

Friday Notes

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology

CAST

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.

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Painted Night Sky



Northern Lights ([aurora borealis](#)) lit up the night sky in Finland.

Veterinary Paper Webinar

On April 7 at 12 p.m., CDT, CAST will host a [webinar highlighting its new paper](#), *Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the U.S. Food Supply*. Join to discover more about this important topic.

[Jayson Lusk](#) (2017 BCCA recipient) is scheduled to appear on ABC's 20/20 Friday night (March 27) to talk about coronavirus and food markets. He is [quoted in this new article](#) about record egg prices. [Kevin Folta](#) (2016 BCCA recipient) provides video [field trips to the lab and farm](#).

National Ag Day occurred on March 24 without the usual in-person fanfare, but the [Ag Day Website](#) provides plenty of resources.

The national head count is important, and the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) is collecting material online, even though it has temporarily suspended field operations to help slow the spread of coronavirus.

March 27, 2020

Springtime Paradox

Season of blossoms mixed with time of anxiety

Farmers, food workers, and the entire public are dealing with pandemic issues at the same time spring brings its usual blooms of hope in the Northern Hemisphere. As they plan to put seed in the ground, [crop producers deal with markets](#) affected by the coronavirus global upheaval. Farm laborers--including [migrant workers--are taking risks](#)--Secretary Perdue issued this [statement about the H-2 visa process](#). Health and food workers continue to work hard and perform crucial duties.



During this time of concerns, springtime brings chirping birds, blooming flowers, and a natural aura of rebirth. Many are putting extra effort into "victory gardens," and as one plant nursery owner said, "You can [nurture yourself while nurturing your plants](#)."

As we all try to balance the battle against the virus with the belief that we will overcome this and "blossom again," credible information is one of the best medicines. CAST is using its blog to provide numerous links: [March 19](#) about education and distance learning, [March 24](#) about food safety, and [March 26](#) about misinformation. See [Page Two](#) below for more about CAST materials and useful sites from other groups including universities.

This *Friday Notes* edition contains a mixture of links with news about many science and agriculture issues as well as sites regarding the coronavirus. As spring unfolds, may we all stay informed and optimistic.

News and Views

Government Aid: Congressional leaders reached agreement on a \$2 trillion economic rescue package that will have [several effects on agriculture](#)--from commodity credit to the Market Facilitation Program. Many [agriculture groups praised the bill](#). Note: As of Friday morning, the House still needed to take final action on this proposal.

Animals and COVID-19: This Ohio State University expert provides recent information about [pets, livestock, and coronavirus](#).

Veterinarians: Mississippi State's Bailey Archey wrote an insightful blog titled [A Student Perspective on Recruiting Future Food Animal Veterinarians](#).

CRP Program: The USDA says the number of acres just accepted into the general [Conservation Reserve Program](#) has risen significantly.



The [National Association of Agricultural Educators](#) includes thousands of members involved in agricultural education, from middle school through postsecondary, and state and national agricultural education leaders. They continue to help with education during this coronavirus era.

The Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom program is offering [virtual at-home learning resources](#) for teachers, students, and parents.

Send in Ideas

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

CAST Social Media



U.S.-China Ag Trade: The USDA announced continued progress in the implementation of the agriculture-related provisions of the [U.S.-China Phase One Economic and Trade Agreement](#).



Adapting to Changes: According to many, [5G capabilities will help farmers](#) cut wasteful spending, assess crops, and make use of large amounts of data.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

Fish Out of Water (video): These [curious cats get a surprise](#), but we don't know what happens to the fish.

Ninja Rats (video): Kangaroo rats use [amazing moves to avoid snake attacks](#).

Couch Potato Ancestor? The earliest known ancestor of most familiar forms of animal life on the planet today appears to have been identified in outback Australia. It's a [tiny sluggish blob](#).



[Working at home with a puppy](#) can be doggone distracting.

CAST Updates and Resources

Blog sites, university information, various links

CAST continues to adjust its methods of communication during the pandemic. The CAST blog provides regular updates about news headlines, announcements, and pertinent educational resource material related to agriculture, science, our members, and CAST activities. Instead of events in Washington, D.C., the [organization will use webinars](#) to disseminate new publications.

Check these three blog posts for current, credible information:

- (1) [Hoaxes and misinformation](#)
- (2) [COVID-19 and food safety/systems](#)
- (3) [Resources for virtual learning](#)

CAST also is communicating through its [social media](#) pages, and you can [sign up here for CAST announcements](#). Plus, Executive Vice President Kent Schescke uses this blog to [preview upcoming papers from CAST](#).

HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

- CONSIDER THE SOURCE**
Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.
- READ BEYOND**
Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?
- CHECK THE AUTHOR**
Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?
- SUPPORTING SOURCES?**
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.
- CHECK THE DATE**
Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.
- IS IT A JOKE?**
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.
- CHECK YOUR BIASES**
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.
- ASK THE EXPERTS**
Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

Suggested Links from Universities...and More

These links are some of the many sources of information from university members of the CAST Education Program:

The [University of Arkansas](#) System Division of Agriculture is using alternate means to assist Arkansans; the [University of Florida](#) Disease Lab will supply kits for research tests; this [Ohio State University](#) site provides information about food safety and fresh produce; [North Carolina State](#) provides COVID-19 information; and this [Mississippi State University](#) expert discusses frozen meat and other perishable food items.

All member universities provide updates and information about their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. A few examples include: [Penn State University](#), the [University of Nevada-Reno](#), and [Iowa State University](#). University members are encouraged to send pertinent links to dgogerty@castscience.org.

CAST members are excellent sources of information, and we welcome links from organizations, companies, schools, and individuals that might enlighten our readers.

The ten [recipients of the Borlaug CAST Communication Award](#) are also excellent resources.

Click here to access the [CAST YouTube channel](#) for video content about science, food production, and agriculture.



Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 northern lights pic from telegraph.co.uk, spring collage from dailymail.co.uk and businessinsider.com, and dog pic from shopus.furbo.com. P. 2 hoax poster from ifla.com. Animal Sec. chicken pic from vinegarandhoney.blogspot. Food Sec. grocery pic from thehill.com. Plant Sec. haybale pic from twitter.com. Inter. Sec. mouse pic from firstpost.com. Gen. Sec. auction pic from agupdate.com. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service or CAST.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

News for Pork Producers: This National Hog Farmer site offers a [variety of pertinent articles](#).

Easing Up on Veterinarians: The FDA intends to temporarily relax certain requirements in order to [allow veterinarians to better utilize telemedicine](#) to address animal health needs during the pandemic.

Veterinarian Publication: Sign up for the [April 7 webinar](#) about the new CAST paper, *Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the U.S. Food Supply*. The publication will be available April 6.

Beef Production: Some experts say the economic stimulus package will provide [relief for cattle producers](#).

Livestock Ruling: After ten years of work, the USDA issued a [final ruling concerning Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices](#).

Protecting Pork: The USDA rolled out its [plan to protect the pork industry](#) should African swine fever be detected in the United States.

Storey's Guide to Raising Beef Cattle: It has been available for two decades, but some say it is the [definitive book about beef cattle](#).



Why did the chickens cross the road? To view the [information site from the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association](#) about chicken production.

Food Science and Safety News

Healthy Eating: Groups publish "dirty" and "clean" lists of produce, but everyone agrees it is also [essential to eat fresh fruits and vegetables](#). Check out this CAST paper, [Interpreting Pesticide Residues in Food](#).

What Came First--the Chicken, the Egg, or the Panic? Americans are [stockpiling eggs during the coronavirus crisis](#), as they cook more meals at home. That's leading to supply shortages and a spike in prices at some supermarkets.

Flyin' Off the Shelves: Demand is "through the roof" for [farm-raised produce](#), and [retail meat sales are soaring](#).

Good Gut Health: This public health expert says a [healthy gut microbiome is crucial](#) in mounting a response to the coronavirus--and it has other benefits.

Beans, Beans, the Magical Fruit: During the coronavirus situation, some foods--such as pasta, rice, and canned meat--have had increased demand. In many areas, [beans have topped the list](#) of "must have" items.



Food Safety: In a recent blog, CAST covers [information and resources](#) that relate to COVID-19's influence on the food industry.

Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Urban Agriculture (video): This [North Carolina A&T State University ag-ed major](#) plans to use her talent and passion for food production in her home city of Detroit.

Solar Energy, or Agriculture, or Both? Farmers, grazers, and scientists discuss the issue about [solar panels and land use](#).

Benefits of Microgreens: Inmates in a penitentiary are growing microgreens--a process that has [nutritional and other benefits](#).



No matter how bored the kids get with home schooling, DO NOT try this at home to teach physics.

Corn into Sanitizer: This Minnesota ethanol producer is ramping up production of [industrial alcohol used in sanitizers](#).

Crop Choice and Climate Change: Crops grown in North Dakota have been changing, but this [diversity is now being influenced](#) by climate change.

Barley Then and Now: Researchers are [testing varieties of barley](#)--one of the earliest cultivated grains, originating in Egypt.

International News

Bustin' Moves in the Zoo (video): An Australian zookeeper filmed on the giraffe live cam [lifted spirits with a cheeky dance](#).

Salty Times: A German study says a [high-salt diet](#) is not only bad for blood pressure but also for the immune system.

Planetary Research: A cannonball that a Japanese spacecraft fired at an asteroid is [shedding light on the most common type of asteroid](#) in the solar system.

Keeping Death Rates Low: This article looks at why [Germany's coronavirus death rate](#) seems to be so low compared to other countries.

Olympics Next Year? Postponing the [Tokyo Olympics](#) comes with a price tag for many around the world. This Japanese official looks for a possible silver lining.



Mice have been [on the space station](#), but this mouse is the [highest ever spotted on Earth](#)--living at 22,110 feet in the Andes Mountains.

General Interest News

Pipeline Back in the News: Nearly three years after crude oil started to flow through the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline, a federal judge ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a [full environmental review](#).

Machines Helping Nature: Researchers are using a kind of machine learning known as sentiment analysis to [assess the successes and failures of wildlife conservation](#) over time.

The Auctioneer's "Cry": This blog looks at why a livestock auctioneer's "cry" is [still relevant in the digital age](#) (related link in caption at right).



Livestock auctions have restricted attendance now, but a few weeks ago, this [auctioneer nabbed the world title](#) (related link at left).

Lending a Hand: These organizations are some of the many [helping restaurants, workers, and farmers](#) during the COVID-19 crisis.

Wasabi Hobby Gets Serious: Wasabi--the spicy green condiment served at sushi restaurants--can be expensive, and much of it in the United States is fake. An [Oregon grower wants to change that](#).

Societies, Companies, and Nonprofit Organizations Serving on the CAST Board of Representatives

- * Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
- * American Association of Avian Pathologists
- * American Association of Bovine Practitioners
- * American Bar Association, Section of Environment, Energy, & Resources-Agricultural Management
- * American Dairy Science Association
- * American Farm Bureau Federation
- * American Meat Science Association
- * American Meteorological Society, Committee on Agricultural and Forest Meteorology
- * American Seed Trade Association
- * American Society for Nutrition Nutritional Sciences Council
- * American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
- * American Society of Agronomy
- * American Society of Animal Science



- * American Society of Plant Biologists
- * American Veterinary Medical Association
- * Aquatic Plant Management Society
- * BASF Corporation
- * Cal Poly State University
- * Corteva Agriscience
- * CropLife America
- * Crop Science Society of America
- * Entomological Society of America
- * Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy
- * Bayer
- * National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a Contractor to the Beef Checkoff

- * National Corn Growers Association/Iowa Corn Promotion Board
- * National Milk Producers Federation
- * National Pork Board
- * North Carolina Biotechnology Center
- * North Central Weed Science Society
- * Northeastern Weed Science Society
- * Poultry Science Association
- * Rural Sociological Society
- * Society for In Vitro Biology
- * Soil Science Society of America
- * Syngenta Crop Protection
- * The Fertilizer Institute
- * Tuskegee University
- * United Soybean Board
- * University of Nevada-Reno
- * U.S. Poultry and Egg Association
- * Weed Science Society of America
- * Western Society of Weed Science

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.

Members of CAST's Education Program

- * Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo
- * Cornell University
- * Iowa State University
- * Kansas State University
- * Mississippi State University
- * North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
- * North Carolina State University
- * Penn State University
- * Texas A&M University College of Ag & Life Sciences
- * The Ohio State University
- * Tuskegee University
- * University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture
- * University of California-Davis
- * University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
- * University of Kentucky
- * University of Missouri-Columbia
- * University of Nebraska Agricultural Research Division
- * University of Nevada-Reno College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources



Note: Land O'Lakes supports the delivery of *Friday Notes* to NAAE

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CAST provides *Friday Notes* as a benefit to its members. Please do not forward, edit, copy, or distribute the Notes in any form to nonmembers without the express permission of the CAST Executive Vice President Kent Schescke (kschescke@cast-science.org). Instead, please encourage your colleagues to join CAST and thereby become eligible for all membership benefits. Contact Colleen Hamilton at 515-292-2125 or chamilton@cast-science.org, or [CLICK HERE](#) for CAST membership information.