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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Plant and Environment News
International News
General Interest News

Publication, Webinar, and Study Guide

See page two below for details about CAST's new paper, webinar, and student study guide focused on Producing Food Products from Cultured Animal Tissues.

May 1, 2020

Challenges, Decisions, and Possible Breakthroughs

Farmers and food workers are on the front lines of supply chain issues, and this week brought more COVID-19-related problems. Packing plants have been closed because of illness and death, livestock producers are losing markets, and consumers are receiving mixed messages about food supplies. Farmers face tough financial decisions and some are dealing with an interrupted delivery system. Employees want to work, but they also are concerned about safety. Government officials are striving to keep the food supply stable, and the USDA announced that packing plants will remain open as part of the Defense Production Act.

Consumers should feel confident that there will be enough food, and most importantly, they should know that their food is safe—as confirmed by the USDA Undersecretary for Food Safety Mindy Brashears.

Many positive stories are also shining through the pandemic clouds. Health care workers are being honored; communities are uniting to help those in need (click here to access 19 state food bank programs); and scientists are working on medical breakthroughs. Scientists at Oxford University have begun clinical trials of a coronavirus vaccine that has potential. Pfizer and BioNTech hope to have "millions of doses" of a coronavirus vaccine on the market by the end of the year. And Gilead's experimental drug, remdesivir, has shown promise as a treatment for those suffering from COVID-19. Scientists and medical workers know that these hopeful announcements come with doses of caution and patience.

Farewell Kim

CAST's Social Media and Communications Specialist, Kim Nelson, is moving to Colorado. CAST staff and board members will miss her professionalism, hard work, and sparkling personality.

CAST will announce the 2020 Borlaug CAST Communication Award winner Tuesday, May 12. Frank Mitloehner (2019 BCCA winner) will be the featured speaker. Click here for details about registering for the event.

Giving in the Time of COVID-19

#GivingTuesdayNow (May 5) is a new global day of giving created in response to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19. CAST is focusing on this altruistic movement in several ways: (1) Continuing to provide balanced, credible science-based information about food and agriculture to all, (2) asking anyone interested in supporting CAST's work in honor of this day to redirect their contributions to organizations serving the food insecure in their own community, and (3) encouraging our members to share timely news about agriculture, food, and science with us so we can then pass it along. Click here for more information and links.
It is not too late to respond to the 2020 Census while being safe and practicing social distancing at home.

News and Views

**Facing the Issues:** Purdue University experts Jayson Lusk and Candace Croney provide answers to tough questions about food supplies, livestock welfare, and farmers facing difficulties in this pandemic era. Lusk was the 2017 BCCA winner, and Croney was a Task Force Chair for a CAST publication about farm animal welfare.

**Supporting Agriculture:** In an effort to get more recognition for agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, 38 agriculture groups and businesses sent a letter to congressional leaders requesting changes to the Paycheck Protection Program.

**Borlaug Legacy:** As reported in this Cornell Alliance for Science story, Norman Borlaug saved millions of lives, but his work has sometimes been unrecognized and questioned.

**A Perspective of Statistics:** This video gives views about the way charts can be interpreted when dealing with reporting about global coronavirus rates.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

**You’ll Never Walk Alone, Captain Tom (video):** As he turned 100 years old, this British veteran received 125,000 birthday cards and raised millions of dollars to fight coronavirus.

**The Tail Wags the Dog—and the Sports Broadcaster:** This announcer misses sports, so he commentates on his two Labradors racing to eat their meals.

**Are the Space Aliens Practicing Social Distancing? (video):** In case you want to take your mind off coronavirus, the U.S. Department of Defense released intriguing footage of UFO sightings.

Cell Cultivated Meat Webinar

**Anna Dilger joined by a panel of experts**

Cell cultivated meat is developing at a rapid pace, but there are many questions to address before it is ready for the dinner table. CAST’s new commentary, Producing Food Products from Cultured Animal Tissues examines many factors about this critical issue.
Due to marketing challenges, some farmers are moving pigs outdoors. They DO NOT need masks, but they do need shade, water, and an escape-proof fence.

Dr. Anna Dilger (University of Illinois) presented key information from the CAST paper during an April 28 webinar. Following that, she moderated a Q&A session with insightful comments from a panel of experts (and coauthors of the paper): Jess Krieger (Kent State University), Jennifer Martin (Colorado State University), Andrew Milkowski (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Paul Mozdziak (North Carolina State University), and Brian Sylvester (Floyd & Lardner LLP).

The webinar is available here, and this link leads to free downloads of the paper, the one-page summary Ag quickCAST, and the student study guide.

Food Animal Veterinarians--Video of Webinar 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. A YouTube video of the webinar is available here, and the paper, a one-page Ag quickCAST summary, and a student study guide are available here (all free).

Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 collage from portal.ct.gov, Borlaug photo from boraluginst.jpg, and Captain Tom photo from dailymail.co.uk. Animal Sec. pig pic from pbs.twing.com. Food Sec. beef ad from beefbloggers.jpg. Plant Sec. sequoia photo from theatlantic.com. Inter. Sec. fries pic from traveltriangle.com. Gen. Sec. worm pic from agwebcom. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service or CAST.

Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

The World Is No Longer Their Oyster (video): These oyster farmers speak about the pandemic's impact on their company, and they say oysters are not only delicious, they are environmentally important.

Market Help: The USDA-APHIS is establishing a National Incident Coordination Center to help livestock and poultry producers whose animals cannot move to market as a result of processing plant closures.

Poultry, Protein, and Worker Safety: The CDC and OSHA released industry-specific interim guidance practices aimed at further protecting the nation's essential poultry processing workforce.

Farm-to-Folks: Some local cattle producers are selling beef straight from the farm as more plants face difficulties.

Tough Decisions: This Mississippi State University dairy expert discusses the harsh scenario facing some farmers—dumping milk, euthanizing pigs, and "depopulating" chickens.

Plant Workers' Health: A major meat company says it is doubling bonuses, increasing short-term disability coverage, and implementing additional health screening measures to support frontline workers.

Plant Workers' Risks: Reports indicate that COVID-19 cases at a meatpacking plant in Colorado have increased, and some say this highlights the risks involved for the workers.

Food Science and Safety News

Funding the Food Truck (video): Many community members are supporting the food insecure. This local chef is relying on donations to continue feeding many children each week.

Making Them Last (video): This lively, fast-talking foodie gives her tips about making sure your fruits and vegetables have a longer shelf life.
With so many cooking at home, the beef folks are helping consumers truly find where the beef is—with recipe suggestions, food safety tips, and answers to frequently asked questions.

**Supporting Local Markets:** University of Florida personnel are joining with others to help create business opportunities for growers and local food producers.

**Get, Grab, Go:** Online grocery pickup and delivery orders continue to increase rapidly amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Brain Food?** Some studies have shown that a healthy diet may benefit the brain, and this report looks at how certain foods that are eaten together might help lower the risk of dementia.

**Growing Food in the Air:** Food safety helped spur the fresh-food goals of these rooftop greenhouse farmers.

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**Plant Agriculture and Environmental News**

**Veggie Availability (video):** According to this analysis, California vegetable growers will plant reduced acreage in the next few months because of big declines in food service demand related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Ready to Stop the Rot:** The USDA identified RS r3b2 (a bacterial pathogen causing a wilt disease in some flowers and food crops), and they are working aggressively to stop the plant disease.

**Organic Beans:** UC-Davis plant experts are releasing six new varieties of organic beans that produce high yields and have disease resistance.

**Hemp an "Essential":** Hemp farmers and CBD companies are now eligible for COVID-19 related economic relief from the Small Business Association and the USDA.

**Weed Fight:** This Kansas State University research looks at Palmer amaranth sensitivity to common herbicides.

**Getting the Crops In:** This meteorologist says farmers can expect rain and wide-ranging temperatures across the Midwest as the corn belt moves fully into planting season.

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**International News**

**In the New Wild (video):** From dolphins in Istanbul to cougars in Chile, lockdowns globally have given parts of the natural world a rare opportunity to experience life with few humans around.

**Positive News in the Land of the Long White Cloud:** New Zealand’s prime minister says that the island nation has defeated—for the present—the coronavirus, as her government announced the lifting of most restrictions. Also, the country is considering a "travel bubble" agreement with Australia.

**Food Security:** Saudi Arabia’s state grain buyer SAGO said it bought 60,000 tons of Ukraine wheat to enhance the country’s food security.

**Global Crisis Management:** The global pandemic crisis underlines three key points: the importance of science and...
Three Nebraska women brought new life and a new species to former hog buildings. They produce millions of mealworms—for pet food, chicken feed, and possibly as a human protein source.

General Interest News

How Does Your Garden Grow? (video): This Master Gardener (John Bonner, former CAST EVP) shares advice about starting seeds for the garden.

Growing It at Home: Check out this recent CAST blog post—Gardens Bloom in the Shadow of the Pandemic.

Fighting the Virus on the Farm: This young Indiana farmer describes the fever, weight loss, aches, and loss of appetite that came with COVID-19. His pregnant wife also survived the virus, and they are now working to keep their farm afloat.

Honeybee Buzz: Researchers at Iowa State University and the University of Illinois say a deadly virus attacking honeybees alters their behavior and physiology in ways that boost the virus’ ability to spread to new hives.

Honeybee Research: Check out this CAST Commentary—Why Does Bee Health Matter? The Science Surrounding Honey Bee Health Concerns and What We Can Do About It.

Ethanol and Clean Water: Ethanol plants yield useful products other than fuel. City water systems need the CO2 byproduct from such plants, and this ethanol plant has reactivated to supply the water treatment centers.

Societies, Companies, and Nonprofit Organizations

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

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