What's in a hot dog?

Did you know beef from grass-fed cattle eliminates the threat of E. coli, or that hormones used in livestock production accelerate the development of young women? Hopefully not, because these statements are false, of course.

But many people believe these and other claims in part because social networking sites and digital media are bigger today, according to Janet Riley, senior vice president of public affairs and communications at the North American Meat Institute, last week discussed the situation last week at the National Institute for Animal Agriculture annual meeting in Indianapolis. NAMA measured how changes in water mass around the globe via its Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE). Launched in 2002, GRACE measures water mass changes in water mass around the globe via its Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE). Launched in 2002, GRACE measures water mass changes in

Websites tackle myths about meat

“Grass-fed meat could have a major impact on agriculture,” said Glenn Fischer, NIAA chairman. “We’ve reached our limit on natural (seafood) production,” Fischer said. “So, does processing make it much more healthy? A study, which pooled data from 14 studies, evaluated the risk of colorectal cancer in people who consumed red or processed meat and found no association between red/processed meat and cancer, according to MeatMythCrushers.com. The study, which included different formulations to meet a variety of nutritional needs, including low-fat, low sodium and gluten-free products. Current USDA dietary recommendations call for Americans to consume 5 to 7 ounces of meat and beans daily.”

“The future of American ag depends on water availability.” About 8 percent of food produced in the U.S. from about 250 different crops comes from California’s central valley, Famiglietti noted. The water scientist expressed concern that evaporating water availability could lead to further depletion of groundwater sources out west. “There is a lot of risk to getting all the food in the world into water availability are changing,” Famiglietti said. “We think water availability continues to rise. Water availability in the Midwest, for example, trended up in recent years. "One of the things we’re looking at is water in the world are getting wetter and dry areas are getting drier," said Famiglietti, who outlined the issue recently on an episode of CNN’s “60 Minutes.”

The shift in water availability could have a major impact on agriculture. "Water is important to the business of (animal agriculture). Aquaculture brings to it another level," Michael Coe, NIAA board member from Portland, Ore., said last week at the annual conference in Indianapolis. Seafood demand continues to increase in the U.S. and worldwide. The U.S. ranks third in fish catches, but only 14% in aquaculture production. The lack of production and booming demand make the U.S. the second-largest importer of seafood. "With over 92% of seafood being imported into the U.S., there is a large market for U.S. producers to engage," said Glenn Fischer, NIAA chairman.

Invocery signals that determine the size of the swine herd changed from green to yellow in recent months as an inventory buildup of swine and pigs as of March 1 (60.93 million head) increased 8 percent, compared to the same time last year.

The swine inventory in Illinois increased 9 percent, to 4.65 million head, from a year ago. The market hog inventory (60 million head) increased 8 percent, while the pig crop (a record 28.8 million head) jumped 9 percent December through February. "Numbers are significantly larger (than a year ago) across the board," said Steve Meyer, president of Paragon Economics, during a teleconference hosted by the National Pork Board. The boost in hog inventory was due in part to expansion of the hog herd along with reduced losses to porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV), which decimated the herd last year. "It looks like we’ve caught back to the long-term upward trend of litters," said Dan Vaught, economist with AgSource Services.

The number of pigs saved per litter was a record 10.17 last quarter compared to 9.53 a year ago. Chris Hurt, Purdue University economist, believes hog prices on a live weight basis could average between $50 and $55 per hundredweight this year. Robert Brown, an independent market analyst, projects a carcass price range of $66 to $71 per hundredweight compared to $92 to $117 last year.

“The incentive to expand has been so sharp,” Hurt said. We think we’ll see modest expansion of the breeding herd.” The breeding inventory on March 1 totaled 5.98 million head, up 2 percent. Producers intend to boost farrowings 2 percent from March to May followed by a 1 percent decline this summer.

Sinking or swimming? NIAA sees growth opportunities in aquaculture

The theme of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) annual conference, “Water and the Future of Animal Agriculture,” focused on more than just making sure four-legged animals have adequate hydration. NIAA also sees opportunities to raise more animals in water via aquaculture. “Water is important to the business of (animal agriculture). Aquaculture brings to it another level,” Michael Coe, NIAA board member from Portland, Ore., said last week at the annual conference in Indianapolis. Seafood demand continues to increase in the U.S. and worldwide. The U.S. ranks third in fish catches, but only 14% in aquaculture production. The lack of production and booming demand make the U.S. the second-largest importer of seafood. “With over 92% of seafood being imported into the U.S., there is a large market for U.S. producers to engage,” said Glenn Fischer, NIAA chairman.

NIAA members, which include Illinois Farm Bureau, recently added an Aquatic Livestock Committee. That committee last fall hosted its first stakeholder meeting in Denver. “Aquaculture is the fastest growing area of animal agriculture,” Coe said. And it appears that trend will continue, according to the NIAA board member. “We’ve reached our limit on natural (seafood) production,” Coe said. “Any growth will come from aquaculture.” Expansion of seafood production won’t be limited to the U.S. In recent years, aquaculture could expand in the Midwest due in part to an ample supply of feed. Soybean meal, rich in protein and soy oil, efficiently meets nutritional needs of most fish species, according to the Illinois Soybean Association. It also can lower production costs as fish meal and oil prices have been pressured in recent years by the surge in demand.

“I believe there are opportunities for aquaculture in states like Indiana,” Ted McKinney, Illinois Ag Director, said at the NIAA conference. “We do a good job providing protein and shipping it to places around the world.” —Daniel Grant

Inventories buildup, lower prices could slow hog expansion in its tracks

Market signals that determine the size of the swine herd changed from green to yellow in recent months as an inventory buildup prompted prices to take a U-turn. USDA, in its quarterly hogs and pigs report released Friday, estimated the inventory of all hogs and pigs as of March 1 shot up 7 percent nationwide, to 65.93 million head, compared to the same time last year. The swine inventory in Illinois increased 9 percent, to 4.65 million head, from a year ago. The market hog inventory (60 million head) increased 8 percent, while the pig crop (a record 28.8 million head) jumped 9 percent December through February. “Numbers are significantly larger (than a year ago) across the board,” said Steve Meyer, president of Paragon Economics, during a teleconference hosted by the National Pork Board. The boost in hog inventory was due in part to expansion of the hog herd along with reduced losses to porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDV), which decimated the herd last year. “It looks like we’ve caught back to the long-term upward trend of litters,” said Dan Vaught, economist with AgSource Services.