

9 April 2026

## 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

[The New Zealand Seeds Authority has launched the Seed Certification Information System, a fully digital platform to modernise seed certification](#) [8 April, Rural News]. The system was delivered in partnership with AsureQuality and the Ministry for Primary Industries, replacing paper-based processes, and improving traceability through geospatial mapping.

[The Commerce Commission has delayed its decision on the proposed sale of carpet manufacturer Bremworth to American-based Mohawk Industries, extending its review until 29 May](#). [7 April, Farmers Weekly]. The Commission is assessing whether the acquisition would substantially lessen competition in the New Zealand carpet market, where Mohawk already owns a major manufacturer.

[The agritech sector has welcomed a move to redistribute New Zealand's science funding system, 20% of funding will be reallocated to prioritise advanced technology](#). [7 April, Farmers Weekly]. Industry leaders say the shift recognises agritech's role in future value creation, whilst cautioning that no additional funding leaves pressure on an already constrained research system.

[The New Zealand National Fielddays Society has proposed a 15-year, \\$3.2 million infrastructure upgrade plan to future-proof the 114-hectare site](#) [7 April, Rural News]. The proposed investments include upgrades to water, energy, site access, and buildings, including a new pavilion to support larger events, and expand year-round use of the venue.

In International news...

[Italy, alongside the Netherlands and the UAE, has proposed a United Nation-mandated humanitarian corridor through the Strait of Hormuz to keep fertilisers and critical supplies moving amid Iran's blockade](#) [2 April, Euractiv]. The plan aims to prevent a global food crisis, particularly affecting African nations, whilst broader diplomatic discussions continue.

[In the United States, members of Congress have introduced a bipartisan bill to encourage domestic manufacturing of biomaterials from plant-based crops through tax incentives](#) [6 April, Green Queen]. The legislation would offer either a 30% tax credit to support new or upgraded facilities or a production credit of 10 cents per pound of renewable materials.

[Meanwhile, Californian lawmakers are considering legislation to establish a voluntary "California Certified" label for non-ultra-processed foods](#) [6 April, Green Queen]. The proposed system would be voluntary for food producers but would mandate retailers to prominently display certified products. It would replace the need for consumers to closely check complex ingredient lists.

[In Australia, the New South Wales Government has committed AU \\$15 million \(NZ \\$18.15 million\) over three years to extend the AgSkilled program, supporting workforce development across agriculture and the food sector](#) [7 April, Food & Beverage Industry News]. The funding will expand short, job-ready training, improve access to courses in regional and remote areas, and support delivery aligned with seasonal workforce needs.

### Spotlight stories

**Innovation Spotlight:** [UMAMI UNITED launches plant-based egg functionality research with Tokyo Denki University](#). [1 April, Protein Production]

Japanese food tech company Umami United has launched a joint research project with Tokyo Denki University focused on developing plant based ingredients that replicate egg functionality in food manufacturing. The project examines egg protein behaviour and recreating these core properties such as foaming, emulsification, and gelation. Amid growing interest in alternatives driven by egg supply and price volatility, the research targets understanding egg properties at a scientific level for industrial applications in ingredient development.

**Technology Spotlight:** [China's new humanoid can cook meals, clean rooms, organizing items](#) [31 March, Interesting Engineering]

Chinese robotics company UniX AI has begun real world testing of Panther, an AI powered home robot designed to carry out everyday household routines, including meal preparation. The system uses AI planning, vision sensors and dual robotic arms to perform multi step routines such as cooking tasks, handling utensils and interacting with kitchen appliances, pointing to potential use cases in home food preparation.

### This week's headlines

[Oceans may deliver next-gen weedkillers](#) [2 April, Farmers Weekly]

University of Waikato researchers are investigating seaweed derived compounds as potential next generation weed control tools, to support the reduction on synthetic herbicide. Early trials have identified several New Zealand algae and seaweed extracts with selective herbicidal activity, particularly against hard to control C4 weeds. The research focuses on achieving targeted weed suppression with low environmental toxicity and minimal impact on non-target species, further field trials are now underway to refine and scale the approach.

[Ministers shift grocery regulator to Defra to strengthen farmer protections](#) [7 April, Farming UK]

In the United Kingdom, the government will transfer responsibility for the Groceries Code Adjudicator to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The move aims to strengthen farmer and supplier protections by aligning grocery regulation more closely with food and farming policy. Ministers say the change, effective 1 July 2026, will improve oversight of supermarket-supplier relationships whilst preserving the regulator's independence and enforcement powers.

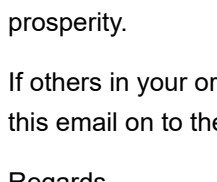
[Dealcoholisation technology to address smoke taint in wine](#) [3 April, Food & Beverage Industry News]

Researchers at the University of Adelaide have found that dealcoholisation technology, typically used to produce low and no alcohol wines, can be repurposed to remediate smoke taint. Smoke taint occurs when volatile compounds from bushfire smoke settle on grape skins and are absorbed during growth and fermentation, leading to undesirable flavours in wine. The approach targets smoke related compounds, whilst preserving desirable aromas.

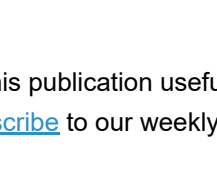
At KPMG, we believe that the future success of New Zealand depends on our ability and willingness to add value to our primary produce and take it to the world. Keeping informed on the latest news and discussions is just one of the ways to make this happen for New Zealand's most significant contributor 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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