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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,

The New Zealand Government has reversed its earlier approach and will introduce Agriculture and Horticultural Science as a standalone optional subject from Year 11, following feedback from rural schools and the primary sector [2 November, Rural News Group]. The Ministry of Education will now develop the subject and supporting resources, with public consultation expected to begin in the coming weeks.

South Port, New Zealand's southernmost commercial port at Bluff, has opened a new freight centre adding 4,000m² of dairy-standard storage as it expands its role in Southland's growing primary-sector exports [30 October, RNZ]. The investment comes as New Zealand dairy exports reached a record $28.8 billion and South Port handled a record 3.96 million tonnes of cargo in the year to June, with around 20 new jobs expected to support further growth.

The Wool Research Organisation of New Zealand has established Wool Source Manufacturing to commercialise wool-derived pigments, particles and powders developed through years of research [3 November, Farmers Weekly]. Plans include a production facility capable of processing 1 million kg of wool annually, building on early sales of wool powders and pigments from its pilot plant.

In international news,

Farmers in England could face spray irrigation restrictions or outright bans in 2027 if winter rainfall remains low, with 82% of the country currently in drought [3 November, Farmers Weekly]. The Environment Agency estimates rainfall of at least 120% of the six-month average is needed to emerge from drought by spring, with vegetable growers particularly exposed if reservoirs fail to refill.

End Food Waste Australia has launched a national membership programme giving businesses across the food supply chain access to tools, research and support to reduce food waste and costs [30 October, Food & Beverage News]. The programme brings together more than 250 organisations, building on work that helped participating businesses reduce food waste by 13% between 2022 and 2024.

India's Arunachal Pradesh state has sent its first 1.5-tonne trial shipment of locally grown kiwifruit to Dubai, targeting the UAE as a new export market [30 October, India Bulletin]. The government-backed Arunachal Kiwi Project aims to improve market access for growers in Ziro Valley, who face high transport costs and competition from imported kiwifruit, including from New Zealand.

Kyrgyzstan has temporarily banned apple imports until 1 February 2027, including from Eurasian Economic Union countries, to give domestic growers more time to sell the 2026 harvest and support local production [29 October, East Fruit]. The restriction will reduce competition from foreign suppliers in the near term, although its impact on grower prices will depend on domestic supply, apple quality and consumer demand.

Spotlight stories

Aquaculture Spotlight: Pharma group Abbey Labs seeks higher florfenicol dose for Tasmanian salmon [30 October, ABC News]

Pharmaceutical company Abbey Animal Health has applied to increase the dose and expand the permitted use of the antibiotic florfenicol on Tasmanian salmon farms. The previous permit was revoked in March after antibiotic residues were detected in wild fish up to 10km from treated salmon pens; residues were later found in abalone up to 14km away. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is assessing the new application for environmental, antimicrobial resistance and residue risks, while Tasmania has proposed temporary closures of nearby rock lobster and abalone fisheries when antibiotics are used.

Investment Spotlight: Agrifood corporates find a new model for financing regenerative agriculture via Soil Capital partnership [29 October, AgFunder News]

Pet food company Royal Canin and ingredients supplier Roquette are jointly funding regenerative agriculture practices across more than 60 wheat farms covering over 4,700 hectares in France. The partnership with Soil Capital shares transition costs across the supply chain and provides independently verified farm-level data to measure outcomes and avoid double counting. Farmers receive 70% of the value of each Soil Capital Certificate, with the model designed for replication across other crops and regions.

This week's headlines

Reimagining the future of New Zealand fibre [4 November, Fashion & Textiles NZ]

Fashion & Textiles NZ has released its 2026 Future of Fibre Aotearoa: Reimagining the Value of New Zealand Fibre report, examining how New Zealand can create more value from its fibre and textile sector. The report identifies opportunities for higher-value, circular and regenerative systems through stronger connections between fibre producers, manufacturers, designers and markets. Next steps focus on turning these opportunities into coordinated industry action, including greater collaboration, investment and development of domestic fibre-to-product pathways.

Shop freezers in seven European countries hit by cyber-attack [3 November, BBC]

A cyber-attack has disrupted refrigerators and freezers at dozens of supermarkets across seven European countries, raising temperatures and forcing some retailers to discard food. Around 40 Delhaize supermarkets in Belgium and Luxembourg were affected, alongside stores in Sweden, Ireland, the Netherlands, Estonia and Finland. The attack follows a similar incident in France last month that affected hundreds of supermarkets and caused millions of euros in food losses.

Hectre opens Auckland lab for hyperspectral fruit research [3 November, Rural News Group]

New Zealand agritech company Hectre has opened a new Auckland research lab to develop hyperspectral imaging technology designed to detect internal fruit defects without cutting into the fruit. The near-$5 million, three-year programme is co-funded by the Government and aims to help packhouses make earlier decisions on what fruit to store, pack or ship, reducing waste and improving quality. Hectre is targeting at least 80% defect-detection accuracy by June 2027 and a prototype validated under commercial packhouse conditions by June 2028.

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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