



**UPDATE: 24 June 2025**

Kia ora

In this update, we celebrate New Zealand's horticulture sector achieving record export growth of 19% to reach \$8.5 billion, and highlight PM Luxon's successful China visit. These positive developments come amid ongoing regulatory and biosecurity challenges, including MPI's review of tomato virus controls following Australia's management shift and Bayer's closure of its Hastings research facility.

Internationally, trade relationships face similar pressures with India-US negotiations stalling and the Malaysian government proposing a 5% tax on imported fruit. 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** **ICPR changes & other updates; Consultations:** Proposed Amendments to Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011; Cost recovery proposals under the Organic Products and Production Act 2023; Have Your Say: New Zealand is negotiating an Arrangement to help resolve non-tariff barriers. **Trade Facilitation Initiatives:** NZ and China launch fast-track fresh food clearance pilot

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## GOVERNMENT AGENCY NEWS

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### ***ICPR changes & other updates***

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

- Australia: [ICPR Australia](#)
- Canada: [ICPR Canada](#)
- China: [ICPR China](#)
- European Union: [ICPR EU](#)
- Indonesia: [ICPR Indonesia](#)
- United States of America: [ICPR USA](#)

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

## ***Consultations***

### **Proposed Amendments to Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011**

New Zealand Food Safety has identified, and is seeking feedback on, 4 broad categories of amendments to the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011.

The proposed changes are intended to: improve accessibility of the regulations; create greater certainty and confidence in the regulations; reduce compliance and operational costs; and improve fairness by providing a more flexible and effective exemption regime.

More information on the proposed changes and how to make a submission is on the Ministry for Primary Industries [website](#). The deadline for submissions is 5pm, 3 August 2025.

### **Cost recovery proposals under the Organic Products and Production Act 2023**

In 2023, Parliament passed the Organic Products and Production Act 2023 (the Act) to regulate organic claims in New Zealand. The Act sets the requirements for making an organic claim and enables the development of secondary legislation to regulate how organic products are made in New Zealand. The new regulatory system is intended to provide consumer confidence in the claims made by New Zealand producers of organic products, and confidence and certainty in the trade of organic products for New Zealand businesses and our trading partners. It will also form the basis of negotiations to gain access to other markets for New Zealand's organic produce. To fund the system, MPI must recover costs not covered by the Crown.

MPI are seeking your input on the cost recovery proposals for services that include:

- approval (certification)
- oversight, support, and monitoring services for the standard
- work to facilitate the export of organic products.

More information on the proposals and how to make a submission is on the Ministry for Primary Industries [website](#). The deadline for submissions is 13 July 2025.

### **Have Your Say: New Zealand is negotiating an Arrangement to help resolve non-tariff barriers.**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) is seeking feedback on a new initiative to resolve non-tariff barriers (NTBs) via a legally non-binding arrangement with a number of other countries. This Open Plurilateral Arrangement will bring together countries that support free and open trade to find ways to resolve non-tariff barriers.

MFAT is seeking feedback on what New Zealanders would like to see in this arrangement and the times of non-tariff barriers they are most concerned about. In particular they are interested to hear from New Zealanders on:

- What types of NTBs are exporters facing that this Arrangement could help address?
- What countries should New Zealand work with?
- What other issues do you think New Zealand should focus on in this Arrangement?
- Do we have permission to contact you in the future if we conduct additional consultation related to this Arrangement?

More information on the proposal and how to make a submission is on the Ministry for Foreign Affairs & Trade [website](#). Deadline for submissions is 1 July 2025.

## ***Trade facilitation initiatives***

### **NZ and China launch fast-track fresh food clearance pilot**

The New Zealand Customs Service and China's General Administration of Customs have initiated a pilot to facilitate faster border clearance for airfreighted fresh foods. Introduced during Prime Minister Christopher Luxon's visit to China, this initiative aims to shorten clearance times at Auckland International Airport and Shanghai Pudong International Airport.

Christine Stevenson, the Comptroller and Chief Executive of New Zealand Customs, was present in Beijing. She stated the project aims to streamline documentation checks, enabling quicker access to the Chinese market for items like fruit. Stevenson noted, "We know that it is important for New Zealand businesses to be able to get the fresh food they are sending cleared on the same day it arrives in China."

The same reciprocal approach will apply to low-risk goods entering New Zealand via Auckland.

Fresh food airfreight exporters can register their interest in further updates from Customs on the fresh food pilot by emailing [ses@customs.govt.nz](mailto:ses@customs.govt.nz) with the subject line 'China Pilot'. [Full article here](#)

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## **NEW ZEALAND NEWS**

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### ***Government news***

#### **PM Luxon concludes successful China visit**

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has wrapped up his successful China visit by meeting with his Chinese counterpart Premier Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. "My first official visit to China allowed me to reconnect with Premier Li on the full scope of our bilateral relationship," Mr Luxon says. Following their meeting, Mr Luxon and Premier Li issued a Joint Statement of Outcomes and witnessed the signing of 11 new government-to-government arrangements covering cooperation on climate change, cultural linkages, tourism and a range of practical initiatives to facilitate trade flows.

Mr Luxon also had constructive discussions with President Xi Jinping and National People's Congress Chairman Zhao Leji in Beijing and Party Secretary Chen Jining in Shanghai.

During his three-day visit, Mr Luxon worked with a high calibre business delegation to promote New Zealand's premium food and beverage, and health and wellbeing products. [Full article here](#)

#### **New Zealand horticulture sector set to reach record high**

New Zealand's horticulturalists are breaking new ground with exports tipped to surpass \$8 billion for the first time, Associate Agriculture Minister Nicola Grigg says. "New Zealand's horticulture sector is poised for impressive growth, with export revenue forecast to hit a record \$8.5 billion by 30 June 2025," Ms Grigg says. "That's phenomenal growth of 19 per cent – the fastest of any agricultural sector - reflecting the dedication and resilience of our growers and exporters.

"Looking ahead, the sector's continued hard work is expected to drive that even higher, with export revenue forecast to climb to \$9.8 billion by 2029. "These numbers reflect the vital role horticulture plays in New Zealand's economy and global trade.

"These strong results are thanks to the dedication and hard work of our fruit and vege growers - and the Government is fully committed to backing their ongoing success. [Full article here](#)

## **Industry news**

### **Zespri forecasts strong 2025/26 returns for growers**

Zespri has announced that its indicative forecast for the 2025/26 season has it on track to deliver "strong value to growers in another record crop year".

CEO Jason Te Brake said average per hectare returns for Green, Sweet Green, Organic Green and Organic SunGold Kiwifruit are now forecast to exceed last year's record returns. "This reflects this season's increased yields, improvements in our Green and RubyRed fruit size, and additional SunGold Kiwifruit and RubyRed Kiwifruit volume from newly producing orchards," he outlined.

"This forecast is encouraging, though there are some economic headwinds in Asia, including inflationary pressures in Japan and our teams are working hard to secure good value in generally softer market conditions," Te Brake continued. [Full article here](#)

### **Tomato virus prompts MPI review after Australia's management shift**

The Ministry for Primary Industries says it will review its current controls after Australia changed its strategy to deal with a highly contagious virus affecting tomatoes, capsicums and chillies.

Across the Tasman, biosecurity experts and industry representatives have declared tomato brown rugose virus not technically feasible to eradicate, and moved to a management strategy. It is not harmful to humans, but infected fruit can ripen irregularly or be deformed. It can also reduce crop yields by 70%.

Stuart Anderson, the deputy director-general of Biosecurity New Zealand, emphasised that current controls have effectively protected New Zealand tomato growers, despite the outbreak in Australia. Imports of Australian tomatoes, specifically from Queensland—a region free from the virus—remain banned as a precaution. "We decided to suspend imports from all Australian states out of an abundance of caution," stated Anderson.

Measures like mandatory virus testing for tomato and capsicum seeds from Australia before entering New Zealand should stay enforced. Anderson confirmed, "Although Australia has announced they will no longer be pursuing eradication, all of the controls that have been in place to limit the spread of the virus remain." [Full article here](#)

### **NZ citrus growers face import pressure**

The chairman of Citrus NZ, Ian Albers, draws attention to challenges facing New Zealand citrus growers due to competition with imported citrus, primarily from Australia, coinciding with local citrus availability. About 98% of domestically grown citrus is sold within New Zealand, with limited export mainly targeting Japan and the USA.

According to Albers, overall, this season is looking reasonably good. He says the previous few years have been challenging with Covid, Cyclone Gabrielle and continuing wet weather which has impacted on things such as tree health. But he says 2024 produced a good spring and there have been pretty good growing conditions in the two main citrus growing regions – Kerikeri and Gisborne.

Ian Albers says getting innovation into citrus packhouses has challenges because they must pack multiple and quite different fruits of differing shapes and sizes. "In the case of citrus, we have everything from grapefruit, lemons, limes and mandarins which all have their own idiosyncrasies in terms packing and grading. Our industry is simply not big enough to have single packhouses for one of these fruits," he says. [Full article here](#)

## **Bayer NZ Crop Science closes its Hastings research facility**

One of the country's largest agrichemical companies has decided to close its research facility in Hastings, and the sector's peak body warns it may not be the last such closure. The end of the Bayer Crop Science research facility – where roughly 20 trials are conducted annually on ways to better grow stone and vine fruit among other things – will see two full time jobs lost.

But Animal and Health New Zealand, the body representing agrichemical firms, says the “big four” multinational companies operating in New Zealand – German-headquartered Bayer, Syngenta and BASF and Texas-based Cortiva Agriscience – have concerns about the time, cost and complexity of getting new crop protection products approved for use, and have warned the processes make New Zealand a less viable market for research and development of new products.

In a statement to The Post, Bayer said increasing costs, generic pressure, and regulatory uncertainty were challenges the industry was facing in New Zealand and across the world.

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)'s general manager hazardous substances and new organisms, Dr Chris Hill, did not comment on Bayer's withdrawal from the market. But he said an effective regulatory system was vital to safeguarding food safety, biosecurity, and public health – “while also reinforcing confidence in our exports and supporting economic growth”.

He said the Ministry for Regulation's recent review confirmed the need to modernise the country's regulatory system, and improvements being undertaken now – streamlining processes, reducing application backlogs and strengthening its assessment team – would help streamline the process. [Full article here](#)

## ***Leadership announcements***

### **Kazi Talaska appointed General Manager of Onions NZ**

Kazi Talaska, the newly appointed General Manager of Onions NZ, brings a fresh perspective and a strong research-driven focus to New Zealand's third-largest horticultural export sector. Originally from Indonesia, Talaska moved to New Zealand to study horticultural science at Massey University. Since then, she has built a career dedicated to advancing horticulture through science, innovation, and international market development.

Talaska is committed to helping New Zealand growers remain competitive in a global market shaped by environmental pressures and shifting trade dynamics. "Our trade relationships are critical to the success of New Zealand's primary industries," she says. "Ensuring affordable, healthy vegetables for both Aotearoa and the world is our priority, and that takes collaboration, innovation, and long-term thinking." [Full article here](#)

## ***Reports & Insights***

### **MPI - June 2025 Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries**

According to the latest Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries (SOPI) report, food and fibre sector export revenue is performing well despite geopolitical turbulence, shifting trade policies, and elevated uncertainty. While some industries remain more vulnerable to external pressures, others are well-positioned to withstand volatility, ensuring overall sector stability. Overall, food and fibre sector export revenue is expected to increase 12% to \$59.9 billion for the year to 30 June 2025, and forecast to reach \$61.4 billion in 2025-2026 year.

Horticulture export revenue is forecast to increase by 19% in the year to 30 June 2025, reaching \$8.5 billion. This growth is primarily driven by the kiwifruit industry, with exports expected to reach \$3.9 billion, following a record 2024 crop and forecasts for an even larger crop in 2025. Looking ahead to the

year to 30 June 2026, horticulture export revenue is forecast to increase to \$8.6 billion, driven by modest growth across key industries including kiwifruit, wine and apples and pears.

Arable export revenue is forecast to drop 1% to \$340 million in the year to 30 June 2025, due to weak ryegrass seed demand and a poor clover season that began early in the year. For 2025–26, revenue is forecast to remain steady at \$340 million. The weak clover season will likely affect next year's exports, and so far, no contracts have been secured with EU or US buyers for ryegrass seed. US tariff policies add to market uncertainty, leading to a cautious industry outlook in the short term. However, if demand for hybrid vegetable seed stays strong, high prices in this segment could lift overall arable exports into positive territory next year.

[Full report here](#)

## **Events & Webinars**

- International Fresh Produce Safety Symposium, 29-30 July 2025, Sydney, Australia [More details here](#)
- Summefruit NZ Conference, 25-26 June 2025, Blenheim [More details here](#)
- B3 (Better Border Biosecurity) Conference 15-16 July 2025, Wellington [More details here](#)
- NZAPI Expo 2025, 30 July-1 August, Nelson, [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](#)

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## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

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### ***In The News:***

#### **Australia: Horticulture value drops despite growth**

Latest statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reveal that the value of Australia's vegetable, cut flower, nursery, and turf industries declined in FY24.

Jolyon Burnett, Chair of the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) Horticulture Council, described the figures as sobering, despite a few positive signs. He urged policymakers to reflect on the conditions required to ensure the sector's future success. "Perhaps most concerning is the vegetable result, with value down \$140 million compared to the previous year, despite a production increase of 250,000 tons," said Mr Burnett. He added that even the \$493 million increase in the value of the fruit sector should be approached cautiously. "We know many fruit growers are feeling the squeeze of rising input costs and are struggling to break even."

"These figures remind us that the success of the horticulture industry cannot be assumed or taken for granted," Mr Burnett said. [Full article here](#) [Statistical data here](#)

#### **Australia: Regulators assessing bid to grow and sell genetically modified purple tomato in Australia**

A genetically modified tomato the colour of an eggplant could be available on supermarket shelves as early as next year if regulators approved a bid to grow it in Australia. The purple tomato, as it is named, has been genetically modified to include genes from the edible snapdragon flower.

Nathan Pumplin is the chief executive of Norfolk Healthy Produce, a United States-based company marketing the plant. He said the tomato had two snapdragon genes added, allowing it to make a class



of antioxidants called anthocyanins, whose nutrients created the purple colour and were also associated with health benefits.

Australia has strict regulations on growing genetically modified crops and to date only canola, cotton, safflower, bananas and flowers have been approved. The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) is the government oversight body and crops will only be approved if they are proven to be safe for people and the environment.

All genetically modified foods for sale and consumption must also undergo a safety assessment by Food Standards Australia New Zealand. [Full article here](#)

## **India-U.S. trade talks stall over agriculture and GM crops**

India and the United States continue intricate negotiations over a Bilateral Trade Agreement involving agricultural products, with apples, corn, and soybeans emerging as contentious points. The ongoing dialogue could delay the agreement beyond the anticipated July 8 deadline.

An Indian government official clarified, "The U.S. is pushing so hard for market access for agricultural products. But India has to protect the interests of a much larger population; it is more of a livelihood issue than a commercial issue for us," according to [www.moneycontrol.com](http://www.moneycontrol.com).

The U.S is eager for tariff reductions on apple imports, while India considers allowing limited concessions on a quota basis to safeguard its domestic apple growers. This proposal faces challenges, particularly concerning apple producers in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

The negotiations also address genetically-modified product imports, a sensitive subject in India. The emphasis is on corn and soybeans, attributed to U.S. producers achieving high yields through GM variants. Indian officials express concerns regarding domestic competition. [Full article here](#)

## **China plans tariff-free trade with Africa**

China has announced plans to negotiate a new economic agreement with 53 African nations to eliminate tariffs. This initiative is designed to extend duty- and quota-free access beyond least developed countries (LDCs), covering middle-income nations. China already provides such access to numerous LDCs, including several African countries.

The policy aims to enable a wider range of African economies, including those with developed manufacturing infrastructures, to engage in the Chinese market. A statement from the Chinese Foreign Ministry followed a meeting in Changsha with African foreign ministers, emphasizing China's readiness to "welcome quality products from Africa" to its markets.

Hannah Ryder of Development Reimagined highlighted that the policy enables nations such as Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, and Morocco to enter the Chinese market effectively duty-free. While trade between China and Africa grows, it remains skewed toward China. Last year, China reported a trade surplus with Africa amounting to \$62 billion. [Full article here](#)

## **Malaysian government proposes 5 per tax on imported fruit**

The Malaysian government has announced plans to expand its national sales and service tax (SST) from 1 July, including a new 5 per cent rate on imported fruit. In an interview with Free Malaysia Today, treasury secretary-general Johan Mahmood Merican said the change was designed to encourage the consumption of local agricultural products and strengthen the nation's food security. "Optional goods with alternatives are subject to 5 per cent SST, but locally produced fruits are not subject to the sales tax," said Merican.

He said the move is part of wider efforts to support local growers and reduce dependence on foreign supply chains for food, adding the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority is working to improve the quality of local products, such as honeydew and pineapples, to offer high-quality and affordable alternatives. [Full article here](#)

## **Reports:**

### **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.

- **Exporter Guide Annual:** [Australia](#); [Hong Kong](#); [New Zealand](#); [Pakistan](#); [Saudi Arabia](#); [Taiwan](#); [United Kingdom](#)  
A resource for US exporters that provides an economic and market overview for each country, as well as demographic trends, practical tips and information on local business practices, consumer preferences, and trends.
- **Japan: Market Updates for Japan's Frozen Food Industry**  
Sales in Japan's frozen food market have been increasing year by year, reaching a record high in 2023. Several factors have led to this growth, including an increase in time spent at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, a rise in dual-income households leading to greater demand for convenience, and ongoing price inflation. Frozen foods in Japan are generally categorized into two types: prepared (processed) frozen foods and frozen ingredients such as vegetables and fruits. Thus far, imports have mainly consisted of frozen ingredients. The market is expected to continue expanding in the coming years. [Full report here](#)
- **267th Japan Food Safety Group Meeting Outcomes**  
The Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) of Japan proposed revisions of Japan's maximum residue levels for five agricultural chemicals (Esprocarb, Ethaboxam, Picarbutrazox, Polyoxorim zinc, and Trifloxystrobin) for various agricultural commodities. In addition, the CAA announced a draft public notice about a special application process for the Positive List for Apparatus, Containers and Packaging (ACP). [Full report here](#)

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