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....
Animal Agriculture News
Food Science & Safety News
Plant & Environmental News
International News
General Interest News

Announcements

Four SpaceX astronauts docked with the International Space Station for a record-setting, six-month science mission--and Baby Yoda hitched a ride with the crew!

NC-State University's CERSA is hosting a virtual workshop on Advances in Regulatory Risk Assessment of Pesticide Drift from Unmanned Application Systems and Manned Aerial Application December 1-3. See page 2 below for related information about CAST's publication and webinar regarding ground and aerial robots.


Happy Thanksgiving—the next edition of Friday Notes will be sent on December 4.

CAST College Corner

North Carolina A&T State

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**November 20, 2020**

**Holiday Changes for Food, Travel, and Gatherings**

Some long-standing holiday traditions will be altered this year as the pandemic affects the way we eat, travel, and gather. The following links provide a look at a few of the many adjustments:

Food safety tips have always been important, but this year, the CDC adds advice about gatherings and a warning about travel—including a caution for university students. As an example of university actions, UC-Davis is expanding COVID-19 testing to include all students and employees. Many restaurants are using digital kitchens, apps, and deliveries.

This article includes information and videos about lessons learned from Canada’s Thanksgiving last month—and the American Automobile Association's holiday travel forecast.

Jayson Lusk (Purdue) provides insights about Thanksgiving food prices, and the American Farm Bureau Federation's 35th annual survey indicates the average cost of this year's Thanksgiving feast is down 4%.

**News and Views**

**Vaccine Updates:** Moderna announced positive results and Pfizer/BioNTech confirmed successes as companies hope to make vaccines available soon. The University of Oxford and AstraZeneca vaccine also shows promise.

**Food Chain:** The food and beverage industry is asking the White House for priority when a vaccine becomes available. A University of Missouri professor says the pandemic has highlighted issues in the food chain—and multiple approaches are needed to create a diverse and efficient production system.

**Rural Hospitals:** Many small-town hospitals have been overwhelmed by COVID-19 cases. The CAST Commentary Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Food and Agricultural
University and Walmart are launching the Equity in Education Initiative.

A University of Arkansas geologist found that holes in the Greenland ice sheet are larger than previously thought.

Cal Poly received $5 million from Grimmway for organic research.

Cornell University's food safety lab granted $2.9 million for new global projects.

Check throughout Friday Notes to see more featured articles from member universities.

CAST Social Media

Visit our website

CAST welcomes ideas for future publications and projects.

CAST Updates

Ground and Aerial Robots for Agricultural Production: Opportunities and Challenges

The new CAST Issue Paper, Ground and Aerial Robots for Agricultural Production: Opportunities and Challenges, was released on November 16, with a webinar on November 17. The paper, Ag quickCAST, and Student Study Guide can be found on the CAST website. There were a lot of great questions asked during the Q&A session—the panelists are working on answering them and there will be a document covering them available in the next few weeks. The recorded webinar can be viewed on the CAST website and on YouTube.

CAST Board of Directors
During the 2020 CAST Board Meeting, there were some updates to the Board of Directors. Amit Dhingra is the Plant Ag and Environmental Issues Work Group Liaison, Sally Flis is the Nonprofit Liaison, Melissa Johnson is the Company Liaison, and George Potacka is the Society Liaison.

Be sure to check out the new CAST mission and vision statements on the website.

**Nominations Open for 2021 Borlaug CAST Communication Award**

Nominations are now open for the 2021 Borlaug CAST Communication Award, an honor that recognizes professionals actively working in the agricultural, environmental, or food sectors who are promoting agricultural science in the public policy arena. Learn how to nominate someone for the 2021 BCCA and download the 2021 nomination packet form here.

**Animal Agriculture and Environmental News**

**Egg Supply and Demand:** Despite what is likely to be an uncertain holiday season this year, USDA economists note that U.S. producers have built large egg inventories.

**Hog Company Court Cast:** A federal appeals court upheld a jury verdict that a North Carolina hog farm constituted a nuisance but threw out most of a multimillion-dollar jury award to a nearby resident.

**Cattle Production and the Pandemic (video):** This story looks at the discussions, finger pointing, and possible legislation focused on the pandemic and the apparent inequities involved with cattle production.

**Biosecurity Lessons Learned from ASF:** A renewed emphasis has been placed on biosecurity practices implemented within the swine feed sector.

**Rural Veterinarians:** Texas A&M AgriLife faculty members are providing education and assistance with a goal of making rural veterinary practices sustainable.


**Hummus for Herds:** Chickpea production is increasing globally, and nutritionists are looking into using some of it as cattle feed.

**Meal Frequency:** Kansas State research shows feeding sows two to four meals a day results in better performance.

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**Fragrant Manure and Visiting Foul**

An Iowa State University study shows that carbon-rich biochar could be used to mitigate many odors and potentially toxic volatile organic compounds emitted from swine manure.

And for the first time, Iowa State will host the National Thanksgiving Turkey following the ceremony at the White House.
Food Science and Safety News

**Old-fashioned, But Still Trendy:** Many say oatmeal is the best performance breakfast—either plain or with a variety of extras added.

**Banner Year for Butter:** The pandemic means more Americans are baking and cooking to pass the time consequently, this has been a banner year for butter.

**Poultry Meat Quality:** The University of Arkansas is preparing graduate students for careers focused on poultry meat quality and consumer satisfaction.

**Pork Cuts:** Research shows that consumers have been interested in non-traditional cuts of meat in recent months.

**Grocers and Customers:** Grocers have won over stomachs and wallets as people cook meals at home during the pandemic, but this report suggests they need to work hard to maintain customer loyalty.

**Mediterranean Diet:** According to this university study, eating a Mediterranean diet may provide a way to help lessen stress and promote healthy aging.

Can He Dance Too?
An Oregon farmer went viral on the controversial social media platform TikTok to explain some aspects about onions.

Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

**Cranberry Campaign (video):** Amazingly, 100 billion cranberries get to grocery shelves before Thanksgiving.

**Important Cellulose Finding:** Penn State researchers showed how cellulose crystals orient themselves relative to the cell wall in plants, with potential implications for chemical and energy development.

**Integrated Pest Management:** The American Society of Agronomy is strengthening their Certified Crop Adviser platform by offering this new program.

**Tech and Pest Management (related to above):** Click here to access the CAST Commentary Stewardship Challenges for New Pest Management Technologies in Agriculture.

**Carbon Credits:** Research projects—with sponsors ranging from the Energy Department to multinational food industry giants—will help determine whether or not carbon credit markets can become sources of income for farmers.

**Hemp in the Desert:** University of Nevada-Reno Extension specialists are researching hemp varieties and best practices for growing it in Nevada—and they will offer online classes on the research findings.

**CRISPR:** This scientist has been using CRISPR gene-editing technology to protect bananas and other staple crops across Africa against killer pathogens.

**Robots in the Field**
University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor Santosh Pitla is developing Flex-Ro, an autonomous field robot designed to identify and study crops in the field, with abilities expanding to seeding crops, managing weeds, and target-spraying pesticides.

Dr. Pitla was the task force chair of CAST's new publication and webinar about robotics and agriculture.

International News

**Record Hurricane:** Hurricane Iota raged in Central America and added to a record-breaking storm season.
Contested Vote Selects Chubby Parrot (video): After allegations of election rigging, the New Zealand Bird of the Year election went to the kakapo—a plump parrot.

Rice, Genomes, and Diversity: University of Queensland scientists studied 3,000 rice genotypes and found diversity was inherited through two maternal genomes.

Cutting Plastic Waste: This British company is changing the packaging of its own labels of hard cheeses to save 260 tons of plastic annually.

Wetlands on Fire: South America’s Pantanal region—the largest tropical wetland on earth—has been hit by the worst wild fires in decades.

Selling Out: Walmart has sold most of its stake in Japan supermarkets.

Tourism in the Age of COVID: This small New Zealand island is having a tourism boom during the pandemic.

General Interest News

From Wily Coyote to Paw Patrol (video): A farm security camera shows the animals showing up for the nightlife.

Pie as Art (photos): A self-taught baker has gone viral with her pie art.

Airport Economics: The pandemic is inflicting economic impacts on all airports; the smaller facilities in the Midwest could take a long time to recover.

Spiderweb Strong: Scientists are figuring out the chemical triggers that turn the liquid stored in spider silk glands into a solid that’s tougher than steel.

Curing your Arachnophobia (related to above): This entomologist explains that spiders are an important part of nature and our indoor ecosystem. Spiders as roommates?

The Benefits of Nature: A European study cites scientists who say there is a strong relationship between growing up with the natural world and aspects of mental health.

Floating Ghost Hotel

A one-time, five-star floating hotel in the Great Barrier Reef now sits as an abandoned ghost hotel—rusting just north of the Korean demilitarized zone.

Igloo Dining

A New Hampshire restaurant is providing igloos for special occasions. And in another video, an infectious disease doctor discusses the safety (or not) of dining in tents, igloos, and greenhouses.

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* Crop Science Society of America
* Entomological Society of America
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