



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 the CAST organization.

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Campus Beauty

Campuses across the United States--including Iowa State--are preparing for the fall student invasion.

Connecting Public and Private Research

Check out the information for the [Agricultural Bioscience International Conference 2016](#)--September 18-21 in Fargo, North Dakota. Speakers include Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and 2016 Borlaug CAST Communication Award winner Kevin Folta.

Sweet Potatoes and Global Food Security

This article profiles two of this year's four [World Food Prize winners](#), and both are North Carolina State University alumni.

Steer-A-Year Program

August 12, 2016

Happy Pigs, Happy Bacon?

In George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, one of the key slogans is "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." Orwell used the phrase to convey a political statement, but today it might refer to the superior nature of porcine intelligence.

[According to researchers at the University of Pennsylvania](#), "The animals have good spatial memory, the ability to recognize each other, and skill at problem-solving. Plus, they can engage in deception--tricking a fellow porker in order to snag a reward."

These university experts are also interested in pig attitudes and temperament. They want to identify which pigs are most likely to thrive in group housing, so that farmers can selectively breed them. In other words, "Do happier pigs produce more piglets--and ultimately more ham, bacon, and pork chops?"

For more links and information about the world of pigs, check out this blog: [Pigs That Fly, Drink Beer, and Enjoy Toys](#).



Pigs need a little social media presence, too!

News and Views

****Research, Information, and Livestock:** Twenty-one land-grant institutions and partner organizations are collaborating to provide researchers, extension professionals, regulators, feed industries, and producers with up-to-date, research-based information about the [nutrient needs of agricultural animals](#).

****USDA Crop News (infograph included):** Acreage shifts aren't new, but this year's 6-million-acre jump to 94.1 million planted corn acres [took some by surprise](#). Soybeans gained 1 million acres to 83.6 million and held closer to market expectations.

[Meat raised by Montana State University students](#) will soon be served at the university's own tables.

Ag Resources

Cornell University provides access to [many agricultural and natural resources](#).

Food Waste Session

An August 26 conference--*Harnessing Consumers and Communities to Help Meet U.S. Food Waste Reduction Goals*--will be held on The Ohio State University campus.

Veterinary Feed Directive

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Iowa Farm Bureau, and the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association are partnering to offer an [educational series about the Veterinary Feed Directive](#).

CAST Social Media



Click here for [links to CAST sites](#): Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, videos, and blogs--including the latest entry: [Grandma Could Surf But Couldn't Milk a Cow](#).

****Water and Politics:** This University of Florida professor says, "Water is a nonpartisan issue to which [science can contribute so much](#). It's been said that the only thing harder to remove from water than salt is politics."



****Optimistic about Ag:** Agricultural producers are feeling [more optimistic about the health of the agricultural economy](#) despite declines in key commodity markets in June and early July, according to this recent survey.

****How Many Calories a Day? 8,000 or More?** The U.S. Olympic Committee's Sport Nutrition Team puts [the right food on the training table](#) and guides athletes through their schedule of consumption.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

Rescued Calf and Puppy Team Up

(video): United by their traumatic pasts, this calf and puppy have [become unlikely best friends](#).



Performing CPR on a Rhino?

(video): Workers at this wildlife sanctuary in South Africa [saved a baby white rhino with CPR](#) after it stopped breathing during a dehorning procedure.

Would you be my BFF? My bovine friend forever?

This One Doesn't Really "Eat Like a Bird": Shoebill birds live in the swamps of eastern tropical Africa and eat eels, catfish, lizards, [and the occasional baby crocodile](#).

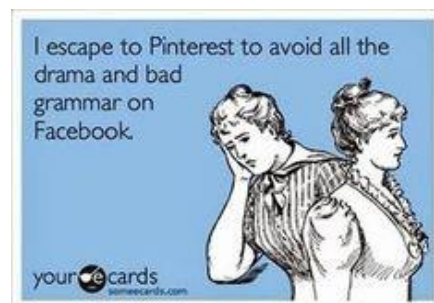
Farming Tools Now Include Social Media

Digitally digging for ways to communicate about agriculture

Farmers, food producers, and agriculture stakeholders are involved with social media in a big way. According to a recent *Farm Futures* survey of 1,550 farmers, [Facebook is by far the most popular](#) social media tool--good for tilling up information, entertainment, likes, and photos of the neighbors' kids and dogs. [Click here to access](#) CAST's Facebook page and its popular "Catch of the Day."

Other forms of social media vie for farmers' digital attention. This writer uses an extended metaphor--social media use is like producing a crop--with his entry called [Seven Secrets to Successful Social Media Farming](#).

CAST promotes agricultural news and announcements through [its Twitter account](#) (5,300+ followers). The organization also uses [Pinterest to highlight agriculture-related photos](#) and information--with 21 boards ranging from "animals" to "humor." Of course the Internet is filled with Pinterest





accounts, and many--such as this one called *Farm Jokes*--feature [humorous quotes about agriculture](#).

Many "advocate" groups use social media and offer plenty of resources--check out the [AgChat Foundation](#) and [Cause Matters](#), including the lists of Twitter accounts and blogs. Speaking of blogs, check out the nearly 300 [entries at the CAST blog site](#). A recent posting considered why the viral Pokemon craze was not so spectacular after all--farm kids have been climbing trees, roaming pastures, exploring barns, and capturing their own creatures (real and imaginary) [in a rural augmented reality for decades](#).

Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 campus pic from pbstwing.com, pig pic from livescience.com, water drop pic from likingsustainability.jpg, and calf pic from insideedition.com. P. 2 social media meme from pinterest.com and cellphone cow pic from satirewire.com. Animal Sec. boar pic from witn.com. Food Sec. poster from pinterest.com. Plant Sec. bat from ucanr.edu. Inter. Sec. manga pic from media.npr.org. Gen. Sec. hay baling pic from livingthecountrylife.jpg. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

These Little Piggies Are a Scourge (video): This Mississippi State University clip [examines the wild hog problem](#)--crop damage and a quickly rising population.

Sweaty Feet and Wagging Tongues (video): Some pets live indoors and some livestock reside in temperature-controlled buildings, but many animals have to [fight the heat in natural ways](#).

Scrambled Effects? (opinion): Many major grocery and fast-food chains will gradually [switch to cage-free eggs](#). This article examines that shift.

Free-Range Poultry (related to above): Check out the forthcoming CAST Issue Paper [Impact of Free-Range Poultry Production Systems](#) on Animal Health, Human Health, Productivity, Environment, Food Safety, and Animal Welfare Issues.

Cattle Feeding 101: This site addresses [frequently asked questions about feedlots](#) and points out that producers build their reputation on trust and on servicing their customers in the best way possible.

Probiotics and Animal Nutrition (audio included): The Food and Agricultural Organization published an [extensive report on the production, impact, and regulation](#) of probiotics for animal nutrition.

Sow Diets: According to this expert, modern sows are bred to produce larger litter sizes, and their [diets need to keep them healthy](#) to support thriving piglets.

Meat on the Rise: According to a Robobank report, 2015 was a [momentous year for U.S. animal protein](#), as it showed the largest increase in U.S. meat consumption since the food scares of the 1970s.



A few wild boars grow large, and last year a North Carolina [hunter bagged this 500-pounder](#).

A Reminder--Do Not Kiss Your Chicken: The CDC reports that 611 [people have contracted *Salmonella*](#) because of contact with live poultry.

University of Kentucky Expert Advice (related to above): [Salmonella outbreaks](#) associated with contact with live poultry are affecting people in 45 states, and Kentucky appears to have the highest number of illnesses.

Tiger, Tiger Burning Not So Bright: Forty-five global organizations are raising the [alarm about increasing tiger poaching](#), and they call for an end to all tiger farming and trade in their body parts.



Food Science and Safety News

Printing Your Customized Food? (video): This computer/3D printer system supposedly will be able to gauge the nutrients and ingredients your body needs to eat for every meal--[and then print it out for you](#).

Beef Nutrition--Grass and Grain (opinion): This article says there are some [differences between grain-fed and grass-fed beef](#), but when considering nutritional value, these differences do not appear to be significant.

Scanning Food: Technology is [empowering consumers](#) with knowledge about what's really in the food we eat.

Scanning GMOs (related to above): A new poll indicates that [most consumers likely would not use scannable codes](#) to find out if food they're buying contains genetically modified ingredients.

Sugar-coated Labels? The USDA ordered up new nutrition labels for cereal boxes, candy bars, and other packaged food items in the supermarket--and they look at [how much and what type of sugar is included](#).

Process Labeling of Food (research paper): The authors of this CAST paper look at the [impact labeling has on the food industry](#)--consumer choices, technology, research money, and product development.

Friendly, Not Raw: Organizers billed [the raw milk debate at the annual conference](#) of the International Association for Food Protection as an "Amicable Exchange of Experts."

Inflamed and Depressed? (opinion): An anti-inflammatory diet [may lower the risk of depression](#), according to a 12-year study involving 6,438 middle-aged Australian women.

Ya Can't Beat 'Em (opinion): This Colorado State University professor [touts the benefits of beets](#).

Container Gardening at Its Best: This St. Louis food pantry [helps clients grow their own food](#).



Mom warned me, but I didn't listen.



Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Coming Up Apples: USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service plans to [approve a new nonbrowning variety of Fuji apple](#) after concluding it does not pose a risk to human health or the environment.

RNA and Stress Adaptation: Researchers are [rethinking plant breeding strategies](#) to improve the development of new high-yielding, stress-tolerant cereal varieties.

Protecting Soil and Water: Research shows that wild thickets protect soil from erosion, so some farmers have a [renewed interest in prairies](#).

Wayward Wheat? The USDA says it has "confirmed the [discovery of 22 genetically engineered wheat plants](#)" in a fallow field in the state of Washington--the third such discovery of nonapproved wheat.

Clean Bill of Health (related to above): South Korea [lifted its hold on stores of U.S. wheat](#) after testing the grain for the presence of unapproved genetically modified organisms.



Some say [bats are the best pest control](#), worth billions of dollars to U.S. agriculture.

Cotton Harvest Winds Down: This Texas A&M report looks at [markets and outlooks](#) for the cotton crop.

Watching Corn Grow from Space: This company will release weekly summaries of how the maize crop is faring in the United States, with estimates based primarily on [algorithmic analysis of satellite data](#).

The Zero Factor (opinion): When it comes to managing Palmer amaranth and [preventing resistance from developing](#), a "zero tolerance" approach is needed, says a University of Arkansas weed scientist.

Buffering Up (opinion): Excess nitrogen from agricultural runoff can enter surface waters, causing algal blooms and fish kills. According to this North Carolina State expert, [riparian buffer zones are an answer](#).

Biotech Crops in China? Official reports say China will [push for the commercialization of genetically modified soybeans](#) during the next five years, as it seeks to raise the efficiency of its agriculture sector.

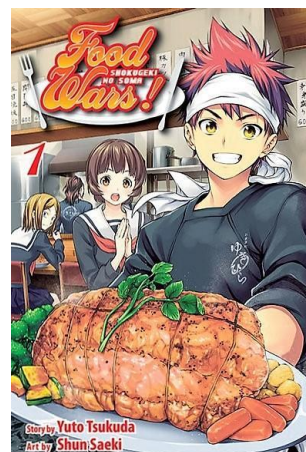
Carbon Farming: This featured new book looks at regenerative [agricultural practices that mitigate climate change](#) and boost biodiversity, water quality, and food security.



International News

India and Crop Choices (video opinion): This long-time farmer in India [grows biotech cotton as well as conventional varieties](#) of wheat, mustard, beans, and some vegetables.

Mama Shujaa wa Chakula (video): This reality TV show, translated from Swahili as "Female Food Hero," features [women farmers overcoming obstacles](#).



Manga Mania for Food and Culture: Manga is a medium for storytelling in Japan--the comic books [tie together food and cultural identity](#).

Manga and Food Culture

Protein Punch: Ireland's National Dairy Council put protein at the heart of its new [Powered by Dairy marketing campaign](#).

Taking a Bite Out of Food Waste: Canadian businesses can [upload photos of leftover meals or groceries](#) to a new app and customers can pick them up at a 15-80% discount.

Climate Change Research: The Australian government said that new [resources would be allocated to climate research](#) at the country's science agency.

You Say Burma, Some Say Myanmar: The USDA is expanding activities and services in Burma with the opening of a new [Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon](#).

Chick Imports Down: China is the second largest broiler meat consumer in the world, but [production is forecast to drop](#) by 5% in calendar year 2016.



General Interest News

Mosquitoes, Biotech, and Zika (video): The FDA gave permission for a genetically modified male mosquito developed by a British company to [undergo field trials in Florida](#).

Martha Stewart and Snoop Dogg (videos): A new TV series this fall will feature the lifestyle maven and the D-O-double-G teaming up [each week to host a dinner party](#) with celebrity guests.

Livin' and Workin' the Country Life (photo essay): When this young lady came back to the farm for a visit, [they put her to work](#)--stacking hay in the pasture was fun!

Century and Heritage Farms Recognition: This program at the Iowa State Fair honors the [essence of why the fair was founded](#).

Emotion Winning Out Over Science? (opinion): This agriculturalist looks at [issues regarding GMOs, rBST, and manure-spreading bans](#).

Full of Hot Air: [These balloon animals](#) look like little pieces of pop art.

Out of Scrubs and into the Intellectual Realm: This Illinois student describes a stimulating weekend at The Ohio State University [Veterinary Scholars Symposium](#).

Farm Camp: Minnesota volunteers are conducting an [introduction to the farm for kids](#) who have never been exposed to agriculture.

Barn Wood Is a Popular Item: While the dilapidated barn might be a nuisance for farmers, reclaimed barn wood is a [hot decorating trend](#) from Manhattan to Manhattan Beach.



[Intoxicated by the smell of fresh cut hay](#) and numb from the day's work.

CAST Information

Check out CAST's page at the [YouTube site](#) to view highly regarded ag-science videos about probiotics, food safety, and water issues--or the latest video dealing with proposed mandatory labeling of GMO food items.



If you have a good idea for a CAST publication, contact us by [clicking HERE for the "Proposal Format](#) and Background Information Form."

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