

Friday Notes



March 22, 2024



Celebrating National Ag Week

National Ag Week is celebrated annually in the U.S. to honor the hard work and dedication of American agriculturalists. The celebration originated from [National Ag Day](#), created after the formation of The Agriculture Council of America in 1973. Initially, National Ag Day was introduced to raise awareness about the vitality and potential of agriculture. However, it has now evolved into a week-long tribute, celebrated in 2024 from March 17 to 23.

Throughout the week, a [series of national events are organized](#), including farm tours, educational seminars, and community gatherings. These events aim to demonstrate the importance of agriculture in our daily lives and recognize the tireless efforts of those working in the industry.

National Ag Week is more than a celebration; it's an opportunity for the agricultural sector to gain the support of consumers. This support is vital for the industry to continue thriving, innovating, and preserving our planet for generations to come. The theme for this year's National Ag Day is "Growing a Climate for Tomorrow," which emphasizes the agricultural community's commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability.

As we celebrate National Ag Week and the 51st year of National Ag Day on March 19, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all those involved in agriculture, from the fields to the research labs. Their collective efforts ensure a steady supply of food, feed, fiber, fuel, and pharmaceuticals for the world.

Women's History Month Series

Continuing CAST's celebration of **Women's History Month**, our fourth article features **Cathann Kress**, Ph.D., Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Dean of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at The Ohio State University, and CAST Board of Trustee member. It highlights her experiences growing up on a farm, her challenges and successes as a woman in agriculture, and her advice on knowing oneself and embracing one's identity in the field.



**Cathann Kress,
Ph.D.**

Embracing My Identity: A Woman's Journey in Agriculture

During my formative years, I grew up on a farm in southeast Iowa, where my family raised sheep. During the summer, my job was to steward the pastures and move the herd from pasture to pasture at the appropriate times. I was drawn to how the systems all worked together.

Being a woman in agriculture, what I struggle with is not that I don't see females as being part of my identity, but that being female is only a piece of my identity, and I want to offer up my whole identity.

I certainly have encountered those who have not included me or questioned my leadership as a woman. Early in my career, I was often the only woman in meetings or groups. I have encountered assumptions about what that might mean about my leadership style, but I've also found many in the agriculture community to be welcoming and appreciative of women leaders and our contributions. If you don't fit what other people may have been anticipating, they think you can't rise to what they were expecting, and then you have to overcome that somehow. I just go about who I am and prove that credibility, but I don't focus on it, which allows me to take leaps. I want to serve well because I care, not because I need to prove myself.

I've had the privilege of impacting people, their work, and their lives through knowledge and education. I've mentored and coached leaders, inspired youth to pursue agricultural careers, and supported early-career professionals. My greatest successes have been my efforts to support people.

Really get to know yourself and what you have to offer – know your currency and what you bring to the table. You are the person who makes the choices. There is freedom that comes from knowing your currency. I'm not trying to be someone else, I'm trying to be the best version of myself, and I accept that I'm human. Some things will go well, and some will not. Mostly- love what you do. I am excited about my work. I deeply value and appreciate the people I work with, and I believe in our mission.

Upcoming Events

April 15-17

The 2024 [Western Poultry Disease Conference](#) will be held in Salt Lake City, UT, and will focus on the latest research and developments in poultry health and disease management.

May 27-29

The 2024 [ISF World Seed Congress](#) will be held in Rotterdam, Netherlands, bringing together seed industry professionals, researchers, and policymakers to discuss global seed issues and innovations.

July 10-11

The 2024 [Organic Produce Summit](#) will be held in Monterey, CA, and will feature educational sessions, networking opportunities, and a trade show focused on organic produce.

USDA: The USDA (1) released the 2023 [agricultural trade balance](#), (2) gave the green light to [six genetically engineered plants](#), and (3) announced \$145M from the Investing in America agenda to [help landowners access climate markets](#).

CAST News

PAPER RELEASE

APPLICATIONS, BENEFITS, AND CHALLENGES OF GENOME EDITED CROPS

Thank you!



CAST Issue Paper Rollout Explored the Future of Agriculture with Genome Edited Crops

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the speakers, panelists, and attendees who joined us on Wednesday, March 20, at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, MO, for the rollout of our issue paper, "**Applications, Benefits, and Challenges of Genome Edited Crops**." Your presence and active participation made the event a resounding success.

The insightful discussions and diverse perspectives shared during the presentations and panel discussion underscored the importance of genome editing in agriculture and its potential to address global challenges while meeting sustainability goals.

Special thanks to our presenter, Sarah Evanega, panel moderator, David Ertl, and panelists, David Bubeck, Bernadette Juarez, Jennifer Rowland, and Jack Cornell, for sharing their expertise and insights.

For those who could not attend, the paper will be released via webinar on **April 3, 11-12 AM CST**. More details and the registration page will be announced soon.

[Download the Paper](#)



Upcoming Papers

April 17 [In-person rollout in Washington, DC]
Full release of all six papers in the FIFRA-ESA series

May 15 [In-person rollout in Ames, IA]
Soil Health and the Hydrologic Cycle

Upcoming Webinars

April 3
Applications, Benefits, and Challenges of Genome Edited Crops

Animal Agriculture and Environmental News



First Case of Avian Influenza Detected in U.S. Goats

Goats on Minnesota farms were infected after sharing pasture and pond with backyard poultry.

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Congress Allocates \$15 Million for Cattle eID Tagging in Appropriations Act

The industry is divided over funding for electronic identification tags under animal disease traceability rules.

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ARS Scientists Transform Animal Byproducts, Revolutionize Waste Management

Innovative water purification technology reduces nitrogen in wastewater and offers sustainable solutions for agriculture and beyond.

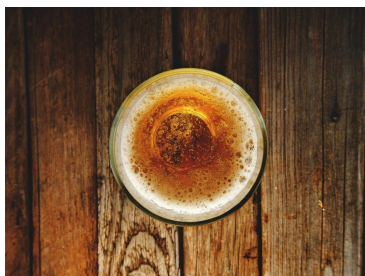
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Food Science and Safety News



Innovative System Detects Beer Spoilage Microorganisms, Enhancing Brewing Quality Control

A startup is developing cost-effective solutions for breweries, enhancing beer quality and reducing production costs.

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Canadian Sea Buckthorn Berries Offer Potential for Diabetes and Obesity

A new study reveals the untapped antioxidant potential of sea buckthorn berries grown in Canada, paving the way for healthier alternatives in functional foods.

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Retailers in Belgium, France, and Luxembourg to Test Sustainable Cellulose Fiber Packaging for Foods

Carrefour and U-Group collaborate with producers and researchers to introduce environmentally friendly wrappings, aiming to reduce plastic waste in stores.

[Read More](#)

NEW CAST PAPER

RNA INTERFERENCE IN AGRICULTURE: METHODS, APPLICATIONS, AND GOVERNANCE

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Plant Agriculture and Environmental News



New Study Reveals More Effective Treatment for Invasive Cogongrass

University of Florida researchers discover grass-specific herbicides can restore native plants and control cogongrass invasion.

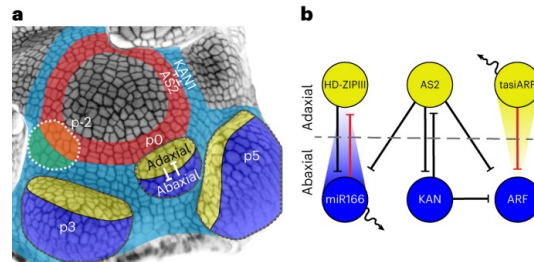
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Corn Cobs Shine as Cost-Effective Alternative for Water Quality Bioreactors

Iowa State University researchers found that corn cobs outperform woodchips in reducing nitrates but face supply challenges.

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Cells in Plant Leaves Self- Organize for Optimal Photosynthesis Area

Small RNAs determine leaf shape variations, mimicking nature's patterns of self-organization and genetic coordination.

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International News

EU Plans Tariffs on Russian Grain Imports, Primarily Symbolic, Sources Say

The European Union is set to impose tariffs on grain imports from Russia and Belarus, a move seen as largely



symbolic due to low shipment volumes, particularly compared to Ukraine.

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Mexico Criticizes USDA's "Product of the U.S." Labeling Rule, Considers Trade Options

Mexico's Ministry of Economy raises concerns over discrimination and USMCA violations

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Gene-Edited High-Yield Corn From Chinese Company Surpasses Traditional Productivity by 50%

China's Origin Agritech achieves milestones in sustainable agriculture with innovative gene editing techniques.

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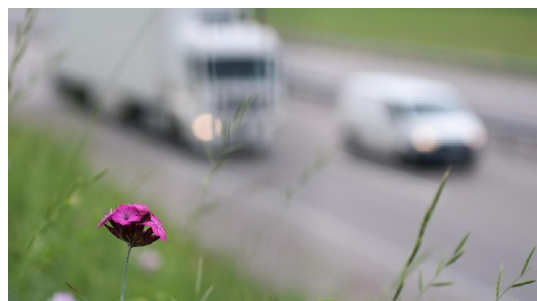
General Interest



U.S. Food and Agriculture Industries Generate \$9.63 Trillion in Economic Impact

A new report shows 11.8% growth over the last year, highlighting the sector's contributions to jobs, wages, and taxes.

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Illinois Launches James F. Evans Global Center for Food and Agricultural Communications

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign unveils plans for a groundbreaking center to advance excellence in agricultural communications.

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NCGA Decries EPA's New Vehicle Emission Standards, Citing Harm to Family Farms

Corn growers express dismay over the EPA's push for electric vehicles and warn of a negative impact on the rural economy and ethanol industry.

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Purpose

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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