

Discovery at Ohio State: New Thought for Food - JULY 2020

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InFACT's Research Agenda Exploring Problems Brought to Light by COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the ways in which our food system is...*less than ideal*.

Wondering how InFACT's research agenda is needed to resolve some of the major food issues of this unique moment in history? Check out our curated list from the news—with links to compelling stories that highlight the needed agri-cultural transformation on which our agenda is focused.



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Connecting Ohio State Students to Healthy Food During the Pandemic

Best Food Forward, a student organization supported by Club Advisor Brian Snyder and financed in part by an innovative partnership between [InFACT, the Ohio State Health Plan and OSU Office of Human Resources](#), is in its fourth year of providing healthy produce and cooking tips for the Ohio State community. As students left campus abruptly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Best Food Forward had to pivot to prevent food insecurity.



[Read the Story](#)

InFACT On the (Virtual) Road

The pandemic may have taken conferences online for now, but it hasn't kept InFACT from having an impact. Check out some of the ways we've stayed connected.

- Both Casey Hoy and Brian Snyder attended the invitation-only **Regenerative Ag Science Convening** involving select agricultural leaders from across the country. The event, co-hosted by **TomKat Ranch** and the **Center for Regenerative Agriculture at Chico State University**, took place April 2-3. Since the convening, Brian has agreed to co-chair a subcommittee on Leadership Development, which will be advancing its work beginning in August.
- Brian was recently selected to co-chair a new **Small and Very Small Meat Processing Issues Working Group** for the **National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**. This group was in the formative stages since last year, but the urgency has heightened because of the meat supply chain issues that have emerged with the recent COVID-19 pandemic. There is much interest in Congress, and a greater chance than there has been in years, to advance new legislation to bolster this important segment of the agricultural industry. The importance of small and very small processing plants is linked not only to improved supply chain resilience, but also enhanced regional economies and viability for small and medium-sized livestock farms across the country.
- Casey participated in the two-day workshop of the **Cooperative Governance Pilot Project on Gene Editing of Crops for Regenerative Agriculture**, hosted online by the **University of Minnesota Forever Green** initiative, June 17-18. This invitation-only workshop attended by a national group of scientists and biotech business

leaders, tackled the question of whether an approach to public engagement in governing the use of genetic engineering techniques like CRISPR could be used to develop cover crops that would diversify agricultural ecosystems and provide continuous living cover in row crop production systems like the corn belt. Stakeholder advisory and oversight boards and certifications were mechanisms that will be explored further.

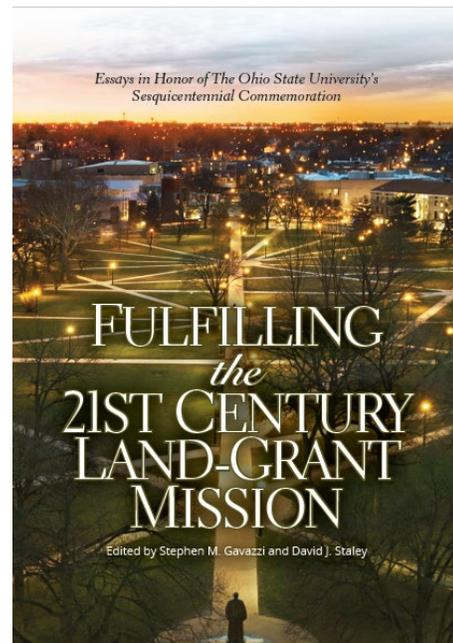
- Brian participated in the **18th Annual Forum of the Sustainable Ag and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF)** network, held online July 13-24. This year's theme was *Fields of Vision: Building on Our Assets for Resilient Food Systems* and featured many presenters from Missouri and Kansas. Among many interesting workshops, a key presentation was entitled *Leveraging Land Grant Institutions as a Force to Address Racism in the Food System*.
- Casey served as lead organizer and facilitator for the online convening of the national **Sustainable Agriculture Education Association** on July 17. Casey led the **Ohio Sustainable Agriculture Education Network (OSAEN)** in organizing a national conference, *AgriCultural Crossroads: Social and Ecological Convergence in the Heartland*, originally scheduled to be held in person at **Ohio State** and **Central State Universities** this year. The in-person conference currently has been postponed until July 22-25, 2021. The online convening had over 180 participants registered from throughout the US and Canada and featured a plenary to introduce the conference topics and venues, a World Café to brainstorm and gather input from SAEA members on the program and conference themes (<http://www.sustainableaged.org/2020-ohio/>), an Open Space session for topics proposed by the participants, and a happy hour mixer (BYO refreshments of course), all accomplished with breakout rooms in CarmenZoom.
- In line with this year's SAFSF Forum theme, Brian was recently selected to participate in a new **SAFSF Farm and Food Systems Lenders and Investors Group**, which will kick-off in August. This cohort of national funders and investors will be looking at issues related to financing new food system infrastructure on a primarily local and/or regional basis, and was open only to those employing significant investment strategies. InFACT was selected to participate on the basis of our current strategic plan, which would combine research and technical assistance with innovative financing in support of community-based groups, institutions, municipalities and for-profit corporations wishing to promote such development.

Preorder Now: *Fulfilling the 21st Century Land-Grant Mission*

Be sure to preorder your copy of ***Fulfilling the 21st Century Land-Grant Mission: Essays in Honor of The Ohio State University's Sesquicentennial Commemoration***, edited by Stephen M. Gavazzi and David J. Staley. InFACT leaders Casey Hoy and Brian Snyder authored an essay in the collection titled "Food and Nutritional Security, Still the Grand Challenge for Land-Grant Universities."

Use the code OSU21ST at checkout to take \$9.95 off the list price, now through December 21.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

[Building Community Capacity around Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers](#)

August 5-6, 2020

[Upper Midwest Ag Safety Online Expo](#)

August 11-13, 2020

[Emerging Leaders in Food & Ag](#)

August 17-18, 2020

[Regenerative Food Systems Investment Forum](#)

September 15-16, 2020

[Land Use Actions for the Future of Our County](#)

September 24, October 22, November 19 & December 3, 2020

[Acres U.S.A Eco-Ag Conference & Trade Show](#)

December 1-4, 2020

[OEFFA's 42nd Annual Conference, Our Time: Essential Links for a Strong Food Chain](#)

February 10-15, 2021

[The Power of Food: Cultivating Equitable Policy through Collective Action – Kansas City, MO](#)

September 20-22, 2021

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

[SWACO 2021 Community Waste Reduction Grant Program](#)

Deadline: August 28

[Learn more about funding opportunities](#)

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