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## Weekly news update from the KPMG 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...

[PGW Wrightson will merge its North and South Island wool auctions into a single national auction in Christchurch from May 2026](#) [27 January, Farmers Weekly].

Christchurch was chosen for its higher-value wool clip, strong domestic and international buyer presence, and convenient access via Christchurch International Airport.

[Arable farmers in Canterbury have been hit by a third major hailstorm in 2026, with ongoing wet weather destroying crops and delaying harvests during what had looked like a promising season](#) [26 January, RNZ]. Growers say the repeated hail and rain have downgraded crops, forcing sales into lower-priced markets and tightening cashflow across the sector.

[Applications are open for the Meat Industry Association's \(MIA\) 2026 Red Meat Sector Dragon's Den, giving individuals and businesses a chance to pitch innovation proposals to sector leaders](#) [28 January, Rural News]. As the second year this initiative has run, MIA say New Zealand must keep innovating and adding value to stay competitive globally.

In International news...

[The world's largest annual food and beverage sourcing event, Gulfood, has opened its 2026 show across two major venues in Dubai](#) [26 January, Gulf News]. This year's event will see 8,500 exhibitors across the food system, from 195 different countries, showcase 1.5 million different food and beverage products.

[French food manufacturer Vitagermine has issued a precautionary recall of selected batches of its Babybio infant formula range due to concerns about toxin-related contamination](#) [26 January, Daily Sabah]. The recall follows earlier actions by Nestlé, Danone, and Lactalis, with French authorities now investigating the deaths of two infants linked to recalled products.

[In Australia, a severe heatwave is pushing temperatures in the state of Victoria towards 50°C, fuelling multiple bushfires and forcing more than 1,000 families to evacuate](#) [26 January, News.com.au]. Authorities warn that extreme heat, dry vegetation, and strong winds are combining to create dangerous and fast-moving fire conditions.

[Meanwhile, exports of Australian table grapes to Japan have surged, with exports rising nearly 300% after varietal restrictions were lifted to allow more than 130 grape varieties into the market](#) [23 January, ABC News]. Industry leaders expect strong ongoing demand across Asia as growers benefit from earlier harvests, improved market access, and expanding promotional efforts.

### Spotlight stories

**Apiculture Spotlight:** [Backed by Bezos, UK–Australian Project Turns Food Waste Into Microbial Protein with AI](#) [15 January, Green Queen]

A research partnership between Manawa Honey NZ and the Bioeconomy Science Institute is uncovering unique health properties in New Zealand propolis, or 'bee glue'. Early analysis from hives placed on Tuawhenua Trust land in Te Urewera shows native plant species contribute to a more complex chemical profile than standard poplar based propolis, suggesting New Zealand varieties may hold distinct bioactive qualities. Researchers say these compounds could strengthen antimicrobial and immune supporting benefits of the propolis, with potential applications in wound care and diabetic management.

**Pet Health Spotlight:** [First Kamsarmax Methanol-Fuelled Bulker Delivered for Cargill Charter](#) [16 January, The Maritime Executive]

San Francisco-based Okava Pharmaceuticals has launched the world's first clinical trial of GLP 1 weight loss implants for cats. The study responds to rising obesity rates in pets, with more than half of domestic cats now overweight. The MEOW 1 study will test a six month implant that slowly releases exenatide, a GLP 1 compound which is different to that used in human weight loss drugs; to reduce appetite, support weight loss and improve long term metabolic health. The company expects the treatment to cost around US \$100 (NZ \$165) per month and plans to seek regulatory approval between 2027 and 2028.

### This week's headlines

[EU urged to extend mandatory origin labelling to more foods](#) [28 January, Agriland]

In Brussels, France, supported by eight other member states, called on the European Commission to extend mandatory origin labelling to a wider range of food products, citing growing consumer demand for transparency. The member states argue that current rules remain limited particularly for unprocessed foods, and for primary ingredients in processed products. The Commission indicated it is open to exploring broader origin labelling measures as part of its wider agricultural policy vision.

[Europe's first precision-bred oilseed rape heads to UK farms](#) [27 January, FarmingUK]

Precision bred oilseed rape from Europe will be grown on British farms under a new £2.5m (NZ \$4.9m) Defra funded project aimed at tackling light leaf spot, the crop's most damaging disease. The three year programme will move gene edited varieties from the lab into farmer led field trials, using a newly identified susceptibility gene that, when switched off, makes plants far less vulnerable to infection. The initiative's goal is to restore oilseed rape's role as a reliable and profitable break crop.

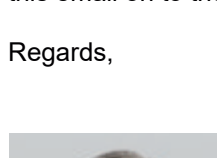
[New crypto vaccine approved for NZ release](#) [27 January, Farmers Weekly]

A world first vaccine to reduce the impacts of Cryptosporidium parvum (crypto) has been approved for use in New Zealand, offering a breakthrough against one of the most common and costly causes of scours in newborn calves. Scours, a severe form of diarrhoea that leads to dehydration, weight loss and, in serious cases, death, has long challenged dairy and beef farmers, with limited tools available for prevention. The newly approved vaccine, Bovilis Cryptium, gives veterinarians and farmers their first option to protect calves from birth against this parasitic infection.

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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