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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...

[Multiple districts were placed under a state of emergency after heavy rain and strong winds swept across the country over the weekend](#) [16 February, RNZ].

Severe wind and flooding caused widespread damage and loss to farms, infrastructure, and crops.

[The government has imposed a two-year ban on taking shellfish, seaweed and most other marine life from rockpools north of Auckland after public concern about overharvesting and ecosystem damage](#) [15 February, RNZ]. Beginning 12 March, the ban is intended to give coastal environments time to recover; kina (sea urchins) are excluded and can still be collected under current rules.

[Biosecurity New Zealand has begun trials on a locally developed protein-based bait, to control invasive yellow-legged hornets](#) [13 February, RNZ]. Used extensively to control invasive wasps, the bait's effectiveness depends on precise timing during a critical breeding window, when wasps and hornets collect protein.

[The New Zealand kiwifruit season has begun with the first harvest of the RubyRed variety from a South Auckland orchard](#) [16 February, Farmers Weekly].

The harvest comes after a season marked by challenging weather in some regions, but growers are reporting good fruit size, and the industry is forecasting a new production record.

In International news...

[In the United Kingdom, British consumer goods company, Unilever, is being criticised for dropping its global commitment to source only cage-free eggs](#) [13 February, FarmingUK]. Animal welfare groups say the decision could slow welfare progress globally. Unilever had achieved 68% cage-free implementation globally before the reversal.

[Meanwhile in the United Kingdom, new bird flu cases have been confirmed within days of each other at sites in England and Scotland, prompting protection zones and the culling of affected birds](#) [17 February, Agriland]. Avian influenza prevention zones remain in place across Great Britain, with strict biosecurity measures as the risk level remains very high.

[In the United States, New Orleans Mardi Gras organisers and researchers are trialling biodegradable beads to reduce the huge environmental damage caused by discarded plastic beads](#) [16 February, Associated Press]. The new beads, developed by Louisiana State University, are made from plant-based material and can even be planted after use, breaking down naturally instead of becoming long term waste.

[Australia's flower industry is calling for country of origin labelling on cut flowers so shoppers can tell whether flowers are grown locally or imported](#) [13 February, ABC News]. Growers say clear labelling would let consumers support Australian producers more, especially during peak times like Valentine's Day, currently the federal government has not required this.

Spotlight stories

Agri-tech Spotlight: [CryoBio nets \\$1.3m to develop novel approach to frost protection](#) [12 February, Ag Funder News]

In the United States, ag-tech startup CryoBio has raised US \$1.3 million (NZ \$2.2 million) to move their new frost protection solution for orchards and vineyards from the lab into field trials. The spray is inspired by antifreeze proteins found in animals that survive sub-zero temperatures. If successful, the technology could offer growers a more affordable and practical alternative to traditional frost protection methods such as heaters, wind machines, and candles. As climate change worsens the effects of frost on growers, more cost-effective tools are needed.

Rural Health Spotlight: [New FarmersAid tool aims to protect farmers in critical accident minutes](#) [10 February, Farming UK]

A United Kingdom farming charity, RABI, has launched FarmersAid, a new digital tool designed to help people respond in the critical minutes after a serious on-farm accident. Farming is one of the UK's most dangerous industries, and family members or colleagues are often the first on the scene, and emergency services can often be delayed. The free smartphone tool provides real-time, step-by-step guidance for the most common life-threatening farm accidents during the crucial minutes before help arrives; and has been developed with clinical and frontline emergency expertise.

This week's headlines

[FAO report exposes scale of fish fraud in global seafood supply chains](#) [13 February, New Food Magazine]

A new report from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warns that fish fraud is widespread across global seafood supply chains, with studies suggesting around 20% of seafood trade may involve some form of fraud. The fraud is defined as 'a deliberate practice intended to deceive others' and comes in many forms including adulteration, theft, mislabelling and counterfeits. The FAO says fish fraud is higher than the rates observed in meat, fruit, and vegetable supply chains; and undermines consumer trust, threatens marine ecosystems, and can pose food safety risks.

[NZ-Singapore e-certification to boost trade](#) [13 February, Supermarket News]

New Zealand and Singapore, through their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, have introduced a new electronic export health certification system to make it easier and more efficient to trade food and primary products between the two countries. The system replaces paper export certificates with real-time digital documents that confirm products meet health and food safety requirements. The change is expected to reduce costs, speed up border clearance and improve supply-chain security for exporters.

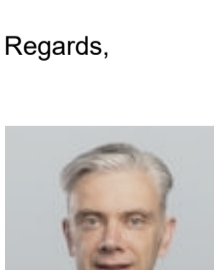
[Container shipping faces challenges in 2026 as Red Sea reopening pressures rates](#) [14 February, Gulf News]

Analysts are forecasting that the global container shipping industry is heading into a tough year for 2026, as freight rates fall amid growing oversupply of shipping capacity. The potential reopening of the Red Sea route would shorten Asia-Europe routes, and free up vessel capacity that had been absorbed since 2023 by the longer detour around Africa. Major global carriers, including Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd, are already expecting weaker earnings due to last year's tariff uncertainty; all this comes as new ships are being delivered.

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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