

FRIDAY NOTES
~SEPTEMBER 11, 2009~

**Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
Publication BroadCAST through New
Media Venue**



Broadcast Yourself™

CAST has moved into a new era of communicating science using social media—most recently via “YouTube,” a web-based video sharing portal. CAST’s latest Commentary—*Food Safety and Fresh Produce: An Update* (QTA2009-1)—currently is highlighted on the popular networking site in three progressive mediacasts featuring Senator Tom Harkin and Task Force Chair William McGlynn. *[Logo courtesy of YouTube™]*



Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DikWwN0bLyk>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCqbQEqNAKs>

Part 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uKveE6cfC8&feature=related>



In the past, “getting the words out” about new CAST publications was limited to hardcopy or electronic mailings, CAST Task Force and Staff presentations at government offices or

society/organization/business meetings, and

postings on the CAST website. But with the advent

of electronic social networking—including

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Helium, among

many others—varying times, remote places, and divergent viewpoints can

instantaneously be brought together, literally in your own hands. Learning about and working in sync with our “world supported by plants and animals” has never

been easier. These new opportunities for communicating CAST’s timely,

objective, science-based information will exponentially increase the availability of the facts on agricultural science issues of the day. *[Photos courtesy of (top) USM*



Mailboxes and (bottom) Carnegie Mellon Computer Services]

This week alone, numerous news stories have focused on food safety issues—many of which echo the findings and conclusions contained in CAST’s recent Commentary on food safety and fresh produce (see, for example, the recall of thousands of cases of green onions contaminated with *Salmonella* (http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_13293525?nclick_check=1); establishment of a new Food and Drug Administration site where food industry officials are required to report potentially dangerous products that might sicken or kill people or animals (<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm181531.htm>); development of new technology for detecting *E. coli* in ground



beef (http://www.agprofessional.com/show_story.php?id=60583); and the announcement by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack that a new consumer website is now available to help consumers and families get all the latest information on food safety and food recalls in one convenient place (<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/09/20090909a.html>). *[Photo courtesy of Purdue University Horticulture Department]*

CAST's food safety Commentary, published July 27, 2009, contains a wealth of knowledge on this critical, ongoing concern, including the following brief excerpts:



Based on available data, the Food and Drug Administration has identified five commodity groups that are responsible for the bulk of produce-associated outbreaks: cantaloupes, lettuce and leafy greens, tomatoes, green onions, and herbs.

Enhanced, computerized systems for tracking and tracing produce from the field to the retail outlet are being developed to facilitate rapid removal of contaminated produce from the food supply chain.

Potentially significant food safety risks are associated with fresh produce, and it is important to manage these risks, especially for particularly susceptible individuals. Consumers should be aware of illness outbreaks as they occur, heed official warnings, and follow good food-handling practices. Another lesson that should not be lost in the clamor surrounding these outbreaks, however, is that real health benefits come with a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables. A growing number of guidelines exist to help minimize the risk of foodborne pathogens in fresh produce. Awareness and commitment by growers, processors, and consumers alike will help ensure that fresh fruits and vegetables are safe as well as healthy.

To learn why the things you put in your mind may be even more important than the things you put in your mouth, visit the CAST website at <http://www.cast-science.org>



To access CAST's Commentary *Food Safety and Fresh Produce: An Update* (QTA2009-1), go to: <http://www.cast-science.org/websiteUploads/publicationPDFs/CAST%20Commentary%20Fresh%20Produce%20Update%209708%20QTA2009-1163.pdf> *[Photos courtesy of (top) USDA Agricultural Research Service and (bottom) TopNews]*