

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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Spring Supermoon



April's [full moon rose majestically](#) this past week. Known also as [the pink moon](#), its orbit was the closest [of the year to Earth](#).



Joining the nonprofit, member-supported CAST is an excellent way to support this newsletter and CAST publications and activities. You can become a member by completing one of the following:

1. Visit cast-science.org and click on **Membership**, then **Become a New Member**.
2. Complete and email this [interactive membership form](#) with your credit card information to Colleen at chamilton@cast-science.org.
3. Call the CAST office at **515.292.2125** to pay by phone with your card, or send a check to **CAST, 4420 West Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50014**.

Thank you for your support!

April 10, 2020

Food Supply Chains Affected by Virus *But the food itself is safe*

As with many businesses in the country, food production sites and grocery outlets have been hit with COVID-19 illnesses. A [corn processing facility](#) announced that several workers had come down with the virus, and [some meat processors](#) are closing temporarily due to infections. The affected facilities will be deep cleaned, but some are concerned about the overall [impact on packing plants](#).



The CDC says that [coronavirus is not passed on through food](#). The production and [distribution systems are the challenging aspects](#), and workers at every level are using cleansing procedures. Grocery workers are on the front line, and many companies are [installing precautionary standards](#)--from plastic barriers to one-way aisle traffic. Restaurants are using [curbside delivery](#), food pantries are providing grab-n-go meals, and many groups are [helping those who are food insecure](#). From [farm workers](#) to truckers to checkout personnel, the key mission is to provide safe food for the public. The [USDA](#) and [North Carolina State University](#), are among the many sites providing helpful information about food safety. Common sense, a community spirit, and an appreciation for farmers and food workers will go a long way during these challenging times.

News and Views

Investigating Supply Chains: The USDA will investigate why a [sudden rise in beef prices](#) due to coronavirus hoarding didn't translate into higher cattle prices for farmers.

Global Supply Chain: A steady rise in countries limiting or banning food exports has triggered warnings from U.N. food agency leaders about [possible disruptions to the global food supply](#) as the world retrenches amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Pets, Livestock, and COVID-19: An infected zoo tiger made headlines, but what are the [facts about humans, pets, animals, and the virus](#)? Although most sources say pets and livestock are "safe," the phrase "an abundance of caution" might be appropriate for us all.



World Food Prize Foundation laureates and experts will be featured in the [2020 Digital Dialogue beginning April 16](#).

The Animal Disease Biosecurity Coordinated Agricultural Project funded by USDA/NIFA hosts [biosecurity community conversations](#). The spring series focuses on livestock mortality composting.

A generous grant will allow [Tuskegee University's Legacy Museum](#) to host its second UNCF/Mellon Teaching and Learning Institute this September.

Check here for the latest publications from the [National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine](#).

Send in Ideas

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

CAST Social Media



Financial Help: The Small Business Administration released rules for a \$349 billion [forgivable loan program](#) that is intended to help businesses, including agricultural employers, during the pandemic.

USDA Grants: The USDA is opening a second application window for funding under the [Distance Learning and Telemedicine](#) grant program.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

A Fish Story (video): Give a dog a fish, you feed it for a day. [Train a dog to fish for itself](#), and it's a whole lot of fun.

Squirrel on the Tilt-a-Whirl (video): An unlucky squirrel got [caught on a spinning bird feeder](#) and went for a wild ride.

Pizza by Pulley (video): A pair of Missouri residents used a [creative way to interact with their pizza delivery driver](#) and retrieve their food without leaving their second-floor apartment.



A Nose for the Ball: This [dog plays volleyball like a pro](#).

Veterinarian Issue Paper and Webinar

Student study guide available

An April 7 webinar hosted by CAST and featuring LSU's Christine Navarre focused on highlights from the important new publication, *Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the U.S. Food Supply*. The webinar included approximately 215 attendees ranging from the curious to experts to students. Many attendees provided thoughtful questions and comments for Navarre to respond to during the Q&A at the end of the event. [The issue paper, a one-page Ag_quickCAST summary, and a student study guide are available here](#) (all free).

Food animal veterinarians in the United States safeguard livestock, poultry, and aquatic food animal health and welfare--as well as food safety and quality. They also play a role in the country's ability to prevent transboundary disease outbreaks. Now more than ever, it is imperative that the nation is able to recruit and retain food animal veterinarians--but that has become increasingly difficult. Click here to access a blog post about the [Crucial Need for Food Animal Veterinarians--Past, Present, and Future](#).



Information Updates: CAST Blogs and Various Links

The CAST blog provides regular updates about news headlines, announcements, and pertinent educational resource materials related to agriculture, science, our members, and CAST activities. CAST's latest blog looks at [humans, animals, and the virus](#).

Check these recent blog posts for more useful information:

- (1) [How the Pandemic is Affecting Farming](#)
- (2) [Hoaxes and misinformation](#)
- (3) [COVID-19 and food safety/systems](#)
- (4) [Resources for virtual learning](#)



You can stay updated on CAST news and more by [joining our mailing list](#) and through our [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) pages. Also, Executive Vice President Kent Schescke [previews upcoming papers in this CAST blog post](#).



All university members of the [CAST Education Program](#) provide material about their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Look up the official university sites for information.

This site looks at [internet options for students on low income or without access](#). It helps parents navigate available assistance programs and eligibility requirements while finding low-cost provider options so students can stay connected during this time.

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

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 moon pic from azcentral.com, collage from cnn.com and nosh.com, dog pic from popsugar.com, and tiger pic from indiatimes.com. P. 2 collage from portal.ct.gov. Animal Sec. collage from ktvo.com and nationalhogfarmer.com. Plant Sec. garden pic from kboeradio.com. Inter Sec. goat pic from cbsnews.com. Gen. Sec. rattlesnake pic from npr.org. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service or CAST.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

Stepping Up: During the pandemic crisis, the nation's [poultry and agriculture industries are working non-stop](#) to meet nutritional needs in the United States and around the world.

Beef's Sustainability: Recent research provides scientific evidence of beef's sustainability throughout history. [Click here to access infographics](#) about the role beef has long played in our global food system.

Dairy Support Requested: Dairy groups are asking the USDA to rescue the industry from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with [production cuts and forgivable loans](#).

Poultry Masks Donated: This poultry company [donated thousands of medical masks](#) to help protect front-line health care workers.

Livestock and the Virus: Although, the USDA recommends that those sick with COVID-19 should [restrict contact with animals](#), the National Hog Farmer organization points out that [neither pigs nor chickens were found to be susceptible](#) to infection with SARS-CoV-2.

Call from Cattle Producers: Farm Bureau groups in 27 states signed a letter to Secretary Perdue [requesting his attention](#) about relief to cattlemen due to volatile markets and the possibility of price manipulation.



March Madness basketball bracketology has been "contained" by the virus, but Iowa [pork producers had their own heated contest](#) going on. A barbecue restaurant called "Whatcha Smokin?" took top honors.

Avian Influenza: Highly pathogenic [avian influenza has been detected](#) in a commercial turkey flock in the southwest part of South Carolina.

Food Science and Safety News

Showing His Chops (video): By using clever filming techniques, this "chop master" shows that [cutting vegetables can be a fun](#) and surreal experience.

When Everyone Eats at Home: This "Freakonomics" podcast features a discussion about the ways [COVID-19 has shocked our food-supply system](#). Jayson Lusk is one of the featured commentators.

Getting Food to the Buyers: Farmers who [sell directly to consumers](#) are either losing or gaining sales depending on whether or not they rely on restaurant outlets, online purchases, or deliveries.

Producer to Public: As in some other states, Florida is [trying to match up](#) producers who are selling directly to the public.

Not So Sweet: A research nutritional biologist at UC-Davis warns that sugar-sweetened beverages are [increasing health risk factors](#).

Soy Protein: Scientists are developing new [techniques using soy protein](#) to create a type of meat substance.



This [report looks at the impact](#) that has come from CAST's influential publication, [Food Loss and Waste](#).

Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

PPE on the Farm: Farmers need PPE (personal protective equipment) and the [shortage could affect them](#) during pesticide applications and other procedures.

Planting Time: Ag retailers are on relatively [firm footing as they prepare for spring](#) following a tumultuous 2019 growing season marked by adverse weather, flooding and delayed harvest.

Restoring Ecological Balance: This ASA/CSSA blog looks at the way [farmers care about conservation](#). "Nature is not a place to visit, it is home."

Weed Fighter: The [EPA approved a herbicide for use with soybeans](#), giving farmers another tool as they fight herbicide resistant weeds.

Saltwater Intrusion: Crop producers are [dealing with saltwater intrusion](#) along the Eastern Shore in Maryland. In a recent paper, an expert ecologist explains why saline soils may have led to the [agricultural failure of a prehistoric population](#).

Soil Surface Temperature: These researchers reflect on the [importance of agronomic practices](#) in determining soil surface conditions during the period after crop establishment but before canopy closure.



The [Seed Savers Exchange](#) started with a tomato plant and morning glory flower. Now the small town operation is nationally recognized.

International News

Ninja Robots Take on the Virus (videos): From Hong Kong's subways to a Thailand science center to Chinese hospitals, [robots are helping take on coronavirus](#).

Fighting the Pandemic--Kiwi Style: When it comes to the virus, New Zealand is trying to [squash the curve, not just flatten it](#).

Elephants Suffer as Tourism Declines: More than 1,000 [elephants face starvation](#) in Thailand because the pandemic has slashed revenue from tourism, conservationists say.

Labor Needs: Norway will allow entry to certain European citizens for work in sectors critically [short of labor including agriculture and the oil industry](#).

Olive Harvest Challenges: As coronavirus spreads, olive growers and oil producers in Argentina face [complications during and after the harvest](#).



A herd of [wild goats](#) has taken over the [deserted streets](#) of a seaside town in Wales during human containment time.

General Interest News

Species "Spillover": Viruses have been increasingly shifting from animals to people, a recent trend that has [researchers at The Ohio State University](#) closely studying a pig virus that can survive in human cells.

Zoonotics 101: Learn about some of the possible reasons behind zoonotic [diseases that pass between animals and humans](#).

Stopping It: This article takes a scientific look at a [possible way to stop COVID-19](#) by blocking its proteins from hijacking, suppressing, and evading humans' cellular machinery. These companies are working on COVID-19 [vaccines, treatments, and testing](#).

Historic Crises and Societal Changes: This article looks at [past public health crises and the influences on society](#)--including changes in infrastructure, education, and other areas.

Fuel Demand Dwindles: A sudden lack of fuel demand in the United States has led to a [closing of ethanol plants and a lack of meatpackers refrigerant](#).



The "[rattlesnake roundup](#)" is ingrained in the history and culture of Sweetwater, Texas--and it "bites both ways," as some support it, some want it disbanded.

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

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

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