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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...

[Kiwifruit marketer, Zespri Group Limited has launched its 2035 strategy at its Momentum Conference in Tauranga, setting an ambition to become the world's healthiest fruit brand](#) [25 February, Bay of Plenty Times]. The plan also signals major growth objectives, with Zespri aiming to double the value of returns to growers.

[New Zealand strong wool prices have risen around 130% since 2022, driven in part by increasing demand from higher-value applications beyond traditional carpeting](#) [24 February, Rural News]. Demand is growing for wool as a natural alternative to petrochemical-derived materials, with new uses and applications including wool acoustic panels.

[A number of industry good organisations are calling for major changes to the proposed RMA replacement legislation, stating it would increase complexity and cost rather than reduce it](#) [24 February, Farmers Weekly]. The sector groups are concerned in its current form, it could expand consent requirements, duplicate freshwater planning, and introduce market-based charges for farmers.

[The Ministry for Primary Industries has proposed a range of policy options to improve pig and sheep traceability to strengthen responses to animal disease outbreaks](#) [25 February, RNZ]. Options suggested include retaining the current paper-based system, moving to electronic mob-based tracing, or expanding the national identification and tracing system.

In International news...

[In the United States, Plantible Foods has become the first company to receive FDA clearance to use their isolated RuBisCO protein](#) in food applications [19 February, Vegconomist]. The regulatory milestone means the protein is 'Generally Recognised as Safe' enabling its use in many different applications including baked goods, beverages, plant-based meat, and dairy alternatives.

[Dutch supermarket chain, Jumbo, has confirmed plans to gradually remove Irish beef from its shelves as it works towards a fully domestic beef supply chain](#) [24 February, Agriland]. The retailer said the shift reflects its focus on local origin, transparency, and animal welfare.

[The European Union has tightened controls on imports of a baby-formula ingredient from China after it was linked to the contamination behind global infant milk recalls](#) [24 February, Euractiv]. The measures introduce stricter border checks and laboratory certification for arachidonic acid, which was identified as the source of toxin contamination.

### Spotlight stories

**Sustainability Spotlight:** [This idea that we can now eat our clothes is pretty revolutionary: how to give unwanted garments a second life](#) [20 February, The Guardian]

New Zealand ethical fashion brand Kowtow has extended its circular model to address garments at the end of their usable life converting textile waste into biochar. Biochar is a carbon-rich material created by heating organic matter without oxygen, produced from natural fibres it can be used to improve soil by increasing water retention and nutrient availability, whilst storing carbon in the ground.

**Food Security Spotlight:** [Australia ramps up national food security plan](#) [24 February, Farmers Weekly]

Australia has begun a series of industry workshops to help shape its proposed national food security strategy, Feeding Australia. The strategy's development has been allocated AU \$3.5 million (NZ \$4.15 million). The workshops beginning this week will gather input from across the food and farming supply chain to inform policy development. The strategy is intended to span the entire food supply chain - from irrigation, biosecurity and supply chain efficiencies through to input security, aiming to ensure food is also available and accessible, not just produced.

### This week's headlines

[Chinese Ship Completes First Autonomous Docking and Cargo Handling](#) [23 February, Maritime Executive]

A Chinese electric container feeder ship, Zhi Fei, has completed the world's first fully autonomous docking and cargo-handling operation at Qingdao Port, marking a milestone in intelligent shipping. The 300 TEU vessel used unmanned navigation, a vacuum-based automated mooring system that secured the ship in about 30 seconds, and autonomous cranes and vehicles to load and unload cargo. The company says the vessel reduces berthing time, crew requirements, operating costs as well as reducing operational risk.

[Automated tractor co goes trans-Tasman](#) [19 February, Farmers Weekly]

New Zealand agritech company Agovor is expanding into Australia as it scales production of its electric, automated orchard tractors and will base production in Sydney. Their compact machines are designed for orchard and row-crop systems, where they carry out tasks such as spraying and mowing with minimal labour input. Agovor recently raised AU \$3 million (NZ \$3.6 million) in capital to increase their manufacturing capacity and to develop additional attachments for use across more crop types.

[After EU Trade Deal, Indian-German Alliance Opens Precision Fermentation Facility](#) [24 February, Green Queen]

Indian company PreferCo has partnered with German process technology firm Glatt to launch a precision fermentation scale-up facility in Hyderabad, India. The Centre of Excellence will bridge the gap between laboratory research and pre-commercial manufacturing. The PreferCo-Glatt facility will allow for microbial fermentation at scales of up to 1,500-litre bioreactors, integrating automation and AI to improve reliability and speed commercialisation.

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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