

# 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.

## In This Issue..... Click to Read

[CAST Fall Board Meeting Fosters Communication--P. 2](#)

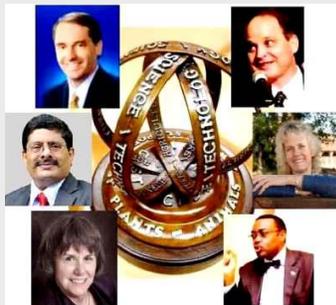
[Animal Agriculture News](#)

[Food Science and Safety News](#)

[Plant and Environment News](#)

[International News](#)

[General Interest News](#)



### BCCA Nominations

Nominations are now open for the 2017 [Borlaug CAST](#)

[Communication Award](#), an honor that recognizes professionals actively working in the agricultural, environmental, or food sectors who are promoting agricultural science in the public policy arena.

### Influential Ag Communicators

BCCA nominations come from individuals, companies, universities, and societies. The American Society of Plant Biologists has been instrumental in nominating the last two BCCA recipients. This year Dr. Kevin



November 4, 2016

## Biotech Crops Stir Debate

*GMO benefits questioned--many react*



When a recent [New York Times article](#) claimed that biotech crops have fallen short by not increasing yields or reducing pesticide use, reactions came quickly on internet sites and social media modes. The following links lead to a few of the many examples:

Kevin Folta says the *NYTimes* article is a "[less-than-scientific ball of bias](#) that revolves around the tired old trope that genetically engineered crops have failed to produce as expected."

The American Soybean Association points out [inaccuracies and omissions](#) in the article.

This editorial from *EcoWatch* reiterates the main findings in the article and [calls for more research and scrutiny](#).

The *Genetic Literacy Project* says the article is [inaccurate and thoroughly misleading](#).

A *Grist* writer agrees with some findings in the article but says the author [missed several important points](#).

Folta [joined six past winners](#)--all are active in the world of science and agriculture. A video of Folta's acceptance [speech about building trust with concerned consumers is here](#). The prestigious award has become key in the efforts to keep agricultural issues in the public eye and in front of national and world policymakers.

### Put on Your Thinking Cap

Do you have an idea for a CAST publication, video, or project you would like to share? **Submit an Idea**--CAST [welcomes suggestions, ideas, and recommendations](#) for future CAST publications.

### Ag Jobs--"You'll Be Making a Difference"

Agriculture is a hot employment option in the United Kingdom also, as this [British writer points out eight reasons](#) to get a job in the agricultural sector.

### Science Award

University of Nebraska scientist Don Weeks received the 2016 NUtech Ventures Prem S. Paul [Innovator of the Year award](#).

### Buckeye Tech Trainers

Ohio State University students and faculty are working with others to [improve tech training in Tanzania](#).

### CAST Social Media

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

Note: OnTwitter, check @AgBioWorld (Dr. Prakash) and @kevinfolta.

## News and Views

**\*\*Ag Research:** According to Secretary Tom Vilsack, the USDA is the world's [largest agricultural research force](#)--and their work has helped to shape the lives of billions of people around the world.

**\*\*Innovation and Hunger (opinion):** Human innovation has brought hunger and poverty to record lows and food production has climbed, as farmers have found [new ways to produce more food](#).

**\*\*CRISPR Plays a Leading Role:** A new television show demonstrates how a molecular biology technique ([CRISPR can have both scientists and screenwriters excited](#)). This writer wonders whether or not the creative team at NBC will keep the science in line with reality.

**\*\*Agroterrorism:** Kansas State University hosted a panel discussion that highlighted the threat of bio/agroterrorism and the importance of [including agriculture in biosecurity and biodefense](#).

## News from the Far Side of the Barn

**T-Rex on a Bucking Bronco (video):** This rodeo included bucking bronco riders dressed as [bananas, grandmas, and dinosaurs](#).



Ready to ride, T-Rex style.

**No Pandering Allowed (video):** A man jumped a fence at the Nanchang Zoo in China for a [far-from-friendly encounter with a panda](#).

**Turtle-mania (video):** Peruvian environmental authorities say they will [release 500,000 baby turtles](#) back into the wild by mid-November.

## CAST Fall Board Meeting

*Fostering ag/science communication*

The CAST fall gathering in St. Louis featured various meetings, presentations, work groups, and facility tours. Members from the three boards (Directors, Representatives, Trustees) met to cover official business and discuss many ag/science issues.

Effective communication was a key focus: media expert Don Schindler of Dairy Management Inc. spoke about digital innovations; CAST's past president David Songstad explained the uses of LinkedIn; and J.J. Jones and Donna Moenning from the Center for Food Integrity explained "Why Values Matter in Science Communication." All agree about the need for food and ag scientists to engage in many modes of communication, including social media.

The plant, animal, and food work groups discussed research papers, and the entire gathering spent time on the evolving CAST strategic plan. From panel discussions to working lunches, members worked hard to further CAST's mission of communicating credible, science-based information.

During the CAST fall gathering, President Mark Armfelt presided over the sessions before he officially stepped down from his office (**Armfelt center in inset photo above with CAST**



**Executive Vice President Kent Schescke and Crop Life America's Janet Collins**). At the end of the meeting, Richard Cavaletto (**photo inset at the right above**) assumed official duties as CAST president.



Many companies, organizations, and educational institutions helped make the gathering possible. Their support--and the input from all CAST members--ensures the success of the organization's efforts to develop quality content and communicate to the public and policymakers alike. **Pictured below: CAST Board of Directors**



## Friday Notes News Categories

Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right). P. 1 GMO collage includes whowhatwhy.org, geneticaliteracy.com, slate.com, and agweb.com. Rodeo pic from i.kinga-img.com. Animal Sec. cat pic from loghouseplants.jpg. Food Sec. coffee pic from precisionnutrition.com. Plant Sec. meme from quickmeme.com. Inter. Sec. whale pic from thetimes.co.uk. Gen. Sec. maze pic from billboard.jpg. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.





## *Animal Agriculture and Environmental News*

**Dairy Farms and Innovation (video):** This Indiana-based dairy operation shares how they [use innovation on their farm](#) to help reduce the need for antibiotics.

**Grass-fed, Organic, and More:** The USDA issued a compliance guideline on [documentation required to support animal-raising claims](#) that must be submitted before such claims may be used on product labels.

**Chicken Production:** The United Egg Producers announced that it was encouraging the development of [alternative practices to male chick culling](#), with the goal of complete elimination of the practice by 2020.

**Milkin' It in the USA:** While the rest of the world slows, [U.S. milk production is still on the rise](#), according to this September report.

**Using Tech to Mine Pig Data:** A swine research farm in Spain is full of sensors as well as innovative ideas to [uncover pig knowledge](#) yet to be discovered.

**Cloned Cows:** This update about the West Texas A&M University station explains that researchers and industry experts figured they could [use cloning to improve beef quality](#) and yield.

**Murderers or Pets? Debate about Feral Cats:** Some think cats need to be strictly controlled because they critically [decrease bird and small mammal populations](#)--others think this is anti-cat hype.



Sushi cat is too cool to go feral.

**Meat Trade:** Iowa pork and beef groups will be on a [trade mission to China and Japan](#) in November--hoping to expand markets, create jobs, and strengthen the economy.

**What's in the Feed Trough?** An agriculture professor at Cornell University developed a new method to confirm that [cows get an appropriate balance of grass and legumes](#) in alfalfa-grass mixtures.



## *Food Science and Safety News*

**Iron Age Cooking (video):** Cooking with a [good cast iron pan](#) can seem daunting, but this site shows how to keep it clean and use it properly.

**Food Illness on the Menu? (opinion):** This British food safety expert says that [cookbooks have so much potentially harmful bacteria](#) clinging to their pages they should be banned from the kitchen.

**Caffeine Connection:** This Bloomberg market analysis says that [global demand for coffee is at an all-time high](#)--and millennials are to blame.

**Targeting Millennials:** If platform shoes can make a comeback, why can't TV dinners? That's the hope of food manufacturers eager to [lure health-conscious millennials back](#) to the freezer section.

**Nutrition Advice and the Food Lobby (opinion):** The influence of food corporations sometimes runs into growing sensitivity to [ethical and conflict-of-interest issues](#).

**Norovirus--Wash Your Hands!** According to this group, the [best way to prevent norovirus](#) is through proper hygiene. In the United States, approximately 20 million suffer from the ailment each year.

**Goin' to the Dogs--Best in the Country (opinion):** From rippers in New Jersey to red snappers in Maine, these wieners and franks are [some of the best in America](#).

**Biotech Spuds:** The USDA approved commercial planting of two types of [potatoes that are genetically engineered](#) to resist the pathogen that caused the Irish potato famine.

**Gluten-free Buzz:** Makers of [gluten-free food are aware of two main consumer groups](#): those who have to for medical reasons, and those who want to because they think they're making a healthy choice.



Millennials and industrial-strength coffee drinking.



## *Plant Agriculture and Environmental News*

**Cultivating Hope (video):** This professionally made clip looks at [sorghum nutrition in Kenya](#).

**Battling the Golden Nematode:** Cornell University researchers' long-standing [battle against a major potato pest](#) is getting a \$1.2 million boost in new state funding.

**A Big Stink:** Specialty crop growers will benefit from a \$3.7 million USDA grant won by North Carolina State University to find sustainable control options for the [invasive brown marmorated stink bug](#).

**The Effects of the Stink (related to above):** Mississippi State University specialists say farmers in their state expect a respectable soybean crop in spite of [attacks by the red-banded stink bug](#).

**Nanobionics:** By embedding spinach leaves with carbon nanotubes, MIT engineers have [transformed the plants into sensors](#) that can detect explosives and wirelessly relay that information to a smartphone.

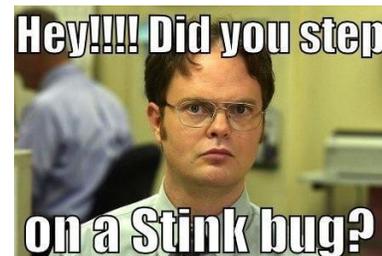
**Algae and Biofuels:** Donald Danforth Plant Science Center scientists have discovered a way to [make algae better at producing oil](#)--such as for biofuels--without sacrificing growth.

**Beating Palmer Amaranth (Pigweed):** A University of Arkansas expert says [pigweed has one specific weakness](#)--seed longevity.

**Soybeans and Organics (opinion):** This Texas A&M crop physiologist believes [organic grain and soybean crops have an enormous opportunity](#) to satisfy demand for specialty feed for a growing industry.

**Can Science Help Save the Banana? (opinion):** The familiar bright yellow Cavendish [banana is in potential danger](#)--the worldwide monoculture of genetically identical plants leaves it vulnerable to disease.

**Soybean Meal Research:** U.S. animal nutrition scientists have carried out a comparative research effort to [document variations in soybean meal sources](#) from various places around the globe.





## *International News*

**Golden Rice Trials:** The first [field trial of Golden Rice](#) in Bangladesh has yielded promising results, triggering prospects of the vitamin A-rich grain's release as early as 2018.

**Amazon and Oil (opinion):** This report claims that U.S. [imports of crude oil from the Amazon rainforest](#) are driving the expansion of oil operations into some of the most pristine regions--with devastating effects.

**A Whale of an Issue (opinion):** Pro-whaling and anti-whaling nations are set to clash yet again over Japan's so-called "scientific whaling" policy as the [International Whaling Commission meets](#).



Is "scientific whaling" an oxymoron?

**Diggin' Deep:** Mississippi State University engineers helped with the [implementation of nine water wells](#) in Zambia.

**Canada-E.U. Pork Trade:** National and provincial pork industry leaders express confidence in Canada's recent [trade agreement with the European Union](#).

**Asian Pork Imports:** Although China took over as the number-one pork importing country in the world, Japan's dependency on [pork imports still has major influences](#).

**Land of the "Black Earth":** Although the country has been involved with political and military conflict, [money is apparently flowing](#) to modernize Ukraine's farms.

**The Viking Spirit:** Declining oil prices leave Norway with economic challenges, but as Arctic temperatures rise, the country is betting on a [potential bright spot--a budding bioeconomy](#).

**Bean Booster:** The recent [surge in soybean purchases](#) by China has helped push soybean prices higher--a combination of strong Chinese demand and tight supplies in South America.

**Most Dangerous Job:** Farming continues to be New Zealand's [most dangerous occupation](#).



## *General Interest News*

**Shifting to Renewable Energy (video):** A report released by the International Energy Agency suggests the [global move toward renewables](#) is happening faster than expected.

**Are Millennials Changing the Buying Scene? (opinion):** Some claim the younger generation is [avoiding groceries and flocking to restaurants](#)--but others point out that older generation members are too.

**A-Mazed:** Wandering through a corn maze is [one of America's favorite autumn rituals](#)-- these works are pixelated, like giant halftone photos, using the density of the corn to make the image darker or lighter.

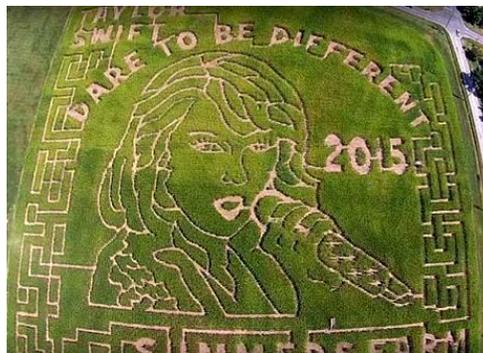
**Economic Reactions:** Falling commodity prices affect various agriculture sectors. According to a new Rabobank report, the [farm equipment industry is making moves](#) to consolidate stores and reduce inventory.

**Robotic Beer Run (video):** Budweiser teamed up with autonomous vehicle company Otto to transport 50,000 cans of beer across 120 miles of highway--the [first commercial shipment by a self-driving vehicle](#).

**DiCaprio Film about the Environment (video):** *National Geographic* produced a feature-length [film about climate change](#)--but viewer response has been mixed.

**Football and Cattle Farming:** Texas farm boy and Cincinnati Bengals professional football player Cobi Hamilton [used his signing bonus to purchase cattle](#) for his parents.

**Ag Ed (opinion):** This writer says [universities should maintain farms](#) for the same reason they have concert halls and lecture series--so students can expand horizons, discover new passions, and enrich their education.



A Taylor Swift maze attracted big crowds last year.

## 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](mailto:chamilton@cast-science.org), or [CLICK HERE](#) for CAST membership information.



## Societies, Companies, and Nonprofit Organizations Serving on the CAST Board of Representatives

- \* American Association of Avian Pathologists
- \* American Association of Bovine Practitioners
- \* 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 Society for Nutrition Nutritional Sciences Council
- \* American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
- \* American Society of Agronomy
- \* American Society of Animal Science



- \* American Society of Plant Biologists
- \* American Veterinary Medical Association
- \* Aquatic Plant Management Society
- \* California Dairy Research Foundation
- \* Council of Entomology Department Administrators
- \* Croplife America
- \* Crop Science Society of America
- \* DuPont Pioneer
- \* Elanco Animal Health
- \* Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy
- \* Monsanto
- \* 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
- \* United Soybean Board
- \* Weed Science Society of America
- \* Western Society of Weed Science
- \* WinField, a Land O'Lakes Company

*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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- \* Cal Poly
- \* Cornell University
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- \* Kansas State University
- \* Mississippi State University
- \* North Carolina State University
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- \* The Ohio State University
- \* University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture
- \* University of California-Davis
- \* University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
- \* University of Kentucky
- \* University of Nebraska Agricultural Research Division
- \* University of Nevada



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