Friday Notes is designed to enhance communication among various agricultural sectors, educators, students, and the public who are interested in a variety of plant, animal, food, and environmental issues. Friday Notes advocates the pursuit of credible, unbiased, science-based information. Material contained in linked articles is from the original authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of CAST.

**March 22, 2019**

**Weather and Agriculture**

*National and international floods affect thousands*

Natural disasters come in various forms--from droughts to blights--but when widespread flooding hits, the immediate damage can be stunning. Recently, water has taken lives and destroyed homes in the United States, and several African countries have been affected by a devastating [cyclone](#). Heavy rain and snow melt brought historic flooding to parts of the Midwest, killing several and forcing thousands to evacuate. The storms have also impacted farmers as they deal with [massive crop damage and livestock losses](#). The [USDA](https://www.usda.gov) provides assistance information on this site, and federal weather officials are worried that this emergency is a [preview for a record-setting flood year in the United States](https://www.usda.gov)

During the same time period, [Cyclone Idai ravaged Mozambique](https://www.usda.gov) and two neighboring countries. United Nations relief officials call it "the worst storm to ever hit the Southern Hemisphere." Hundreds are dead, thousands are homeless, and food production will be affected massively.

**News and Views**

Data-sharing Publication and Video: CAST's [recent commentary](https://www.usda.gov), *Enabling Open-source Data Networks in Public Agricultural Research*, focuses on promoting the conversation among agricultural science partners to create a system that encourages data sharing. Access a [video of the presentation here](https://www.usda.gov) (panel discussion at the 32-minute mark).
Three New Members on the Board of Representatives

CAST continues to benefit from professional insights

CAST has benefited from the guidance and leadership of respected experts since 1972, and this week we note that since the beginning of the year, three more professionals have joined the organization’s Board of Representatives. Kellie Bray, Leland Glenna, and Newell Kitchen will all be on the CAST Plant Work Group.

Kellie Bray is a chief of staff at CropLife America. She has covered both federal and state government relations, and she has been a leader in the organization’s affiliation with youth groups such as National FFA and Ag Future of America.

Leland Glenna represents the Rural Sociological Society, and he is a professor of rural sociology and science, technology, and society at Penn State. Dr. Glenna focuses on social and environmental impacts of agricultural science and technologies.

Tariffs and Trade: President Trump said he is planning to leave U.S. tariffs on Chinese products in place "for a substantial period of time," even after some form of deal is reached with China.

Analyzing the Lancet Report: Authors of the EAT-Lancet report recommended a "transformation" of the human diet to solve climate change, and now they are responding to criticism that the suggestions are overblown and impossible to implement.

Cancer Case: A federal jury ruled that the weed killer Roundup caused a California resident to develop cancer. The Bayer company continues to affirm that "glyphosate-based herbicides do not cause cancer."

Ag Economics: This study shows that U.S. food and agriculture industries contribute more than 7-trillion-dollars a year to the nation's economy.
Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right), P. 1 Borlaug image from WFP.jpg, flood collage from KRUN.com, hoosiersagtoday.com, and denverpost.com, map from ecr.co.za, and mole rat pic from bbc.co.uk. Animal Sec. cow pic from twitter.com. Food Sec. cartoon from agescimarche.it. Plant Sec. biofuel graphic from futurity.org. Inter. Sec. road pic from hotcars.com, and phone pic from thebetterindia.com. Gen. Sec. family photo from towtnew.s.com and vaping pic from bwbx.io. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

Farmer to the Rescue (video): This farmer uses a tractor and front loader to save a cow caught in the mud during the Nebraska floods.

Gene Editing and Livestock (opinion): This editorial states why the proposed U.S. regulation of gene-edited food animals "is not fit for purpose."

Ag Trespass Law 2.0: Iowa lawmakers sent another "ag trespass bill" to the governor—a version that is more narrowly tailored than the previous rule that was called unconstitutional by courts.


Pork Seized at the Border: U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents seized about 1 million pounds of pork imported from China amid concerns it could contain the African swine flu disease.

Finding Safe Cattle Feed: Drought has forced Missouri beef ranchers to find alternatives such as millet and sudangrass—but nitrate poisoning can become an issue in some cases.

Food Science and Safety News

Pesticide Residue: According to the information in the graph at right, pesticide residue should not be a major concern for the nation’s consumers.

Eggs and Cholesterol: A recent study cautions consumers about eggs and cholesterol, but the lead scientist for the report provides analysis that looks calmly at the overall results.

Eggshells in Cosmetics, Ceramics, and Batteries? Biowaste in the form of chicken eggshells has proven to be effective for energy storage.

What Is "Organic"? As organic food shifts from a utopian movement to lucrative industry, a struggle is going on regarding production and marketing.

Is There a "Fiber Gap"? According to this report, only 5% of people in the United States meet the Institute of Medicine’s recommended daily target of fiber in their diets.
Precaution about the Precautionary Principle (opinion): This writer says the precautionary principle is bad policy because to fully comprehend the concept of risk, a person must have a very good understanding of statistics and data analysis--and most people don't.

Research about the Precautionary Principle: To access science-based information about this topic, check out CAST IP 52, Impact of the Precautionary Principle on Feeding Current and Future Generations.

Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Purple Pastures (video): This woman left her profession as a teacher 15 years ago to run her family's lavender farm, and now she is the president of the firm.

Citrus Greening: A decade of ravages by citrus greening has left Florida with only hard-core, committed growers, and more research is needed to keep them in business. University of Florida experts are helping.

Soil Quality: Three global leaders in agricultural research and international development--including Kansas State--are joining to improve the livelihoods of the world's poorest populations by increasing soil fertility.

Heard It through the Grapevine: A long-awaited federal grape-genetics research lab in New York will employ cutting-edge genomic tools to aid traditional grapevine breeding.

Food Policy Discussion (video): In this archived presentation, Marty Matlock, Executive Director of the Office for Sustainability at the University of Arkansas, joined other experts to discuss food safety and sustainability. As Dr. Matlock said, "Climate change is driving food scarcity. We need to focus on food security, because that is where children die, where people suffer."

Marty Matlock and Sustainability: Dr. Marty Matlock is also Executive Director of the University of Arkansas Resiliency Center and Professor of Ecological Engineering in the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, and he is the 2018 Borlaug CAST Communication Award winner.

International News
**Watch in Wonder (video):** Narrated by Sir David Attenborough, the latest trailer for the nature series, *Our Planet* looks at the wonders of our world.

**Fighting Climate Change:** Germany, one of the world's biggest consumers of coal, will shut down all 84 of its coal-fired power plants during the next 19 years.

**Brazil-U.S. Trade:** Brazil has agreed to ease trade barriers for U.S. wheat, pork, and beef. The U.S. will now be allowed to export 750,000 tons of wheat--tariff free--to Brazil, and the ban on U.S. pork imports has been lifted.

**Radiation and Soil Contamination:** Japan experienced the unprecedented Tohoku earthquake in 2011, with a massive tsunami that resulted in the meltdown of a nuclear power plant. Scientists are still working on the resulting soil contamination.

**Plant App in India:** Plantix is an AI-driven mobile application that aids farmers and gardening enthusiasts with information on diseases, pest infestation, and nutrient deficiency--all by sharing a photograph of a leaf.

**Water Woes (opinion):** This writer claims that certain large agricultural concerns in Colombia are controlling water interests and making it tough on peasant farmers.

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**General Interest News**

**Fireball in the Sky (video):** NASA reports that on December 18, 2018, a giant space rock exploded 16 miles above Earth's surface, giving off 10 times the energy of the atomic bomb detonated over Hiroshima.

**Efficient Fertilizer Use:** According to this site, farmers can improve their fertilizer-use efficiency by using these six recommendations.

**Keeping Some Cash:** A proposed House bill would give an economic boost to young people in agriculture by allowing 4-H and FFA students aged 21 and younger to keep more of the modest income they earn.

**Gene Therapy and Vision:** Researchers used gene insertion to help mice regain sight, and they hope that the therapy can be tried on humans within three years.

**Vaping and Kids:** As the FDA looks for more information on e-cigarettes and e-juice sales, a new study shows that adolescents and young adults cite appealing flavors as a main reason for using e-cigarettes.
CAST, through its network of experts, assembles, interprets, and communicates credible, balanced, science-based information to policymakers, the media, the private sector, and the public.

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