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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 Wool Collective has proposed a grower levy, likely to be 2–3 cents per kilogram of greasy wool, to fund market development, research, standards and industry capability [10 November, Farmers Weekly]. Growers will vote on the proposal through Beef + Lamb New Zealand's referendum in February–March 2027.

Animal and Plant Health New Zealand is urging the next Government to accelerate reform of agricultural and veterinary product approvals, with survey respondents reporting NZ$15.8 million in lost revenue in the 20 months since a ministerial review and 50 delayed products [11 November, Farmers Weekly]. The industry body says lengthy approval processes are delaying access to new treatments and reducing New Zealand's attractiveness as a launch market for global suppliers.

New Zealand agritech company Aimer Farming has raised NZ$3 million to expand its AI-powered pasture management platform, currently used by more than 800 dairy farms across New Zealand, Chile and the UK [12 November, Farmers Weekly]. The funding will support further development of its dairy offering, wider adoption of satellite pasture measurement and a beef-specific offering due to launch in 2027.

In international news,

Australian supermarket group Woolworths is expected to open an A$900 million fresh food distribution centre in Western Sydney in early 2027, supplying 300 stores across NSW [6 November, Food & Beverage News]. The automated facility will handle up to 3,000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables daily, helping produce reach shelves faster and extending shelf life.

In India, the Maharashtra Government has directed officials to continue a one-year exemption permitting the sale of loose edible oil, cooking oil sold directly from bulk containers, while operating standards are developed [6 November, FNB News]. The measure aims to maintain food safety and prevent adulteration without imposing undue costs on small traders, who are still seeking the formal government resolution.

US retailer Walmart plans to add 300 drone delivery sites through a multi-year agreement with Zipline [6 November, Progressive Grocer]. Its existing drone programme has completed more than two million deliveries, with tens of thousands of eligible products available in as little as 30 minutes in participating areas.

Spotlight stories

Investment spotlight: Bezos Earth Fund backs testing programme for beef and dairy technologies [10 November, AgFunderNews]

The Bezos Earth Fund has joined the Yield Lab Institute's Global Cattle Innovation Platform as a catalytic funder under a one-year agreement. The programme will identify challenges across beef and dairy value chains and connect agritech startups with research partners and testing environments. It aims to address the lack of capital and validation opportunities that can prevent technologies from reaching commercialisation.

Innovation spotlight: New apple variety tipped to thrive in hotter, drier climates [9 November, RNZ]

Planting has begun in Hawke's Bay for Tutti, a premium apple variety bred in Spain using New Zealand genetics and selected for hotter, drier climates. Around 100 hectares will be planted over the next five years, with the first commercial crop expected in approximately two years. The variety has already been licensed across 900 hectares in South America, Europe and China, as T&G Global targets growing global demand for premium apples.

This week's headlines

Korean researchers create whole-cut hybrid cultivated meat with 80% lower cost [3 November, Green Queen]

Researchers at Gyeongsang National University in South Korea have combined cultured animal cells with pea, soy and wheat proteins to create steak-like fibres and marbling. The government-funded team estimates its hybrid method could reduce production costs by 70–80% and has developed equipment for larger-scale production. Its startup, Orange CAU, is progressing commercialisation, with a projected selling price of around US$30/kg, although regulatory approval is still required.

Bananas under threat as unfair trading practices and climate change push growers to crisis point, warns Fairtrade [6 November, Banana Link]

The Fairtrade Foundation has released a report warning that low prices, unfair purchasing practices and increasing climate pressures are placing banana growers and future supply at risk. It found that banana productivity during the 2023–24 El Niño fell 22% in Ecuador, 13% in the Dominican Republic and 6% in Peru, while producers face rising input costs without corresponding increases in UK supermarket prices. Fairtrade Foundation is calling on the UK Government to introduce legislation addressing unfair trading practices across supply chains.

Aussie VC invests in world-first food waste tech [4 November, Food & Drink Business]

Australian agrifood investor Tundra Capital has led an A$2.4 million Series A raise for Singapore-based N&E Innovations, which converts agricultural waste such as cashew husks into a food-grade antimicrobial ingredient. Its ViKANG99 technology can be incorporated into packaging or applied directly to produce to inhibit bacteria and mould, with the company claiming it can extend shelf life by up to four times. The funding will support expansion into Australia, the UK, Germany, Vietnam and Taiwan, including post-harvest treatments for fruit and vegetables and antibacterial food packaging.

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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