**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

- **CAST Impact Reports--P. 2**
- **Animal Agriculture News**
- **Food Science and Safety News**
- **Plant and Environment News**
- **International News**
- **General Interest News**

#### Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Food and Agricultural Markets

CAST's new commentary will be released June 29, with an informational webinar featuring four authors from the task force at 11 a.m. Central Time.

This paper examines the economic factors and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on the agriculture sector. [Click here for registration details.](#)

### Upcoming CAST Releases

1. **Agriculture and the Microbiome** (July release)
2. **Naturally Occurring Hormones in Meat, Milk, and Eggs and Use of Supplemental Hormones in Animal Production** (July release)
3. **The Importance of Communicating Empirically Based Science for Society** (Sept. release)

### Research Report

The Genetic Literacy Project says a new study indicates that there are no distinguishable differences between the highly purified, chemically defined sugar produced from conventional or GM varieties.

### Events and Announcements

#### June 19, 2020

**Scientific Research and the Virus**

* Agriculture might play a big part*

A cheap, widely available [steroid appears to reduce death risk](#) in many severe COVID-19 cases. Hailed as a "major breakthrough," scientists are hopeful but still cautious about the drug's effects. Researchers around the world are working at a hectic pace in attempts to develop treatments and vaccines for coronavirus. Scientists are speculating about the [variable nature of COVID-19](#), as they look at the toxicity of distinct strains, patient blood types, genetic factors, and more.

Agriculture is involved with the search for virus solutions, and cows may be one factor. A biotech company in South Dakota is using cows to make antibodies for the possible treatment of COVID-19. Even the [Colorado Potato Beetle](#) might end up inspiring a COVID-19 vaccine, as this research funding project demonstrates.

Many universities are helping during the pandemic. A [group testing approach](#) proposed by a Cornell researcher could potentially curtail the virus's spread through weekly testing of every household in the United States. A Texas A&M analyst refined a statistical model to forecast [COVID-19 cases](#). And two scientists--one from The Ohio State University and one from USDA-NIFA--are featured in this article that looks at [Research and Funding in the time of COVID-19](#).

#### News and Views

**USDA Updates:** The USDA will extend the contracts of select vendors from the first round of the [Farmers to Families Food Box Program](#). This podcast reports about a [USDA grain survey](#) for some corn and soybean producing states, updates about winter wheat, and more.

**Trade Issues:** Farm groups and agribusiness interests appealed to the Administration to give the Chinese time to fulfill their promises regarding U.S. agricultural commodities and the "[phase one agreement](#)."

**Farm Income:** The government will send a record $32.8 billion in direct payments to farmers this year, but the [economic slowdown triggered by the coronavirus](#) will pull down farm income by 3%, according to this University of Missouri report.

**Dicamba Decision:** The [EPA faces a deadline regarding Dicamba use](#) as the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals wants to know why the agency is allowing continued over-the-top use of the product.
Farm Progress Show organizers announced plans to move ahead with the gathering near Boone, Iowa, September 1-3.

Cornell's online series, *Alliance for Science Live*, launched recently with Zoom, Facebook, and YouTube offerings.

The Midwest Poultry Federation announces its registration system is now reopen for the *2020 MPF Virtual Trade Show and Convention* August 12-13.

Penn State Extension launched a 10-week video series called *Agriculture: Working for You*. It focuses on family farm operations.

CAST welcomes ideas for future publications and projects.

Robots Unleashed (video): Boston Dynamics has a new robot ad some call both inspiring and disturbing.

Komodo Dragons Don't Play Well with Others (video): Photographers used spy cameras to film komodo dragons; things do not end well for spy pig.

Gummy Bearology: The science behind gummy bear production includes gelatin, a copper kettle, a rolling pin, and the magic of thermodynamics—the company makes 100 million of them a day.

CAST Social Media

CAST publications and events communicate science-based information to the public and policyholders alike, and at regular intervals, the organization produces Impact Reports to follow the influence of its papers. The following titles are paired with a link to the current Impact Reports.

- Reducing the Impacts of Agricultural Nutrients on Water Quality across a Changing Landscape” - [1 year report](#)
- “Scientific, Ethical, and Economic Aspects of Farm Animal Welfare” - [2 year final report](#)
- “Interpreting Pesticide Residues in Food” - [6 month report](#)
- “Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Health Benefits and Dietary Recommendations” - [2 year final report](#)

Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 COVID collage from wbur.org and knau.org, sunrise from pbs.twimg.jpg, and cow cartoon from comic.jfif. Animal Sec. boy and calf pic from fairwebsite.jpg. Food Sec. pig pic from dailymail.co.uk. Inter. Sec. bee collage from bbc.com and classicfm.com. Gen. Sec. goat pic from socwall.com. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service
Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

A "Cattle Whisperer" (video): This Nebraska cattle rancher explains her vision of sustainability--respect for the land, animals, and people in the community.

Pork Production: The federal government says pig processing has almost returned to 2019 levels, although some reports indicate certain challenges still exist.

Turkey Time (video): This "360-degree virtual tour" of a turkey farm gives the viewer a taste of this type of poultry production.

Lab Work Helps with ASF Prep: Veterinarians and swine producers are assisting African swine fever (ASF) preparedness in the United States when they make submissions to their veterinary diagnostic laboratories.

Ag Interference Law Update: A federal judge recently declared that much of North Carolina's ag-gag law violated the First Amendment.

Another Use for the Incredible Egg: According to university research, eggs that would otherwise be wasted can be used as the base of an inexpensive coating to protect fruits and vegetables.

Workin' the Line: Using diagrams, this article looks at how COVID-19 is changing meat packing plants.

Combined Effort for Gene Editing: The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges announced the creation of a Gene Editing Task Force.

Food Science and Safety News

No Debate--Hydrate! (video): The Mississippi State Extension Office provides various helpful links including this video about how to stay properly hydrated.

National Jerky Day (video): The North American Meat Institute insists that Fathers' Day should be a meat jerky day.

U.S. Meat Shortages and Exports: In his latest blog, Jayson Lusk examines changes in prices that may have helped prevent "shortages" and kept meat at home.

Outbreaks in the Fields and Plants: Coronavirus outbreaks among farm workers are popping up in rural communities across the country, sparking fears that cases will rise as harvest season progresses.

Processed Diet: These experts contend that neither fat nor carbohydrates alone can explain the rise of metabolic illness in western society, and they point to processed foods as a culprit.

Price Fixing? Central Grocers filed a class action lawsuit alleging the big four packers have violated the Sherman Act by conspiring to constrain beef supplies in the United States.

Food Safety and Fresh Food: This University of Nevada-Reno article gives consumers advice about how to balance the need for fresh food with the risks posed by grocery shopping in the era of COVID-19.
Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

**SECURE Rules and Crop Biotech:** This University of Florida researcher gives us another look at the [USDA regulations for crop biotechnology](https://www.faport.org/news/usda-announces-its-new-2020-plant-biotechnology-secureregulations) that will begin phasing in during June 2020.

**Research and Communication:** Dr. Alexa Lamm’s new article in *HortTechnology* examines the indoor plant propagation research and education needs of specialty crop producers. It comes from a research partnership between the University of Georgia and the University of Florida.

**EPA, Exemptions, and Complaints:** The EPA commented about retroactive or "gap" Small Refinery Exemptions under the Renewable Fuel Standard, and [ethanol supporters have big concerns](https://www.faport.org/news/ethanol-supporters-call-for-biofuel-extensions).

**Curbing Pesticide Use:** Cal Poly scientists have developed an advanced method of treating citrus that will eliminate the use of thousands of gallons of pesticide per year.

**Trees and Carbon Storage:** Penn State researchers report that a forest's ability to store carbon depends significantly on the bedrock beneath.

**Get My Drift?** A University of Kentucky weed scientist is helping grain producers find ways to minimize herbicide drift through research and extension programs.

**Nitrate Leaching Research:** As reported in the CSA News, researchers tested reduced irrigation and variable rate nitrogen to cut down nitrate leaching while growing potatoes.

---

**International News**

**Iceland Ices COVID-19 (video):** After a tough start, Iceland appears to be free of coronavirus. Testing seems to be the key, and the airport is now ground zero for that.

**Safe ASF Vaccine:** China has stated that their clinical trials of an African swine fever vaccine is safe so far.

**Uitwaaien—Dutch Zen:** In the Netherlands, people have been seeking out windy exercise for more than a hundred years as a cure for stress.

**An Unwanted Jump:** Confirmed coronavirus cases have jumped in Africa, with South Africa the worst affected.

**Antarctic Field Research Cancelled:** The coronavirus has forced the United States and the United Kingdom to cancel their Antarctic field research.

**A New Way to Control Mosquitoes:** A new study by North Carolina State University created a spray by combining volcanic glass and water to control mosquitoes.

**AI to Cut Shipping Costs:** A leading British agribusiness estimates huge savings due to artificial intelligence that predicts crops' shipment window three times earlier than previously possible.

---

**General Interest News**

**Going Primitive for Superior Results:** Researchers at Texas A&M University created superior bone grafts using primitive stem cells.

**Pandemic Drive-in (video):** These New York City diner owners turned their parking lot into a venue for drive-in movies, food, and stand up comedy shows.
This goat seems unimpressed, but a pharmaceutical research institute is genetically modifying goats in hopes of manufacturing a cancer medication.

**Folta and Fraley on Tech:** Kevin Folta's latest podcast is an interview with Dr. Robb Fraley, a scientist who was involved with breakthroughs in plant genetic engineering.

**Combined Safety Effort:** North Carolina State University and Novozymes have been producing hundreds of gallons of hand sanitizer for campus safety--and to use surplus ethanol.

**Excellence Grant:** Tuskegee University is one of three land-grant institutions to receive $1.6 million from the USDA for its Center for Innovation and Sustainable Small Farms, Ranches and Forestlands.

**Iowa Governor's Charity Steer Show Will Proceed:** This steer show has raised more than $3.8 million for the Ronald McDonald Houses that provide a place to stay for families of children being treated in nearby hospitals.

**Farm Performance and Size:** A Kansas State University study developed a ranking of farms based on their economic performance and growth--a key take is that the lower the debt level, the higher the ranking.

---

### 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
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

Dan Gogerty (Communications and Friday Notes Editor)
Dylana Luett (Communications and Social Media Specialist)
The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
4420 West Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50014-3447
Phone: 515-292-2125
E-mail: dgogerty@cast-science.org; dluett@cast-science.org

** With assistance from Megan Wickham (Scientific Editor) and Colleen Hamilton (Membership Specialist)

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.