

Friday Notes

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology

ICAST

The Science Source for Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Issues

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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Ice Climbing on the Farm

Winter [boredom is no problem](#) if you have an old grain elevator to fast freeze. This site provides some [background and history](#) of the activity.

Ag Ed and Tech

Technology and agriculture are blending together at a rapid pace--so much so that the time is ripe for a [multitude of new career opportunities](#).

Ag Ed in the City

Enrollment in ag programs is on the rise in urban areas because the [possibilities within agriculture](#) are changing and so is the curriculum.

BCCA Nominations

January 22, 2016

A Smorgasbord of School Lunch Items

The Senate Agriculture Committee approved a bill designed to help schools that say the administration's healthier school meal rules are too restrictive. Agriculture Secretary Vilsack backs the compromise, saying it maintains most of the [healthier school meal rules](#).



Easy to choose in the old days. It was always "I'll have what she's serving."

Approximately 50 million K-12 students attend institutions that participate in the USDA school meal programs. The department is calling for tech-savvy [entries into its design contest](#): an app that coordinates the meal programs. The deadline is March 1, and monetary prizes are offered.

Moving on to university life--this is one of several lists from 2015 that ranked ["best college dining halls."](#) As usual, it's a matter of taste.

Some folks remember predigital school cafeterias, and this blog provides links and insights about "old school" lunchrooms: [Milk, Wedgies, and Humble Pie](#).

News and Views

**** Unfolding Story--Avian Influenza:** Animal health officials responded to a [bird flu outbreak in Indiana](#)--more than 400,000 birds have been euthanized at the ten affected commercial poultry farms. [This Q&A fact sheet](#) might help with some of the basics related to this issue.

**** WOTUS Veto:** President Obama [delivered an expected veto](#) of a congressional resolution that would kill the "waters of the United States" rule redefining the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. A veto override attempt failed to get enough votes in the Senate.

****Biotech Controversy (ten-minute video):** The CBS News *Sunday*

Nominations are open for the prestigious [2016 Borlaug CAST Communication Award](#).



Pig Farmer Excellence

The National Pork Board created the America's Pig Farmer of the Year award in order to recognize the best of the best in pig farming. Check here for [nomination information](#).

First in Forage

The Kansas State University Agronomy Forage Bowl Team took [first place honors](#) in the National Forage Bowl Competition.

Global Veterinary Diagnostics Report

This industry report analyzes the [global markets for veterinary diagnostics](#) across various segments in the realm of research.



CAST Social Media

Check the popular CAST [Catch of the Day](#) [here](#) and the CAST [blog](#) [here](#).

Morning program looks at the GMO issue, [including the fight regarding labels](#).

****Biotech and Food Security Solutions:** This [article includes some frank comments](#) from World Food Prize laureate Robert Fraley and insights from North Carolina State University professor Jennifer Kuzma. Fraley speaks about GMOs, informing consumers, and labeling. Kuzma also mentions GMOs, but she emphasizes the need to cut food loss and waste (note: Professor Kuzma is a task force author for an upcoming CAST "[ag innovation](#)" paper regarding gene editing).

News from the Far Side of the Barn

Only Two Types Can Kill You (video): [Australian spiders are fascinating](#), including this peacock spider that dances for love--and its life--in this "have your mate and eat him too" ritual.

McChocolate Potatoes: Apparently, McDonald Japan is preparing to introduce a new novelty item to its menu: [chocolate-covered fries](#).



2016 Python Challenge

(video): Individuals and teams are headed into the wilderness to thin out South Florida's population of Burmese pythons, with prizes of up to \$1,500 awarded for [catching the most and the longest](#).

Two More Students Bring Their Talents to CAST

As 2016 begins, two more university students have joined the CAST staff, and once again the organization benefits from the ideas, insights, and vitality that so many young people display. These two Iowa State University students also bring agricultural experience and farm memories with them as they settle into their CAST work routine. Kelsey Faivre comes from Illinois, and *Friday Notes* will profile her--and her writing talents--in next week's edition. Kelsey and Hannah Pagel (below) are now student administrative assistants with CAST.

Farms, Cows, and a Paint Brush

Hannah Pagel's farm roots run deep. Her family farm in the rolling hills of northeast Iowa is a "Heritage Farm"--one that traces family ownership back more than 150 years. This official designation is not just a commemorative plaque for Hannah. She loves the traditions and rural beauty that come with the land.

Hannah's appreciation of the "Good Earth" mixes with one of her passions--painting. As she says, "The farm is my canvas." [Click here to access Hannah's blog about painting, cows, and farm life.](#)

As a college sophomore, Hannah is now focused on her education. Majoring in agriculture and society, she is immersed in ag, sociology, and political science courses. She also belongs to several clubs, including the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA). "It's a challenge," she points out. "This is my first year on the team, and I can't wait to see what the competition is like in Kansas City."



Hannah Pagel--pictured here with her dad and brother--showed cattle throughout her school years.

Hannah adds "basketball fan" to her palette of activities, and she often joins fellow students at the coliseum to be part of "Hilton Magic" on game nights. Hannah takes on many pursuits, and staff members at CAST are glad she is bringing that enthusiasm to its office here in Ames.

Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P.1 silo pic from southwestiowanews.jpg, cafeteria pic from adventures of grand mahoney.blogspot, and python pic from img.s-msn.jpg. Animal Sec. cow pic from ryandonnell.fortunemag. Food Sec. poster from pinterest.jpg. Plant Sec. Mr. Potatohead pic from thecoli.jpg. Inter. Sec. ship pic from digg.com. Gen. Sec. Mars cartoon from secondcloudontheleft.blogspot. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

Big Ag Can Be Open, Productive, and Sustainable: This large-scale farmer [succeeds on many levels](#)--milk production, waste recycling, and communication with the public.

World Beef Consumption Rankings: The United States is the [largest consumer of beef](#) in the world, followed by Brazil and the European Union.

Lowering Emissions: A research team looks at how adding alum as an amendment to poultry litter [reduces ammonia and greenhouse gas](#) concentrations and emissions, specifically carbon dioxide, in poultry houses.



Cows belly up to the bar as milking time becomes "circular."

USDA, Labels, and Beef: The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service is [getting rid of a labeling program that focused on claims regarding grass-fed beef.](#)

It's a Matter of Taste (opinion): This professor says meat's mission is to consistently provide consumers with a [pleasurable eating experience at a compelling price](#).

PEDv North of the Border: Canadian officials say they prevented the [spread of the PED virus](#), as they prepare for the next emerging disease.

Beef App: The Mississippi State University Extension Service released the MSUES [Cattle Calculator for iOS platforms](#); it includes Apple's phone and tablet operating systems.

Poultry "Big Data": Two companies collaborate to produce the [largest flock health database](#) in the poultry industry.

Raw Milk Regulations: Federal law prohibits the sale of raw milk across state lines, but [state lawmakers are free to write their own regulations](#).

Big Country--Small Pig Industry: Size, location, and climate are just a few of the factors challenging Australia's economic survival and positioning within the [global hog trade market](#).



Food Science and Safety News

Breakfast Sense--and Some Classic Ads (video): Is it really that [bad to skip breakfast](#)? According to this writer, here is what the science says.

Dietary Guidelines--Old School: The USDA has been [trying to illustrate a good diet since 1894](#). Check out some of these posters from the past.

Fast Casual (audio available): Grabbing a quick meal [does not just mean fast food these days](#).

Say Cheese (opinion): This writer says the Dietary Guidelines are good news for the dairy industry but [not for the cheese industry](#).

Nutrition Is Almost Impossible to Study (opinion): This writer says that [almost everything you know about food is wrong](#).

Possible Food Trends--from Hemp to Sauerkraut: This foodie [highlights several healthy foods](#) that might be worth some attention.

Influential Restaurants (opinion): This food expert provides a roundup of the restaurants that supposedly [shaped and defined American dining](#).

A Gut Feeling: This Stanford University microbiologist speaks about the value of fiber and says it feeds the [trillions of microbes in our guts](#).

Healthy Food: Researchers have developed an antimicrobial wash that [reduces the risk of foodborne pathogens](#) contaminating fresh produce.



No, the USDA did not use this as a dietary guideline poster. But check out some of the old posters in the story at left.



Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Gardening Trends for 2016 (video): This collection of gardening ideas might [chase away the winter blues](#).

You Say Potato--They Say Biotech Potato: The USDA announced it will extend deregulation of the J.R. Simplot Company's Innate Potato to another Simplot [genetically engineered potato with the same traits](#).

Helping Sick Grapes: Scientists at UC-Davis identify a key protein at the root of a [disease likely ravaging California's grapevines](#), costing the state's wine and grape industry more than \$100 million yearly.

More Neonic Research Needed (opinion): The agriculture [industry has made strides](#) in addressing the contaminated talc issue by creating better planter lubricants, but planter designs may also need tweaking.

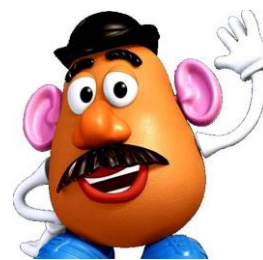
Biotech Maize: This report summarizes what is known about the relationship between [the cultivation of BT maize hybrids](#) and contamination levels with different types of mycotoxins.

It's Alive! The Soil Science Society of America wants you to know that despite the frigid temperatures in northern climates, the [soil in your yard is still teeming with life](#).

Wine and Vine Info: The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service hired four viticulture program specialists to [assist grape growers](#) with challenges and educational information.

Heady Times for Cauliflower: High demand, favorable growing conditions, and limited supply are resulting in scarcity and [subsequent high prices](#) for the latest "it" food.

Bringing in the Blueberries: This research team is developing an advanced sensor system to help [harvest and process fresh-market blueberries](#) at high speed and with low yield loss.



Biotech potatoes
get the OK.



International News

Tip the Ship (video): This Canadian ship carries a huge amount of logs and [appears to be sinking](#) when it unloads.

Fighting World Hunger: The United Nations [World Food Program](#) is promoting agreements with the Indian government and business sector to boost nutrition in the world's second-most-populous country.

International Table Etiquette: In case you eat when you travel, here's a list of various [food etiquette policies around the world](#).

Job Opening for Ag Hermit: This tiny Atlantic island, said to be the most remote inhabited place in the world, is [seeking an agricultural adviser](#).

Green Sanctuary in the Desert: A Dubai company is planning to build a [tropical rain forest in the city](#) "to inspire to learn about and care more for every single plant and animal that inhabits the Earth."

Electrified Fork: This University of Tokyo food hacker is developing [an electrified fork that zaps](#) your taste buds with low current to make food taste saltier.

Night Milk: This European 2016 consumer trends report includes [a section on selling sleep](#)--a milk called Milchkristalle that will supposedly gain new markets this year.



Not yet time to abandon ship.

Potash, Mines, and the Markets: Weak [conditions in the potash market](#) will not improve any time soon, according to this Canadian corporate executive.



General Interest News

No, You Can't Just Call Matt Damon: This NASA expert explains the challenges of designing [food for deep space missions](#).

Zinnias in Space (related to above): A flower has [bloomed on the International Space Station](#) for the first time.

Milk Going to the Olympics: Milk will be an [official sponsor of Team USA](#) in this year's Olympic competitions.

Research and Education: The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy is calling for a new [commitment to research and education](#) in food and agriculture from all sectors.

Ag Funding and Green Revolutions (opinion): The Chicago Council says our second Green Revolution may well happen if [funding for agricultural research](#) grows.

Children's Book Award: The American Farm Bureau Federation has chosen *First Peas to the Table* for its 2016 [Book of the Year award](#).

Getting Bugged in Our Homes: This report says [our homes are jungles](#) inhabited by 100 different species of insects--spiders, beetles, mites, and others.

Church, State, and Food Waste: The EPA launched the Food Steward's Pledge, an [initiative to engage religious groups](#) to help redirect discarded food to hungry mouths.

Witnesses to Hunger: This national organization aims to [draw attention to the struggles](#) of the thousands of women and children living in poverty.

The Sound of Sizzle: In cooking, sound is the forgotten sense. For example, the sizzle a piece of meat makes when it hits a hot pan informs you that a vital (and delicious) [chemical reaction is taking place](#).



My rock garden is done--now where to plant my broccoli and kale.

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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