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Weekly news update from the KPMG New Zealand Agribusiness Network

Welcome to this week's issue of Field Notes, a summary of Agribusiness news from across the sector, prepared by the KPMG Agribusiness network.

Week in review

In Aotearoa...

[The Meat Industry Association reported that red meat exports exceeded \\$1.1 billion in February 2025, a 25% increase compared to February 2024](#) [1 April, NZ Herald]. The United States remained the largest export market with a 32% rise to \$339 million, while exports to China increased by 5% to \$278 million.

[The first ever kiwifruit charter powered by low-emissions biofuel has been completed by Fresh Carriers Co. Ltd and Zespri International Limited](#) [27 March, Rural News Group]. The Kowhai refuelled in Hong Kong with a biofuel blend made from used cooking oil, which is unavailable in New Zealand, before sailing to Tauranga to load 1.2 million trays of SunGold and 16 containers of RubyRed kiwifruit bound for Greater China.

[Meanwhile, kiwifruit marketer Seeka is trialling a robotic stacker at its packhouse in Te Puke](#) [26 March, Farmers Weekly]. The lightweight Electrostack is ideal for smaller production spaces and can stack eight boxes of kiwifruit per minute, significantly saving labour, time, and cost.

In international news...

[The new American administration has announced tariffs on more than 125 countries, including 10% on New Zealand products](#) [3 April, NZ Herald]. Many countries will receive a baseline 10% tariff, however, the United States' largest trading partners, China and the European Union have higher duties of 34% and 20%, respectively.

[According to the Climate and Environmental Finance Report, Ireland spent €159.2 million \(NZ \\$300 million\) on international climate finance in 2023, a 32% increase from 2022](#) [30 March, Agriland]. The funding focuses on ocean protection, biodiversity, and climate resilience, with a commitment to provide €225 million (NZ \$425 million) annually in climate financing by 2025.

[A new report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation highlights concerning trends in the loss of genetic diversity among plants and forests](#) [31 March, Agriland]. The report assesses the global status of conserving and sustainably using plant genetic resources of 128 countries concluding that genetic diversity is crucial for resilient agri-food systems that can withstand climate challenges

[Australian farmers' have mixed feelings about a new report into supermarket power](#) [25 March, ABC News]. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's report highlights the power imbalance between major supermarkets and suppliers, recommending increased transparency and fairer pricing practises.

Spotlight stories

Research and Development: [Native Australian fungi and bacteria found to stop unstoppable fall armyworm](#) [27 March, ABC Rural]

In Australia, research from Queensland's Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the CSIRO has unveiled promising biocontrol methods to combat fall armyworm, leveraging native fungi and bacteria. The fall armyworm feeds on crops, reducing yields by up to 73%. Scientists have discovered that biological controls offer a faster and more efficient alternative to traditional insecticides, eliminating the pest within 24 hours and sidestepping the issue of resistance. DPI plans to continue trials with plans to commercialise the technique in the coming years.

Farm Waste: [Farm plastic waste: Push for regulated recycling scheme by 2030](#) [1 April, RNZ]

In New Zealand, efforts to regulate farm plastic recycling are intensifying with calls to implement a comprehensive scheme by 2030. Despite voluntary initiatives by Plasback and Agrecovery who recycle 60% of the yearly 10,000 tonnes of plastic bale wrap, many farmers still burn or bury farm waste. The Minister for the Environment is advocating for mandatory recycling to boost efficiency and sustainability. As innovative alternatives like edible and biodegradable netting are explored, experts urge higher recycling targets and incentives for compliance to tackle the significant challenge of agricultural plastic waste.

This week's headlines

[Singapore set to require green credentials](#) [27 March, Farmers Weekly]

From next year, Singapore will mandate publicly listed importers to disclose supply chain greenhouse gas emissions, affecting New Zealand suppliers. This move aligns with Singapore's Green Plan 2030, targeting carbon neutrality by 2050. Rebecca Sharpe of Better Earth Ventures explained Singapore's balance of business growth and strict climate commitments may prompt New Zealand exporters to lower emissions to align with the emissions reporting requirements.

[Chatbot set to answer dairy farmers' questions](#) [28 March, Farmers Weekly]

A new chatbot, developed by University of Canterbury PhD student, could provide dairy farmers instant access to DairyNZ's comprehensive Facts and Figures guide. The chatbot aims to reduce the information overload farmers may face from multiple data sources by covering a wide range of topics from farm finances to animal health. The AI-driven tool will provide quick, accurate answers to farmer queries, supporting on-farm decision-making. The tool is scheduled to debut at the 2025 Southern AgriTech and Innovation Day in May.

[New policy to ensure food quality and safety](#) [20 March, China Daily]

China has announced new guidelines aiming to enhance oversight from farms to consumer tables, ensuring food quality and public health protection. The guideline, issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, will ensure greater coordination between regulatory bodies and improve food safety at every production stage. This will be achieved by establishing a traceability system for agricultural products to monitor from farm to market, prevent unsafe products from entering the supply chain, and enable authorities to respond quickly to safety issues.

At KPMG, we believe that the future success of New Zealand depends on our ability and willingness to add value to our primary produce and take it to the world. Keeping informed on the latest news and discussions is just one of the ways to make this happen for New Zealand's most significant contributor to prosperity.

If others in your organisation would find this publication useful, please forward this email on to them. They can then [subscribe](#) to our weekly newsletter.

Regards,



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