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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 news,

[A new Rabobank survey found horticulture has overtaken sheep and beef as New Zealand's most confident rural sector, with 30% of respondents expecting agricultural economic conditions to improve over the next year](#) [18 September, RNZ]. Overall rural confidence remained positive, although rising input costs, geopolitical uncertainty and drought continued to weigh on sentiment.

[About 50 farmers are appealing a High Court ruling requiring the repayment of more than NZ\\$9 million received through a failed GDX live cattle export deal](#) [22 September, Farmers Weekly]. Liquidators argue the 2022 payments were insolvent transactions that favoured some creditors; the appeal is expected to be heard in 2027, whilst a small number of farmers are settling repayments.

[New Plymouth-based Egmont Honey has acquired Taihape-based Tweeddale's Honey, lifting its hive count above 22,000 and likely making it New Zealand's largest beekeeping operation](#) [21 September, Rural News Group]. The deal comes as registered hive numbers have fallen from 918,000 in 2019 to fewer than 490,000, whilst raw mānuka honey prices have begun to recover.

[Organics Aotearoa New Zealand has launched a scorecard comparing political parties' organic-sector policies ahead of the 7 November election](#) [22 September, Rural News Group]. The organisation says the NZ\$1.2 billion sector is growing across domestic and export markets, with export earnings rising at more than twice the rate of the wider food and fibre sector.

In international news,

[Hong Kong has signed a protocol amending its investment agreement with ASEAN to provide Hong Kong businesses with non-discriminatory treatment across member states and greater legal certainty](#) [21 September, Asia News Network]. ASEAN has been Hong Kong's third-largest destination for outward direct investment for four consecutive years, with investment stock valued at HK\$671.2 billion (NZ\$149.4 billion).

[The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board is promoting greater use of British produce in NHS kitchens by contributing guidance on farming systems, nutrition and supply chains to a healthcare catering publication](#) [21 September, FarmingUK]. The material covers the nutritional value of beef and lamb, halal food provision, seasonal sourcing and the use of a wider range of meat cuts to reduce waste.

[The EU and the Philippines have reached substantial agreement on a Free Trade Agreement, putting the deal on track for finalisation in the coming months](#) [22 September, EUBusiness]. The agreement would liberalise more than 94% of tariff lines, covering over 97% of bilateral trade; two-way goods trade totalled €17.6 billion (NZ\$35.2 billion) in 2025.

Spotlight stories

Food-Health Nexus Spotlight: [Walmart is getting into Medicare: What seniors should know](#) [21 September, Consumer Affairs]

US retailer Walmart is partnering with SCAN Health Plan to develop a co-branded Medicare Advantage plan for older Americans. The offering is expected to launch initially in two US states and could combine insurance coverage with Walmart's pharmacy, vision, food and wellness services, although benefits and other plan details remain subject to finalisation and regulatory approval. The partnership would extend Walmart's healthcare presence by linking Medicare coverage with services customers already use through its retail network.

Governance Spotlight: [New Free Platform Connects Rural NZ With Board and Trustee Vacancies](#) [17 September, Rural News Group]

Rural and Regional Governance New Zealand has launched a free online platform aggregating board, trustee and committee vacancies across rural and regional New Zealand. The platform draws listings from council and statutory body websites, cooperative election processes, sector publications and other public sources. Organisations can also submit vacancies free of charge, whilst users gain a single place to find roles that are otherwise dispersed across multiple channels.

This week's headlines

[South Australian government commits \\$109 million to help struggling wine industry](#) [18 September, ABC Rural]

The South Australian Government has announced a A\$109 million (NZ\$135 million) package for the state's wine industry as it responds to persistent oversupply and weak demand. It includes A\$100 million (NZ \$124 million) in loans to help growers shift to alternative crops, alongside support to reduce surplus inventories and extend export market development. The package follows several years of pressure on grape growers after China's import restrictions contributed to a red wine glut and global wine consumption declined.

[Onside and Assura form new agriculture platform](#) [22 September, Farmers Weekly]

Christchurch-based agritech company Onside has acquired software provider Assura, creating a combined business with more than 60,000 users across six countries. The platform brings together tools for safety, contractor management, biosecurity, compliance and market access, giving agricultural businesses a consolidated view of operational and risk data. The companies say the acquisition will help customers manage increasingly complex compliance requirements and make more informed operational decisions.

[Kellogg's backs UK wheat farmers with regenerative agriculture programme](#) [14 September, Food Manufacture]

In the UK, WK Kellogg Co has partnered with Belgian regenerative agriculture specialist Soil Capital to support 25 wheat farmers in adopting practices intended to improve soil health and farm resilience. The five-year programme will provide financial incentives, field-level data and monitoring tools across nearly 4,000 hectares. Wheat produced through the programme will be used in Kellogg's UK cereal brands, including Special K.

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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