



16 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

[State-owned farmer Pāmu will pay a NZ \\$10 million special dividend to the Crown](#) [15 April, Rural News]. The payment sits outside of Pāmu's standard dividends, which will see NZ \$15 million paid in this financial year, and follows a one-off capital repayment.

[Woolworths New Zealand is trialling the sale of only pre-packed meat in its South Island supermarkets](#) [10 April, Stuff]. The trial involves removing in-store butcheries; difficulties recruiting qualified butchers was cited as the primary driver.

[Zespri Group has released an updated emissions plan, targeting a 42% reduction in its direct \(Scope 1 and 2\) emissions by 2030, as part of a net zero 2050 ambition](#) [11 April, The Country]. The plan also addresses Scope 3 emissions, particularly shipping, with a 30% cut target in emissions per tray through vessel efficiency, fuel transition and logistics partnerships.

[Kiwifruit growers across the North Island have reported minimal damage from Cyclone Vaianu, with only isolated and minor crop losses despite strong winds and heavy rain](#) [13 April, RNZ]. Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated said that a key concern now is potential quality impacts, with wind-related skin rub making some fruit no longer top-grade.

In International news...

[The United States has extended the ban on Russian-origin seafood imports, renewing restrictions first imposed in 2022](#) [14 April, Intrafish]. The April 2026 extension will keep closed loopholes that had allowed Russian seafood to enter the US via third-country processing.

[The French Government has committed €6 million \(NZ\\$12 million\) for two climate-resilient agriculture programmes in Laos](#) [13 April, Asia News Network]. The initiatives focus on improving irrigation and agri-ecological practices, to strengthen Laos' government capacity for long-term agricultural planning and investment with growing climate risks.

[Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu have secured more than US \\$40 million \(NZ \\$67.7 million\) in Green Climate Fund financing to support agricultural transformation programmes](#) [13 April, ABC News]. Delivered over five years, the funding aims to help farmers adapt to climate change, reduce pressure on land, and move away from unsustainable farming practices.

[Australian wool broker Elders will move Western Australian \(WA\) wool handling and sales to Victoria from July 2027, ending more than a century of local operations](#) [11 April, ABC News]. Elders attributed the move to a near 40% fall in WA wool volumes, saying Melbourne provides a larger and more competitive market.

Spotlight stories

Regulation Spotlight: [FDA exempts low-GI sweetener tagatose from added sugar labelling](#) [10 April, AgFunder News]

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has exempted low calorie sweetener tagatose from 'added sugar' labelling requirements, removing a major barrier to its commercial use. The decision follows a legal challenge by food ingredient business Bonumose after the FDA denied an exemption despite recognising tagatose's low glycaemic impact, lower caloric value and dental health benefits.

Technology Spotlight: [Scentian Bio raises \\$7m to take its AI and insect-powered 'digital nose' to market](#) [8 April, NZ Herald]

New Zealand deep tech start up Scentian Bio has raised NZ \$7 million to commercialise its AI and insect based 'digital nose', a sensor that detects complex smells to assess food quality, air safety, and biological risks. The technology replicates insects' highly sensitive olfactory receptors and delivers rapid results compared with traditional testing. Initial customers are in the food and beverage sectors, with seven pilots in global food companies already in play.

This week's headlines

[British lamb and beef to see £2.1bn investment from M&S](#) [10 April, Meat Management]

British retailer Marks & Spencer (M&S) will invest £2.1 billion (NZ \$4.82 billion) in domestic lamb and beef through two 10 year supply agreements with processors ABP and Dunbia. The contracts cover supply from around 3,500 M&S Select Farmers and are intended to secure long term British sourcing, support farmer investment, and protect its exclusive premium ranges.

[Support tool for new contract milkers launched](#) [12 April, Farmers Weekly]

A new Mid Canterbury pilot programme, From the Gate, has been launched to support first time contract milkers entering the dairy sector. The initiative aims to improve early career outcomes by connecting new contract milkers with trusted advisors, industry resources, and relevant events. It also focuses on building peer networks and developing practical skills in people management, health and safety, and business decision making.

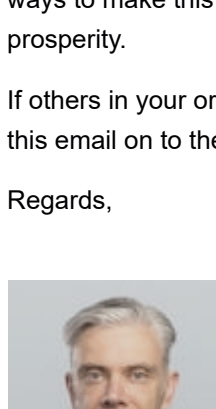
[First of its kind: Gene-edited crop moves closer to UK farms](#) [8 April, FarmingUK]

A gene edited, emissions-reducing barley developed by Rothamsted Research has become the first crop approved under the UK's new precision breeding rules, marking an early milestone in post Brexit agricultural regulation. The barley has been bred to increase its energy density for use as animal feed, allowing cattle and sheep to extract more energy from the same ration, reducing methane emissions during digestion. The approval enables further on farm trials to assess performance and commercial potential.

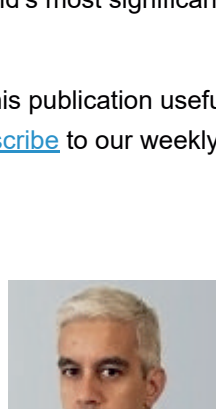
At KPMG, we believe that the future success of New Zealand depends on our ability and willingness to add value to our primary produce and take it to the world. Keeping informed on the latest news and discussions is just one of the ways to make this happen for New Zealand's most significant contributor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



Ian Proudfoot
Global Head of Agribusiness



Andrew Watene
Head of KPMG Propagate™



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KPMG New Zealand:
18 Viaduct Harbour Avenue
PO Box 1584
Auckland 1140
T: +64 9 367 5800

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