



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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Submit an Idea



Since 1972, scientific societies have been advancing the CAST mission. In various ways, CAST supporters play an active role in the organization, and one important method is to generate topics and ideas. [Click here to access](#) the "Submit an Idea" page.

Digging in the Dirt

The second annual [Soil Health Conference](#) will be held in Ames, Iowa, on Feb. 16-17.



Cattle Conference

Kansas State University will host [Cattlemen's Day 2017](#) on Friday, March 3, in Manhattan, Kansas.

A Plea from Scientists

The American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America,

February 3, 2017

Faux News for Real Bacon

Shortage Rumor Sizzled Until Common Sense Set In

Desperate tweets and alarming headlines hit the media recently, [as reports indicated](#) that pork belly (bacon) reserves were getting low--"Nation Panics as Its Pork Belly Shrinks!" The social media flurry ([#baconshortage](#)) soon died down, [and the truth started to filter in](#). Yes, demand is high, and prices might rise. But according to most, there will be no shortage.



Bacon Crisis Averted

Maybe it's a case of not-quite-fake-news. It seems to have been more misinterpretation than manipulation.

Either way, bacon gets even more publicity, and that makes one famous literary pig a bit nervous--[as shown in this blog, Wilbur's Lament](#).

News and Views

****Vote Regarding EPA Head:** The nomination of Scott Pruitt to be administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency made it through committee (with some drama involved), and his name now [goes to the full Senate](#) for a vote.

****Farm Bill Funding (audio):** As lawmakers begin their Farm Bill process on Capitol Hill, there are concerns in Washington regarding [how much money will be available](#) for the next piece of legislation.

****NAFTA and Ag:** President Trump said he wants to see the North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiated quickly--a [renovation or a brand new version](#). Many U.S. food and beverage industry entities [stand firmly on keeping NAFTA](#).

****Scientific Quality Control?** This respected scientist criticizes a reworked "rat study" report and worries that papers like this are too often [published in apparently respected journals](#).

News from the Far Side of the Barn

and the Crop Science Society of America sent an open letter to President Trump asking that he "[protect and defend the scientific integrity of federal scientists.](#)"

UK Vet Sites

The University of Kentucky Department of Veterinary Science recently [launched new websites.](#)



CAST Social Media

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

Tinder for

Orangutans: Dutch zookeepers say they will start using a tablet to [show a female orangutan pictures](#) of available males.

Birds on a Plane!

(video): Apparently, a Saudi prince had [80 falcons aboard a commercial airline flight](#), sitting in coach class. Not sure if they ordered the sushi or the beef tartare.

Tongue Tied (brief video): In case you haven't had enough saliva-based research lately, this site shows how frogs can [snatch flies out of the air](#) at incredible speeds and hang on to them using only their tongues.



Hmmm. I'll swipe right if you get rid of this glass pane.

Impressive Ag Experts on CAST Board

Nonprofit Organizations, Companies, and Societies All Represented

From its inception in 1972, CAST has benefited from the guidance and leadership of respected experts, and today's list is no exception. Busy people put in time to help promote the mission of communicating valuable, science-based information--and this week we note some of the recent changes on the Board of Representatives.

Although Gary Brewer has been a board member, he will now represent "insect science" under the auspices of the Entomological Society of America. Several groups have new representatives: George Patocka for the American Dairy Science Association, Amit Dhingra for the American Society of Plant Biologists, Rob Richardson for the Northeastern Weed Science Society, and John Harbell for the Society of In Vitro Biology.

Two new groups join CAST--Corn Growers and Tyson Foods

David Ertl will represent the National Corn Growers Association/Iowa Corn Promotion Board where he is the Technology Commercialization Manager. He is responsible for developing and commercializing new corn traits and managing research in the area of corn production. He has been involved with 14 patents and has managed various research programs. David has a Ph.D in plant breeding from Iowa State University.



Lora Wright will represent Tyson Foods, where she is Division Manager, Beef Supply Chain, Office of Animal Well-Being and Food Safety Quality Assurance. She is involved with programs such as Tyson's FarmCheck--a protocol involving standard elements of site checks that include training in animal handling, site self-checks, daily observation, animal and facility observations, handling practices, euthanasia, and no acts of abuse. Lora earned her M.S. degree in animal science at Colorado State University.



Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 pork poster from m.freshpet.com and orangutan pic from washingtonpost.com. Animal Sec. goat pic from socwall.jpg. Food Sec. food pic from USDA. Plant Sec. tomato fight pic from freshconnect.jpg. Inter. Sec. food pic from lolamipezhharuerto.com. Gen. Sec. drone pic from gsmcneal.jpg. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

Avalanche Rescue Dogs (video): These mountain rescue dogs perform well in the [first line of defense when disaster strikes](#).

Biotech Disease Prevention (video): Researchers have [genetically modified cows to be resistant](#) to the bacterium that causes bovine tuberculosis--a disease that can be fatal for cattle and possibly humans.

Two Heads Are Dumber Than One (video): We love goats, but let's face it--they provide a [certain amount of comedy relief](#) for the animal kingdom.

Pork Company Survey: As demand for pork remains high, millennial consumers say that what pigs eat has a strong [influence on their pork-buying habits](#). Ninety-four percent of American consumers eat pork.



Ag Communication: These experts give us three [tips for telling your animal health story](#)--especially about antibiotic use.

Experts say baby goats have unique cries and odors. Great--I'm surrounded by loud, smelly kids.

Closed-loop Concept: This Texas A&M expert says that [the closed-loop concept focuses on bioenergy](#) from manure and capturing greenhouse gases--while also generating electricity.

Ranchers and the Environment: A ranch family in North Dakota was named the national winner of the [2017 Environmental Stewardship Award](#).

Accelerating Hog Totals: Based on preliminary data, the [2016 hog slaughter totaled a record](#) 118.1 million head, which is 2.3% more than in 2015 and 1.4% more than the previous record set in 2008.

Poultry without Antibiotics (opinion): This expert says success in the "brave new world" of [raising poultry without antibiotics](#) includes high chick quality, good husbandry practices, and maintaining healthy gut flora.



Food Science and Safety News

Disgusting or Tasty? (videos): This site features a [culinary quirk from each state](#)--from goop and clam pie to lutefisk and Spam musubi.

High-pressure Way to Purify Food: This new high-pressure processor [destroys foodborne pathogens](#), according to Cornell University food scientists.

Super Bowl--Super Eating: These numbers demonstrate [how much food will be consumed](#) during the upcoming Super Bowl weekend when the New England Patriots and the Atlanta Falcons play.

Personal Foul? Food Illness during the Big Game: Avoiding unsportsmanlike (food) conduct during Super Bowl gatherings means [keeping aware of food safety procedures](#) such as these.

Spinach Power? USDA-ARS scientists identified [eight spinach varieties](#) that have low oxalate levels, and they are sometimes linked to better health.

Breakfast On Again? Research seems to shift on a monthly basis, but this says people who skip this morning meal are [more likely to have various health risk factors](#).

Acrylamide Alarm (opinion): British food scientists have declared that [browned toast might be bad](#) for your health.



Don't get flagged for food safety penalties.



Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Biotech Mushroom: Marketers like the idea of a [nonbrowning mushroom developed through gene editing](#), but some wonder whether or not consumers will accept the idea.

Tastier Tomatoes: University of Florida researchers say they have found a way to [put the flavor back into tomatoes](#).

Biotech Solution for Greening? Citrus greening continues to devastate Florida's orange groves, but university researchers believe the [cure may lie in gene editing](#), and the USDA is funding their research.

Soil Biodiversity: New university research will evaluate pastures to document how [management of native grasslands may enhance](#) soil biodiversity and contribute to producer profitability.

Looking Up for Fertilizer Market? The [nitrogen fertilizer sector](#) is optimistic about 2017, helped by a slowdown in capacity growth amid a revival in prices, according to this European-based group.

Safety Net for Cotton? Cotton organizations want to [add cottonseed as a covered commodity](#)--an effort that did not work last year for a variety of reasons.



Tomato puree--there are times when the taste is secondary.



International News

Tiny, Edible, and Just a Bit Weird (video): Creators of Japanese [tiny-food videos shrink recipes](#) to Lilliputian dimensions--pancakes the size of nickels and burgers compact enough to flip with chopsticks.

GPS for the Outback: Animal welfare on large Australian stations is a challenge. Researchers are collaborating to find ways to [help ranchers better manage livestock](#).

No Man Is an Island: Apparently, some [islands are inhabited or overrun by animals](#)--including a pig island in the Bahamas and a cat island in Japan.



Honey, I've shrunk the kitty.

Flowering on This Island Nation: Fiji is home to about 800 species of [plants found nowhere else in the world](#), and one of the most special is the tagimoucia, a crimson and white flower.

Crisis Looming for 17 Million People: With only one-quarter of expected rainfall received in the Horn of Africa in the October-December period, the UN called for an immediate [response to prevent a catastrophe](#).

Wagyu Beef Trade? Tokyo aims to resume beef exports to Australia by year-end, [hoping to overturn a ban on Japanese beef](#) in place since 2001 after the discovery of mad cow disease.

Gender Spat in the Emerald Isle: This Irish farm woman [takes issue with comments made about women](#) on the farm. She thinks timing and technique are more important skills than brute force.

Mysterious Circles: Some now think the eerie fairy circles in the Nambian desert could be the handiwork of [hungry termites and thirsty plants](#).



General Interest News

Drones and Precision Ag (animated video): Alongside unmanned tractors and satellite technology, drones are seen by many as part of the next [generation of precision agriculture tools](#).

Environmental DNA: This experiment examines how far and how quickly [environmental DNA--or eDNA](#)--travels in different kinds of streams.

Saddle Up for the Cal Poly Rodeo: The 77th [annual Poly Royal Rodeo](#) is a throwback to the Old West, as athletes rope and ride during one of the best college rodeos in the land.

Don't Pucker Up: This University of Kentucky entomologist discusses [the kissing bug and its impact](#)--these blood-feeding insects are feared due to the potential health effects of their bites.

College Ag Programs: This Berry College [beef program led to 16 different businesses](#), almost half of them related to agriculture.

The Shape of Things to Come: Emerging tools, new technologies, and a changing workforce are [transforming agriculture](#).



Chemical application on the farm--drone style.

Write Your Way to Farm Ownership: This owner and operator of Bluebird Hill Farm in North Carolina wants to [give it away to the winner of her essay contest](#).

Buzz about This Bee Bacterium: Some think a new bacterium [could be the reason](#) so many bees keep losing their buzz.

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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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 Association of Avian Pathologists
- * American Association of Bovine Practitioners
- * 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 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
- * California Dairy Research Foundation
- * Council of Entomology Department Administrators
- * Croplife America
- * Crop Science Society of America
- * DuPont
- * Elanco Animal Health
- * Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy
- * Monsanto
- * National Corn Growers

- * 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
- * United Soybean Board
- * Weed Science Society of America
- * Western Society of Weed Science
- * WinField, a Land O'Lakes Company

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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