**Friday Notes**

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology

*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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**In This Issue......**

**May 15, 2020**

**Alexa Lamm Wins 2020 BCCA**

*University of Georgia scientist excels at communicating*

Alexa Lamm is the 2020 Borlaug CAST Communication Award winner. The talented scientist is known by colleagues as an effective "translator" thanks to her skills at making science concepts clear for policymakers and the public. [Click here to read about her many accomplishments.](#)

The announcement came during a [May 12 webinar](#) that included remarks from Dr. Scott Hutchins, USDA Deputy Undersecretary for Research, Education, and Economics, Kent Scheske, CAST EVP, Juan Tricarico, CAST President, and Julie Borlaug, a member of CropLife Foundation's Board of Directors. Frank Mitloehner (UC-Davis) delivered the keynote address focused on the question, "Can We Eat Our Way Out of Climate Change?" Mitloehner, an internationally respected animal science expert, explained how intelligent livestock management and the proper application of technology help mitigate climate change.

**News and Views**

**Links in the Food Supply Chain:** With the Farmers to Families Food Box program, the USDA approved a $1.2 billion [plan to buy](#) meat, crops, and milk that farmers are struggling to sell. Many other programs are helping to get food to the public: (1) [FarmLink](#), a not-for-profit grassroots movement, (2) a movement known as CSA, [community supported agriculture](#), (3) the [Pass the Pork](#) program, (4) farmers selling [directly to consumers](#), and (5) hundreds of local situations like this [South Florida vegetable farmer](#) connecting with the public through social media.

**USDA Announcements:** The USDA announced (1) a final rule updating and modernizing [biotechnology regulations](#) under the Plant Protection Act and (2) that China was the leading buyer during the week ending May 7 for [soybeans, corn, and cotton](#).

**WASDE Report:** The [USDA's World Agricultural Supply & Demand Estimates](#) report gives information about projections for livestock, grains, and other crops.
University of Nevada-Reno experts help provide information for producers and consumers to minimize food-safety risks.

An online network that connects producers, suppliers, processors, and workers along Pennsylvania's food supply chain was launched by Penn State University.

The National FFA Organization announces its FFA Forever Blue Network--an official professional networking and personal development platform for FFA members, alumni, and supporters.

CAST welcomes ideas for future publications and projects.

CAST Social Media

Vaccine Science (video): More than 100 coronavirus vaccine candidates are being tested at record speeds, and this medical expert looks at the science behind the efforts.

Stark Economics: Farm bankruptcies were up 23% even before COVID-19; the second and third fiscal quarters are expected to be even more difficult.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

Zoomed Out (video): This "ex-sports broadcaster" holds a serious company meeting with a pair of dogs. One is definitely suffering from Zoom-itis.

Humans Beware: The deadliest animals on Earth? Don't worry about Shark Week; think snakes, mosquitoes, and "hungry, hungry hippos."

Do Android Dogs Dream of Cyber Cats? (video): A robot dog enforces social distancing in a Singapore city park--and many seem to want to keep away from the "headless canine."

CAST Material Available
Past papers, webinar information, upcoming publications

The past months have been filled with challenges, and members of the ag/science community have had to adjust in various ways. CAST continues to produce science-based material for the public and policymakers, and the organization has successfully shifted from in-person rollouts to online webinar events. Readers can access publications, videos, webinars, and more from the CAST website. The following list includes forthcoming publications and recent papers, webinars, and study guides.

Stewardship of New Pest Management Technologies
Webinar Tuesday, May 19, and access for the new Commentary, The Need and Challenge for Effective Stewardship of New Pest Management Technologies in Agriculture.

Chinese Translation of Pesticides Residue Paper
The influential CAST publication Interpreting Pesticide Residues in Food is now available in a Chinese language version.

Cell Cultured Meat--Publication, Webinar, and Student Study Guide
CAST's recent commentary, *Producing Food Products from Cultured Animal Tissues*, examines many factors about this rapidly developing issue. Dr. Anna Dilger (University of Illinois) presented key information from the CAST paper and hosted a Q&A session during an April 28 webinar. 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 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).

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**Friday Notes News Categories**

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 animal pic from theatlantic.com, hippo pic from youtube.com, and Dr. Lamm photo from uga.edu. Animal Sec. egg pic from trendsmap.com. Food Sec. cat pic from me.me. Plant Sec. tractor pic from agrimarketing.com. Inter. Sec. taco collage from atlasobscura.com. Gen. Sec. hospital cartoon from harvestpublicmedia.org. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service or CAST.

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**Animal Agriculture and Environmental News**

**Poultry Research:** New grants will fund poultry research on (1) a new type of blackhead disease vaccine and (2) light intensity's effects on broiler welfare.

**Price Discrepancies:** Lawmakers want a probe of the "pricing gap" in the beef industry.

**Pork Production Affected:** Pork processing has been slowed, but so far farmers have largely been spared the pain of euthanizing livestock.

**Fighting African Swine Fever:** Trials will soon start in Germany to observe progress with transgenic pigs with immune cells that show resistance to ASF.

**Cattle Grazing for Profit:** A two-year study in Kentucky showed how market cows grazing on a certain type of fescue ended up making a substantial profit.

**Supply Chain "Optionality" (opinion):** Some think the best way to build flexibility into the supply chain is to build in a bit more optionality at every step of the process.

**Veterinary Info:** This newsletter from the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges provides various stories of interest.

**Veterinary Publication:** Check out CAST's recent publication, *Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the U.S. Food Supply*.
Food Science and Safety News

Weed and Feed (video): The arrival of spring means weeds may be popping up in yards. This North Carolina State University clip shows that these weeds might make fresh, colorful salad ingredients.

Traceability, Food, and COVID-19: Traceability is the systematic ability to trace the path of food ingredients through their lifecycles. The pandemic is affecting the system.

Beef and Health: A Journal of Nutrition report says a small portion of lean beef daily in a healthy dietary pattern does not adversely affect heart disease or diabetes risk factors in men and women at risk for type 2 diabetes.

Nutrition, Diet, and Vitamin D: A balanced, sensible diet is highly recommended, and some think vitamin D might be the one supplement to add to smart eating.

Food Industry Woes: This group estimates that the restaurant and food-service industry lost more than $50 billion in sales in April.

Containment Munchies: Many snack-food munchers are going for the brands of old. Pass the Oreos, Goldfish, and Doritos.

Burning Fat and More? A Japanese study looks at some of the effects of fasting.

Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

How Does Your Container Garden Grow? (video): Mississippi State University experts provide tips for improving container gardens.

Food Security and Plant Innovation: This interactive map explores the ways that different nations are embracing plant science innovations to reduce food loss and waste.

Crop Modeling for the Future (video): Predictive agriculture unites computer science with agronomy, plant breeding, and crop production. One technique--crop modeling--uses past and current field data to help farmers make better decisions.

Corn Strength: A University of Kentucky study says corn producers have the best chance of controlling foliar diseases and improving stalk strength when foliar fungicide treatments are applied at the tasseling stage.

Soybean Collaboration: The Yield Lab Institute and the United Soybean Board have teamed up to launch the Soy Innovation Challenge.

Integrated Crop-livestock Systems: This report says integrated crop-livestock systems help farmers decrease fertilizer use while increasing grain yield in flooded rice fields.
**International News**

**Into the Woods (video):** The Icelandic Forest Service is trying to **bring back the woodlands**.

**Generosity through the Centuries:** Ireland is **repaying a famine-era act of kindness** by donating millions to Native Americans fighting COVID-19.

**Turning on the Sorghum Tap:** The door is open for **U.S. sorghum exports to flow into Vietnam** to make liquor and to feed pets, poultry, swine, and aquaculture.

**Face-to-face Events:** Trade shows have the **green light in Germany** starting in June.

**Sweet Potatoes in Africa:** North Carolina State University researchers continue to improve **sweet potato varieties for use in Africa**.

**General Interest News**

**A Sticky Situation (video):** Volunteers helped **rescue a horse that was stuck in a deep mud hole** with ice around the edges in the foothills of Alberta, Canada.

**Murder Hornet Imposters:** Mississippi State University experts point out that no murder hornets are in the state, but **four look-alike insects are**.

**Vaccine Debate:** Many public health professionals are worried about the **increasing influence of anti-vaccine views** on Facebook pages.

**Hiring for the Harvest:** Harvesters are **struggling to recruit foreign crews** during the pandemic. Nearly 30% of the U.S. harvest involves foreign workers.

**Microalgae on Bee Menu:** A microscopic algae could provide a complete and sustainably sourced supplemental diet to **boost the robustness of managed honey bees**, according to ARS research.

**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
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* 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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