



UPDATE: 04 April 2025

Kia ora

In this edition, we bring you the latest updates on the strengthening trade relationships between New Zealand and India, including the launch of the FTA negotiations. We also delve into the competitive pressures our exporters face in maintaining market share in other Asian markets and insights into the impact of the US tariffs on our exporters. As always, you'll find links to these items, along with our regular updates on regulatory notifications, consultations, national and international news, and upcoming events.

Ngā mihi

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GOVERNMENT AGENCY NEWS

Consultations

Proposed amendments to the New Zealand Food Notice: Maximum Residue Levels for Agricultural Compounds

New Zealand Food Safety wants your feedback about changes to the New Zealand Food Notice: Maximum Residue Levels for Agricultural Compounds. The proposed changes include: 2 new entries for maximum residue levels in Schedule 1 and 12 amended entries for maximum residue levels in Schedule 1.

More information on the proposals and how to make a submission are on the Ministry for Primary Industries [website](#). Deadline for submissions is 16 May 2025.

New Zealand-India Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement

Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay has launched a public consultation on New Zealand and India's negotiations of a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. Your views will help inform New Zealand's negotiating positions. Have your say by making a submission on:

- existing economic relationships between New Zealand and India
- specific opportunities for increased trade and investment, as well as wider strategic opportunities
- broader New Zealand interests
- any other issues relevant to this negotiation.

More information on the FTA and how to make a submission is on the MFAT [website](#). Deadline for submissions is 14 April 2025.

Strategic Documents

New Zealand Food Safety Action Plan 2025-2027

MPI recently released The New Zealand Food Safety Action Plan 2025–2027: a foundational piece of work, which outlines how NZFS will contribute to the Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) mission to grow the value of the country's food and fibre sector. The Action Plan focuses on achieving three key outcomes:

- New Zealand food is safe and suitable.
- New Zealand has a thriving food economy.
- New Zealand has a well-functioning food safety system (a newly defined outcome, which highlights NZFS's regulatory stewardship role within New Zealand's food safety system).

For each outcome, the document sets out priorities and initiatives that will make the greatest impact on the New Zealand food safety system. [Action plan here](#)

International Agreements

Customs agencies bolster New Zealand-India engagement to improve market access

Customs administrations in New Zealand and India have taken a significant step towards deepening the trade relationship between our two countries with the signing of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) in New Delhi on Monday. The arrangement recognises the Customs supply chain security standards of both countries and promotes market access for exporters between them.

Authorised exporters from New Zealand and India that meet the supply chain security measures will now receive priority at their respective borders, with less likelihood of inspections and quicker clearance of their goods. This provides them with certainty and increased speed to market in one of the world's fastest growing economies. [Full article here](#)

ICPR changes & other updates

The following ICPRs have been updated in a number of sections since the last newsletter:

- **Canada:** [ICPR Canada](#)
- **Chile:** [ICPR Chile](#)

If you need any further clarification, contact your Independent Verification Agency in the first instance.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

Government news

New Zealand & India strengthen horticultural ties

Agriculture and Trade Minister Todd McClay signed a new Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) during the Prime Minister's recent Indian Trade Mission, reinforcing New Zealand's commitment to enhancing collaboration with India in the horticulture sector. "Our relationship with India is a key priority for New Zealand, and this agreement reflects our commitment to deepening this strategic partnership," Mr McClay said.

The MOC aims to foster closer ties between the two countries' horticultural industries, focusing on areas such as technical exchanges, harvest and post-harvest management, training, and the sharing of technological expertise. [Full article here](#)

NZ & India launch Comprehensive FTA negotiations

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay announced on the 17 March that New Zealand and India have formally launched negotiations on a Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement.

Mr McClay recently held extensive discussions with his Indian counterpart Piyush Goyal in New Delhi, where they agreed to launch negotiations.

"This announcement is a major breakthrough in the economic relationship between India and New Zealand," Christopher Luxon says. "Currently the fifth-largest economy in the world, with a population of 1.4 billion people, India holds significant potential for New Zealand and will play a pivotal role in doubling New Zealand's exports by value over the next ten years. [Full article here](#)

Industry news

Kiwi exporters scramble to understand Trump's new tariffs

New Zealand's biggest exporters to the US are trying to come to grips with what exactly the Trump administration's new tariffs will mean to them. Goods from New Zealand will have a 10 percent tariff applied when sent to the US. Last year the US surpassed Australia to become New Zealand's second-largest export destination, with trade nearly doubling over the past decade to \$9 billion.

Economist and lecturer at AUT Professor Niven Winchester said New Zealand had been hit by relatively low tariffs compared to the EU and China, and that might give us advantages in certain areas. He predicted there would not be a direct big impact on New Zealand's industries, but the knock-on effects on the global economy would be felt.

"The big worry for New Zealand is a global trade war, where everyone is a little bit less well off and buying less of everything from anywhere, but the tariffs on themselves - because we have a relatively low tariff - there's pluses and minuses, and I think it's going to be pretty much close to come out as a wash for New Zealand as a whole."

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon believed New Zealand was well-positioned to weather the tariffs. [Full article here](#).

Kiwifruit exporter claim world first in all product sold with home-compostable labels

Kiwifruit exporter Zespri is claiming a world first in being the only fruit company that will shortly have all its product sold with home-compostable labels. It is a challenge the industry has been grappling with for well over a decade, but Zespri executive Tim Mackle said this year the majority of its fruit will soon have them. And by next season, all fruit grown in New Zealand or off-shore will have stickers that disappear after a year in a compost bin.

Mackle said it was exciting to have made progress towards more environmentally friendly labels. "There are some countries around the world, particularly in Europe (France and Belgium), that do mandate them now and in fact New Zealand is one of those. For all fruit intended for the local market, it does need to be home compostable. We are world leading. "The key part of our brand is the label. When someone picks up beautiful kiwifruit around the world, they see the label, they see the brand," he said.

[Full article here](#)

Blueberry boom: Market set to expand as confidence grows

Confidence in the future of blueberries as a crop is expected to lead to sector expansion in the coming years, according to Blueberries New Zealand. There are about 100 blueberry growers in the country, with the crop primarily grown in Waikato and Hawke's Bay, and some cultivation in Northland, Wellington, and Nelson. In the 2023/2024 season, New Zealand produced about 4,000 tonnes of blueberries on 1,000 hectares.

Exports to Australia have been positive, providing buoyancy to the sector, which is now considering increased plantings. The potential of Australia, and now South Korea as a market from next season is encouraging current growers and exporters to talk about expanding [Full article here](#)

China's top court upholds T&G Global's apple variety rights ruling

T&G Global has welcomed a recent decision by the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China, which upheld an earlier ruling concerning the protection of its Scilate apple plant variety rights. The judgment confirms a November 2023 ruling by the Lanzhou Intermediate Court of Gansu Province, which found that the defendant had infringed on T&G's intellectual property rights by cultivating and selling Scilate variety plant material and apples harvested from unauthorized plantings. The court awarded RMB 3.3 million in damages, including punitive damages, and ordered the removal of the infringing plant material.

T&G Global stated that the decision reinforces the protection of intellectual property rights for plant breeders and is in line with China's updated Seed Law. The company noted that the ruling supports enforcement efforts and sets a precedent for future actions against unauthorized propagation. [Full article here](#)

Reports & Insights

MFAT Market Intelligence Reports: Indonesia's economic plans

President Prabowo Subianto has an ambitious economic goal for Indonesia, the largest economy in Southeast Asia, to hit 8% annual economic growth by 2029. To achieve this, the Indonesian Government is prioritising increased investment, expanded exports, and a continuation of the "downstreaming" policy implemented during the previous Jokowi Administration. The path to 8% annual growth may present a number of challenges, but there continue to be significant opportunities for New Zealand. Indonesia is projected to have the world's seventh largest economy by 2030 and to be in the top five largest economies by 2050. [Full report here](#)

MFAT Market Intelligence Report: Japan: Economic Update

In 2024, Japan saw mixed economic results. The trade deficit narrowed, foreign tourism reached record highs, and business profits and the stock market hit all-time highs. Interest rates rose, and inflation met the Bank of Japan's 2.5% target. However, growth was sluggish at an estimated 0.3-0.4% for the 2024/25 financial year. .

Trade between New Zealand and Japan slightly declined, with two-way trade at NZD9.36bn for the year ending September 2024, down from NZD9.8bn the previous year. Horticulture and meat exports grew by 16% and 26%, respectively, but dairy exports fell by 16%. Services trade remained below pre-pandemic levels, though student numbers recovered. [Full report here](#).

MFAT Market Intelligence Report: UAE Trade and Economic Update

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) continues to enjoy sustained economic growth, with GDP projected to increase by approximately 4% in 2025. This growth is driven by the country's efforts to diversify its economy, with the non-oil sector (especially tourism, financial services and technology) contributing almost 75% of real GDP. The UAE remains one of New Zealand's most significant trade and investment partners in the region. Our recently signed bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) presents new opportunities for trade and investment, aligning with the Emirates' economic transformation strategy. [Full report here](#)

MFAT Market Intelligence Report: Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum strategic reset: priorities and plans

The Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum (ANZLF) enables discussion between senior trans-Tasman business leaders and government about ways to improve business and trade between Australia and New Zealand. The ANZLF has gone through a strategic restructure over the last year and sought to align its policy focus areas and recommendations with New Zealand and Australian government and trans-Tasman business priorities. It has also refined their longer set of recommendations raised by businesses, to a smaller number of items that they hope the Australian and New Zealand government may be able to collectively progress in the short-to-medium term: [Full report here](#)

MFAT Market Intelligence Report: New EU Rules on Packaging and Packaging Waste will Transform its Supply Chain

The European Union's new Packaging and Packing Waste Regulation (PPWR) represents a drastic shift for participants across the supply chain, both in the EU and globally. The regulation updates an existing Directive and is designed to push businesses in the EU and globally to adopt more sustainable packaging practices, reduce waste, and improve rates of recycling and re-use.

The rules will impact a wide range of supply chain participants – from manufacturers and distributors, through to retailers and wider service providers, who will need to know their packaging impact at an unprecedented scale and make changes to their operating models. There may be opportunities for New Zealand businesses in the cleantech and sustainable packaging solutions sectors, who can contribute to the EU's transformation. [Full report here](#)

Global Coalition of Fresh Produce – Global Value Chains Explained

As part of United Fresh's work with the Global Coalition of Fresh Produce, they are developing a series of briefing notes, the first of which is Fruits and Vegetables: Global Value Chains Explained. Understanding costs and prices in global value chains for fruits and vegetables. [Report here](#)

Events & Webinars

- International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) Leadership Summit 2025, 29 April 2025, Sydney: The Future of Fresh. [More details here](#)
- International Seed Testing Association Congress, 5-9 May 2025, Te Pae Christchurch , [More details here](#)
- 2025 Women in Seed Forum, 25 May 2025, Chateau on the Park, Christchurch, [More details here](#)
- Hort Connections, 4-6 June 2025, Brisbane Convention Centre, Australia [More details here](#)
- Primary Industries Summit & Awards, 24-25 June 2025, Christchurch [More details here](#)
- International Fresh Produce Safety Symposium, 29-30 July 2025, Sydney, Australia [More details here](#)
- Potatoes Conference 2025, 12-13 August 2025, Christchurch [More details here](#)
- Seed Business 2025, 25-28 August 2025, Te Pae Christchurch, [More details here](#)
- New Zealand Horticulture Conferences, 26-27 August 2025, Wellington [More details here](#)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

In The News:

Chilean exporters set sights on Vietnamese market for Kiwifruit and blueberries

Chile has exported more than 3,000 tonnes of fruit to Vietnam so far in 2024/25, an increase of 133 per cent on the year-earlier period according to Frutas de Chile. Cherries made up 94 per cent of shipments and table grapes the remaining 6 per cent. Together with apples, they are the three products that currently have access to the market.

Miguel Canala-Echeverría, general manager of Frutas de Chile, said efforts are focused on negotiating access for fresh kiwifruit and improving the entry conditions for cherries. After kiwifruit, Canala-Echeverría said the next fruit in line for market access is blueberries.

With a population of almost 100mn, of which 61.4 per cent is under the age of 35 and 30 per cent lives in cities, Vietnam is a highly attractive market for Chilean fruit exporters. [Full article here](#)

India resists US push for fresh produce market access

The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) has opened the Indian market to several premium products, but fresh produce remains a sensitive area. To protect domestic growers, India has excluded key agricultural goods—including fresh fruits and vegetables—from the agreement. While some premium American fresh produce, such as Washington apples, has found its way into Indian markets, broader access remains restricted.

The exclusion of fresh produce is now a point of contention between India and the United States. As a U.S. delegation visits New Delhi to discuss the terms of a proposed bilateral trade agreement, the push for reduced tariffs on American fresh produce has taken center stage. The U.S. is seeking greater market access for a range of items, which could intensify competition for small Indian fruit and vegetable growers.

India maintains that opening its market to large-scale imports of fresh produce could undercut local farmers, many of whom rely on traditional and small-scale production methods. Protecting these producers remains a priority for Indian trade negotiators, even as the country deepens economic ties with other global partners. [Full article here](#)

South African apples return to Thailand after 16-year absence

South African apples are set to return to Thailand this week after an absence of 16 years. Exporters have said it is their priority to familiarise themselves with the new export protocol agreed between the two countries, to establish a reputation as reliable suppliers. Thai re-entry and expected other gains in the Far East and Southeast Asia could not have come at a better time for the South African apple industry. Geopolitical turmoil in other parts of the world has forced South Africans to spread their basket of products globally.

"Sixteen years ago, Tru-Cape exported over 100 containers to Thailand," Tru-Cape's CEO Roelf Pienaar said. "However, in our absence, New Zealand has gained a significant market share, presenting strong competition. While our re-entry may start slowly, we are optimistic about gaining momentum [Full article here](#)

India's fruit exports rise 47.5% over five years

The Indian government reported a 47.5% rise in fruit exports over the past five years. During a session in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada highlighted the role of free trade agreements with the UAE and Australia, which have contributed to a 27% and 6% increase in exports to these countries, respectively.

Minister Prasada stated, "As far as fruits export goes, there has been an increase of 47.5 per cent in the last five years. Major fruits exported from India are mangoes, grapes, bananas, apple, pineapple, pomegranate, and watermelon." [Full article here](#)

Electronic phytosanitary certificates lower trade costs

The use of electronic phytosanitary certificates—ePhyto—for exporting plants and plant products results in lower trade costs and higher margins for exporters, faster delivery of fresh fruits and vegetables, and ultimately increased agrifood trade. These findings are highlighted in "Investing in Trade Digitalization: The Case of ePhyto," a new report by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The report shows that as more countries adopt ePhyto, the more exporting companies will save. By investing in digital tools like ePhyto, countries can position themselves to reap the full benefits of a more efficient, transparent, and sustainable global trading system. The report provides further recommendations and actions that different public and private stakeholders can take to maximize the benefits of ePhyto. [Full article here](#) [Report here](#)

Reports:

IFPA releases supply chain white paper

The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) released a white paper titled "Supply Chain of the Future: From Vision to Action," which outlines a roadmap for unprecedented collaboration in the fresh produce supply chain. Key focuses include harmonised standards, smart data escrow, shelf-life predictability, and dynamic incentives. The IFPA has organized global "collabathons" to foster open dialogue and shared problem-solving, aiming to build trust and transparency across the supply chain. The initiative includes establishing working groups, executing pilot programs, and showcasing successful collaborations at the IFPA Global Produce & Floral Show. [Full article here](#) [Report here](#)

Gain reports

Global Agricultural Information Network reports are produced by the USDA. They are designed to provide timely information on the economy, products and issues in foreign countries that are likely to have an impact on United States agricultural production and trade. The information in them is written for USA exporters but the majority is equally relevant to New Zealand. For import regulations for a particular market, New Zealand exporters should first check the country's ICPR on MPI's website.

- **EU Early Alert - Pesticide Review**

The European Union (EU) follows a complex, rolling system of review for active ingredients and Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) in food. [Full report here](#)

- **UK government publishes Precision Breeding secondary legislation**

Two years after the primary Precision Breeding legislation was passed, the UK government has published the secondary legislation needed to implement it. After this Statutory Instrument clears its Parliamentary hurdles, the way should be clear for gene editing techniques to be used to develop improved crop varieties for commercialization, with applications for the first authorizations expected in fall 2025. [Full report here](#)

- **China: GACC Announcement 277 - Regulation on Declaration Management of Import and Export Goods**

On March 28, 2025, the GACC published Announcement 277 updating the Regulations on the Declaration Management of Import and Export Goods, which will take effect on May 1, 2025, replacing the previous version from 2003. The Regulations include several key changes related to customs clearance declaration procedures and operations, including electronic document submission, timelines for submissions, amended certificate requirements, etc [Full report here](#)

- **China: Fifty National Food Safety Standards and Nine Amendments Released**

On March 27, 2025, China's National Health Commission (NHC) and State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) jointly published an announcement releasing 50 new or updated National Food Safety Standards (GB) and nine amendment sheets. The new or updated standards include food labels, food contacting materials, microbial testing methods, and contaminants. FAS China has published earlier versions of many of these GB standards in standalone reports previously as China has notified many to the WTO in previous years. [Full report here](#)

- **Avocado Annual: [Mexico](#)**

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