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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...

[The government has announced nearly \\$28 million for the latest funding round for the Hill Country Erosion Programme to support erosion control projects across the country](#) [9 February, Beehive]. The programme aims to stabilise vulnerable land, protect productive soils, and reduce downstream environmental and economic damage from severe weather events.

[Bay of Plenty nut orchard, Torere Macadamias, has entered a strategic partnership with the Riddet Institute to develop high-value food and wellness ingredients from macadamia nuts and their byproducts](#) [5 February, Farmers Weekly]. The collaboration formalises four years of research, showing major phenolic compounds in macadamia husks, opening new functional food opportunities for New Zealand's emerging macadamia industry.

[Beef + Lamb New Zealand Inc and Ag Proud will host National Lamb Day on 15 February, marking the anniversary of the first frozen lamb shipment exported in 1882](#) [11 February, Rural News]. The nationwide celebration includes events at Parliament, Southern Field Days (Waimumu), Totara Estate (Oamaru), and an offshore promotion in London.

In International news...

[The Fiji Australia Business Council and the Market Development Facility have formalised a partnership to launch an agri-food manufacturing export accelerator programme for small and medium enterprises](#) [6 February, Fiji Village]. The initiative will support high-potential Fijian agri-food manufacturing businesses to overcome market-entry barriers and expand into the Australian market.

[The United States \(U.S.\) and the Republic of India have released an interim trade framework that advances negotiations toward a broader bilateral agreement](#) [7 February, Reuters]. The framework outlines commitments to reduce tariffs, increase market access and deepen cooperation across energy, technology, and supply chain resilience.

[An American federal district judge has ruled that the State of Texas's 2023 labelling law for plant-based meat products was unconstitutional](#) [6 February, Green Queen]. The court found that requiring companies to use terms such as 'meatless' violates First Amendment protections; the decision is widely viewed as a win for plant-based producers and consumers.

[Meanwhile, U.S. avocado imports for the Super Bowl reached 300 million pounds \(136,000 tonnes\), the highest pre-game volume on record](#) [6 February, Fresh Fruit Portal]. The increase is attributed to long-term demand growth especially among younger consumers, effective Super Bowl-focused marketing, and favourable growing conditions in Mexico supporting supply.

### Spotlight stories

**Gaming Innovation Spotlight:** [Meadow Fresh launches fantasy sports league powered by real cows](#) [9 February, Rural News]

New Zealand dairy brand, Meadow Fresh, has unveiled the world's first fantasy sports league driven entirely by live farm data, allowing players to draft real cows and compete for a \$20,000 prize. The 'Fantasy Herd' game pulls milking outputs and behavioural insights from cows at Nottingham Dairy Farm in North Otago, with each animal wearing a solar powered Halter smart collar. Meadow Fresh says the goal is to make modern dairy farming fun and visible. The 'Fantasy Herd' opens 9 February, giving players a week to build their teams before the first round kicks off.

**Viticulture Spotlight:** [Boost for development of low-emissions alternatives to glass wine bottles](#) [4 February, ABC News]

In Australia, two companies have each been granted AU \$1 million (NZ \$1.1 million) through the federal Business Research and Innovation Initiative to develop low-emission alternatives to glass bottles. The funding will support the development of stainless steel and polymer bottle alternatives aimed at reducing freight weight and production energy use. The investment supports the wine industry's shift away from heavy glass bottles, which account for around two thirds of the sector's estimated 1.77 million tonnes of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

### This week's headlines

[NZ Rhazpody, the new hop off the trial block](#) [10 February, RNZ]

New Zealand's largest hop grower, Clayton Hops, in partnership with The Bioeconomy Science Institute have released a new commercial hop variety, NZ Rhazpody. Developed over five years and trialled by brewers in China, Canada and Australia, the variety has earned strong reviews across lager, pilsner, and IPA styles, with early testing suggesting it outperforms several existing New Zealand hops. The release adds to nearly 20 other locally developed hop varieties grown in the top of the South Island.

[FDA approves natural food dye beetroot red](#) [7 February, CNN]

The US Food and Drug Administration has approved beetroot red and expanded the permitted uses of spirulina extract to bring the number of approved natural food colours under the current administration to six. The move is part of the 'Make America Healthy Again' push to replace petroleum based synthetic dyes with natural alternatives allowing more foods to be labelled as 'no artificial colours'.

[Kiwi company T&G fights to get illegal orchards torn down in China](#) [9 February, RNZ]

New Zealand horticulture company, T&G, has secured a major ruling in China's Supreme People's Court after a grower illegally planted and sold its Scilate apple variety, marketed as Envy®, using similar branding. The court confirmed that the grower had breached T&G's plant variety rights, ordering the destruction of illegal orchards in Gansu province and the payment of significant damages. This is the second time China's highest court has ruled in T&G's favour, reinforcing a legal precedent under China's strengthened Seed Law, which provides authorities with greater enforcement powers.

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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