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.

In This Issue...... Click to Read

- BCCA Winner Announcement During Online Event--P. 2
- Animal Agriculture News
- Food Science and Safety News
- Plant and Environment News
- International News
- General Interest News

Borlaug CAST Communication Award

CAST will announce the 2020 Borlaug CAST Communication Award winner Tuesday, May 12. See page two below for more information. Click here for details about registering for the event.

CAST will present a free webinar May 19, featuring research from its new commentary The Need and Challenge for Effective Stewardship of New Pest Management Technologies in Agriculture followed by Q&A with a panel of the commentary's authors. Click here for registration details.

CAST thanks its members for their involvement May 5 in #GivingTuesdayNow.

May 8, 2020

On the Menu--Meat Issues

Farmers, ranchers, food workers, company employees, and government officials are trying to keep the food supply chains flowing, but problems arise, and the main focus lately has been on meat. Conditions change by the hour, and the difficulties vary according to location and types of meat. The following stories provide some background to the unfolding situation:

A meat-supply crunch could mean higher prices, purchase limits, and smaller selections. This article looks at what consumers might expect.

The USDA and the Administration laid out "guidance specific to the meat processing industry to keep these critical facilities open while maintaining worker safety."

Food workers have been hit hard by coronavirus, with at least 9,400 positive cases tied to meatpacking plants across 28 states.

A U.S. federal judge has dismissed a worker advocacy group's lawsuit accusing a large meat producer of failing to adequately protect employees from coronavirus at a plant in Missouri.

This Ohio State University expert looks at the financial and emotional tolls affecting farmers and ranchers as they deal with livestock, markets, and excruciating decisions.

According to these experts, long-term strategies are needed to keep the nation's meatpacking plants open and its food supply chain moving.

This blog post includes more links about the meat food chain issue. Many people are working hard to solve these problems, and there is one thing to keep in mind: Our food itself is safe.

News and Views

Trade Possibilities: Reports indicate that United States and Chinese trade officials expect to meet their obligations under the Phase One Trade Agreement in a timely manner.
With a name like “Murder Hornet,” you get lots of attention. Stories at left.

Check stories here and throughout the newsletter from the 18 highly respected universities in the CAST Education Program:

**University News**

University of Missouri: Agriculture students are adapting to remote learning. The University of Nevada-Reno recognized 4-H volunteers making a difference in the lives of young people. North Carolina A&T State University officials are helping limited-resource families and farmers during the coronavirus crisis. UC-Davis offers online lectures about food and wine presented by the Robert Mondavi Institute. As with many schools, Tuskegee University is turning to a virtual alternative for its Spring Commencement Ceremony. The University of Kentucky is working closely with county extension offices during the pandemic to help small businesses. The University of Arkansas provides regular podcasts to highlight important issues during this pandemic crisis.

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Necessary--and Fragile--Supply Chains: With a focus on meat/livestock production, renowned animal expert Temple Grandin discusses big operations, local operations, and the fragility of the supply chain.

USDA Announcements: The USDA says it will buy millions of dollars’ worth of surplus food, and the agency announced up to $100 million in competitive grants available to expand the market for biofuels.

Small Farms, Bailouts, and Fairness (video): With trade war issues and coronavirus problems, small and medium-sized farmers are on the edge. This Sixty Minutes segment looks at where the millions of dollars of government bailout money is going.

CRISPR and Virus Testing: MIT researchers are trying to develop a better coronavirus diagnostic test based on CRISPR, a powerful gene-editing technology.

**News from the Far Side of the Barn**

Is There an Entomologist in the House? (video): Let’s admit it, we don’t really need a “murder hornet” panic at this time, but the insect raised quite a buzz in the press.

The Wasp and Agriculture: The hornet is worrying agriculture experts as it apparently causes harm to honeybees.

Culinary Revenge (video): Some say the dangerous insect makes a tasty treat.

A Real Exercise Buddy (video): This canine athlete shows that a dog can perform an exercise routine better than most humans could.

2020 BCCA Winner Announcement May 12

Online event includes presentation by Dr. Frank Mitloehner
A University of Pennsylvania research project is determining whether or not canines can detect...
an odor associated with the virus that causes the disease COVID-19.

**Beef Production Advice:** To help beef producers solve the mystery of why their cattle conception rates aren't where they'd hoped, Kansas State University has launched the Heifer CONSULT resource.

**Farm Biosecurity:** Considering the current pandemic situation, this veterinarian gives advice to producers who work around animals daily. She says biosecurity, emergency planning, and preparedness are vital.

**Crucial Role of Veterinarians (related to above):** Check out the recent CAST publication, *Impact of Recruitment and Retention of Food Animal Veterinarians on the U.S. Food Supply.*

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### Food Science and Safety News

**Meals for Students (video):** Many school districts, including this one in Minnesota, are providing free meals to any student during distance learning.

**Helping Hands:** North Carolina State University staff members are helping feed insecure families, and Cornell University veterinarian students are helping get milk donations to local food banks.

**Health Considerations at the Buffet:** As some establishments reopen, health experts weigh in on the safety factors at buffet restaurants.

**Food Worker Controversy:** In this opinion piece, the writer points out that "illegal" food workers are now deemed "essential" by the federal government.

**Gut Health and Food Safety:** The USDA and the Department of Poultry Science at the University of Georgia are developing ways to improve food safety by addressing broiler gut health.

**Beef Pinboard:** Pinterest often caters to the foodie in us all, and the beef industry has added a "beef for dinner" site filled with convenient, tasty recipes.

**Probiotics:** Some producers say functional ingredients like probiotics can help the food service industry respond to a growing consumer focus on wellness.

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### Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

**Grain Market Movements:** Private exporters reported to the USDA sales of 686,000 metric tons of corn for delivery to China, and the news also affected the soybean market.

"Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree"**: Before a devastating disease hit, the chestnut tree was woven with the fabric of American history. Some think genetic engineering can bring back the tree’s glory.

**Economic Blow:** Texas A&M University experts released a report showing the huge economic impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on production agriculture in Texas.

**Citrus Saviors:** University of Florida researchers continue to make progress in their fight against citrus greening.

**Many Shades of Green for Soybeans:** University of Arkansas drone photography data correlated to genetic markers for soybean nitrogen fixation help producers develop higher yields.

**Phosphorus Management:** USDA-ARS and Mississippi State University scientists reveal the best practices for phosphorus management when using poultry litter as fertilizer.

**Cover Crops, Soil, and Costs:** Researchers produced a four-year analysis of cover crop mix and timing on soil effects. A separate Iowa State University study looks at participants in a corn-soybean rotation area and their tactics to offset costs for cover crops.
More than 400,000 people are killed by malaria each year, mostly children. Bed nets help, but a new scientific breakthrough shows “enormous potential” to control the disease.

The agricultural robots market is set to maintain a healthy growth rate during 2020 and beyond. This article looks at a company’s road to developing robotic pruners, weeders, and lettuce thinners.

Bord For En (video): A restaurant in Sweden serves only one person at a time, and diners pay only what they can for the three-course meal.

Woolly Street Party (video): Now that people are “locking down,” hundreds of sheep grazed their way through the empty streets of this town in Turkey.

Flying Pigs: China is working to repopulate its hog population; France and several other European countries are flying breeding pigs into the country.

Ending Dependence: As Africa grapples with disruptions in the global supply chain caused by the pandemic, some see it as an opportunity for the continent to become self-sufficient in food production.

Llama Treatment: According to these scientists, antibodies found in llamas might prove to be useful in the treatment of COVID-19.

Cheesy: French citizens are being urged to eat cheese, as sales drop by 60% during the pandemic.

Healthcare Workers Honored as Superheroes (video): Banksy and other mural artists honored health worker superheroes, and county health departments, such as this one in Illinois, paid tribute to nurses during National Nurses Week.

The Rodeo Will Rise Again: The famous Cal Poly Rodeo was cancelled, but the “the work that went into it was a labor of love.”

Donated Beef: These Montana ranchers are providing beef to local community food banks, pantries, and community centers.

Ethanol Slowdown Continues: The Renewable Fuels Association says ethanol production has scaled back to the lowest level since ethanol production statistics started in 2010.

What’s in Your Kitty Litter Box? A new biobased kitty litter from Agricultural Research Service scientists could be coming to a cat box near you.

Ocean Behavior: A National Science Foundation grant will help this assistant professor of mechanical engineering at Penn State study how particulate matter behaves in the ocean.

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