

## **Betsy says HI!!!!**

### **Announcements**

**The next LABQUEST meeting will be this Wednesday, May 14 at 12:30 at the WOMC Board Room.**

### **Science Report Highlights**

Betsy and Dan thought all the items in following science report from Charles were interesting but most liked the following:

- Can Stem Cell Therapy Be Used To Treat Parkinson's Disease?
- Measles Could Become Endemic In The US
- FDA Suspends Milk Safety Program – due to staff being let go
- FDA To Phase Out Petroleum Based Synthetic Food Dyes By End Of 2026
- Will Maryland's Last Coal-Fired Power Plant Be Closed

### **Science Report**

#### **Self-Protective Measures –**

You should get your medical advice from official sources, your doctor, or your pharmacist ... not from this Report or the internet. Per recommendations by FDA and CDC, everyone should maintain current vaccinations for the three respiratory viruses: Covid, flu and RSV (for RSV, adults [over 60](#) and children [younger than 8 months](#)) - unless your doctor advises against it based on your medical record. Adults over 50 should have had the [Shingrix vaccine for shingles](#) (two doses 2 to 6 months apart, good indefinitely). Adults over 50 should have the [Pneumococcal Vaccine](#).

- [7230 Cases Of Apple Juice Recalled](#) - because of the potential for contamination with mold. Details [here](#). FDA website notice, [here](#).
- [63,200 Pounds Of Oats Recalled](#) - due to contamination with plastic. [Details](#). FDA [announcement](#).
- [NIH BMI Calculator](#) - Use the [NIH](#) National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute [calculator](#) to find your Body Mass Index (BMI). Above 25 - overweight. Above 30, check with your doctor, consider better nutrition, and exercise.
- [Basal Metabolic Rate \(BMR\)](#) - Your BMR is how many calories you burn just sitting in your chair. Use the [calculator](#) to get your BMR. Then consult the exercise table to see how many calories you can consume daily with your current exercise plan and still maintain your current weight.
- [Body Roundness Index \(BRI\)](#) - is a new medical screening tool for estimating *visceral* fat, [details](#). Use a calculator to get your BRI [here](#). Additional background from Harvard, [here](#). Results to your doc.

## Vaccine and Therapeutic News -

- Can Stem Cell Therapy Be Used To Treat Parkinson's Disease? - Parkinson's Disease is an [incurable, degenerative brain condition](#) affecting about 1 percent of those over age 60 worldwide. Two recently published studies ([Study 1](#), [Study 2](#)) describe successful *safety* testing in small clinical trials. Promising, but larger studies will be needed to assess *effectiveness*. Stay tuned.
- Measles Could Become Endemic In The US - A recently published modeling [study](#) by Stanford University researchers indicated that at present vaccination rates there will be 850,000 cases, 170,000 hospitalizations, and 2,500 deaths over the next 25 years. A 10% decline in vaccinations will result in 11.1 million cases in that same time period. This, a quarter century after the disease had been declared eradicated in the US ... shameful!

## Other Health Science News -

- FDA Suspends Milk Safety Program - due to lack of laboratory testing personnel. [Details](#).
- Foods To Eat, And To Avoid, For Hay Fever - Some foods help by easing inflammation and boosting the immune system. Here are 9: berries, pineapple, carrots, onions, kale, peppers, ginger, garlic, salmon. Others can magnify itchiness and sneezing. Here are 4: apples, melon, dairy (particularly aged cheese), alcohol. [Details](#).
- FDA To Phase Out Petroleum Based Synthetic Food Dyes By End Of 2026 - [Details](#) and a video. The list: Red 40, Red 3, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3. Tyson Foods has [announced](#) that it expects to complete the elimination of petroleum based dyes from its products *this month*.
- Natural Food Colors Produced By Yeast Fermentation - [Phytolon](#) (Yokne'am Illit Israel) and [Ginkgo Bioworks](#) (Boston MA) have [announced](#) that two colors, 'Beetroot Red' and 'Prickly Pear Yellow' will commercially available in the US upon FDA approval. Color spectrum range: purple, pink, red, orange, and yellow.
- 5 Bad Things You Can Do To Lose Visceral Fat - [here](#). Note internal link on strength training.[Phil J.]
- Build A Better Pistachio - and they will plant it, based on the now more complete [genome of the tree](#) described by researchers at the University of California at Davis. [Better nutrition, and better resilience to extreme weather conditions](#), are the goals. [Publication](#).
- Are Your Stools Healthy? - Check the Bristol Stool Chart [here](#). Ideally you should be a Type 3 or 4. This simple check, that you can routinely do yourself in a few seconds, may help catch a problem early, and could provide important information for your doctor. [Details](#).
- Women's Skin Care - 4 ingredients that dermatologists say actually work: retinoids, vitamin C, niacinamide, and alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs). Details [here](#) and [here](#).

## Practical Nutrition -

- Best Canned Organic Refried Beans - La Preferida Organic Refried Beans, just beans and a bit of salt, [here](#). Add what you like to tune-up the flavor. Or you can do it the hard way, [here](#).
- Do Your Avocados Have Strings? - They're harmless, and edible, so not to worry. [Details](#).
- Can You Safely Eat A Brown Avocado? - It depends. If a *cut* avocado has been exposed to the air a little bit too long, then yes. If you cut into one and find brown spots, then you can cut around the spots, remove them, and eat the green parts. If you cut into an avocado and find that the browning begins at the stem and spreads out, then it is moldy and should be discarded. [Details](#).
- Misleading Words For Sugar - High-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, barley malt, dextrose, maltose and rice syrup are all [forms of sugar](#). Certain blood alcohols sometimes used as sweeteners, such as Erythritol and Xylitol, are made by the body and occur naturally in certain foods - but in very small amounts. They have recently been [linked to heart disease and stroke by Cleveland Clinic researchers](#), and should be avoided as food additives. Chemical sugar substitutes to be avoided: acesulfame potassium, advantame, allulose, aspartame, brazzein, lactitol, maltitol, mannitol, neotame, rebaudioside A (reb-A), saccharin, sorbitol, thaumatin and trehalose.
- Pellet Grills - make a healthier and more convenient choice for precise cooking/smoking, without generating the toxic materials created when some foods are burnt. You can also take your choice of natural wood pellets to feed into the grill, rather than be limited to charcoal briquettes of unknown chemical composition and smoke taste. 24 pellet grills are tested and reviewed, [here](#).
- Protein Is Essential For Good Health - and helps with weight control by promoting a feeling of satiety. See 13 suggestions [here](#) for natural food sources that don't also carry too much saturated fat. Tune-up: little or no beef or pork, even if lean ... and consider cycling legumes through a chilling process to convert some of the complex carbohydrates to resistant starches (fiber).
- Is Your Favorite Food Ultra-Processed? - and if so, what's a good substitute. View the Northeastern University [TrueFood Dashboard](#).
- Most Nutritious Vegetables and Fruits Rank-Ordered by CDC - See the list [here](#). Chinese cabbage = bok choy.

## Environmental Science News -

- Will Maryland's Last Coal-Fired Power Plant Be Closed - 16 MD coal-fired plants have been closed since 2012. The last one, the Brandon Shores plant near Baltimore, was scheduled to close this June, but the regional power grid operator, [PJM Interconnection](#), [won't allow the closure until 2029](#) - by which time they expect to have completed a \$1.5 billion package of grid upgrades. Stay tuned.
- Maryland's Secret Beach - You'll need reservations. [Details](#).
- Shallow, Horizontal, Geothermal-Source Heat Pumps - [are practical](#) in many suburban yards, and are more efficient in extreme hot and cold weather than air-sourced versions. [Details and diagram](#).

- \$20,000 EV Truck - Slate Auto has just unveiled its first product, the Slate Truck: two-door, no frills, no infotainment center, hand crank windows, actual knobs, no autonomous driving, no paint. The company offers a DIY flat-pack kit to convert the pick-up bed to an SUV. Details and photos, [here](#), with a cute, must-see video. [Slate Auto](#) (Troy MI). More background [here](#).
- Texas Fish Story - 153 pound, [7'3" Alligator Gar](#) caught on a 2 lb fishing line .. took 4 hours. [Mack]
- Climate Change Expected To Increase Arsenic In Paddy-Raised Rice - Temperature and CO2 levels projected by 2050 are expected to increase the *inorganic* (absorbed, not organically incorporated) [arsenic content of open field \(paddy-raised\) rice](#) in Asia substantially [Inorganic arsenic is a carcinogen](#). Columbia, Johns Hopkins and Chinese Academy of Science researchers [modeled](#) rice paddy procedures used in: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam. Their results project a sharp rise in associated cancer cases, especially cancers of the lung, bladder, and skin ... unless rice paddy water management changes are made. [Peter M.K.]

#### Other Science News -

- NVIDIA (Santa Clara CA) - announces up to a \$500 billion investment over the next four years in US-based AI infrastructure. [Details](#).
- Passenger Aircraft Have Gotten Slower Since The 1990's - It's not your imagination. Now the Canadian aircraft manufacturing company Bombardier is bringing out the [Global 8000](#) ... the fastest civil passenger jet in the world ... top speed Mach 0.94. Get there sooner! Woooosh!

#### Nice Thing - [full screen, skip ad]

Rusalka - a 1901 opera by Czech composer Antonín Dvořák, written to be sung in Czech. A water nymph (Czech folklore) falls in love with a human prince, and seeks help from a forest witch to become human. Plot synopsis and other details, [here](#).

- Song To The Moon - Měsíčku na nebi hlubokém - Aria sung by soprano Frederica von Stade, 2012, [here](#). [Jena D.]
- Song To The Moon - Aria sung by soprano Renée Fleming, 2014, with subtitles [here](#).
- Czech Lyrics And Translation - [here](#).