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.

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New CAST Publication Examines Pesticide Levels in Food--P. 2
Animal Agriculture News
Food Science and Safety News
Plant and Environment News
International News
General Interest News

Adesina in Focus
A new biography of the 2017 World Food Prize laureate Dr. Akinwumi Adesina looks at his efforts to uplift Africa's agriculture, reduce poverty, and improve the daily livelihoods of the continent's citizens. Adesina was the 2010 BCCA winner.

Digital Environment
The American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, and the Soil Science Society of America will host approximately 4,000 scientists, professionals, educators, and students at the 2019 International Annual Meeting, "Embracing the Digital Environment," from November 10-13 in San Antonio.

CAST

Scholarship Winners
Graduate students from the University of Arkansas who

From Field to Family
Crop Protection and Food Safety

It's harvest season in many parts of the world, and farmers become even more focused on yields and production techniques. This week's newsletter includes links to many articles about crops and the crucial need to produce enough safe food to feed the world.

When it comes to production methods, it's helpful to hear from those with hands-on experience--farmer, blogger, and registered dietitian Jennie Schmidt explains why crops need protection. Many universities offer websites filled with blogs, links, and presentations about crop protection--for example, this University of Arkansas site features numerous segments about weed control. Also, check the Plant Section below for related stories, including a link to a CAST publication specifically about crop protection.

Production techniques affect quantity and quality. Consumers want safe food, and farmers work hard to deliver the best goods. A recent report--with input from Cornell University--looked at some of the barriers to implementing food safety practices. Many universities, companies, nonprofits, and societies provide research and training workshops focused on food safety. For example, Kansas State University has these upcoming sessions for fresh-produce growers.

Communication about food products is also important, and the latest CAST publication (led by Carl Winter, left) looks at the scientific facts regarding fruits, vegetables, and pesticide residues. As you can see in the full report (covered on page two below), the key point is that fruits and vegetables are important for us all, and our farmers are producing quality items that are safe to eat.

News and Views
won 2019 CAST scholarships created impressive videos, podcasts, and infographics with high production quality.

Publications Update
Watch for rollout information about CAST papers coming early in 2020:
(1) The Microbiome's Positive Impacts on Crops and (2) Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the U.S. Food Supply.

Borlaug Dialogue
Read about twelve undergraduates from the Purdue College of Agriculture who attended the 2019 Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium during World Food Prize week.

Student Recognition
The Poultry Science Association Foundation recognized the recipient of the 2019 Diamond V Endowed Scholarship--Austin Silva, a poultry science student at Texas A&M.

Send in Ideas
CAST welcomes suggestions for future publications and projects.

CAST Social Media

Grain Trade: Exporters reported the sale of 264,000 tons of U.S. soybeans to China for delivery in the 2019/2020 marketing year, amid hopes for a partial trade deal between the world's largest economies.

Pesticide Regulations: The EPA proposed rules to update pesticide application exclusion zone requirements.

World Hunger: According to this report, world hunger is now on the rise after a steady decrease during several decades. With World Food Day recently occurring, many are working on solutions.

Crop Research: USDA Deputy Under Secretary Scott Hutchins announced that the National Institute of Food and Agriculture has invested $11 million in research to support specialty crop farmers.

Court Case: A coalition of renewable fuel and farm groups is challenging the EPA in federal court for issuing more than 30 RFS waivers in 2018.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

A Healing Pig: A devastating fire and other setbacks affected this family farm, but a runaway pig has given them some hope and neighborhood connections.

Gasoline, Matches, and Stupidity: (video): We will state the obvious. This is not how to get rid of cockroaches.

Haunted Corn Maze (video): This crop yields crazy clowns, chainsaws, and haunted hotels.

"A very intelligent animal." Story link at upper left.

It's Important--Eat Your Fruits and Vegetables

CAST Report Looks at the Science Regarding Pesticides in Food Products
Consumers are concerned about their exposure to pesticides through fruits and vegetables bought at the grocery store, but that fear is not supported by scientific evidence.

A new report from the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology aims to reduce consumers' worries by describing how information from complex risk assessments can be misinterpreted in news stories and by consumer advocacy groups. The innately complex findings from scientific publications can easily be shaped into unfavorable narratives that end up confusing grocery buyers more than aiding them.

“Consumers should feel confident, rather than uncomfortable, when purchasing fruits and vegetables,” says Dr. Carl K. Winter, Cooperative Extension Food Toxicology Specialist Emeritus at the University of California-Davis and chair author of the CAST publication.

The new CAST paper provides an overview of how pesticides are used in crop production and their benefits in the food system. The authors also offer accurate evaluations of scientific sources commonly used by media outlets and advocacy groups to shape consumer advice.

This AgWeb report features a video commentary about the CAST publication.

The full report, Interpreting Pesticide Residues in Food, is available to download here. The Ag quickCAST version is accessible here.
Veterinarian Shortage: Farm veterinarians are increasingly rare, and this article explains why we should care. This list of "best veterinary schools" shows that plenty of good work is going on in universities--most of these top schools are members of the CAST Education Program.

A Horse in Zebra Clothing: A UC-Davis professor backs up what was reported last week--horses dressed as zebras enjoy definite benefits.

Genetic Variation: This Pennsylvania State University professor looks at the loss of genetic variation, including his claim that one bull possibly has a quarter-million daughters.


Food Science and Safety News

Food Waste "Gets Ugly" (video): What started as a small way to combat the massive problem of food waste in this country has turned into big business--including a student food recovery network. View the related full CAST publication Food Loss and Waste and the summary of the paper, the Ag quickCAST, on our website.

Modern Food Production: This article looks at changes in food production, including 3D printing, vertical farming, nanotechnology, biotechnology, and more.

Cook Wild Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Nutrition Education Program provides recipe cards and information to help citizens learn how to prepare wild game--rabbit jambalaya, anyone? This video explains the program.

Viral Bacon (video): The bacon vending machine has been a buzz on the The Ohio State University campus, but the bacon scarcity panic a few years ago was overblown, and the current bacon glut is explainable when various factors are taken into consideration.

Expensive as a Gold Nugget? In another look at the cultured meat movement, these $50 chicken nuggets were grown in a lab.

Plant Agriculture and Environmental News
Fine Wines and Changing Weather (video): Experts from UC-Davis are joining in with tech developers in an effort to help the Napa Valley wine industry cope with the problems of a changing climate.

Grapes and Drought: University of Nevada-Reno researchers partnered with Oregon State to investigate ways to make grape varieties more drought-tolerant.

Benefits from Chicken Manure: This study--using Iowa State University research--looks at the long-term impact of poultry manure on crop yield, soil and water quality, and crop revenue.

Environment Program: At the recent World Food Prize gathering, officials for Corteva said the company is committing $500,000 toward a program to reward farmers who adopt carbon-sequestering practices.

Crop Diversification: Some opportunities are opening up to help farmers financially as they try to improve soil health by diversifying crops.

Productivity and Water Quality: This CAST publication looks at increasingly productive crop techniques and the challenges of water quality.

Crop Protection: This CAST paper addresses crop production topics. Crop Protection Contributions toward Agricultural Productivity is a paper in the series on The Need for Agricultural Innovation to Sustainably Feed the World by 2050.

This writer says regenerative agricultural practices (including tech innovations) could help stop climate change. Another writer takes a different view, claiming organic methods could increase greenhouse gas releases.

International News

Setting the Record Straight: Sheep officials in Great Britain are trying to counteract accusations about the environmental impacts of their industry.

The Passing of a Famous Sheep: Chris the sheep became famous because he was found in the Australian countryside carrying a coat of nearly 90 pounds of wool.

Bovine Pair Leading Fundraising Efforts: Knickers the giant Australian steer is in an unlikely friendship with Lucky, a small calf making headlines for allegedly being stolen by a vegan activist.

From Landfill to Lunch: An international project in Kenya is changing the destination of so-called ugly vegetables by diverting them into the country’s school meals program.
The Unusual Aye-aye: Madagascan lemurs called aye-ayes display a collection of delightfully ghoulish traits—including their teeth, ears, and hands that feature a tiny sixth finger, a “pseudo thumb.”

Irish Drones: Although drone owners deal with several restrictions on farms in Ireland, many think the technology will soon be as important as the motorbike and sheep dog.

General Interest News

Animating a Pumpkin (video): This artist spices things up by carving fifteen pumpkins as separate frames of a clever animation.

Pumping Up Pumpkin Sales: Pumpkin sales in Virginia are generating millions of dollars.

From Blood Sampling to Chemical Reactions (video): During a university science tech week, North Carolina A&T students demonstrated scientific, hands-on activities at local schools.

Drone Down on the Farm: Mark Parker lists his top ten reasons a farmer needs a drone—from herding goats to shooing blackbirds to mowing the lawn.

Eyes in the Sky (related to above): This blog features several drone stories and an essay about why it was good not to have drones as a kid on the farm.

Latest Drone Testing: A Virginia town was chosen as the test location for drone deliveries from FedEx, Walgreens, and a local business.

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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