



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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## Announcements



The [2021 Agri-Pulse Ag & Food Policy Summit will focus on climate policy](#), and it features noted speakers including Borlaug CAST Communication Award winners Frank Mitloehner and Marty Matlock.

The National Pork Board is soliciting research proposals for the [Pork Scholars Program](#)—deadline: February 23.

The Trust in Food Symposium will be held February 23-25. You can learn more about [the event here](#).

Check here for information about the [Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society's 2021 Virtual Healthy Farms Conferences](#) starting February 6.

## CAST College Corner

A [Cal Poly](#) nanosatellite was successfully launched into space for a recent NASA mission.

Two new wine grapes from the [University of Arkansas](#) offer novel commercial options that are

## January 29, 2021

# Education Gears Up for a Challenging New Year

In-person education can be safe, according to [many U.S. health researchers and CDC officials](#), but it requires schools and their surrounding communities to commit to prescribed [health procedures](#).



Schools are making tough decisions, and the following examples provide a look at a few of the many approaches at various universities: (1) Iowa State University's [COVID-19 Response Site](#) covers many topics, (2) the University of Kentucky president uses a radio interview to explain the [challenges of in-person learning](#), (3) the University of Missouri [works closely with infection control experts](#) as it proceeds with classes, (4) University of Tuskegee students will be able to access the Propel Center's [online digital learning platform](#) from anywhere, (5) a North Carolina State University medical expert answers questions about [virus mutations](#), and (6) University of Nevada-Reno officials provide [information about vaccines](#).

## News and Views

**Climate Policy:** The new administration installed [climate friendly priorities](#) that include references to the importance of agriculture. [Reactions vary](#).

**Think Tank:** The *Climate 21 Project* taps the expertise of more than 150 experts to [provide climate response ideas](#).

**USDA Ag Innovation Initiative:** This website provides more information about the Ag Innovation "[Agenda](#)" and its "[Strategy](#)."

**Administration Ag Changes:** The American Farm Bureau president speaks about [the EPA](#), and nominee Tom Vilsack comments about [the USDA](#). Vilsack's [confirmation hearing](#) will take place February 2.

**Food Insecurity on Campus:** Jayson Lusk ([2017 BCCA winner](#)) looks at food insecurity on college campuses, and he advocates for [better statistical measuring methods](#).

adapted for growing in Arkansas vineyards.

[North Carolina A&T State University](#) will offer a new Ph.D. in agriculture and environmental sciences.

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.

**Pandemic Information:** These sites look at (1) COVID-19 [mask popularity and safety](#), (2) why [N95 masks](#) are in short supply, (3) the FDA [recall of certain hand sanitizers](#), and (4) a list of the toxic sanitizer [product names](#).

## Far Side of the Barn

### Baby Panda Cam (video):

"Little Miracle," the [Smithsonian National Zoo's star attraction](#), is now old enough to act like a rambunctious toddler.



### Wonderful or Terrifying:

[Love 'em or hate 'em](#), Peeps are back and include flavors such as [cotton candy, watermelon, and hot tamale](#).

## CAST Updates

### Guest Blog—Over-regulation Kills Innovation

[This blog was written](#) by Dr. Stuart Smyth (task force chair for the CAST Commentary [The Importance of Communicating Empirically Based Science for Society](#)). Smyth discusses why he believes that European regulation has driven innovation away for 20 years.



### 2021 Borlaug CAST Communication Award Nominations Open—Applications Due February 1



The Borlaug CAST Communication Award (BCCA) is an honor that recognizes professionals actively working in the agricultural, environmental, or food sectors who are promoting agricultural science in the public policy arena. This award has become an influential component in the efforts to keep agricultural issues and programs in the public eye and in front of national and world policymakers.

You can learn [how to nominate and download](#) the nomination packet on the CAST website. The BCCA has been awarded to [11 outstanding professionals](#).

### Click. Contribute. Communicate.

Please support CAST's efforts to communicate credible science through [membership](#) or a [donation](#) today. CAST's success in countering misinformation and continuing as a voice for sound science in the future—as we have in the past—depends on your membership and donations. If you are already a CAST member—and haven't renewed yet for 2021—please [renew](#) today!

## Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

**Livestock and Climate Change:** Research about how livestock grazing affects soil carbon has many believing in the [beneficial role cattle might play](#) in a changing climate.

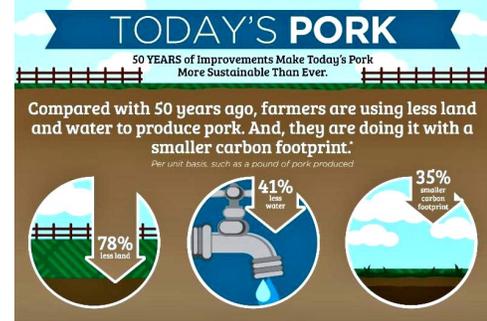
**Poultry Line Speeds:** The USDA placed a freeze on a proposed rule to increase [line speeds at poultry-processing plants](#), and reactions to the decision vary.

**Meat Food Chain:** Processing plant closures due to coronavirus forced some farmers to euthanize animals last year. Would [expanded use of small meat processing operations](#) strengthen this food system?

**Not Just a Pregnancy Test:** Some beef producers believe an [ultrasound can measure how well the ribs are marbling](#) before cattle are sent to a meat processor.

**Poultry on Campus:** The US Poultry Foundation recognized [successful campus poultry clubs](#)—including NC-State, Texas A&M, and Penn State.

**Dolphin Traits (photos and video):** This scientist looks at the [personality traits of dolphins](#) in the wild—traits that could affect their survival.



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The pork industry has had many [innovations over the years](#), and this article spotlights several, especially regarding biosecurity and facilities.

North Carolina A&T State researchers are looking at pig disease and ways to [keep food workers and food supplies safe](#).

## Food Science and Safety News

**Resilient Food Systems:** This podcast—featuring 2020 BCCA winner [Alexa Lamm](#)—examines [how technology supports](#) the professionals and businesses in the fresh produce chain.

**Food and Chemicals:** This article says there is no way consumers can get their exposure to pesticides to zero, but it also [claims that chemical residues are at safe levels](#)

**Residues in Food (see above):** A CAST paper chaired by Carl Winter—2012 BCCA winner—[looks at chemical residues in food](#): *Interpreting Pesticide Residues in Food*.

**Not Just Good for the Eyes:** A Kansas State University food safety specialist explains why research shows that [carrots are good for the heart](#).

**Curbing Allergies:** This research looks at how [allergic reactions caused by wheat and peanuts](#) can be prevented.



When *Sesame Street* called, a young Georgia farmer took the [opportunity to take American agriculture to a new audience](#).

## Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

**Conservation Outreach:** Iowa State University experts published a paper focused on understanding factors that motivate [conservation behavior among farmers](#).

**Grain Price Influences:** Corn [sales to China](#) made corn prices surge, soybean prices rose due to conditions in Brazil, and wheat prices firmed on news of a Russian export tax.

**A Walnut Named Wolfskill:** UC-Davis specialists release a [new walnut variety](#) named the “UC Wolfskill.” It is designed for earlier and more efficient harvests.

**Plant Genome Editing:** A newly engineered variant of the gene editing tool CRISPR-Cas9, [called SpRY](#), removes the barriers of what can and can't be targeted for gene editing.



Millions of people need access to clean drinking water. University

**Gene-edited Cotton:** The USDA announced the deregulation of a [cotton variety using genetic engineering](#) for resistance to certain insects.

**Ethanol Exports:** Increasing demand in China will mean [U.S. ethanol exports](#) to China will fill the gap.

scientists from Texas and Penn State are making [breakthroughs in desalination](#) technology as they hope sea water can help with Earth's water woes.

## International News

**Farmers Protest:** Thousands of farmers [protested Indian government agricultural reforms](#) as they tore down barricades and drove tractors through roadblocks.

**Latin America Poultry:** This site lists [speakers, topics, and presentation summaries](#) for this notable summit.

**Science Recognition:** Dr. Rattan Lal, 2020 World Food Prize winner, received further recognition in India for his [soil science research](#) and the increase in farmers' yields.

**Pig Comeback:** Belgium started the [repopulation of pig farms](#) in a region that was hit by African Swine Fever.

**Turtle Comeback (video):** A [rare river turtle in Asia](#) hunted for its meat, has been brought back from near extinction.

**Drone Applications:** According to this report, drones are used in Brazil to [reduce the cost of applying agrochemicals](#) in sugar cane.



The [famous ice festival](#) in Harbin, China, features frozen towers, castles, and ice slides—plus plenty of beauty.

## General Interest News

**Whale of a Discovery:** Researchers with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration believe they have identified a [new species of whale](#) in the Gulf of Mexico.

**Ag Robotics:** Ag engineers looked at the [opportunities and challenges](#) associated with robots in agriculture. Check out the [related CAST Issue Paper here](#).

**Modern Methods for Digs at the Past:** A Penn State doctoral student's algorithm is part of the artificial intelligence that is [opening new windows into the past](#)—using machine learning and 3D modeling to revolutionize archaeology.

**Drought-planning Webinars:** This series will assist ranchers in [how to prepare for droughts](#).

**The Big Melt:** Earth is now [losing 1.2 trillion tons of ice each year](#), and many fear it will get worse.



Research about dire wolves shows they shouldn't be kept in the *Canis* genus, but instead in the [Aenocyon genus](#), a proposal first made—but largely ignored—in 1918.

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- \* American Meat Science Association
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- \* American Seed Trade Association
- \* American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
- \* American Society of Agronomy
- \* American Society of Animal Science
- \* American Society of Plant Biologists
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- \* Bayer
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- \* National Corn Growers Association/Iowa Corn Promotion Board
- \* National Milk Producers Federation
- \* National Pork Board
- \* 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

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The Science Source for Food,  
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