



AGRIBUSINESS

Field Notes

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23 April 2020 – This week's headlines



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BLOG OF THE WEEK

Introductory comments to the Epidemic Response Committee – Thursday 23 April at 11am

Thank you for inviting me to provide my observations on how New Zealand's food and fibre industry can contribute to country's economic recovery from the pandemic. I am KPMG's Global Head of Agri-Food, leading a network of professionals working in over 50 countries with many of the world's leading agri-food companies. I am also a member of Te Hono, a network of New Zealand food and fibre industry leaders and have been the lead author of the KPMG Agribusiness Agenda for the last decade.

Over the last month I have talked with more than 70 industry leaders and I can assure the committee that our industry is ready to rise to challenge of leading New Zealand's economic recovery. We have long been the developed nation with the greatest reliance on growing and selling biological products to the world to pay for our schools, roads and hospitals – now more than ever the industry recognises it needs to step forward to ensure that our country is able to maintain the living standards we have become accustomed to.

The industry has spent the last decade shaping an ambition to provide outstanding, ethically

produced food and fibre products to discerning customers around the world with respect and reciprocity to our climate, land, water and living systems.

Covid-19 has not changed the industry's resolve to continue to play its part in responding to the challenges of climate change, restoring our waterways or ensuring the sustainable use of our land and oceans. Now is not the time to back away from these commitments but to seek ways to accelerate our transformation so we can capture the economic benefits they will create for all New Zealanders faster.

Water is fundamental to the industry. We consistently fail to store enough of our water across the country to maximise the value we grow. As the government seeks shovel ready infrastructure projects, enabling water storage schemes that guarantee year-round water must be a priority. Reliable water across the country, will deliver economic and environmental benefits to all.

Lockdowns and fears of food scarcity have raised the awareness of food and its importance in our lives to the highest level since the Second World War. This presents the industry with significant opportunities as the producer of some of the world's best produce.

The response to Covid-19 has had material impacts on many of the countries and consumers we sell too. While it is too early to predict with confidence how markets may look

in 12 months' time there are clear signals we need respond to.

Rising unemployment and declining incomes globally mean consumers will buy less in the coming months. We expect the purchases they do make to be more considered and conscious. Product attributes become more important than ever. This supports continued progress towards our environmental aspirations.

However, many attributes beyond the environment are being amplified by the virus. A product's ability to deliver a health outcome, and particularly to strengthen a consumer's immunity system, will increasingly influence purchasing decisions. Ensuring the health benefits of our products are a value driver requires commitment to science programmes that support producers to make verified health claims when telling their stories. The government can assist organisations in obtaining the proof to back their claims.

Science is also important in ensuring our products meet the needs of consumers. It is critical we are on a level playfield in terms of the technologies we have access to. Now is the time to initiate a wider conversation on how we utilise new solutions, like gene editing, if they support and enhance the core attributes that we as a country wish to be famous for. The pandemic's source appears to be an animal market in China. Globally this has fuelled the debate around the role animals play in the food system, but it has also raised the desire of consumers to source safe, reliable, trusted products.

We have always been high integrity producers. Our success in controlling the Coronavirus is being recognised internationally and amplifying the global perspective that New Zealand is a safe country. This provides an opportunity for us to own a narrative surrounding trusted food and to capture the hearts and minds of premium consumers. Lifting our investment in food safety and provenance traceability is required to

support this effort. The government has an important role to play in accelerating initiatives in this area. One practical example would be for them to take a lead in data sharing.

A notable global trend from lockdown is the explosion in use of digital channels to purchase food. The industry needs to dramatically accelerate how it uses these technologies to connect our products to customers. Covid-19 has given organisations around the world the opportunity to pull forward their future and recreate themselves digitally; in New Zealand this could mean new collaborations around radical business models that could see us delivering fresh product baskets to a customer's door anywhere in the world to capture more of the value we grow.

Realising new business relies on us being able to continue to trade freely. As country's move to protect local industries and local jobs this ability is being challenged. A shift towards protectionism threatens the industry's growth. It requires the government to double down on efforts to protect free trade and market access. We also need to ensure our exporters have the confidence to sell in an environment where business failures will reach unprecedented levels; there is a potential role for government in providing credit insurance if this becomes impossible to source commercially.

Given our ability to visit customers around the world will be constrained for some time, as will the ability of visitors to come to New Zealand, I recommend we redeploy the capability that exists within Tourism NZ to tell New Zealand's food story globally – this keeps our country in the minds of potential visitors who are also likely consumers of our premium food and fibre products. It provides a platform companies can use to tell their own stories.

The industry has been seeking people to support its growth for a decade and has used overseas labour to fill vacancies. Without people the industry will be unable to deliver on its growth potential. It is ready to provide career

opportunities to New Zealanders however support is needed to attract people to the regions where opportunities exist and to provide the training to enable them to prosper in their new careers.

Before closing, I would also like to acknowledge the contribution farmers, processors and distributors of food are making in response to the growing food insecurity challenges that Covid-19 has created in our society. The issues we are facing today, with the potential of more than 1 million kiwis being or becoming food insecure by the end of the month, are significant but highlight the importance of thinking deeply about how we ensure we feed our five million every single day. As we emerge from the current crisis it is important that we turn our minds to developing a National Food Strategy, as a nutritionally secure New Zealand is critical if we are to tell the world we produce the best food in the world.

The pandemic has given us the opportunity to challenge everything we do. The now normal is not the normal we have been used to. Disruption creates opportunity, now is the time for the government and industry to partner in innovative ways, to execute quickly and capture the opportunities in front of us – with the way MPI and the industry have worked together over the last month, I believe this can be done and food and fibre will lead our economic recovery. Thank you again for the invitation and I look forward to your questions.

Ian Proudfoot

Global Head of Agribusiness
KPMG- Auckland



Food Innovation

[Coronavirus will boost clean meat trend, says supplier](#) [17 April, Oliver

Morrison, Food Navigator] Cultured meat supplier 'Peace of Mind' Co-Founder David Brandes reports that whilst the Covid-19 pandemic is a setback for the cultured meat sector in the short term, he believes that the crisis will provide a "new normal" which could hasten consumers looking for sustainable and safe food solutions. Cultured meat has been reported to be worse than normal meat due to the carbon dioxide released by the laboratories, however Mr Brandes reports that over time the sector will become more energy efficient and that cultured meat production is far less water intensive than conventional meat production. Mr Brandes sees opportunity in the future for cultured meat to become personalised in its nutritional profile to cater for various nutritional deficiencies experienced by consumers.



Aquaculture

[Aquaculture – an opportunity to diversify](#) [16 April, Damian Moran,

Benie Chambers & Matt Plant, Plant and Food Research, Rural News] The fastest-growing animal production sector is Aquaculture, which has had global annual growth rates of 6 percent over the last 15 years. Consumption of aquatic food has risen to an average of 20 kilograms per person annually. Investors, landowners and farmers are increasingly interested in the potential for aquaculture production to diversify land and water use within New Zealand. Pāmu commissioned AgResearch and Plant & Food Research to consider how aquaculture production could be adapted into the land and water resources of a Canterbury dairy farm. It has been reported that low nutrient footprint production is to use aquaculture outputs in the wider farming ecosystem. This method requires sufficient storage capacity for the effluent water.



Biosecurity

[Deadly olive tree disease across Europe 'could cost billions'](#) [13 April,

Matt McGrath, BBC News] New research which developed an economic model show that Xylella fastidiosa disease could cost olive oil producing regions billions of euros and increase the cost of olive oil for consumers. The disease is spread by insects and has already killed large numbers of trees in Italy, after being first discovered in 2013. Crop yields have declined by 60 percent since it was first discovered. The researchers report that in a worst-case scenario in Italy costs could reach €5.2 billion (approx. NZD\$9.3 billion). Greece and Spain are also at risk of losing large amounts of money to the disease, and the three countries together produce 95 percent of the European olive oil production. The disease can also infect cherry, almond and plum trees and works by limiting the trees ability to move water and nutrients. The Xylella bacterium has also been found in Spain, France and Portugal. The researchers reported that further research is needed in cultivar resistance traits, as well as vector control and inoculum suppression to limit the disease's spread.



Pork

[Pig-headed butcher ruling causing issues](#) [15 April, Nigel Malthus,

Rural News] NZ Pork Chief Executive David Baines has reported that they have lost 50 percent of their normal market due to the forced closure of restaurants and independent butchers. As a result, the relaxation of Covid-19 lockdown rules to alert level 3 may not be enough to stop an animal welfare crisis on the country's pig farms due to a surplus of pigs on-farm. Mr Baines states that the six abattoirs across the country are under a lot of pressure as they need to break the carcasses down, have social distancing and also have fewer staff. There are no established export markets to pick up the slack and is geared almost entirely

towards domestic production. NZ Pork is working at developing export outlets with the Ministry for Primary Industries as these require country to country agreements. Pig Farmer Jason Palmer reports that he is doing his best to keep moving pigs through the system, and that the worst-case scenario would require farmers to destroy pigs on farm.



Agribusiness

[Adapt quickly](#) [17 April, Colin Willisroft, Farmers Weekly]

KPMG's Global Head of Agribusiness Ian Proudfoot has reported that traceable, trusted food will become increasingly important after lockdown. Mr Proudfoot reported that it is imperative that food producers adapt quickly to consumer behaviour changes. Mr Proudfoot partook in an AgriTech webinar, speaking on how food availability will no longer be taken for granted after empty shelves around the world, and how many citizens have been required to learn how to cook due to food service outlets being closed. As a result, Mr Proudfoot reports that governments globally will focus on increasing local production to feed their people and to provide food security. On top of this global freight paths are changing and will need to be reinvented, which will require an outlay of costs. Mr Proudfoot stated that there is a need for the Government to invest in telling the NZ food story to overseas markets. Direct-to-consumer supply channels have been encouraged due to social isolation accelerating the use of digital solutions. Mr Proudfoot also commented on how non-essential food businesses may face challenges when reopening and a lot will depend on established relationships and experiences, with the need to creatively use digital platforms to draw customers in.

[Spending on fast food, cafes to surge once Covid-19 restrictions ease, survey finds](#) [20 April, Anuja Nadkarni, Stuff NZ] Horizon Research has surveyed 1267 consumers and expects

spending on fast food, cafes, petrol, gardening centres and hardware stores to surge after Covid-19 restrictions are eased. Many people signified that they will use courier and postal services for non-essential items. Consumers are also expecting to take domestic holidays and road trips when possible. Only one percent of those surveyed stated that they were “definitely not” complying with the lockdown restrictions. Alert level three will allow businesses to open if they can deal with consumers in a contactless way.

[An opportunity to tell the real story of NZ food](#) [22 April, Peter Burke, Rural News] Agriculture Minister Damien O’Connor has reported that he believes Covid-19 has brought people back to the realities of food preparation and sourcing suitable produce. Mr O’Connor states that it is an opportunity for those in the primary sector to sell the story of how New Zealand produces quality food. Mr O’Connor is impressed with how the agricultural sector has adapted to the new rules and circumstances that Covid-19 has brought so far and also acknowledged that it has increased the pressure felt in the sector due to drought and financial burdens.



Horticulture

[Veg growers to work on emissions](#)
[16 April, Annette Scott, Farmers

Weekly] Potatoes New Zealand (PNZ) is seeking funding for a nationwide project to transition crop production to more sustainable land management from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). PNZ have adopted a strategic objective of zero net emissions by 2050. Its other two central objectives for the sector are doubling export value by 2025 and increasing domestic value by 50 percent by 2025. The multi-stream project is aimed at protecting the industry’s ability to grow whilst meeting high environmental standards. PNZ’s project has expanded since last year to include the vegetable sector as a whole, and now has Onions NZ, Vegetables NZ and Horticulture NZ

[on board. PNZ as a result is now applying for MPI Productive Sustainable Landuse Funding to help develop new system strategies and tools to help with leaching.](#)

[Mandarin harvest underway](#) [17 April, Sudesh Kissun, Hort News] The mandarin season is beginning in Northland and it has been reported that the crop for this year is great due to the warm, dry summer resulting in sweet, large-sized fruit. More than 12 million mandarins are forecasted to be picked, with majority of these being kept for New Zealand retail outfits, with T&G Global sending some of the crop to Japan. 80,000 crates of satsuma mandarins are expected to be picked in Northland, which is one of the largest mandarin growing regions.

[Kiwifruit labour proves patchy](#) [17 April, Richard Rennie, Farmers Weekly] Seeka Chief Executive Michael Franks has reported that the kiwifruit sector is facing labour shortages due to the loss of around 1300 RSE workers, and as a result is looking for more workers to help with harvesting and packing as the sector enters its peak harvest weeks. Kiwifruit processors have reported a high worker turnover rate this season and are worried about how many workers will leave if the country moves from alert level four down to level three. Kiwifruit Growers Chief Executive Nikki Johnson confirmed that there are still several hundred vacancies in the industry, with many of these being for nights shifts in the packhouse. The industry has harvested 40 percent of its crop so far.

[Tamarillos to give New Zealanders a health kick this season](#) [17 April, Matt Russell, Fresh Plaza] Robert Morris from the New Zealand Tamarillo Growers Association reports that the fruit is high in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants when compared with other common fruits and vegetable and is hoping this will help drive consumer consumption this year. The fruit has high levels of iron, copper, magnesium, potassium and a range of vitamins. It has immune enhancing properties, and the Northland season has just commenced, with

fruit available to November. Growers have been challenged this year with dry weather, which has impacted the size of fruit. The fruit is available at supermarkets and will also be available at independent fruit and vegetable stores once they re-open after Covid-19 restrictions.



Fisheries

[Coronavirus: NZ King Salmon donates fish to frontline workers across top of the south](#) [19 April, Stuff NZ] New Zealand King Salmon is providing 500 frontline health workers in Nelson and Blenheim with salmon portions as a thank you. New Zealand King Salmon CEO Grant Rosewarne reported that their gesture is a small way of thanking those minimising the impact of Covid-19 on the country. The company also donates \$150,000 annually to a range of environmental organisations, schools and charities at the top of the South Island.



Environment & Emissions

[Sheep and beef GHGs overstated](#) [15 April, Peter Burke, Rural News] AgResearch have developed a more accurate way of calculating the nitrous oxide emissions from sheep, beef and dairy production. The research has shown that nitrous oxide emissions are around 10.6 percent lower than previously reported for sheep emissions, beef cattle down by 5 percent and dairy cattle by 1.4 percent. The new calculations mean that the agriculture sector's overall reported emissions for 2017 will be reduced by 4.4 percent, and a decrease in New Zealand's overall reported emissions by 2.1 percent. Beef + Lamb New Zealand's Jeremy Baker reports that the research shows that understanding of how livestock contributes to global warming is continuing to involve, and that is important to invest in science in these areas.

[Fertiliser reduced, production holds](#) [16 April, Nigel Malthus, Rural News] State-owned Pāmu have reduced nitrogen input on its dairy farm whilst maintaining both milk and grass production through using fertigation which applies fertiliser through irrigation. Last season, they applied 42 percent less nitrogen compared to the previous season, with both milk and grass production remaining comparable with past seasons. The research is funded by the Sustainable Farming Futures Fund, with support from Ballance Agri-Nutrients, Fertigation Systems and Molloy Ag. The fertigation allows farmers to apply fertiliser in a liquid form when needed and more frequently.

[Dairy farmers committed to water quality](#) [17 April, Sudesh Kissun, Dairy News] Dr David Burger, DairyNZ's Strategy and Investment Leader for the Environment reports that New Zealand's dairy sector is on a journey to improve and protect water quality outcomes. The Our Freshwater 2020 report highlights where New Zealand is facing environmental challenges and where citizens can play their part. The reports aims at informing work currently happening to protect waterways and to support new ventures.

[Sector wants deal on reforms](#) [17 April, Neal Wallace, Colin Willisroft, Farmers Weekly] Leaders from the primary sector are in discussions with the Government to try and reach a consensus on freshwater reforms. Covid-19 essentially stalled the Government's Essential Freshwater reforms, with focus being placed on the crisis. The Government is however, working collectively with the Food and Fibre Leader's forum to come to a consensus. The forum consists of 11 sector leaders who have reported that they are focusing on water use and storage, as well as nutrient leaching regulations, whilst providing regulations that are achievable for farmers.



Wool

[Wool sector remains in limbo](#) [22 April, Pam Tipa, Rural News]

Federated Farmers Meat and Fibre Chairman Miles Anderson has reported that the wool industry is currently in limbo and is waiting to see what a post Covid-19 world looks like. Mr Anderson states that for the industry to survive, it needs collaboration. Wool prices were already low before the pandemic, and it is a waiting game to see what happens after the world starts to resume after lockdowns globally.



Alternative Proteins

[Impossible Foods rolls out to nearly 1,000 new grocery stores and supermarkets](#) [17 April, Jonathan Shieber, Tech Crunch] Impossible Foods is rolling its plant-based meat substitute to 777 supermarkets across California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Nevada this week. This comes as part of a USD\$500 million (approx. NZD\$830 million) round of funding which is partly being used to increase the company's distribution and geographic footprint in the US. The Impossible Burger is expected to be launched in even more stores as the year goes on. The company report that they have added extra measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure safety for both staff and consumers. Impossible Foods have reported that its research and development initiatives are still being pursued and is also moving to broadly commercialise its Impossible Sausage and Impossible Pork products.



Poultry

[Free-range chooks scoop top award](#) [21 April, Richard Rennie, Farmers

Weekly] Brother George and Ben Bostock have won New Zealand's supreme champions at this year's Outstanding NZ Food Producer Awards.

The Bostock Brothers won the award for their organic whole chicken brand which was established five years ago and supplies butchers, supermarkets and restaurants. Their chickens have 30 times more space than a conventional free-range chicken, and a diet that includes green apples, bugs, grass and organic maize. The brothers are also the only company in the country using air chilling to treat chicken carcasses post-slaughter. The brothers were also named Paddock Champions with their whole chicken and won gold medals for their chicken thigh and breast products.



Red Meat

[No dividend despite record profit](#) [16 April, Sudesh Kissun, Rural News]

Silver Fern Farms have reported a record profit of \$71 million for the financial year ended 31 December 2019. They have decided to defer making a dividend until the economic situation surrounding Covid-19 becomes clearer. Co-operative Chairman Richard Young reports that it is taking a conservative approach to the current operating environment, with market dynamics changing daily making modelling of financial impacts hard. Mr Young reported that the board is confident that the co-operative is in a strong financial position and that shareholders will be informed of any dividend decision once it has been made.

[Essential food processors take massive wage subsidies](#) [17 April, Brent Melville, The Country] Primary food processors that have been deemed essential under the government's lockdown restrictions have received around \$92 million in wage subsidies. Silver Fern Farms and Alliance Group have received a combined \$77.7 million under the scheme to supplement wages for 11,000 workers in total. On top of this, Farmlands have received \$9.2 million, Blue Sky Meats \$2.4 million and Mataura Valley Milk \$616,000. To be able to qualify for the payments, companies need to demonstrate a 30 percent drop in business up to June as a result

of the pandemic and is paid in a lump sum at a flat rate to cover employees for 12 weeks of work. Justin Courtney, Silver Fern Farm's Head of Sustainability reports that the company has faced global market disruptions with products held up in ports, airfreight flights cancelled and a delay in containers returning to New Zealand. Mr Courtney states that the company is focused on supporting its employees through this time.

[Stock backlog adds to pressure](#) [17 April, Neal Wallace, Farmers Weekly] Silver Fern Farms have told suppliers that sheep waiting times are between four to six weeks in the South Island and between two to three in the North Island. This is due to Covid-19 regulations reducing plant throughput by 50 percent for sheep. Cattle are facing similar wait times. An analysis done by Beef + Lamb NZ and the Meat Industry Association have forecasted that the South Island sheep backlog will not clear until the end of May. Lambs are being prioritised. Manager of Mt Linton Station Ceri Lewis reports that they still have 18,000 lambs to kill compared to usually around 4000 at this point in the year. Mel Croad, AgriHQ Senior Analyst stated that farmgate prices are easing due to the backlog paired with falling market demand and companies processing fewer animals. Both Silver Fern Farms and Alliance Group are moving stock between plants and islands, and processors and exporters are also moving inventory out of cold storage to free up space for incoming stock.

[Meat the Need connects farmers and food banks](#) [20 April, The Country] Farmers Siobhan O'Malley and Wayne Langford have founded new charity Meat the Need, which aims to get donated produce from farmers to food banks across New Zealand. The charity has been in the pipeline for a year, and means that farmers are able to gift produce when they are able to throughout the year, ensuring food banks have quality food to give out to New Zealand's most vulnerable. They are starting with 500g packets of beef mince, and livestock can be donated online or via Silver Fern Farms, one of the

founding partners for the charity. DairyNZ, Federated Farmers, Beef + Lamb NZ, as well as AgProudNZ and individual farmers have also helped in the initial stages of the charity.



Dairy

[Turmoil chops milk price forecasts](#)

[17 April, Hugh Stringleman,

Farmers Weekly] New Zealand Dairy Analysts report that increased northern hemisphere production combined with Covid-19 mean that the outlook for next season's farmgate milk price has become worse. As a result, analysts are pitching their forecasts around \$1 to \$1.50 less than what dairy companies are predicting. Rabobank Analysts Emma Higgins and Michael Harvey are predicting only \$5.60/kg milk solids. Mr Harvey reports that Covid-19 has increased risk in global commodity markets which is expected to lead to an extended down cycle in milk prices. The analyst's advice to farmers is to cut unnecessary costs on farm and wait it out. ASB Senior Rural Economist Nathan Penny states that the 2021 season has a number of unknowns and moving parts and believes that farmers need to prepare for the possibility of a result under \$6/kg. ANZ's Agriculture Economist Susan Kilsby revised the milk forecast down to \$6.45/kg during April. Fonterra is not due to make its first forecast of the 2021 milk price until the third week in May, right before the season begins on 01 June.

[The popularity of prebiotics in dairy](#) [17 April, Jim Cornall, Food Navigator] Research has found that one in four dairy product launches are focused on digestive wellness promotion. According to MarketWatch, the dairy sector is expected to drive the growth of prebiotics by over 9 percent in Europe in the next few years. Digestive wellness was highlighted as the number one food, nutrition and health theme for 2019 with consumers stating that it is important to them. Some dietary fibres are also prebiotic, and consumer testing has shown that over two

thirds would find a prebiotic logo on their dairy drink would make the product more appealing.

[Coronavirus: Dairy farmers' moving day to go ahead with strict Covid-19 controls](#) [22 April, Esther Taunton, Stuff NZ] Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor has reported that dairy farming's traditional moving day will go ahead this year, with strict controls to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. Every year on 01 June, hundreds of sharemilkers move their cows, equipment and families to new farms. The moving day is seen as critical to both the dairy industry and New Zealand's economy and the announcement is expected to be a relief for many dairy farmers. Farmers shifting this season will receive further guidance on the controls from industry groups.

[Dairy prices fall to 16-month low at Global Dairy Trade auction](#) [22 April, The Country] The latest Global Dairy Trade auction has seen the price index falling by 4.2 percent. Nearly all products on offer weakened, apart from cheddar and lactose which respectively rose by 1.9 and 12 percent. Skim milk powder dropped by 4.9 percent to an average price of US\$2,380 a tonne (approx. NZD\$3,990). The largest price drop in the main commodity groups was anhydrous milk fat, dropping by 7.9 percent. The New Zealand dairy season ends on the 31 May 2020. The disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic has seen economists revising their 2020/21 milk price expectations.



Forestry

[Covid 19 coronavirus: Forest industry ready to work in a safe way](#)

[17 April, The Country] The Forest Industry Safety Council have reported that they will be releasing guidance on how forestry companies can safely open at alert level 3. National Safety Director Fiona Ewing stated that they have developed the guidance using input from the industry and will provide clear and detailed advice for companies around distance and

hygiene. Mrs Ewing reports that they are waiting on clarification, however businesses with over five employees may need to register with the Ministry for Primary Industries under level 3.



International

[Growing meal-kit supplier bolstered by £33m investment](#) [16 April, Flora

Southey, Food Navigator] Recipe meal-kit company Gousto have raised £33m (approx. NZD\$68 million) in an investment round in order to expand its services and also increase manpower. The funding round was led by Perwyn, MMC Ventures, and Fitness Influencer Joe Wicks. The company is working on being able to provide next day delivery service and customised recipe boxes. Demand for delivered meal kits has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic and its self-isolation measures. Gousto state that the funding round was planned months before the outbreak and that they are expected to deliver over four million meals to 380,000 UK households during April.

[Generation Africa kicks off next agritech competition for Africa](#) [16 April, Samuel Mungazde, Green IT] The Generation Africa partnership initiative have announced the second annual GoGettagz Agripreneur competition which is aimed at developing the pan-African entrepreneurial community and to support those innovating with technology in the agri-food sector. The annual competition is offering R1.9 million (approx. NZD\$170 thousand) in prize money which will go to two innovative ventures between the ages of 18 and 35 who have founded or co-founded companies in the African agri-food sector. The organisers report that the competition being launched amidst the Covid-19 pandemic is aimed at supporting entrepreneurs throughout this time, and to help ensure the pandemic does not turn into a severe food crisis.

[British workers reject fruit-picking jobs as Romanians flown in](#) [17 April, Lisa O'Carroll, The Guardian] Thousands of British workers who

applied for job picking fruit and vegetables on farm after a nationwide appeal, have rejected job offers. As a result, hundreds of workers are being flown in from Romania to fill labour shortages. Recruitment company Concordia have reported that 900 people have rejected the roles offered to them, with only 112 accepting the offer. They stated that the main barriers have been length of the contract, location of the farm, and inability to work full-time due to care responsibilities. Another recruitment firm Hops stated that only 9 percent of those who completed their recruitment process were eligible for the job. Recruiters have appealed for patience from citizens, stating that they are working through the applicants and that the peak season begins in May, with thousands of roles available for those seeking work.

[Coronavirus: Overseas farmers forced to dump milk during Covid-19 lockdown](#) [17 April, Esther Taunton, Stuff NZ] Farmers in Britain are dumping up to five million litres of milk a week, and up to 14 million litres are being dumped in the US each day. This is due to supply chain issues and food service outlets being closed due to Covid-19 implications. Fonterra Co-operative Group have reported that it is business as usual for New Zealand farmers as factories are still operating as essential businesses under the Ministry for Primary Industry guidelines. Three of New Zealand's top five dairy exports are whole milk powder, infant formula and skim milk powder which all have long shelf lives. Federated Farmers Dairy Chairman Chris Lewis reports that with the end of the dairy season approaching, issues are being found due to backlogs at meat processing works across the country.

[Hungry Americans are waiting in miles-long lines as food banks struggle to keep up with demand. Here's a look at how rising unemployment and dwindling volunteer pools are impacting US food pantries.](#) [17 April, Bethany Biron, Business Insider Australia] US unemployment rates have dramatically increased since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, with many food banks struggling

to feed the demand due to a lack of volunteers. More than 16.8 million Americans have filed for unemployment during the last three weeks. At the same time, farmers are dumping thousands of gallons of milk and destroying produce due to supply chain disruptions meaning that there is no way to distribute it to those in need. Food pantries in New York have declared a national emergency due to the increased demand and lack of volunteers. Many food banks have switched to drive-throughs in order to minimise person-to-person contact. As a result, cars are lining up for miles attempting to access the food provided by food banks.

[Aldi launches £24.99 essentials food box for delivery to vulnerable and isolating people's homes](#) [17 April, Jessica Lindsay, Metro] UK Supermarket chain Aldi have created an essentials food parcel with 22 items, costing customers £24.99 (approx. NZD\$51). It includes toilet paper, handwash, tinned items and a couple of treats and is aimed at vulnerable people or those who are self isolating. This comes as many supermarkets have a shortage of online shopping delivery slots. Aldi has also introduced other measures such as changing opening hours and giving priority to NHS staff.

[Trump announces \\$19B coronavirus aid for farmers](#) [18 April, Reuters, NY Post] USA President Donald Trump has announced a USD\$19 billion (approx. NZD\$31.3 billion) relief package which is aimed at helping farmers deal with the impacts of Covid-19 including USD\$16 billion (approx. NZD\$26.4 billion) in direct payments to producers and also mass purchases of meat, dairy, vegetables and other products which will be distributed to food banks, churches and aid groups. US Farmers have faced supply chain disruptions resulting in some being forced to throw out food.

Organisations referenced in this week's Field Notes include:

AgResearch
AgriHQ
Aldi
Alliance Group
Ballance Agri-Nutrients
Beef + Lamb New Zealand
Blue Sky Meats
Bostock Brothers
Concordia
DairyNZ
Farmlands
Federated Farmers
Fertigation Systems
Forest Industry Safety Council
Generation Africa
Gousto
Hops
Horticulture NZ
Impossible Foods
Kiwifruit Growers
KPMG
MarketWatch
Mataura Valley Milk
Meat Industry Association
Meat the Need
Ministry for Primary Industries
MMC Ventures
Molloy Ag
New Zealand King Salmon
New Zealand Tamarillo Growers Association
NZ Pork
Onions NZ
Pāmu
Peace of Meat
Perwyn
Plant and Food Research
Potatoes New Zealand
Seeka
Silver Fern Farms
T&G Global
Vegetables NZ

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