

Friday Notes

Council for Agricultural Science and Technology

CAST

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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Food Evolution Opens Across the Country



[Check here for information, discussions, and reviews concerning the documentary film *Food Evolution*. This reviewer emphasized the increasing role of \[biotech crops in a world looking for safe, sustainable food.\]\(#\)](#)

Biotech Info

This site provides definitions, insights, and explanations from more than 200 experts as they [answer inquiries about biotech.](#)

Grants Help with School Lunch Programs

Sixty-five projects nationwide were chosen to receive USDA's annual [farm-to-school grants.](#)

Veterinary News

This article looks at on-going [vacancies and funding shortages for](#)

June 23, 2017

Why Bee Health Matters

CAST rollout coincides with pollinator week

Everyone agrees that [pollinators are crucial](#) to our food supply--the thousands of bee species around the world are key to promoting plant growth. On Monday, June 19, CAST presented an important commentary about bee health, with a special focus on honey bees: [Why Does Bee Health Matter? The Science Surrounding Honey Bee Health Concerns and What We Can Do About It.](#)



Dr. Marla Spivak (University of Minnesota) spoke about the paper at three events in the nation's capital: (1) a morning session with the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, (2) an NC-FAR lunch seminar with staffers from the House of Representatives, and (3) an NC-FAR afternoon seminar with staffers from the Senate. Scroll down to page two for more links, photos, and information.

News and Views

****NAFTA and Trade Negotiations:** The Trump administration's priorities for the [renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement](#) came up for debate on Capitol Hill this week--the administration is touting improved relationships with China, while some comments contain an us-versus-them mentality.

****Ag Research:** Earlier this week, House Agriculture Committee members agreed with officials from land-grant and non-land grant universities about the [importance of agricultural research.](#)

****Comments about Rural America:** President Trump touched on [several ag-related topics](#)--including biofuels, infrastructure, and broadband--during a speech in Iowa this week, as he emphasized a desire to "rebuild rural America."

[public-health veterinarians](#), particularly those with the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. And this recent event [taught rural veterinarians about how to respond](#) and work together in the event of a potential transboundary emergency situation.

Forestry Infrastructure

The USDA and partners invested \$20 million in 21st Century [Conservation Service Corps partnership agreements](#) to provide 4,000 work opportunities for youth, young adults, and veterans.

Summer Science Camps

The University of Arkansas offers 20 summer camps [focused on science, tech, and engineering](#).

CAST Social Media



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

****Biotech and Regs:** The Trump administration says it will [attack overseas regulations](#) that restrict the export of GMO crops and other products originating from American technological innovation.

****Related to Above:** CAST's informative commentary--*The Impact of Asynchronous Approvals for Biotech Crops on Agricultural Sustainability, Trade, and Innovation*--provides [insights about the challenges of trade negotiations](#).

****Child Hunger in America:** Rates of [children living in households characterized by food insecurity](#) have improved since 2014--but hunger problems still exist in the United States, especially as schools let out for summer.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

Residue--Shape of You

(video): The [Peterson Brothers' new clip](#) uses a parody of an Ed Sheeran song to enlighten us about cover crops and other farming techniques, while also entertaining us with their down-on-the-farm style.



Ultimate Take Out (video): A bald eagle [swoops in and steals a fish](#) right off of a small boat in Canada.

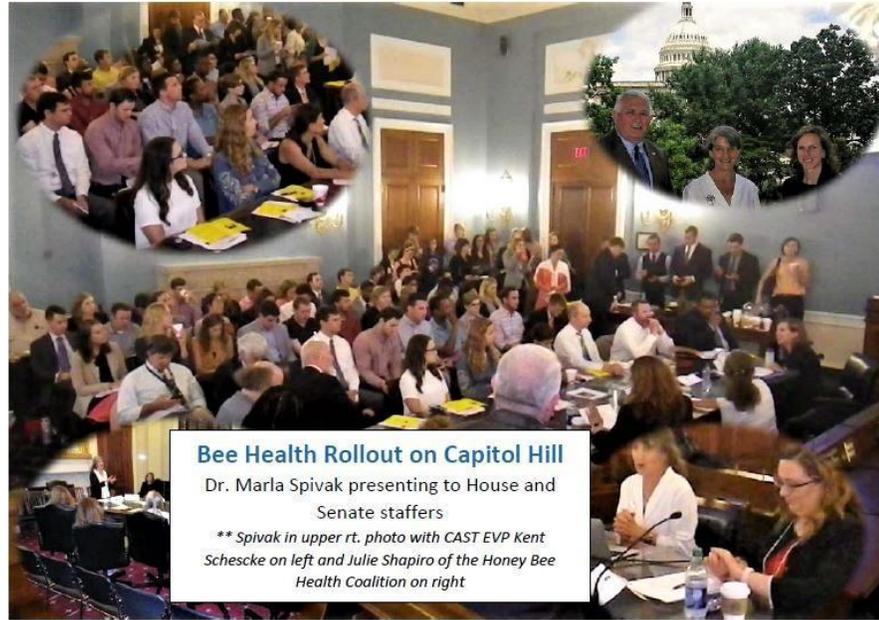
Four-ton Lifesavers (video): These two adult elephants figured out how to [rescue a drowning young elephant](#).

Capitol Hill Events Highlight CAST Commentary

Bee health in the spotlight as Dr. Spivak presents findings

CAST released a timely commentary titled *Why Does Bee Health Matter? The Science Surrounding Honey Bee Health Concerns and What We Can Do About It*.

To roll out this important research paper, Dr. Marla Spivak, an entomologist and Distinguished McKnight University Professor at the University of Minnesota, spoke at three events in Washington, D.C.: (1) a morning session with the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, (2) an NC-FAR lunch seminar with staffers from the House of Representatives, and (3) an NC-FAR afternoon seminar with staffers from the Senate.



- Full [commentary available here](#)--includes a link to Dr. Spivak's presentation.
- The Ag quickCAST [one-page version is available here](#).
- This link provides access to Dr. Spivak's [presentation on YouTube](#).
- Click [here to read the press release](#) on CAST's website.

The sessions were well attended, and many ag media outlets have promoted the information. CAST EVP Kent Schescke noted, "We were pleased with attendance and interest about this topic. There were many good questions and discussions following the presentations." Listed below are a few of the quotes from Dr. Spivak's speech:

"Our greatest challenge going forward is how we protect our pollinators . . . and control our crop pests at the same time."

"It is not an 'either-or' proposition. Instead, a 'rebalancing' needs to take place so bees can be protected next to corn and soybean fields, but also in apple orchards and almond groves.

"We are in the middle of this glorious pollinator revival, and people--because they're paying attention to bees and monarch butterflies--they're starting to realize they can help."

The CAST commentary points out that "pollination services contribute directly to the economy and food security," citing annual revenues of \$11.7 billion from the sale of honey bee-pollinated fruit, vegetable, and nut crops in the United States. "The additional value of pollination services by the thousands of species of native bees that live in the wild throughout the (U.S.) is estimated at \$3.4 billion annually, and the total economic value of pollination worldwide, by all bees, was estimated at \$216 billion."



Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 Peterson pic from iptv.org. Animal Sec. pig pic from pbstwing.com. Food Sec. raw egg pic from mensxp.com. Plant Sec. baling pic from livingthecountrylife.jpg. Inter. Sec. cow pic from thesegoldwings.jpg. Gen. Sec. farmer pic from agriculture.mdpcdn.com. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

Pork Checkoff Strategy: With the consumer market for pork and other protein sources changing rapidly, Pork Checkoff is [planning changes to its marketing strategy](#)--millennial, mobile, and multicultural.

Beef Ban: The United States [halted imports of fresh Brazilian beef](#); the USDA said a high percentage of shipments failed to pass safety checks.

Chill Out and Use Common Sense: At a recent presentation, Temple Grandin gave pointers about spotting stressed animals and moving them in the [calmest, most humane way possible](#).

Labeling Lawsuit: These ranchers in the state of Washington seek to overturn a March 2016 decision by the Department of Agriculture to revoke [regulations requiring imported meat products to be labeled](#) with their country of origin.

Egg Supply and Demand: Groceries and food companies have made big promises about switching over to cage-free eggs, and apparently there is now a [surplus of cage-free eggs](#).

A Woolly Way to Fight Weeds: As [sheep continue to prove their ecological worth](#), municipalities, government agencies, and private companies pay for their services.

Boars to China: China took delivery of 1,012 American boars, the latest sign that producers in the world's [top pork market are expanding herds](#) even as concerns grow about slowing demand and overcapacity.

Natural Ways to Fight Pests: With a goal of fighting serious cattle industry pests, this research looks at the [promising repellent and insecticidal qualities](#) of more than 20 different botanical compounds.

Chicken Processing: With heightened concerns about animal welfare affecting U.S. meat processors, some companies announced modifications of the [way chickens are handled at packing plants](#).



A UC-Davis professor is building on her pioneering research by examining the role personality plays in the [welfare of farm animals--in this case, baby pigs](#).



Food Science and Safety News

Grocery Power Play (video): Amazon.com's \$13.7 billion purchase of Whole Foods makes it a [major player in the U.S. grocery industry](#)-- and that leaves a lot for shoppers, retailers, and other companies to consider.

Winners and Losers from Grocery Merger (video; related to story above):

After the Amazon move, some [analysts predict big changes](#) for grocers. This article says shoppers will win, but brick-and-mortar stores will lose.

Best of Times, Worst of Times: Some say this is a [golden age of variety and quality for restaurants](#)--but many establishments are facing tough economic times.

Lunchroom Is Neither a Nanny State nor a Junk Food Emporium (opinion): This successful blogger wants good food in schools, and she thinks [both extremes use false narrative](#) and misleading spin.

Free Food, Less Waste: The University of Wisconsin-Madison has created a food resource that gives students and faculty [access to free vegetables that otherwise would be composted or discarded](#).

Pretty in Pink? Maybe Not Cooked Chicken: This expert offers [tips about poultry meat](#)--and what to do about "pinkness" even after you've cooked it.



Raw eggs like Rocky? Or cooked? The Egg Nutrition Center [provides info about nutrition and safety](#).



Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

A Dash of Manure on the Side, Please (video): Ohio State University specialists have been running tests on [side dressing corn with manure](#) since 2013. This updates us on some of the latest techniques.

Johnny Appleseed with an Advanced Degree: This visit to a modern apple orchard shows how [farmers use science to develop growing techniques](#), better yields, and multiple pest management methods.

Smart Baling: This university expert provides a list of [safety considerations to keep in mind during hay baling](#) season.

A Garden Gnome with Benefits (video): This futuristic contraption acts like a Roomba for the garden, but [it attacks weeds not dirt](#).

What's in Your Silo? Silage production [mixes science with art and business](#), according to this article.

A Fragrant Way to Fight Stink Bugs? A scent that petunias and snapdragons release to attract pollinators [may be an environmentally friendly control for pests](#) like the spotted wing drosophila fly and the brown marmorated stink bug.



As this blog explains, we had [50-pound bales, wild drivers, and hay rack surfing](#).



International News

Weed Seed Crusher Shows Promise (video): An Australian farmer's invention [destroys weed seeds during harvest](#) and has the potential to reduce the need for herbicides.

Deadly Fires in Portugal (video): Soaring temperatures have threatened [efforts to bring a raging forest fire in Portugal under control](#). At least 64 people have died, as high winds added to the disaster. Note: [update here](#).

Transcontinental Ag: Turkey and Sudan took the first steps to establishing a bilateral [partnership to implement agriculture projects](#) worth \$10 billion.

The Bear and the Dragon: Russia and China have agreed to improve [bilateral agricultural cooperation](#) mechanisms, with a focus on trade and investment.

Chocolate, Watches, and Pigs? According to this story, [advanced standards in Switzerland](#) are not only applied in their precision instruments like the famous Swiss watches, but also in the pig industry.

Bitter Coffee: Coffee farmers in central Kenya are staring at [reduced earnings compared to last season](#), courtesy of extreme weather that has drastically cut harvests.



You are free to roam the cabin? We assume this is not how 4,000 cows are being [airlifted from Australia to start a dairy concern in Qatar](#).



General Interest News

Gene Editing Update: CRISPR/Cas9-mediated gene editing ameliorated [neurotoxicity in a mouse model of Huntington's disease](#). Research will continue on applications for humans.

Work-Life Balance for Ag: [Balancing career and family](#) is hard for any professional, but ag professionals often find themselves in an especially pressurized situation.

Precision Drips: Drip irrigation means water is frequently and slowly applied directly on the crop root zone. This article looks at the basics that make this practice [efficient and environmentally advantageous](#).

Ag Entrepreneurs: This writer says [farmers are the ultimate entrepreneurs](#)--constantly innovating, growing businesses by themselves, and taking full responsibility for all aspects of product delivery.

Antibiotics and Common Sense: Medical centers throughout the country are [trying to minimize the needless over prescription](#) of antibiotics, but studies show this is still an ongoing problem.

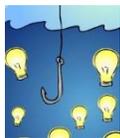
New Antibiotic Sources? (related to above): Researchers have identified potentially useful antibiotics [from some of the strangest places](#) imaginable: sponges, sea snails, and marine worms.

Horses and Music: Horseback riding and rhythm-and-music therapies [may improve stroke survivors' recoveries](#), according to this research.



Resilient and Driven: This woman raises 600 cattle, works 3,500 acres of organic crops, oversees a hunting business, and manages the ranch's Conservation Reserve Program.

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
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- * Elanco Animal Health
- * Entomological Society of America
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- * 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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