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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New CAST Commentary

CAST's commentary, Impacts of Human Health and Safety of Naturally Occurring and Supplemental Hormones in Food Animals, will be released Monday, July 27. Register for the free webinar here--on July 28 at noon central.

Events and Announcements

In this new blog, catch up with Marty Matlock, Univ. of Arkansas professor and program director--and 2018 BCCA winner.

The World Food Prize Foundation’s George Washington Carver Internship is an unparalleled professional opportunity for students interested in global issues of hunger, poverty, and development. Click here for application details.

Tuskegee University provides this

July 17, 2020

Universities Face Tough Decisions

The annual fall migration to college used to have students thinking about roommates, class schedules, and pizza joints. This year’s checklist includes disinfecting wipes, trendy masks, and nightmares about those long swabs they use to test for COVID-19. For some students, such considerations might be irrelevant. Distance learning could be the key mode at many schools, as infection rates continue to plague parts of the United States.

Situations will change, but here is a look at some examples of how universities are hoping to cope with a challenging fall semester: (1) Penn State expects half of its fall classes to have in-person components—with faculty delivering classes remotely, in person, or a hybrid of both modes. (2) At this time, Cornell is one of only two schools in the Ivy League that will allow all students to return in the fall. (3) Most schools—such as Florida, Iowa State, and Ohio State—have webpages to inform staff and students about possibilities for the fall. (4) And many universities have links about COVID-related situations such as North Carolina A&T State’s decision about its fall sports, the University of Nevada-Reno professors using statistics to understand the pandemic, Texas A&M researchers testing an inhaled therapeutic to protect against COVID-19, and a North Carolina State program listing ag finance resources.

News and Views

USDA Announcements: (1) The recent USDA WASDE report included a raised estimate of red meat and poultry production, (2) Dr. Parag Chitnis will now serve as Acting Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and (3) the USDA is investing more than $16 million to provide broadband service in rural areas in Mississippi.

National Environmental Policy Act: The Administration plans to change a major environmental law to speed up infrastructure projects like highways and pipelines, a move critics say could also make it harder for Americans to have a voice in the planning process.

Pandemic in Rural Areas: The number of new COVID-19 cases reported each day in rural counties has more than doubled in the last month, and the increase shows no signs of abating.

International Students: UC-Davis and many other universities were relieved that the U.S. government rescinded a directive that would have forced international students to leave the country if their U.S. schools held all classes online due to COVID-19.
Don't Try This at Home: Cristina Zenato, the "shark whisperer," says sharks have beauty, personality, and purpose.

The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts Award went to Danielle Nierenberg, a food activist and founder of Food Tank. She focuses on sustainability and equity in food systems.

The Midwest Poultry Federation (MPF) will cover the schedule for its Virtual Education Program during the MPF Virtual Convention and Trade Show next month.

A virtual indoor agtech presentation on July 23—Connecting Technology and Business to Create Healthy, Resilient Food Systems—features many noteworthy presenters.

CAST welcomes ideas for future publications and projects.

CAST Updates about Publications and Webinars

New CAST Commentary

On Monday, July 27, the new CAST commentary, Impacts on Human Health and Safety of Naturally Occurring and Supplemental Hormones in Food Animals, will be released. A webinar session featuring the authors will occur July 28. Register for the free webinar here. Robert Collier from the University of Idaho is the chair for this commentary.

New CAST Publication Impact Reports Available

Two new publication impact reports are available: The Genome Editing in Agriculture: Methods, Applications, and Governance two year final impact report can be found here. The Impact of Free-Range Poultry Production Systems on Animal Health, Human Health, Productivity, Environment, Food Safety, and Animal Welfare Issues two year final report is available for viewing.

Student Study Guides

CAST study guides are available on the paper's landing page on CAST's website under the "Publications" tab. As Dr. Anna Dilger (University of Illinois and CAST incoming President-Elect) said, "Through the study guides, we highlight the main topics of newly released CAST papers, and then provide questions that ask students to think more deeply about the issues. We hope that teachers and students alike find them useful and that this tool
The National Chicken Council refreshed its Chicken Check-in website, providing consumers and other visitors critical resources about the U.S. poultry industry.

It's been two weeks since the rollout and webinar for Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Food and Agricultural Markets. It was recorded and is available online, along with the commentary, Ag quickCAST, and Student Study Guide. View the COVID-19 webinar update here. The paper has received 3,183 hits on the CAST website, and it was picked up by 91 media outlets.

Upcoming Publications

- Agriculture and the Microbiome (August release)
- The Importance of Communicating Empirically Based Science for Society (September release)
- Food Biofortification--Reaping the Benefits of Science to Overcome Hidden Hunger (October release)

Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 school graphic from amazonaws.com and shark from letsharksbe.com. Animal Sec. cartoon from backyardpoultrymag.com. Plant Sec. corn pic from drleonardcoldwell.jpg. Inter. Sec. mountain scene from geneticliteracyproject.com. Gen. Sec. animal pic from petspajamas.com. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service or CAST.

Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

A Whopper of a Campaign (video): The Burger King Company is using kids and a catchy song to promote their beef production techniques to reduce methane emissions. Ag organizations are disappointed with what they consider a misleading campaign, and scientists are responding with facts and studies. This UC-Davis video includes comments from Frank Mitloehner.

Ranching Sustainability: According to this beef executive, "The three pillars of sustainability are economic, environmental, and social; cattle ranchers can impact each of these on a local level."

Mr. Roboto on the Line? Meat processors have been hotspots for COVID-19 outbreaks, and some plants are planning to have robots replace human meat cutters.

Hormone Free: Chicken producers point out that labels on packaging might indicate otherwise, but they say all chicken products must be free of added or artificial hormones.

RELIEF for Producers: RELIEF for Producers Act of 2020 would compensate livestock and poultry producers who were forced to euthanize or donate animals.

"Antibiotic-Free" Pigs: Findings show that weaning age should be increased in piglets when the weaning age and antibiotic use for pigs were evaluated.

Stayin' Afloat: This proud California dairy farmer battles for survival in uncertain times.

Food Science and Safety News

Is That a Cake, a Croc, or a Roll of Toilet Paper (video): This clip shows how a skilled pastry chef can make cakes that masquerade as everything from a pump bottle of lotion to a pizza to an entire platter of barbecued food.

Tech and Food Safety: The FDA plans to use enhanced technology with new data sources to trace food outbreaks to their origins.
Food Insecurity Statistics: The number of families experiencing food insecurity hit a record due to the pandemic, and Black and Hispanic families are disproportionately affected, according to a study from Northwestern University.

Fighting Food Insecurity: The University of Florida is involved with a project to fight food insecurity in several rural Florida communities.

Peanut Properties: A researcher at North Carolina A&T State University is working on a method to improve the shelf-life of peanuts.

A Matter of the Heart: An international team of experts on heart disease and diet says there is no evidence that a low-saturated fat diet reduces cholesterol in people with familial hypercholesterolemia.

Kids, Fruits, and Veggies: A key point in the new 2020 Dietary Guidelines focuses on getting children under the age of two to consume a healthy diet with fruits and vegetables.

The USDA posted the 2020 Dietary Guidelines, and a virtual meeting to hear comments from the public will occur August 11. Related link at left.

Gene Editing and Food Safety (video): This video from the American Seed Trade Association and CropLife International looks at the prospects of gene editing helping with food safety.

Climate Change in Focus: Researchers have found that agricultural sectors are more incentivized toward mitigating climate change in hopes that these will lead to economic benefits for rural communities.

Herbicide Drift: According to this report, off-target dicamba injury to crops and plants continues to be an issue, with reports in Iowa growing.

Reducing Biodiversity Loss: This story says that smaller farm fields can reduce biodiversity loss and increase wild plants, birds, beetles, and bats.

Crunch Time for Ethanol: Though ethanol margins have been improving some, the industry has lost about $3.4 billion in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.

Stress-resilient Soybeans: Kansas State University researchers are creating heat stress-resilient soybeans. The research is funded by a $500,000 award from the USDA and NIFA.

Shoo, Fly: Researchers at Montana State University are breeding varieties of wheat that stand up to the damaging stem sawfly.

Child Vaccination Problem: The World Health Organization and UNICEF said they anticipate an "alarming decline" in the number of children receiving potentially life-saving vaccines due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Promoting Agriculture: British Farmers are reaching out to the public and government officials to raise the importance of the crops sector as part the annual #YourHarvest campaign.

Innovative Ag Techniques (related to above): This report says the United Kingdom is getting ready to open the door to new gene-editing technologies.
A New Zealand farmer broke the world record for the highest wheat yield for the second year in a row.

**General Interest News**

**Seafood in the Cornbelt:** Fish tanks in greenhouses are part of a production push that has some thinking states like Iowa can become a seafood powerhouse.

**Look on the Bright Side of Life:** A Harvard health expert lists six positive developments to remind us that there is hope during this pandemic crisis.

**Blockchain Goals:** A major blockchain-powered organization announced that its platform is ready to transform the agriculture and fishing industry by solving logistical challenges.

**Self-powered Restaurant:** McDonald's opened its first self-powered restaurant—with a solar-paneled roof, photovoltaic glass panels, and solar parking lot lights.

**Livestock Shows:** With the support of several agriculture organizations, a modified Indiana State Fair 4-H Livestock Competition will take place.

**Art and Plant Evolution:** A biologist and a historian are looking for art to trace fruit and vegetable evolution.

**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

More pets are being fed homemade raw diets, but they might be lacking key nutrients.

World Hunger and the Pandemic: More people are going hungry, an annual study by the United Nations has found, and the COVID-19 pandemic could exacerbate that crisis.

Cook with What You Have: A U.S. food writer moved to Ireland, and he discovers how to use different ingredients grown on the Emerald Isle.
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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