



23 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

[Environment Canterbury has secured up to NZ \\$750,000 per year to continue its soil conservation and revegetation programme for the next five years](#) [17 April, Farmers Weekly]. Since 2019, the programme has planted over 30,000 trees, retired 11,000 ha, and improved hill-country resilience across North Canterbury.

[Natural Pet Food Group, a Christchurch-based pet food exporter, has been awarded Certified B Corporation status](#) [20 April, NZ Herald]. The certification strengthens its premium export positioning, particularly in Japan and North America, where New Zealand provenance resonates with consumers.

[Niagara Sawmilling Company, a Southland-based timber processor, has begun a major NZ \\$115m expansion, including a new state-of-the-art sawmill](#) [20 April, RNZ]. The investment will double processing capacity by 2027, lift annual log intake above 500,000 tonnes, and increase domestic value-added timber processing relative to raw log exports.

[The Environmental Protection Authority has approved Vibrance Premium, a new fungicide seed treatment for potatoes that targets multiple soil-and tuber-borne diseases](#) [15 April, Rural News]. Final approval from the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Group is pending, with growers hoping for approval before the spring planting season.

In International news...

[American retailer, Walmart, is facing a US \\$5 million \(NZ \\$8.5 million\) class action lawsuit over its Bettergoods plant-based milks, with claims the products are misleadingly labelled due to their containing non-plant derived additives](#) [17 April, Green Queen]. The case raises questions over how strictly 'plant-based' claims are interpreted.

[Authorities in Austria have seized tampered jars of baby food, after a sample was found to contain rat poison, additional tampered jars of the same brand, HiPP, were seized in the Czech Republic and Slovakia](#) [20 April, BBC News]. A widespread recall in Austria, and pre-emptive removal by retailers in Czech Republic and Slovakia has occurred whilst authorities investigate.

[The Singapore Food Agency, Singapore's national food safety regulator, has published a complete list of novel foods approved for sale in the island nation](#) [20 April, Green Queen]. The list confirms 14 novel products and ingredients, including cultivated meat, algal protein, and fermentation-derived foods.

[In Australia, the New South Wales Government is co-investing AU \\$14.3 million \(NZ \\$17.3 million\) with industry, to support the oyster, kelp, and seafood sector on the state's South Coast](#) [16 April, Food & Beverage News]. The funding will target increasing production, sustainability upgrades and regional jobs across farming, processing, and marine-based operations.

Spotlight stories

Retail Spotlight: [M&S Invests Further in its Value Offer With 22 Veg Staples Moving into Remarksable Value and Dropped and Locked as Customers Increasingly Prioritize Health Without Compromising on Value for Money](#) [17 April, M&S]

British retailer Marks & Spencer (M&S) has reduced the price of a further 22 everyday vegetables to make healthy eating more affordable, responding to growing pressure on household food budgets. The vegetables have been added to M&S's Remarksable Value range and its Dropped and Locked range, which holds prices for set periods to give shoppers more certainty.

Cell-based Spotlight: [Mondelēz & Celleste Bio Unveil World's First Lab-Grown Chocolate Bars](#) [16 April, Green Queen]

Global confectionery company Mondelēz International has developed nearly a dozen milk chocolate bars made with cell based cocoa butter, making a milestone for the application of cellular agriculture. The technology was developed with Israeli startup Celleste Bio and grows real cocoa cells in bioreactors to replicate conventional cocoa butter. The process can deliver the same volume of cocoa butter that would typically require around four tonnes of cocoa and 10,000 square metres of land, using just one to two cocoa beans.

This week's headlines

[The New Zealand wool that went around the moon](#) [21 April, RNZ]

Lanaco, an Auckland-based manufacturing company, supplied its wool-based EcoStatic air filters for NASA's recent Artemis II mission around the moon. The filters are used in emergency breathing systems and are designed to operate in zero-gravity fire conditions, withstanding heat, smoke, and moisture. Compared to standard synthetic filters, the technology extends safe breathing time from ~10 minutes to 60 minutes.

[Defra pledges crackdown as illegal meat seizures surge at Dover - FarmingUK News](#) [20 April, FarmingUK]

The United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has announced an action plan targeting illegal meat imports following a series of seizures at the Port of Dover. In March, more than 14 tonnes of illegal meat were seized in a single week, taking total confiscations to over 422 tonnes since September 2022. The response will bring together border, food safety, and enforcement agencies to strengthen controls and reduce disease risk.

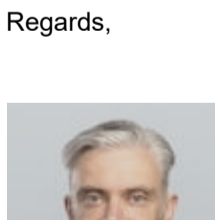
[Government reviews RSE visa scheme, report calls for reform](#) [18 April, RNZ]

An International Labour Organisation report has called for reforms to New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer visa scheme, citing high migration costs and risks of worker exploitation. The report recommends a fairer sharing of costs between workers, employers and government, easier ability for workers to change employers, and improved access to healthcare. The Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment is currently reviewing the scheme and will consider the report's recommendations alongside input from employers and Pacific partner countries

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.

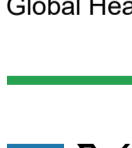
Regards,



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