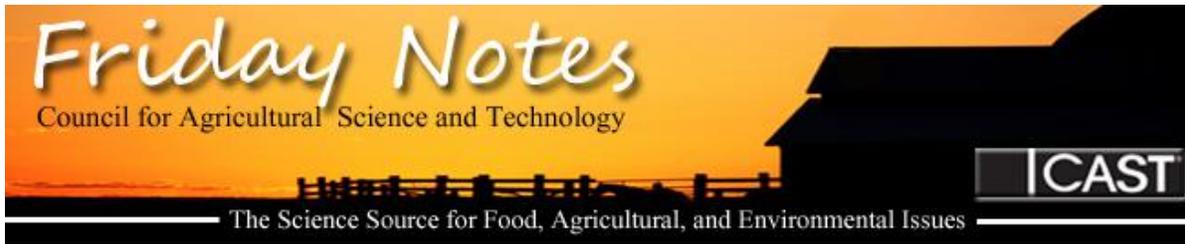


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Friday Notes is designed to enhance communication among various agricultural sectors, educators, students, and the public who are interested in a variety of plant, animal, food, and environmental issues. *Friday Notes* advocates the pursuit of credible, 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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[Plant and Environment News](#)

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[General Interest News](#)

Happy Holidays



The next edition of *Friday Notes* will be on January 5, 2018.

Awards for Ag Study

The America's Farmers Grow Ag Leaders program will partner with farmers to award more than \$500,000 to deserving students pursuing ag-related degrees in 2018. Administered by the National FFA Organization, these scholarships are awarded in \$1,500 increments to [students looking to pursue post-secondary education in an ag-related field of study](#).

Gimme Chocolate

A recent University of Kentucky study looked at the [buying, purchasing, and consuming of chocolate](#).

Helping New Farmers

The [Cornell Small Farms Program](#) is preparing the next generation of

December 15, 2017

Communication Is Still the Focus *Agriculture, science, and credible information*

In an era when "failure to communicate" seems to be the norm, these scientists say [we should focus on the data](#)--the facts should guide us. Many also suggest ways to enhance social media techniques. Check here for a video presentation about "[The Science of Science Communication](#)" --part of the Arthur M. Sackler Colloquium in Washington, D.C. People from many walks of life are using blogs, Facebook entries, tweets, and other methods to spread information about the science behind food production. [This site offers a list of communicators](#)--including the blog site from Jason Lusk (Univ. of Purdue and 2017 BCCA winner).



From Adesina to Lusk, recent [BCCA recipients have provided leadership in ag/science communication](#).

News and Views

Net Neutrality Vote: The Federal Communications Commission [voted to repeal net neutrality](#)--the 2015 Open Internet Order. The FCC chairman [said the move will spur investment](#), while some state attorneys general are [threatening lawsuits to stop the change](#).

Farm Bill Action: The current farm bill does not expire until the fall of 2018, but several members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are [getting a jump start on the process](#)--with a special look at cotton, dairy, sugar, and other issues.

Keeping It Real: [Tree farms are still a draw](#) during holiday season.

A Disturbing Trend: The [suicide rate for farmers](#) in the United States is much higher than that of the general



farmers and ranchers to scale up their operations and reach key business milestones, thanks to a new grant from the USDA.

Innovator Award

An Iowa State Univ. assistant professor of agronomy was one of eight scientists from across the country to win this year's [New Innovator Award](#).

CAST Social Media



Click here for [links to CAST sites](#):
Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, videos, and blogs.

population. This article points out that rates are high in several other countries as well.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

Real Road Rage (video): A [wild elephant attacked a bus in southwest China](#) while the driver was inside. He was shaken but not stirred.

Don't Turn Your Back on a Squid: This study looks at the [top predators in the deep ocean](#)--with squid, big fish, and jellyfish getting top billing.

Breaking the Law: Several hungry [donkeys in India were thrown behind bars](#) after chowing down on the wrong plants.



A panda rolling in the snow will soothe whatever ails you.

CAST Building on 2017 Success

Place science communication at the top of your New Year's resolution list

As 2017 comes to a close--and CAST boards and staff gear up for the new year--we take time to give thanks for all that was accomplished. "I would like to thank our members, staff, volunteers, and supporters for making it another successful year for CAST," states CAST EVP Kent Schescke.

Now, more than ever, it is important for the general public and policymakers to know the facts underlying the many agricultural issues influencing daily life. [Help make a difference by donating to CAST during this season of giving!](#)

Communication is still key in bridging the gap and sharing credible science-based information. In 2018, make it your New Year's resolution to reach out to policymakers, the media, the private sector, and the public in a way that might be out of your comfort zone.

"As we work to grow CAST's presence on social media, I encourage you to engage with us and share our content on your personal pages," states CAST's Communication Specialist, Kylie Peterson.

As 2018 draws near, CAST will continue to be a credible, reliable place for information within the digital age of science communication.



[Click here to watch our video](#) that highlights all that was accomplished in 2017 thanks to the continuous support of people like you!

[Summary of Activities June-November 2017](#)



Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 farm pic from smithsonianmag.com, tree farm pic from allenhillfarm.com, and panda pic from dailymail.co.uk. Animal Sec. frog pic from 9gag.com. Food Sec. cow pic from abeforum.jpg. Plant Sec. avocado pic from dailynews24.online. Inter. Sec. plastic pic from bbci.co.uk. Gen. Sec. cartoon from etsy.com. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

Pig Report: The USDA report about antimicrobials used with food-producing animals shows that U.S. pig farmers are [working efficiently for the health and welfare](#) of their livestock.

Meat Power: This research explains [why meat is an important source](#) of proteinogenic AA and antioxidant peptides in human diets--as well as providing other beneficial factors.

Pollen Pellets: Bees don't just transport pollen between plants, they also bring balls of it [back to the hive for food](#).

CAST Commentary (related to above--includes video): [Why Does Bee Health Matter? The Science Surrounding Honey Bee Health Concerns and What We Can Do About It.](#)

Drone as Cattle Farmer: This [cattle farmer uses drones](#) to gather cattle, look at water troughs, and make sure everything is functioning correctly.



Baby, it's cold outside. [Some wood frogs of Alaska freeze in winter](#) and thaw out when spring arrives.

Livestock Genetics: Alison Van Eenennaam--UC-Davis professor and 2015 BCCA winner--looks at the [genetic milestones reached by the pork industry](#).

Egg Production: The Kraft Heinz Co. said it will [transition to 100% cage-free eggs](#) in all global operations by 2025.

Eggs in Court (related to above): Twelve states have joined to [challenge California in the U.S. Supreme Court](#) regarding the state's law requiring egg producers across the country to comply with certain regulations.



Food Science and Safety News

From Noodles to Fruit to Doughnuts (video): To celebrate the New Year, foodies around the world devour specific [foods to summon good luck](#) for the next 365 days.

Nutritional Aid: The delivery of federal food benefits for millions of low-income people is likely to change after the USDA announced it will allow states [more flexibility in how they distribute money](#).

Whole, Low, Reduced, Free? [What do milk fat percentages mean?](#) The percentage on your milk container is the amount of fat in the milk by weight.

Golden Potato: A [genetically modified tuber with high amounts of vitamins A and E](#) could potentially help nourish the world--but will it ever make it to market?

Probiotics, Antibiotics, and Research: Evidence builds that friendly bacteria are important for human health, but [the research is still out](#) about the growing use of probiotics.

Keeping Food Safe: These [three food safety articles](#) look at a stocking stuffer, horse health, and reductions in drug use.



Whole milk is fine with this cat. [Milk regulations at schools are shifting](#) as the USDA announced regulatory changes.



Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Crop Residue Effects: The University of Nebraska conducted a two-year study to look at [crop residue and subsequent yields](#).

Academic Papers about the Environment 2018: [Three new papers are available](#)--conservation programs, the Clean Water Rule, and the Renewable Fuel Standard.

Citrus Struggles: Florida [citrus growers face tough decisions](#) that will affect next season's crops.

Controlling the Nitrate Tap (opinion): This report looks at the [big challenges to cut nitrate loading](#)--with a focus on no-till/strip till, cover crops, controlled drainage, wetlands, buffers, and more.

Plant Power: A new [program envisions plants as discreet, self-sustaining sensors](#) capable of reporting via remotely monitored, programmed responses to environmental stimuli.

Dark in the Daytime--Eclipses and Plants: These researchers looked at how plants reacted [when night conditions interrupted the day](#).



A British supermarket chain is offering an [avocado with softer skin and no pit](#).



International News

Solar Farm with a Panda Design: Most solar farms align their solar arrays in rows and columns to form a grid. A new power plant in China [decided to have a little fun with its design](#).

International War on Waste: A war on food waste in [France](#) [has helped it secure the top spot](#) in a ranking of countries by their food sustainability.

Exporting Waste: The United States exports about one-third of its recycling, and nearly half goes to China--but [that situation could be changing](#).

Food Waste Resource: The University of Pennsylvania and CAST published [Food Waste Across the Supply Chain: A U.S. Perspective on a Global Problem](#).

British Porkers: This [overview of the hog industry in Great Britain](#) looks at challenges and opportunities.

India and Science: India's [commitment to science](#) is paying off, as the country pushes to reverse its brain drain.



These charts explain the [plastic pollution problem](#). Marine life is facing "irreparable damage" from the millions of tons of plastic waste that end up in the oceans each year.



General Interest News

Biotech Documentary Spurs Discussion: The Ohio State University's Agricultural Technical Institute held a [free screening of the documentary Food Evolution](#)--an effort to promote critical thinking about the food industry.

Dipstick DNA: An even faster [method developed for DNA and RNA isolation](#) takes about 30 seconds. The method uses revolutionary dipstick technology.

Robotic Algae (video): [This robot made of algae can swim through your body](#). Scientists hope this discovery could one day be a game changer for modern medicine.

A Stronger Poinsettia: Americans [embrace poinsettias as a holiday tradition](#), and North Carolina State University has played an important role in helping the industry prosper.

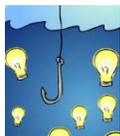
Mosquito Music (video): Mosquitoes can be deadly. Now, [researchers have developed a new, cheap way to monitor these insects](#), and they want your help.



These [eight new products](#) might be on a farmer's wish list.

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."

CAST provides Friday Notes as a benefit to its members. Please do not forward, edit, copy, or distribute the Notes in any form to nonmembers without the express permission of the CAST Executive Vice President Kent Schescke (kschescke@cast-science.org). Instead, please encourage your colleagues to join CAST and thereby become eligible for all membership benefits.

Contact Colleen Hamilton at 515-292-2125, ext. 224 or chamilton@cast-science.org, or [CLICK HERE](#) for CAST membership information.

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- * American Bar Association, Section of Environment, Energy, & Resources-Agricultural Management
- * American Dairy Science Association
- * American Farm Bureau Federation
- * American Meat Science Association
- * American Meteorological Society, Committee on Agricultural and Forest Meteorology
- * American Seed Trade Association
- * American Society for Nutrition Nutritional Sciences Council
- * American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
- * American Society of Agronomy



- * American Society of Animal Science
 - * American Society of Plant Biologists
 - * American Veterinary Medical Association
 - * Aquatic Plant Management Society
 - * BASF Corporation
 - * Croplife America
 - * Crop Science Society of America
 - * DuPont
 - * Elanco Animal Health
 - * Entomological Society of America
 - * Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy
 - * Land O'Lakes
 - * Monsanto
- * National Corn Growers Association/Iowa Corn Promotion Board
 - * National Milk Producers Federation
 - * National Pork Board
 - * North Carolina Biotechnology Center
 - * North Central Weed Science Society
 - * Northeastern Weed Science Society
 - * Poultry Science Association
 - * Society for In Vitro Biology
 - * Soil Science Society of America
 - * Syngenta Crop Protection
 - * The Fertilizer Institute
 - * Tyson Foods
 - * United Soybean Board
 - * Weed Science Society of America
 - * Western Society of Weed Science

CAST assembles, interprets, and communicates credible, science-based information regionally, nationally, and internationally to legislators, regulators, policymakers, the media, the private sector, and the public.

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- * University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture
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Note: WinField Solutions (Land O'Lakes) provides sponsorship for the distribution of *Friday Notes* to the National Association of Agricultural Educators.

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