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.

**In This Issue...... Click to Read**

- **Student Staff Member Adds Global Perspective** -- P. 2
- **Animal Agriculture News**
- **Food Science and Safety News**
- **Plant and Environment News**
- **International News**
- **General Interest News**

**Scoopin' the Orbital Loop**

After a successful Space X rocket launch, the Tesla Roadster is cruising off to the asteroid belt. This footage provides visuals and sounds as the two booster rockets land back on Earth.

**Tech and Research**

The latest ideas and technology related to machinery, crop inputs, and agronomic practices will be on display at the annual Commodity Classic February 27-March 1 in Anaheim, California. Attendees will also see the announcement of the winning research and product concepts from the National Corn Growers Association's inaugural Consider Corn Challenge.

**News and Views**

**The Egg--It's Still Incredible**

Consumers do not seem to fuss over the "what came first" question. They just appreciate the nutritious, versatile food that comes in a shell. Long a staple in the United States, eggs are also a U.S. export success story, as they gain a large global market. The Egg Industry Center released its first year-in-review research report featuring 22 new, ongoing, or completed research projects. A different site provides articles, analysis, and information on managing egg operations and other issues--including a look at grants from the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research to UC-Davis and other universities for study regarding how to improve the health and productivity of egg-laying hens. And this article recommends eggsploring (you knew we'd crack into an egg pun sometime)--looking at the many ways eggs can be used.

**Biotech Regs and Animal Innovation:** This look at the regulation debate about genetics and animals includes insights from Alison Van Eenennaam, Kevin Folta, and Greg Jaffe.

**Glyphosate Issue:** A U.S. House Committee questioned the World Health Organization's cancer research findings on glyphosate during a recent hearing.

**Farm Income Forecast:** Highlights from the USDA's February 2018 Farm Income Forecast show that farm sector profits are likely to decline.

**Blockchain and Ag:** Some believe that a recent U.S. soy transaction is a sign that blockchain has some real potential for the transfer of agricultural commodities. And another article uses tomato commerce to explain that blockchain technology might help facilitate consumer preferences.

**Innovation Sources:** In this interview (7 minutes into the podcast), Jayson Lusk explains how agriculture innovation comes from students, nonprofit scientists, university professors, and struggling entrepreneurs.

Send 'Em In

Click here to submit an idea for a CAST publication.
Veterinarian Loan Funding
Funding to help eligible veterinarians offset a portion of their education debt incurred in pursuit of a medical degree is now available.

Food Security
The Global Food Security Symposium will be March 21-22 in Washington, D.C.

Cover Crops
The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is offering a cover crop conference to growers in a corn/soybean rotation on February 15th. Click here for more info.

CAST Social Media
Click here for links to CAST sites: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, videos, and blogs.

CAST Gains Global Perspective
Caryn Dawson joins CAST staff
Pursuing a major that requires a backpack and a suitcase at Iowa State University, Caryn Dawson is working toward a bachelor's degree in global resource systems and horticulture with a minor in animal science and Spanish. Her interest in traveling was sparked by a Rotary International cultural exchange to Argentina for ten months after graduating from high school. During her trip, she learned a new language and was immersed in a new culture.

Caryn's connection with CAST happened long before she even realized it. Prior to her freshman year at Iowa State, a 4-H mentor encouraged her to attend a luncheon and an ISU women's basketball game on campus. It was during that visit that Caryn received a personal introduction to Wendy Wintersteen (former CAST Board of Trustees chair and current ISU president). "After telling her about my trip to Argentina, Wendy encouraged me to look into global resource systems. If it weren't for her input and guidance, I don't believe I would be where I am today."

As an administrative assistant intern at CAST, Caryn is hoping to gain knowledge and expertise on a wide variety of issues in agriculture. "I am excited to have the opportunity to gain experience in various aspects of
finance, not only to help me in my personal endeavors but also in my future career.” We welcome her to the CAST staff.

To read Caryn’s full story, click here.

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**Friday Notes News Categories**

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 space pic from nerdist.com, egg pic from scienceblogs.jpg, farm painting from smithsonianmag.com, and ice cream pic from atlasobscura.com. P. 2 photos from Kylie Peterson and Caryn Dawson. Animal Sec. crayfish pic from nyt.com. Food Sec. coffee pic from precisionnutrition.jpg. Plant Sec. grain bin pic from katherinelplessner. Inter. Sec. mascot pic from metro.co.uk. Gen. Sec. gene diagram from doubleexscience.org. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

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**Animal Agriculture and Environmental News**

**Brain Training for Old Dogs (video):** Scientists have discovered the importance of lifelong learning in animals as they study cognitive training in dogs using touchscreen games.

**Swine Flu Vaccine:** A Kansas State University researcher has licensed a new vaccine to an animal health company to fight a highly contagious swine disease overseas. The U.S. is currently free of the disease.

**Beef Research:** University of Arkansas researchers are conducting a life-cycle analysis of the beef industry to identify ways it can increase sustainability—and to assess how much the industry has improved during the past decade.

**Antibiotic Alternative?** This USDA report says scientists are studying a natural supplement as a possible alternative to antibiotics for promoting pig health and growth.

**Setting the Record Straight:** The National Milk Producers Federation admonished the authors of a university study for a research article falsely describing milk as a high-risk factor in spreading foodborne illness.

**Dairy Cow Health:** A new method can detect most major mastitis-causing bugs in as little as three and a half hours. That means infected cows can be correctly diagnosed and treated more quickly.

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**Food Science and Safety News**
Challenge for Food: This breakthrough research shares how people responded to questions regarding food labeling—spotlighting a disconnect between consumers, farmers, and the food system. Check out this CAST blog that highlights similar consumer trust research.

Hot and Cold Running Food Safety Methods: The most economical way to kill the bacteria that cause common foodborne illnesses is heat, but this study looks at lower temperature mechanisms that kill Salmonella.

Food Delivery Apps: Some worry that the growing use of services like Uber Eats and Seamless will put restaurants out of business.

Your Aging Brain on Leafy Greens: A study in Neurology finds that healthy seniors who had daily helpings of leafy green vegetables—such as spinach and kale—had a slower rate of cognitive decline.

Attitudes about Biotech Food (opinion): The Genetic Literary Project says consumer-friendly GMO foods could change minds about biotech crops and animals.

Breeding Tastier Tomatoes (see related article in Plant Section): A new study has uncovered which flavor-enhancing genes have been lost, giving growers a road map to breed tastiness back into tomatoes.

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**Plant Agriculture and Environmental News**

Robotic Harvest: Automation systems are superseding strenuous manual labor and making their way into the agricultural industry—as robotics knock on the door of cotton growers.

Soybean Markets: High oleic soybeans crossed the final regulatory hurdle, creating opportunities to increase U.S. soybean competitiveness in the global market.

It's a Gas: Ethanol scientists are working on a breakthrough to turn greenhouse gas into fuel.

We're Not Exactly Sure What It Means, But It Sounds Cool: Check out the research about high-resolution spatiotemporal transcriptome mapping of tomato fruit development and ripening.

Cover Crops and Water Quality: The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship kicked off a three-year project aimed at increasing acres of cover crops and improving water quality in the state.

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**International News**

The National Corn Growers Association announced the 25 winners of the 2017 Fields of Corn Photo Contest—including this beautiful photo from Katherine Plessner.
Dam Release Provides Temporary Relief (video): Cape Town, South Africa, is suffering from an extreme drought, but temporary relief came with a water release from a dam reservoir.

Golden Rice Update: Bangladeshi rice scientists have advanced a beta carotene-rich rice to a varietal release stage, heralding a new era in the fight against vitamin A deficiency.

Escalating Trade Dispute? China launched an anti-subsidy investigation into imports of sorghum from the United States—the latest move in what appears to be an escalating trade dispute between the two countries.

Grain Transport Slowdown: A protest by grain transporters in Argentina could leave exporters and crushers operating without soy, corn, and wheat.

Planting Peppercorn: As traditional cash crops struggle under extreme weather, farmers in Cameroon have started growing drought-resistant Peja peppercorn.

Meat Questions in England: Great Britain's food regulators call for a nationwide review of meat-cutting plants after the discovery of serious incidents at two key facilities.

General Interest News

Talking Killer Whale: According to researchers, a killer whale has the ability to mimic human speech by copying its trainer.

A Flood of Water Issues: This site says many cities are facing water problems due to climate change and urban drought. See related article about Cape Town in the International Section above.

The Right to Repair: Two manufacturing associations developed a "statement of principles" they claim will help farmers and ranchers minimize downtime and maximize productivity of farm equipment.

Help Wanted: Finding good farm help has become tough with labor shortages, but farmers are discovering ways to recruit and manage qualified employees.

Renewable Energy (opinion): This speculative overview tries to imagine powering civilization entirely with energy from renewable sources—wind, sun, water, geothermal, and plants.

Farm Babe in India: Michelle Miller--the Farm Babe--speaks, writes, and farms, and she recently traveled India to explore its food/ag scene.

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.

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* National Pork Board
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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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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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