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

CAST Updates and Info—P. 2
Animal Agriculture News
Food Science and Safety News
Plant and Environment News
International News
General Interest News

Fly Like an Eagle
Flying over mountains on the back of an eagle—buckle up.

College Scholarships
Check out these tips to help identify and apply for all kinds of college scholarships.

Education Grants
The America’s Farmers Grow Ag Leaders program will award more than $500,000 to students pursuing ag-related degrees in 2018.

Swine Conference
Kansas State University's 2018 Swine Profitability Conference is planned for Tuesday, Feb. 6.

Research Prize
Cornell University researchers received a $1-million grand prize in a contest seeking innovative solutions to nitrogen runoff.

Institute Registration
The U.S. Borlaug Summer Institute on Global Food Security is a two-

January 5, 2018

New Year, New Science
Biotech advances and ag innovation

Biotech innovations have been affecting agriculture and medicine for decades, and gene editing has become one of the most influential aspects. Many have heard about CRISPR gene editing, but most do not really know how the procedure works. Now that a “do-it-yourself” kit can be ordered online, maybe it’s time more policymakers and members of the general public pay attention. Click here to access links regarding the next generation of gene editing tools, genetic advances in medicine and agriculture, and pertinent information from Alison Van Eenennaam and Kevin Folta. It also might be an opportune time to check out the informative video called “Are GMOs Bad for Your Health?” Note: Forthcoming publications from CAST include topics such as genome editing in agriculture and biotech regulations.

News and Views

Split Decision on Ag-Gag Law: An appellate court restored specific provisions of Idaho’s 2012 Ag-Gag law but said audio-visual recordings of animal agricultural facilities could not be prohibited by the state under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Farm Bill: According to this report, action on the Farm Bill is possible early in 2018, but many variables could affect the timing.

Last Year’s Top Articles: Harvest Public Media’s top stories of the year range from USDA leadership to devastating storms to rhinestone cowboys. Agriculture.com also listed their “most interesting items.”

Fighting Global Hunger: This article looks at the combined efforts of the USDA, land-grant universities, and the CGIAR system of research
A week-long program for U.S. graduate students interested in developing an understanding of the challenges around global food security.

Extra Job Training
This UC-Davis program is an example of how universities help provide additional training for students as they aim for specific professions and industries.

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

CAST New Year Updates
Announcements, links, and items keeping you tuned into some of the happenings and opportunities at CAST

Seaboard Foods has joined CAST, and it's worth noting that they not only strive to produce safe, quality food, they also have a high school scholarship program with a February 16 deadline. A CAST welcome to this vibrant company.

Nominations are open for the 2018 Borlaug CAST Communication Award, an honor that recognizes professionals actively working in agricultural, environmental, or food sectors while also promoting agricultural science in the public policy arena. Due date: February 5.

Speaking of the BCCA, this blog comes from 2017 winner Jayson Lusk: "Year in Review." And this blog from Kevin Folta, the 2016 winner, explains why transparency and communication are so important.

Along with individuals, companies, universities, and organizations, societies have been a key pillar of CAST's effectiveness since 1972. Originally instituted as a "society of societies," CAST now has 22 society members.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

Luke, I Am Your Farmer: In a shameless move to capitalize on the Star Wars craze, we offer this look at why Luke Skywalker is the most famous farm boy in the galaxy. The article includes a performance from Darth Farmer.

Bull 2, Unfortunate Dude 0: This is why you should never turn your back on a sinister bull.

Dogs in Snow: Good to see someone likes the record cold and snow.

Esther the pig has an enthusiastic social media following.
USDA Projects Record Meat Consumption (video): For all the buzz about pea protein and lab-grown burgers, Americans are set to eat more meat in 2018 than ever before.

Poultry Welfare (opinion): Alison Van Eenennaam looks at the California “poultry welfare law.”

Playful Piglets: During a recent study, researchers measured object recognition in piglets by testing their reactions to new toys. Click here for the blog “Pigs That Fly, Drink Beer, and Dig Toys.”

Grass-fed Beef and Nutrients: With insights from Texas A&M and the University of Nebraska, this article looks at the increasing demand for grass-fed beef and dealing with grass nutrient problems.

Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices: The USDA announced it will withdraw the proposed rule regarding organic livestock and poultry practices. Reactions are mixed.

Hog Housing: This National Hog Farmer study looks at how much floor space is needed for sows that are group housed.

Buzzing Around: When honeybee colonies get larger, common sense suggests it would be noisier with more bees buzzing around, but this study shows that is not the case.

Venison--deer meat--is turning up in both exclusive restaurants and local food pantries.
We Are What We Eat (video-opinion): This UC-Davis information recommends a diet that--according to them--is good for people and the planet.

Jayson Lusk on Food Prices: Trends suggest we can expect small increases in prices of food at home, but prices of food away from home may continue to rise at historical rates.

Most Nutritious Diet Plans (opinion): This panel of nutritionists, dietary consultants, and doctors provides opinions about the best diets--the Mediterranean Diet scored high.

When Older Means Tastier: Modern technology has improved efficiency, but has it compromised flavor? This recent study suggests the answer is "yes!"

Something Fishy: New research found that children who eat fish at least once a week sleep better and have higher IQs than those who don't.

Safer Food: A patent registration is pending for intervention recipes that might successfully disinfect avocados, mangoes, strawberries, chilies, tomatoes and coriander.

Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Biotech Perspectives (opinion video): Although no scientific evidence shows a problem with GMOs in food, some organizations are ignoring the science and blocking innovation.

Glyphosate Classification: Glyphosate, the most widely used herbicide in the world, is not likely to cause cancer in humans, according to the EPA.

The Rise of the Soybean: Farmers in the U.S. grew more soybeans in 2017 than ever before, and this article looks at how that surge has occurred.

Organic Fraud Watch: The USDA encourages legal organic operations and certifying agents to be on guard for fraud.

Forage Grass Varieties: This article examines the benefits of growing multiple types of forage grasses for grazing animals.

Forages and Weather: This University of Arkansas article looks at why the state's forages were hit hard by the whims of 2017's weather cycles.

Martian Brew: Anheuser-Busch is pushing the boundaries of beer as they prepare to study the germination of barley in space. Farmers, however, have other earthly concerns.

International News
**Thar They Blow (video):** This rare footage shows 800 beluga whales swimming to their birthplace.

**Britain’s Meat Industry:** This article looks at the meat farming industry in the United Kingdom and considers what impact it will have on jobs.

**Pesticides in Food “Not a Risk”:** This research provides a refined assessment and perspectives on the cumulative risk resulting from the dietary exposure to pesticide residues in the Danish population.

**A Mighty Dutch Wind:** The operators of the Netherlands’ electric grid have come up with an ambitious plan to build an artificial island in the middle of the North Sea that would support the world’s largest wind farm.

**Wallace--Or Is It Gromit?--Would Be Proud:** A British project has successfully increased the level of long chain omega-3 while reducing the level of saturated fatty acids in cheese.

**Dining with the Fish:** Located in the Maldives, this eating facility is the world's largest all-glass underwater restaurant.

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**General Interest News**

**An Electric Pickup Truck:** You can't pull a gooseneck trailer with a Prius, but this company is hinting at rolling out an electric pickup truck.

**Stress and Farm Finances:** The past few years have been tough on farmers, but a stress test might help.

**Unusual Renewable Energy:** This study shows how unconventional spaces could be put to use to generate renewable energy while sparing land that could be better used to grow food.

**Is That Fly on the Wall Really a Fly?** Cornell engineers are working on insect-like robots to make them behave more like real insects.

**Organizations to Keep an Eye On:** The Food Tank group has compiled a list of 118 organizations to keep an eye on in 2018 that are working towards a more sustainable food system.

**The Importance of Ag:** Mississippi State University officials point out that agriculture continues to be a major boost to the state’s economy.

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**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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* Monsanto
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* 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

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