CAST
Friday Notes
Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
The Science Source for Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Issues

The objective of *Friday Notes* is 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 in Washington, D.C., on p.2
Animal Agriculture News
Food Science and Safety News
Plant and Environmental News
International News
General Interest News
Meyers & Associates Report

Events and Opportunities

Honoring an Ag Hero

The 99th anniversary of Norman Borlaug's birth was celebrated at the Hall of Laureates, the building in Des Moines that is the home of the World Food Prize.



Ag Fighting Poverty

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announces that the USDA will launch its "StrikeForce" initiative in ten additional states to increase partnership with rural communities and leverage community resources in targeted, persistent poverty areas. This link includes video.

UC-Davis Vet Expansion

The UC--Davis School of Veterinary Medicine celebrated the public opening of a new four-story, $58.5 million research building, dedicated to making discoveries in basic science as well as human, animal, and

March 29, 2013

Making an Impact in D.C.

CAST Activities Coincide with National Ag Day



On March 18, CAST held three rollout presentations for a timely new publication--*Food, Fuel, and Plant Nutrient Use in the Future.* The week's activities also included a CAST Board of Directors' meeting, a CAST reception, a visit to the Ag Day Dinner, and various opportunities for meetings with agriculture policymakers. Scroll down to page two for more information and photos about these events.

News and Opinions

** The GMO issue has taken root and opinions sprout up on the Internet like spring dandelions. This article features a University of Florida plant geneticist who says science supports the use of genetically modified plants for food production. Another news item reports that some groups claim a recently signed law unfairly favors big GMO seed companies, while this link from a multinational company supports the content of the bill.

** Various groups seem content to keep "beating a dead horse" as the horse meat issue continues. Chicken nuggets in Greece supposedly contain horse meat, and in a disturbing turn, a pro-horse slaughter advocate in New Mexico produces a video that ironically might hurt the case for new processing plants. Access this from-the-horse's-mouth blog for various updates and links.

** The antibiotics debate moves from the feedlot to the halls of Congress. Some politicians say evidence confirms the dangers of excessive antibiotic use in agriculture, and they want restrictions. This editorial makes a case for curbing the widespread use of antibiotics in livestock production. However, many also think antibiotics are crucial to producing plentiful and healthy food. Dr. Scott Hurd has built a reputation as a scientist who looks carefully at the research in an effort to consider food safety. In this article, he explains why antibiotics remain important for animal and public health.



** This series covers the farm safety issue regarding grain bins. "Buried in Grain" provides

environmental health.

Ag on Display

Texas A&M University offers a nonthesis option M.S., thesis option M.S., and Ph.D. in plant breeding as a distance learning experience for students unable to study on campus.

Baconmania Spreading



Iowa State University will be riding high on the hog with their own baconfest next fall.

Buckeye Beef School

Beef cattle producers who want to boost profits through artificial insemination can attend a school on the subject April 30 through May 2 taught by Ohio State University Extension and Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center experts.

Radio Daze

With digital devices making transistor radios an endangered species, this blog looks at radio, farming, and the old days.

CAST Social Media

- *Twitter*
- *Facebook*
- *CAST Website*
- *CAST Blog*
- *Pinterest*

links for articles looking at tragic deaths, safety regulations, and problems with the system.

Good Vibrations on the Dairy Farm

In the latest ag-based parody, milk production rolls to some good vibrations by the Beach Boys and splashes along to a parody of a wet *Flash Dance* scene. This tribute to dairy farmers, "Feedin' a Nation," makes use of talented Midwesterners, and it promotes donations to the food bank.

News from the Far Side of the Barn

From Brew to Moo: Martin Morgan's cows go crazy for craft beer. More to the point, his herd of Red Angus cattle can't get enough of a major craft beer by-product--the spent grain that's left after the beer is brewed.



Iowa Pig Producer Gets Colbert Bump (video): Carl Blake claims to produce the best bacon in the world with his cross-bred hogs--Chinese pigs purchased from Iowa State University and Russian wild hogs. Top chefs seek out his pork for its richly flavored meat, marbled with plenty of fat. His recent appearance on The Colbert Report--with his piglets Hamlet and Little Smoky--has placed him in the limelight.

CAST Activities in the Nation's Capital Coincide with National Ag Day

Even though cold weather kept the cherry trees from blossoming, there was a lot of activity in Washington, D.C., last week and CAST was part of it all. In addition to three rollout presentations for the newest CAST Issue Paper on March 18, a number of other CAST activities took place in D.C. coinciding with National Ag Day celebrations.

Members of the CAST Board of Directors and senior staff traveled to D.C. for the Spring Board of Directors' Meeting. Over two days, the Directors discussed business items including work group proposals for future publications, membership and budget issues, and organizational governance. Executive Vice President Linda Chimenti reported on



Productive discussions at the Board of Directors meetings.

activities since the Fall 2012 Annual Meeting and presented proposals for new initiatives. Fran Boyd of Meyers & Associates joined the meeting to give an update on governmental activities, including budget concerns, and President Phil Stahlman convened a meeting of the Borlaug CAST Communication Award Selection Committee to discuss nominees for this year's award.



Ag Day dinner in Washington, D.C.

On March 19, Directors visited the offices of several USDA administrators to share information about recent CAST activities and to thank the agency leaders for their past support of CAST. That evening, CAST representatives were among the 170 people who attended the Celebration of Agriculture Dinner at the USDA Whitten Building, where U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack gave the opening remarks and this year's winners of the student Ag Day Essay Contest and Video Contest were recognized.

On March 20 CAST hosted a "Get Reacquainted with CAST" reception in the Longworth House Office Building for legislators, staffers, and stakeholders. Iowa Congressman Steve King addressed the audience, and CAST Directors and staff visited with guests to share information about resources available through the CAST website and social media outlets.



CAST President Phil Stahlman, CAST EVP Linda Chimenti, Congressman Steve King.

Visits to the offices of the American Farm Bureau Federation and the International Food Information Council rounded out a busy week in D.C., the town where the word "sequester" was on everyone's lips.

Rollout Events Started the Big Week in D.C.

Nutrients Issue Paper Making an Impact

During three presentations on March 18, Dr. David Zilberman of UC-Berkeley and Dr. Bruce Dale of Michigan State University used material from CAST's latest publication to explain the growing need to understand how we can best use nutrients to feed a hungry world. Zilberman and Dale were part of the task force team that composed the influential Issue Paper #51--*Food, Fuel, and Plant Nutrient Use in the Future*. They presented the information at a morning briefing in the Russell Senate Building (hosted by NC-FAR), at a Lunch-N-Learn seminar in the Longworth House Building (also hosted by NC-FAR), and at an afternoon session in the Doubletree Hotel (cohosted by Farm Foundation and CAST).



Dr. Zilberman, left, and Dr. Dale informed policymakers in D.C. about *food, fuel, and nutrients*.

As Dr. Dale stated, "We are in a time of profound transistion in how the world will be fueled and fed--we cannot continue forever along our current pathways; we must change, and the sooner the better."

Dr. Zilberman wrapped up their Powerpoint presentation by suggesting that agricultural interests can meet the challenge by (1) redesigning agricultural production systems, (2) improving crop varieties, (3) recycling nutrients, and (4) adopting advanced processing technologies.

The timely nature of this topic means that this publication has been downloaded regularly from the CAST website, and it has been covered in the press. For example, one analyst stated, "The issue paper further calls for producers to continue to use best management practices to manage their nutrients because healthy soil is essential to growing feed as well as cellulosic biofuels." The article, titled *Nutrient Use Efficiency Important to Energizing the World,* can be found here.

The text of Issue Paper #51 is available on the CAST website.

Friday Notes News Categories



Photos courtesy of the Agricultural Research Service (top masthead); TopLatest News (globe at right); newyorknewsgiro.com (Animal Agriculture News); northrup.org (General Interest News). Page 1 Hall of Laureates pic from worldfoodprize.com; bacon pic from ifood.tv; grain bin pic from npr.org; pic of pig farmer from americandigest.org. P. 2 pics from M.Sly and T. Van Arsdall. Food Science Sec. deep fried pic from robopug.com. Sheep pic in Inter. Sec. from Reuters. Capitol photo in Meyers Section from J. Bonner. Unless otherwise noted, photos courtesy of the USDA Agricultural Research Service.



Animal Agriculture and Environmental News

High on the Hog (video): These well-produced clips take us to hog farms and acquaint us with pig farmers and pork production.



Getting Their Sea Legs (video): Watch these six different baby animals learning to stand.

Megatrends and Beef Industry Shifts: The University of Arkansas ag folks provide insights about changes in the marketing landscape for the beef industry.

Chickens, Soy, and Record Production: Feeding animals soy in the United States and shipping out value-added products like meat and eggs represent a dual opportunity for U.S. soybean farmers.

Heart-healthy Beef: These three extra-lean beef cuts get the American Heart Association's check of approval.

Helpful Bacteria Coats: A strain of probiotic bacteria that can fight harmful bacterial infections in poultry has the ability to change its coat, according to these new findings.

Video Regulations: A Tennessee legislative panel approves a bill that requires people making undercover videos of livestock operations to turn an unedited copy over to law enforcement officers within 24 hours.

Fruit Fed Beef: A University of Nebraska researcher looks at ways to use citrus in cattle feed to reduce the amounts of *E. coli* found in foods.

Beef Genetics: The 2011 National Beef Quality Audit provides insights on quality attributes that could help ranchers fine-tune their genetic selection.

Animal Pets (videos): From a gorilla who loves cats to an elephant with its own dog, check out these astonishing stories of animal affection.



Food Science and Safety News

Fortified Yogurt: Small amounts of beta-glucan, a fiber-rich component of oats, can be added to low-fat yogurt without noticeably affecting the texture or other key characteristics, according to the USDA.

Solid Advice on Solid Foods for Babies (video): According to a new survey, 40% of mothers are feeding their babies solid food much earlier than they should.

Nay to the Neigh in this Meat: Chicken nuggets and other meat products have been recalled by Greek health authorities after being found to contain horse meat.

Bad Brain Food (opinion): This doctor thinks adults and children alike should avoid certain fatty foods because the brain could be affected.



Midwestern Snackers: According to numbers recently released by an online delivery ordering service, Chicago is the country's number one late-night delivery city.

Medical Food? An Ohio State University food scientist focuses on creating new functional foods that could prevent and treat chronic diseases without demanding major changes to diets.

Junk Food Junkies? According to some experts, and contrary to recent research, junk food may not be addictive after all.

Food Fraud: The U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention has released an updated USP Food Fraud Database that citizens can access for free to find out deceptions in approximately 2,000 foods.

Choco Worries: Global cocoa prices could more than double by 2020 if production fails to catch up with demand, according to this expert.

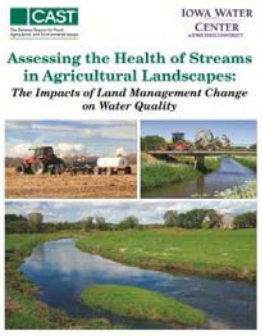


Plant Agriculture and Environmental News

Water Quality: Iowa State University ag folks provide us with *The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy,* a science-based framework to assess and reduce nutrients in Iowa waters and the Gulf of Mexico.

Related Material (above): CAST recently released the Issue Paper *Food, Fuel, and Nutrient Use in the Future*.

More Water Information: More than half of the country's rivers and streams are in poor biological health according to this new study.



Related CAST Publication: *Assessing the Health of Streams in Agricultural Landscapes: The Impacts of Land Management Change on Water Quality*

Minimizing Seed Risk: Industry leaders in agricultural seed, products, services, and plant science solutions announce the release of an initiative to promote the safe handling and management of treated seed.

Skipping Genetics: New research explains how certain traits can pass down from one generation to the next--at least in plants--without following the accepted rules of genetics.

Can't Beet That! A dozen farmers, supported by university experts and a $5 million state grant, are set to start construction of a California demonstration plant that will convert beets into ethanol.

Peace Accord: DuPont Pioneer and Monsanto agree to drop antitrust and patent lawsuits filed against each other as part of a broader licensing deal reached between the two agribusiness rivals.

Plant Dialogues: This article promotes a nature documentary on talking plants--"What Plants Talk About" will air April 3 on PBS.

Grass Heat: Studies from a USDA scientist provide a complete cost-benefit breakdown of using switchgrass pellets--potentially a cheaper source of energy--instead of fuel oil for heating.



International News

A Hypo-allergenic Apple a Day? Italian scientists and researchers are trying to develop a hypo-allergenic apple, which could provide a new frontier for the genetically modified food market.



Battle to Save Lambs (video): A late winter storm in Scotland traps sheep and new-born lambs. These photos and a video show farmers desperately working to save them.

Pigs on the Wing: The Irish government and Australian veterinarians agree to open up a potentially lucrative market for the export of pig meat from the Republic of Ireland to Australia.

Food from the Sky: Military helicopters have been deployed to carry out food drops to animals in isolated rural areas in Northern Ireland cut off by the snow.

Hogs, Water, and Regulations (opinion): This update and viewpoint looks at the dead pig situation in China water sources (see related item below).

Dead Ducks (video): Approximately one thousand duck carcasses have been found in a river in southwest China, prompting further food safety concerns.

British Hog Farmer Woes: Stark new figures show that a common pig virus, present on 99% of pig farms, has major economic implications for individual farmers and the pig industry as a whole.

If You Like Pina Colada: Researchers in Australia have created a new "pina colada" pineapple that tastes like a coconut.

Fairy Circles: The "artists" behind bizarre, barren, grassless rings dotting the desert of Southwest Africa have been found lurking right at scientists' feet--termites.



General Interest News

The Value of Agriculture (video): This animation explains agriculture from planting seeds to the Internet--a look at how innovations in farming and growing our own food civilized society.

Farming the Windy City (video): Indoor "vertical" farming is a hot trend, although some farms have had more success than others. This indoor farm is taking it to new levels in a giant warehouse just outside Chicago.



Digital Ag Insights: University of Nebraska ag folks give us a look at farming in the digital age--impressive magazine site here for various articles on agriculture.

Gobble Blogging: This interesting site looks at setting up a turkey farm--an inside look at a family farming situation.

Move over Letterman: A Virginia Agriculture group gives us the top ten list of common misconceptions about agriculture.

Farmland Bubble: This writer wonders if the bubble is about to burst on farmland prices.

Ag Day Wrap-up: This site looks at some of the happenings on National Agriculture Day.

Look to the Skies: Unmanned drones have emerged as a controversial tool for the military and national security apparatus--soon they may become widespread over America's farms.

Keeping Them Down on the Farm: This Nebraska educator helps with outreach programs aimed at keeping young people in the state and working in agriculture.

Meyers & Associates Report



March 29, 2013

No report this week.

Fran Boyd
Meyers & Associates
Washington, D.C.

CAST Information

Check out CAST videos at the SchoolTube site. Click HERE to view highly regarded ag-science videos about probiotics, food safety, and water issues--or the latest video, *The Direct Relationship between Animal Health and Food Safety Outcomes*.



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 Linda Chimenti (lchimenti@cast-science.org). Instead, please encourage your colleagues to join CAST and thereby become eligible for all membership benefits (contact Melissa Sly, CAST Director of Council Operations, at 515-292-2125, ext. 232 or msly@cast-science.org). 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**
*** American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers**
*** American Society of Animal Science**
*** American Society of Plant Biologists**
*** American Veterinary Medical Association**
*** Aquatic Plant Management Society**
*** Council of Entomology Department Administrators**
*** Croplife America**
*** DuPont Pioneer**
*** Elanco Animal Health**

*** Iowa Soybean Association**
*** Monsanto**
*** National Pork Board**
*** North Central Weed Science Society**
*** Northeastern Weed Science Society**
*** Novus International, Inc.**
*** Poultry Science Association**
*** Society for In Vitro Biology**
*** Syngenta Crop Protection**
*** The Fertilizer Institute**
*** 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.

Dan Gogerty (Managing Communications Editor)
The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology
4420 West Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50014-3347
Phone: 515-292-2125, ext. 222;
Fax: 515-292-4512; E-mail: dgogerty@cast-science.org
** *With assistance from: Carol Gostele (Managing Scientific Editor) and Teresa Decker (Administrative Assistant)*

CAST
The Science Source for Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Issues