

## Riverside Residents Prefer the City's Drinking Water

Outcomes of the Blind Water Tasting Test at the 2006 Orange Blossom Festival, Riverside California, Sunday, May 21, 2006.

UC Center for Water Resources conducted a blind taste test on the taste preference of public water supply (tap water) and bottled water for those who visited the exhibit booth of the University of California Citrus Experiment Station from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm on Sunday, May 21, 2006.

The public water supply came from the tap in a home in the City of Riverside and the bottled water came from 5-gallon home delivery bottles of a water supplier in the Inland Empire. The water was not cooled by ice as the cold temperature tended to mask the taste sensory.

A total of 175 people who tasted the water and cast the ballots:

- 30 in favor of **Water A** (the bottle water delivered to a home)
- 138 in favor of **Water B** (municipal water supply from the tap of a home near Riverside downtown)
- 3 indicated neither water was acceptable
- 2 were not able to distinguish the difference
- 2 guessed that **Water B** was the bottled water

This was an informal poll that did not involve randomization, replication, and control group in the sources of water or tasters. It also did not involve preconditioning to free the tasters from interferences of antecedent taste exposures. However, the poll does reflect the ways drinking water is consumed. The outcome might alter significantly had different sources of water been chosen.

While all drinking water in the United States meet the National Drinking Water Standards (<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/mcl.html>), consumer preference of drinking water is often based on taste, color, odor, and packaging. Among them, taste is the most direct and personal experience. Additional information about bottled water and public water supply in Southern California may be found in a report on drinking water quality on the website of UCLA's Institute of the Environment:

<http://www.ioe.ucla.edu/reportCard/report00/html/drinkingquality.html>