

# Friday Notes

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology

ICAST

The Science Source for Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Issues

*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.

## In This Issue..... Click to Read

[Animal Gene Pool Publication Rollout Information--P. 2](#)

[Animal Agriculture News](#)

[Food Science and Safety News](#)

[Plant and Environment News](#)

[International News](#)

[General Interest News](#)

## Hello World



This prize-winning photo is one of many fascinating images from a North Carolina State [contest highlighting research](#) being done at the university.

## Agriculture Extension

Extension and public outreach play a fundamental role in [helping America put science into practice](#). Read the [full report here](#): *Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources--Cooperative Extension and Public Outreach*.



## Science Communication Scholarship

University of Arkansas grad students have until **Sunday, September 15**, to submit their [science communication example and application](#).

## Membership Spotlight

This month, we feature [a Q&A with Dr. Sally Flis](#), The Fertilizer

September 13, 2019

## Food Labels, Semantics, and Consumer Confusion

When we first covered issues about labels, advertising, and consumer confusion, we pictured a shopper strolling down the grocery aisle. That concrete image still holds--but with new food outlets, online ordering, and home delivery, the convoluted choices and intentional or non-intentional misinformation have blossomed further. The following links are just a few of the many articles covering various angles of the labeling dilemma for consumers.



\*\*As Shakespeare said, "What's in a name?" This video looks at [what makes milk "milk"](#)--and which products can use the term.

\*\*The Mississippi Department of Agriculture will allow vegan and vegetarian companies to [continue using meat terms](#) on food labels.

\*\*The Center for Food Integrity says many health-conscious consumers are [confused by the mixed messages](#) on labels and in advertising.

\*\*When it comes to beer, the "less-filling, tastes-great" tussle has given way to a [label battle between MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch](#) regarding the phrase "no corn syrup."

\*\*This commentator looks at [grocery store marketing claims](#) that she says are B.S. (below standard).

\*\*This [CAST Issue Paper--Process Labeling of Food: Consumer Behavior, the Agricultural Sector, and Policy Recommendations](#)--considers how to bridge the informational gap between producers and consumers.

\*\*CAST Communications and Social Media Specialist Kim Nelson looks at food-label issues in a three-part blog series: (1) [Misleading Food Labels](#), (2) [Voluntary Labeling](#), and (3) [Fixing the Problem](#).

## News and Views

**WASDE Report:** The USDA issued the September *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* (WASDE) [report](#) and [briefing information](#). Click here for a [video that includes market analysis](#).

**Disaster Relief:** The [USDA announced details](#) of the long-awaited disaster aid program. Farmers affected by natural disasters in 2018

Institute's representative on the Board of Directors. Dr. Flis is also an individual member of CAST.

## Interacting with Researchers

The University of Missouri Fisher Delta [Research Center Field Day](#) featured more than 10 stops and allowed attendees to interact with numerous researchers.

## Coming Events

Check out details about IFIC's [Future of Food Summit](#)--September 18 in New York City.

[September 19 webinar](#): *Reducing the Impacts of Agricultural Nutrients on Water Quality across a Changing Landscape.*

Check here for information about the 2019 [Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium](#)--October 16-18 in Des Moines, Iowa.

## Send in Ideas

CAST [welcomes suggestions](#) for future publications and projects.

## CAST Social Media



and 2019, including Hurrricane Dorian, can apply for assistance. Secretary of Agriculture [Sonny Perdue commented](#) about the program.

**Science-based Sustainability:** This [highly regarded report looks at sustainable agriculture](#)--its complexities, challenges, and promises. It also focuses on the need for innovation, investment, and support for farmers.



**Farmer Financial Challenges:** In a difficult year for many U.S. farmers, a new law raised the level of debt allowed for a [Chapter 12 bankruptcy filing](#). This editorial contends the year has been [especially hard on family farmers](#).

**WOTUS Repeal:** In its continuing effort to roll back regulations, the administration finalized the [repeal of the 2015 Waters of the U.S.](#)

## News from the Far Side of the Barn

**Panda Kindergarten (video):** A young panda's birthday turns into a going-away celebration as [Xiang Xiang moves on](#).



**Bring the Mustard, Hold the Dog Slobber (video):** This man's dog is trained in [the art of fetching food--and beer--from the fridge](#).

These [birds have a human-like conversation](#). We assume it's not about the classic Monty Python "[Dead Parrot](#)" skit.

**Spooky Juxtaposition:** Today is [Friday the 13th](#) and tonight brings a full harvest moon.

## Protecting Food Animal Gene Pools for Future Generations

### D.C. Rollout of Important CAST Publication on September 30

Genetic diversity serves as a way for populations to adapt to changing environments. However, the number of breeds has declined markedly over the past half century as intensive farming practices have focused on a narrow number of high-producing breeds. This paper (*Protecting Food Animal Gene Pools for Future Generations--A Series on The Need for Agricultural Innovation to Sustainably Feed the World by 2050*) addresses the vital need to protect genetic diversity in a time when disease or future climate change could unexpectedly decimate the small number of breeds the world depends on for food.

Three [presentation options are available](#) to learn about the vital need to protect the genetic diversity of livestock and methods to maintain existing gene pools. On September 30, Dr. Julie Long (research physiologist with USDA-ARS) will present highlights of CAST's new issue paper.



10:00 - 11:00 a.m. ~ 328A Russell Senate Office Building, 2 Constitution Avenue NE, Washington, D.C.

Noon - 1:00 p.m.  
~ includes Chick-fil-A Lunch; vegetarian option upon request, 1300 Longworth House Office Building, 9 Independence Ave SE, Washington, D.C.

2:30 - 3:30 p.m. ~ USDA 107-A Whitten Building, 12th St. and Jefferson Dr., SW., Washington, D.C.

Download this CAST report starting September 30 at [cast-science.org/publications](http://cast-science.org/publications).



Flujo de Genes en Alfalfa  
Biología, Mitigación y Efectos Potenciales en la Producción



Reminder: As we reported last week, CAST now provides a Spanish language version of its special report about gene flow in alfalfa.

Spanish Version: [Flujo de Genes en Alfalfa](#) *Biología, Mitigación y Efectos Potenciales en la Producción*

English Version: [Gene Flow in Alfalfa](#): *Biology, Mitigation, and Potential Impact on Production*

## Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 egg hatch pic from ncsu.edu, labels collage from ecori.org, global food graphic from foodsecurity.com, and parrot pic from laughingsquid.com. P. 2 cattle pic from producer.com. Animal Sec. student photo from isu.edu and chicken pic from dailygreen.jpg. Food Sec. trash pic from image.png and mouse pic from topsimages.com. Plant Sec. scientist photo from ucdavis.edu and graph from usda.com. Inter. Sec. whiskey pic from standard.co.uk and insidehook.com, and dog pic from vanityfair.com. Gen. Sec. veterinarian photo from townnews.com and horse pic from wskg.com. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service or CAST.



### Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

**Grasslands, Conservation, and Cattle (video):** Cattle and conservation have not always been natural companions when it comes to managing grasslands, but many now see the ways [responsibly managed cattle can add to ecosystem sustainability](#).

**Poultry Production:** Borlaug CAST Communication Award [winners](#) continue to produce important publications. In a recent post, [Jayson Lusk](#) (Purdue) looks at the costs for individual [poultry producers switching to slower breeds](#).

**PRRSV Research:** A new \$3 million grant will help university researchers investigate how [porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus](#) (PRRSV) evolves and spreads.

**BRD Research:** Research and practical experience have [shown a genetic component](#) to the ability of individual cattle, or sire lines, to resist Bovine Respiratory Disease (BRD) pathogens.

**Confinement Systems:** A coalition of Nebraska citizens is protesting against large livestock operations. If the petition is followed, it would put a [temporary stop to new confined-animal feeding operations](#) in the state.



**Chicken Myths:** Most people have no actual connection with the farms that produce the chickens they eat. This site looks at [misconceptions about broiler chickens](#).

**Production Practices:** The National Chicken Council does a Q&A about the use of [antibiotics in chicken production](#).



**Doctoral students at many agricultural universities produce valuable research--in these two examples from Iowa State University, Cesar Moura [looks at hog disease](#), and Ben Smith examines the [efficient use of swine barns](#).**

### Food Science and Safety News

**A Flu App:** University of Arizona specialists produced an [easy, quick test for norovirus](#)--the bug that causes the "stomach flu"--using a modified smartphone.

**Boil, Steam, Bake, or Simmer?** This website provides [test results for seven of the most well-known techniques](#) of boiling and peeling an egg.

**How's Your Response to Fat?** UC-Davis experts and other researchers report that people have very [individualized](#)

[inflammatory responses](#) to eating a high-fat meal.

**Nutritional Caution:** The moves to plant-based diets for the good of the planet may be commendable, but they can also cause problems with the [low intake of essential nutrients](#) involved in brain health, according to this nutritionist.

**Eat Your Vegetables!** This study claims that [repeatedly offering a variety of vegetables to children](#) increased their acceptance and consumption.



**Frying Oil and Health:** Scientists examined the impact of frying oil consumption on [inflammatory bowel disease and colon cancer](#), with mice as the test models.



Only 5.3% of food scraps in the United States were composted in 2015 according to the EPA. Many are saying that [using scraps to make soil](#) is a common-sense trend. The [USDA provides related information](#) on this site, and click here for CAST's [Food Loss and Waste](#) publication.

## Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

**Ag Info:** This USDA website provides [scheduled release dates](#) for agency reports and summaries.

### Ethanol, Trade, and Politics

\*\*The U.S. Grains Council found that nonbeverage ethanol has been the [fastest growing U.S. agricultural export](#) during the past five years.

\*\*Considering the tariff issues with China, the Grains Council encourages efforts to drum up demand for [new exports across Asia](#).

\*\*At the same time, White House officials are [urging U.S. biofuel producers and oil refiners](#) to accept a deal to lift biofuel blending mandates in 2020.

\*\*[Political issues with ethanol](#) revolve around waivers, environmental concerns, and production quotas.



This humorous, informative video comes from a UC-Davis student who urges Californians to help [prevent the spread of citrus greening disease](#). The University of Florida has also been actively involved in [fighting against the citrus greening virus](#).



**Global Soybean Markets:** The share of Chinese soybean imports supplied by Brazil has increased, while the [U.S. share has decreased](#).

**Legal Hemp Growing on the Rise:** Licensed hemp climbed to 511,442 acres in 2019, [a fourfold increase](#) over licensed acres in 2018.

**Stopping Stiltgrass:** The National Science Foundation is providing a grant for university researchers to [study the damaging invasive species](#) call Japanese stiltgrass (*microstegium vimineum*).

## International News

**Rats! (video):** New Zealand's rats are driving a quarter of the nation's birds--many of them flightless--to extinction, so the country is [working to eradicate the rodent](#).

**Aussie Fires (video):** Officials are dealing with raging bushfires in Australia, and they expect the [trend of hotter, more intense episodes](#) to continue.

**Gotta Have Their Pork:** China's Guangdong province will release 3,150 tons of frozen pork from reserves, part of a [campaign to secure supplies](#) of the country's favorite meat in

light of the African swine fever disaster.

**Meat Markets:** South Korea, Mexico, and other countries are offering a wide selection of options--from gourmet hot dogs to sausage sandwiches--that are winning over customers and [creating more demand for U.S. red meat](#).

**Zeroing In on the Zero Budget Program:** Some scientists in India take issue with "[Zero Budget Natural Farming](#)," calling it "unproven technology."



**Pet Cloning:** At this lab in China, [cloning a dog can cost nearly \\$55,000](#)--but apparently the demand is high.

**"Beauty From Within" Yogurt?** This company claims that its yogurt can [relieve dry skin and keep it moist](#).



In a bid to stop the trade of counterfeit alcohol, scientists at the University of Glasgow created an [artificial tongue to taste-test types of whisky](#).

## General Interest News

**"Wasteful" Research That Pays Dividends (video):** The eradication of a horrible livestock pest helped ranchers in many ways. The cure started with a much-ridiculed research project--[Sex Life of the Screwworm](#).

**Veterinarian Shortage:** A [shortage of veterinarians](#) who care for both small and large animals is affecting farmers in Missouri.

**Veterinarian Applicants:** This data looks at the [demographics of the current veterinarian applicant pool](#) in regards to diversity. **Note:** The CAST Issue Paper *Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the U.S. Food Supply* will be released in December.

**Diversity and Networking:** Many schools are proud of their veterinarian programs, including Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, with its [focus on diversity and student networking](#).



In many areas, veterinarians are in short supply. See related links at left.



**Work to Ride:** These Cornell [students wake up at dawn](#) to clean the barn and bath, groom, and exercise the horses. They've also worked their way to become captains of the polo team.

**Farming Program for Military Vets:** The Ohio State University promotes the Veteran Farming Program, a [project helping veterans](#) through gardening and horticulture.

## CAST Information

Check out CAST's page at the [YouTube site](#) to view highly regarded ag-science videos about probiotics, food safety, and water issues--or the latest video dealing with proposed mandatory labeling of GMO food items.

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*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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**\*\* With assistance from Megan Wickham (Managing Scientific Editor)**