

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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World Water Day

Approximately 650 million people, or 10% of the world's population, do not have [access to safe water](#).

Ag Career Perceptions

According to one survey, few college graduates are [considering a career in agriculture](#)--but this interview indicates a high interest in ag careers and [increased enrollment at colleges of agriculture](#).

Farm to Fork Politics

This year's Agri-Pulse Ag Day Farm to Fork Politics discussion focused on the food supply and agricultural policy. This video provides a brief [summary of key quotes and moments](#) from the discussion.

Real Sustainability

March 25, 2016

Cuba Connections

Most Ag Groups Seek Trade

For more than five decades, Cuba has been ninety miles off shore and light years away politically. Not all agree with the recent thaw in relations, but many in the world of agriculture are interested in possible trade and business openings. Here are a few articles looking at recent developments and the prospects for agriculture.



The United States and Cuba are working on an agreement to [share agriculture and food research](#) and ideas.

Certain types of "check-off" programs that are supervised by the USDA and paid for by farmers might be a part of the reform to help [reinvigorate sales to Cuba](#).

Will Congress end the five-decades-long trade [embargo with Cuba](#), and what will that mean for agriculture?

This member of Congress says the opening of trade could represent a nearly \$2 billion [market for American agricultural exports](#).

News and Views

****Biotech and GMO Labels (updates):** Surveys indicate that many consumers are negative about GMO products and positive about biotech food labels. However, most scientists and ag-related stakeholders say GMOs are safe and effective. This [article looks at the "whys" of this divide](#).

-In this editorial, ag expert Julie Borlaug says proven [biotechnology deserves non-stigmatizing](#) national labeling standards.

-This writer thinks that even though GMOs are safe, [mandatory labeling is a good idea](#).



The Global Food Security Consortium and the Seed Science Center at Iowa State University will welcome

experts from around the world to discuss the components necessary for addressing global food and nutrition security in an [upcoming symposium](#) titled "REAL Sustainability."

New Silicon Valley

The North Carolina State University Plant Science Initiative imagines the state as the [Silicon Valley of plant sciences](#)--the project has just received an \$85 million injection.

Legal Decisions with Ag Connections

The University of Arkansas Agricultural Law Center has compiled a list of legal developments that will have [significant impact on agriculture](#).

Food Waste Across the Supply Chain

The [University of Pennsylvania](#) and CAST offer an insightful book that stems from expert presentations at *The Last Food Mile Conference*. A [free download for CAST members is available here](#).

CAST Social Media

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

-During the past week, four major companies joined Campbell's Soup with the [intent to label GMO products](#).

****Right to Farm?** Nebraska lawmakers kicked off debate on a "[right to farm](#)" measure that would restrict the state's power to regulate agriculture.

****Spring Break with the Cows:** This university senior happily traded beaches and parties for [feedlots and calving](#).

**Ag University Recognition:

The University of California-Davis ranked second for agriculture and forestry in the annual QS [World University Rankings](#). Universities such as Cornell, Iowa State, Texas A&M, Florida, and North Carolina State also made the list of top schools. A Dutch university placed first.



News from the Far Side of the Barn



Arachnophobia Revisited (videos):

Most spiders are only a few centimeters long, but some species have grown bigger--the world's largest is the [size of a dinner plate](#).

Even Lassie Would Be Impressed:

A life-saving dog has been honored with a posthumous award after passing away at the age of 12. The canine [saved nine humans and one other dog](#) from drowning over the course of his life.

Jack and the Beauty Product Beanstalk? Seeing a plant sprout out of your drain is some [serious fairy tale weirdness](#), but apparently it can happen if you use the Lush soap bar with beans.

Special Event in D.C.

Biotech Speech Followed by Announcement of BCCA Recipient

Please join the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology and DuPont--in cooperation with the World Bank--for a presentation on *Gene-edited Crops: More Palatable to GMO Critics and Consumers?* by [Channapatna S. Prakash](#), the 2015 Borlaug CAST Communication Award recipient. The event will occur on Thursday, April 21, at 2:30 p.m. EDT.

Following the Dr. Prakash's speech at the World Bank in Washington, D.C., CAST will announce the winner of the 2016 Borlaug CAST Communication Award. [Click here for registration information](#).



Our Biotech Future

Special Committee Formed by the National Academy of Sciences

The National Academy of Sciences has provisionally appointed 13 members to a [committee tasked with studying the changing scientific and regulatory landscape of biotechnology](#).

Experts chosen for this important work include the following professors: Steven Bradbury of Iowa State University, Raul Medina of Texas A&M University, Jennifer Kuzma of North Carolina State University, Jeffrey Wolt of Iowa State University. They will join others from the academic, government, and business sectors.

Committee members will focus on these issues:

What will the likely future products of biotechnology be over the next 5-10 years? What scientific capabilities, tools, and/or expertise may be needed by the regulatory agencies to ensure they make efficient and sound evaluations of the likely future products of biotechnology?

Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P.1 pic of Vilsack from foodproductiondaily.com, pic of boy at water tank from ibtimes.co.uk, and the spider pic from nhm.ac.uk.jpg. Animal Sec. pig pic from adorablog.org. Food Sec. pizza pic from pizza.jpg. Plant Sec. soil pic from nationofchange.org. Inter. Sec. well water pic from ibtimes.co.uk. Gen. Sec. dog pic from barkpost.com. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

Beef--from Pasture to Plate (video): The [beef life cycle is a complex system](#) that requires a broad community of people working together to create high-quality beef.

Pigs Can't Fly, But Maybe They Sing? (video): This short clip [shows a sow feeding her pigs](#)--and possibly grunting out a little song.

Poultry News: The [top ten most-read articles](#) from the *Journal of Applied Poultry Research* are available here for free.

Ready for an Outbreak? (opinion): According to some experts, the [amount of vaccine available](#) at the North American Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine Bank is below what would be required for an outbreak.

The FDA, Antibiotics, and the VFD: The new FDA commissioner discussed the use of antibiotics and outlined [where his agency overlaps with agriculture](#) and the new Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD).

Beware of Foaming Manure: These experts are studying why manure in livestock storage facilities foams, as they try to eliminate [dangerous conditions in hog operations](#).

Rendering, Incinerating, Burying, or Composting? This Kansas State University expert says whatever the reason an animal dies, [proper disposal of the carcass](#) is critical.

Livestock Mortality (related to above): This CAST Issue Paper provides solid background information:



Click here for a blog about [pigs that fly, drink beer, and enjoy toys](#).

[Ruminant Carcass Disposal Options for Routine and Catastrophic Mortality.](#)

Open Wide for the Gift of Life: Using special treatment procedures, Ohio State University veterinarians [provided years of life to a dog](#) with oral cancer.

Tackling a Horse Disease: The director of the University of Kentucky Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory spoke about a [vaccine now available](#) for equine leptospirosis.



Food Science and Safety News

A Passion for Pizza (video): This 21-minute inaugural episode of "The Pizza Show" takes viewers on a tour of [some of the greatest pizzerias](#) in Brooklyn.

Ranking the Fish You Buy (opinion): This site [rates popular fish in the market](#) by ranking them for nutritional value--looking at omega-3 content and mercury levels.

A Meaty Statistic: Overall [meat department sales have increased](#) 2.5% since the recession that began in 2008, a growth rate the grocery industry says outpaces many other departments.



Hot dog pizza in Brooklyn? Fuhgeddaboutit!

Grape Goodness? Eating grapes may help obese people [decrease certain types of fats](#) in their blood that are linked to heart disease and lower their risk of infection, according to a USDA study.

Pulp Fiction? (opinion): This article points out that [Parmesan cheese](#) is not going to leave you swallowing splinters, as the FDA--not the media--monitors the product.

Saving Food Waste: This Kickstarter product wants to [help food in the kitchen](#) last up to an extra month.

Who's Number One? The title of [world's hungriest hamburger eaters](#) goes to the blokes Down Under. Even France and England are rising on the charts.

Designer Milk--the Real Thing? Coke has joined forces with a dairy cooperative to create Fairlife--producing a filtered, high-protein, low-sugar, [lactose-free designer milk](#).



Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Sorghum as a Source (video): This University of Florida professor gave a presentation about sustainable production of [fuels and chemicals from sorghum](#).



Carbon Farming (opinion): According to this expert, agriculture is one of the best ways to draw out carbon from the atmosphere and [put it back into the soil where it came from](#).

Carbon farming--possible and desirable?

Trying to Close the Yield Gap: The Ohio State University Extension office is working on a multistate research project to identify key factors that stop soybean producers from [obtaining higher yields](#).

The Ethanol Debate Continues: U.S. corn producers may have found two unlikely allies in their decade-long [battle with big oil](#) to get ethanol into the nation's fuel stream: automobile manufacturers and American drivers.

Protecting Pollinators (opinion): The Government Accountability Office issued a new study on bees and pollinators and found that the USDA and EPA could be [doing more to protect them](#).

Strawberry Winter Capital: Thousands of workers [gather here every winter to pick strawberries](#) in huge fields that lie within 10 miles of this Florida town.

Tile, Water, and the Environment: This article looks at the impact of tile on nutrient loss--along with the [history and importance of tile drainage](#) to farming.

Conventional to Organic (opinion): This member of a four-generation Iowa farming family is convinced of [organic farming's value](#).

Soil Is More Than Just Dirt: Hundreds of organizations and individuals [work to improve soil health and restore land quality](#). Food Tank focuses on 22 of these projects, with a special emphasis on cover crops.



International News

Possible BSE Case in Europe: France's agriculture ministry confirmed a recent case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, [also known as mad cow disease](#).

Water World: In some parts of the world, women and children spend as many as six hours daily collecting fresh water. Globally, [a child dies from a water-related disease every 90 seconds](#).

Sweet Success: This Ethiopian woman is the [proud owner of three hives](#) that have produced enough honey for her to build a house equipped with solar panels and buy some farm animals.

Antibiotics and Livestock in Russia: Antibiotic residues in livestock production have become a [growing problem in Russia](#) during the last few years, according to this official.



Daily gathering at a well in India.

Going Local in Italy: The Italian city of Florence is requiring shops and restaurants to make sure that 70% of their [food comes from the surrounding region](#)--fried cow brains is a local specialty.

Planting Rice in the Dry: Scientists are developing [more resistant varieties of rice](#) to help farmers in Vietnam adapt to climate change, amid the country's worst drought in 90 years.

Rice with Extras (related to above): Scientists from Colombia and five other countries have developed a [genetically modified variety of rice](#) with high contents of iron and zinc.



General Interest News

Livestock Guardian Dogs (video): The Texas sheep and goat industry will soon be "[going to the dogs](#)" if these Texas A&M AgriLife experts have their way.

Betting on Ag: Investors are cultivating a new [crop of ag tech start-ups](#), as many entrepreneurs gathered recently to consider possibilities.

Pollinator Buzz (opinion): This Government Accountability Office study says that the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency could be doing [more to protect bees and pollinators](#).

More Buzz (related to above): According to a U.S. Senator, the EPA should "proceed with the utmost caution" in [conducting risk assessments](#) of neonicotinoid insecticides.

Water Research: Kansas State University is receiving a USDA grant for innovative research and extension activities to address [water challenges in the Ogallala Aquifer](#) region.

Water Use: This study looks at how the [expanding use of recycled water](#) would reduce water and energy use, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and benefit public health in California.

You Say Potato, They Say Change: The National Potato Promotion Board approved a [new name, mission, and strategic plan](#) for its agricultural promotion group.

Going Solar? Ohio State University experts have information to help farmers and other agribusiness people find out [if solar energy is right for them](#).



Some dogs aren't ready for work on a ranch--or any work at all.

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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