Summary of Activities September to December 2020

2020 Borlaug CAST Communication Award Presentation

On October 13, Dr. Alexa Lamm was presented with the 2020 Borlaug CAST Communication Award. Immediately after receiving the award, she put policy into practice and delivered an insightful presentation on *Effectively Communicating Science in Times of Crisis*–regarding the importance of ag/science communication in challenging times. Lamm provided science-based advice about how to consider audiences, messages, channels, and sources. A video of her presentation, informational slides, and the Q&A session is available here.

Nominations are now open for the 2021 BCCA, 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 here.

2020 CAST Annual Board Meeting

The annual board meeting was held virtually October 27-29. Tuesday was the Board of Directors meeting, President's Report, USDA Science Panel, and work group breakout sessions. Wednesday included the BCCA Panel, Treasurer's Report, EVP Report, Adaptive Plan Rollout, New President's Vision, and a second round of work group breakouts, updates, and reports. The President's Awards were given to three influential leaders: Mark Armfelt, CAST President 2015-16; Dirk Drost, CAST Treasurer; and Mark Cochran, Board of Trustees Liaison. CAST outgoing President Juan Tricarico ended his excellent service to CAST in this role by offering his usual upbeat, thoughtful comments. Incoming President David Baltensperger (pictured left) then began his official responsibilities, but he had already been leading webinars and performing many other crucial roles for CAST. The Board of Trustees meeting finished out the three-day meeting on Thursday.

CAST's Adaptive Plan 2021-2025

The adaptive plan has been approved by the board and is designed as a strategic road map leading CAST from mission to vision while providing flexibility and continuing to build upon the successes of the 2016-2020 strategic plan. It emphasizes three focus areas to drive desired results and four activities to capitalize opportunities to increase content, reach, and impact.

The 2021-2025 strategic plan positions CAST to achieve these desired results: 1) Recognized source of scientific consensus on food and agriculture, 2) Inform decision-making and empower to influence, 3) Identify and attract new partners, sponsors, and members, and 4) Build trust in (and advocate for) food and agriculture.

Recent CAST Publications and Webinars

On September 21, CAST released the commentary on *The Importance of Communicating Empirically Based Science for Society*. The webinar on September 22 had five panelists—Stuart Smyth (task force chair, University of Saskatchewan), Ruth McDonald, Cami Ryan, Meghan Wulster-Radcliffe, and Jon Entine. This paper discusses the crucial factors of what is defined as empirically based science (rigorous, proven methodologies, and peer-reviewed results), emphasizing that whether science is conducted by a private company, a university, or a government department or agency, it is all the same, requiring that sound methodologies be followed.

On October 14, CAST released the issue paper on *Food Biofortification—Reaping the Benefits of Science to Overcome Hidden Hunger*. The panelists on the October 15 webinar were Howarth Bouis (task force chair, International Food Policy Research Institute), Matin Qaim, Saurabh Mehta, Torbert Rocheford, Jan Low, Ekin Birol, and Dominique Van Der Straeten. This paper describes the progress made in disseminating, testing, and developing biofortified food crops with both conventional plant breeding and genetic engineering.

Approved Publications Under Development

GMO Free—The Impact on Consumers, Retailers, Farmers, and the Environment

Review of Mycotoxin Impacts: Balancing Economic Costs with Animal and Human Health Adverse Effects Worldwide

Harmful Algal Blooms: Causes, Effects, and Mitigation

Goals, Strengths, and Limitations Governing the Use of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) in Food and Agriculture

RNA Interference Technology in Agriculture: Methods, Applications, and Governance

Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts of Implementing Sustainable Intensification in Agriculture at Scale

The Impact of Biogenic Methane from Ruminants on Climate Change

Recruiting and Educating Graduate Students to Become Researchers and Leaders in Global Agriculture

The Impact of CAST—50 Years of Influence in Agriculture

On November 16, CAST released the issue paper on *Ground and Aerial Robots for Agricultural Production: Opportunities and Challenges*. The webinar on November 17 featured remarks from Santosh Pitla (task force chair, University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Tami Brown-Brandl, Dennis R. Buckmaster, Todd J. Janzen, Michael Sama, and Scott Shearer. This issue paper presents opportunities provided by ground and aerial robots for improved crop and animal production, and the challenges associated with their progress and adoption.

Stay Aware and Connected through CAST

CAST's *Friday Notes* newsletter, blog, and other social media outlets regularly provide important updates about news headlines, announcements, and pertinent educational resource material related to agriculture, science, and COVID-19's impacts on the ag industry.

A new CAST resource includes student study guides focused on recent CAST papers that can then be used by teachers and parents for students' online learning activities and in other educational settings.

Thank you all for your support and we wish you a happy holiday season!