

**PMAC weekly update 4th to 11th May**

1. **Covid 19 -** New Zealand, Looking forward, Market disruptions positive and negative
2. **Government agencies:** ICPR Changes WTO Notifications;
3. **New Zealand News**: APEC economies agree to keep markets open and trade flowing in response to COVID-19; New Zealand horticulture exports grow to $6.2 billion; Unmanaged host trees of codling moths pose risks to apple industry; Horticultural labour shortage could mean New Zealand food shortages; New Zealand runs out of lettuce; Kiwifruit growers decide to appeal PSA ruling; Q-Flies have a good sense of smell
4. **International news:** GAIN reports; European Commission adopts package of measures to further support the agri-food sector; Trade disrupting issues that should not be forgotten; "If we can bridge the gap between technology and reality, the sky is the limit for horticulture"; Maersk opens China-Turkey rail service; Asia Fruit Logistica reschedules to November; Freshfel times; An economic overview of ornamental flowers and plants in Brazil; Mexican scientists research edible corona vaccine

**Comment**

With New Zealand hearing today whether we will move into Level 2 later this week it seems as though the whole world is ready to move past this crisis. As the FloraHolland article notes The Crisis Management Team (CMT) has been transformed into the Corona Recovery Team. On this basis I intend to put out one more Covid 19 daily on Wednesday or Thursday of this week and will then revert to the Weekly update with Covid 19 articles placed in the appropriate section.

In the Covid 19 articles this week there are more articles looking forward and talking about what recovery means and a smattering of articles about the ongoing effects of the pandemic. The most significant comment probably is a confirmed increase in the price of food in France – quoting a 9% average increase.

In the New Zealand section, it’s heartening to see ASEAM agree to avoid trader restrictive practices , there is the timely reminder from Mike Chapman that New Zealand must develop its own Food Security Strategy for fruit and vegetables or else we are likely to have shortages in some areas . Also announced is the news that the group of Kiwifruit growers who sought compensation for the introduction of PSA will appeal the Appeal Court’s recent judgement.

In the International section one article stands out above the rest "If we can bridge the gap between technology and reality, the sky is the limit for horticulture". This article from the new Business Development Officer at a Dutch agri technology firm. Looks at developments such as Robotics and vertical farming and comments on how soon they may become a significant force in the production of fruit and vegetables.

**Covid 19 specific reports**  

* 1. **New Zealand**

**KPMG webinar recorded**

To download a copy of last weeks The ‘now normal’ future: Food and fibre in a world emerging from COVID-19 please click [here](https://communication.kpmg.co.nz/e/2dew2nqbsyovq/3f4f35bf-909b-4f0c-9dda-44fbf2745e18). If you wish to listen to the full webinar it is also available [here](https://communication.kpmg.co.nz/e/dge6luxn0hlhfca/3f4f35bf-909b-4f0c-9dda-44fbf2745e18) should you wish to play it back.

**Coronavirus: Trade Me launches fresh food boxes**

Sales of fresh groceries on Trade Me will help feed hungry Kiwi kids, the head of social enterprise Eat My Lunch says. On Friday, Trade Me announced it was working with local suppliers to sell fresh grocery boxes including organic meat, fruit and vegetables and even baked goods.

Head of Trade Me marketplace Lisa Stewart said selling fresh food boxes was a first for the company and it was hoped more producers would be added. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/121373859/coronavirus-trade-me-launches-fresh-food-boxes>

* 1. **Looking forward**

**'Whole new business': Farmers innovate to get food from field to plate**

The crisis has exposed the world’s reliance on international trade and on a vast number of seasonal workers who usually travel from farm to farm, often crossing borders, to help gather in produce as it ripens.

But many farms and firms are adapting quickly by selling online direct to consumers and employing the local new unemployed- sometimes with Government support – e.g. in Spain, the European Union’s biggest fruit and vegetable exporter, has responded by allowing the unemployed to take farm jobs while keeping welfare payments, and has extended work permits for those migrants already in the country.

U.S. President Donald Trump has exempted such migrants from a temporary curb on immigration during the crisis. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-food-solutions/whole-new-business-farmers-innovate-to-get-food-from-field-to-plate-idUSKBN22J1IB?il=0>

**Building resilience into the vegetable supply chain using container farming**

Canada’s food supply chain is robust and reliable - even in times of the COVID-19 crisis - but there is an opportunity to become more self-sufficient. Container farming can provide your food supply with some autonomy and reduced reliance on external food supply chains. Empty shelves at the outbreak of the pandemic were a shock to many grocery store retailers.

Each community has different needs, but one possible solution is container farming. With container farms, communities and grocery stores can grow a variety of produce year-round, no matter the weather, and even customize what’s being grown to match the demand of the community.

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9212263/building-resilience-into-the-vegetable-supply-chain-using-container-farming/)

**A balance of consistency and flexibility will be necessary to reopen the economy**

This week’s PMA virtual town hall focused on the reopening of the economy: what factors should be taken into consideration before, during, and after reopening? The two most important components that continued to come up were the health and safety of the community, and the need for flexibility – both in the government’s guidelines ( to allow businesses to be flexible in how they apply these regulations) , and in businesses. An important theme throughout the meeting is that there will be a ‘new normal,’

The meeting agreed it is necessary for all businesses to have a good plan and make it work . The plan must take into account. First is the intensity of the contact within the business. Second is the number of contacts that may be involved. Finally, the third is what physical or operational changes could be implemented to reduce the risk involved. <https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9215202/a-balance-of-consistency-and-flexibility-will-be-necessary-to-reopen-the-economy/>

**Will COVID-19 bring about a new global freight strategy?**  
COVID-19 has generated unprecedented disruption in the global logistics and freight industries, severely impacting operations and delivery activities. However, could these current challenges ultimately pave the way for a more streamlined, efficient and environmentally-friendly future?

Beyond economic stimulation, the need for a more resilient supply chain to mitigate potential disruptions from future similar events could see producers and distributors looking to local manufacturers rather than international suppliers and work towards a more joined up operation so that logistics are managed to optimise freight movements. [Click here to read the full article.](https://seanews.co.uk/features/will-covid-19-catalyse-the-advent-of-a-new-global-freight-strategy/)

* 1. **Market disruptions negative and positive**

**Corona crisis disrupts potato processing industry**

The Dutch potato processing industry is virtually at a standstill due to the out-of-home market falling away. According to the Association for the potato processing industry (VAVI)it is looking for alternative destinations for a huge potato surplus. Belgian processors are continuing as best possible. They are trying to extend their current season, and honor contracted volumes.

The VAVI secretary expects about a million tons of french-fry suited potatoes to go unprocessed. “How much of a surplus will depend on developments in the sales markets. But, there will undoubtedly be a surplus this year.” He says that a million tons are equal to 25,000 truckloads of potatoes. That is a significant volume for which the sector is seeking alternative destinations." Some my be used ads industrial potatoes but the returns are likely to be low. It is estimated the effect will be a revenue loss of €500 million, at the very least, for the Dutch processing industry.

The corona crisis is also affecting the Belgian potato processing industry. However, it seems the situation differs from that in the Netherlands. That is due to the country’s traditionally strong focus on the retail sector. The potato processing industry is proceeding as best it can there. But the lockdown regulations are making it difficult for an increasing number of companies. Belpotato.be, the Belgian branch organization’s estimate of potatoes that cannot be processed, reaches a maximum of 750,000 tons valued at about €125 million. “Companies that supply retailers have a normal to increased demand. People are cooking at home more, so they buy frozen potato products too.”

He notes reefer container availability for both Asia and South America is the biggest issue. That means there are fewer containers available for return trips with, for example, frozen french fries. “The rumors that maritime transport would become pricier did not materialize .”

 https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9214021/corona-crisis-disrupts-potato-processing-industry/

**Dutch government to allocate € 50 million to help potato growers**  
The [government of the Netherlands will provide € 650 million to save farmers](https://en.potatosystem.ru/pravitelstvo-niderlandov-vydelit/) from complete bankruptcy and to pay off losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Of this amount, about € 50 million will be used to help potato growers. The approach used is that the first 30% of the loss of trade will be borne by the entrepreneurs themselves, and the remaining 70% of the damage will be “substantially compensated” by the state.

**Maersk app sees record use amid COVID-19**  
Driven by Covid-19 demand for online business transactions has i[ncreased the Maersk shipments app usage](https://www.maersk.com/news/articles/2020/05/06/maersk-app-sees-record-use-amid-covid-19) by nearly 90% in 2020.”In the first five weeks of 2020, the app averaged 70,000 business transactions weekly. By mid-April, it had grown to 130,000 business transactions weekly, reflecting an 86% increase in this online remote usage tool.”

[Food prices have crept up across Europe during the coronavirus lockdown](https://uk.news.yahoo.com/fresh-food-prices-spike-europe-153415985.html) as food growers struggle with supply chains disrupted by measures against COVID-19. For example Comparing the first week of March with the first week May. Bananas are up 12 percent and apples 9 percent. Vegetables, such as lettuce, turnip and tomatoes, have increased in price by 10 percent on average. The reasons for price increases are numerous. Transport costs have increased and consumers have shown a preference for packaged fruit and vegetables, over fears about transmission of the virus, pushing up prices with the extra packaging costs. An increase in labour costs is partly responsible, notably for seasonal workers, as well as continued difficulties in importing produce from abroad because of coronavirus. Overall, prices have increased by an average of nine percent across the board,

Turkey’s [agricultural exports rose during the January-April period,](https://www.dailysabah.com/business/economy/turkeys-agricultural-exports-rise-in-q1-despite-covid-19-pandemic) Agriculture-based exports increased by 2.9% in the first quarter of the year, according to an Anadolu Agency (AA) report while industrial exports declined 16.2 %. Fresh fruit and vegetable exports followed the rising trend with a 21.6% increase.

**Canadian sectors hurting**

As Canadas onion market continues to collapse, [area producers are turning to the federal government to survive.](https://www.malheurenterprise.com/posts/7117/onion-producers-seek-federal-help-as-malheur-county-industry-tips-into-free-fall) The government has a relief plan – the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program – that will furnish $16 billion in help to farmers. Of that, $2.1 billion is to help producers cover losses for specialty crops such as onions.

COVID-19 has also puts the brakes on potato acreage as McCain and Simplot scale down in Manitoba  
[Manitoba’s potato acreage will take a hit this year in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and plummeting demand](https://www.potatonewstoday.com/2020/05/07/covid-19-puts-the-brakes-on-potato-acres-as-mccain-and-simplot-scale-down-in-canadas-manitoba-province/). According to multiple industry sources, McCain Foods has dropped 16 per cent of acres from its contracts with Canada’s Manitoba farmers, while Simplot has also made smaller cuts from its agreements.

**Agriculture sector Philippines shrank 1.2% in Q1** [Lockdowns imposed to control the spread of the coronavirus pandemic have adversely affected the country’s agricultural growth story](https://business.inquirer.net/296649/agriculture-sector-shrank-1-2-in-1st-quarter) in the first quarter of the year, casting uncertainty on the administration’s goal of an annual 2-percent growth for the sector.

**Philippines E-commerce for agri products ‘new normal, positive’ effect of pandemic**  
[E-commerce in agricultural marketing and trading has become the “new normal” and one “positive” effect of the pandemic](https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1271818/fwd-da-e-commerce-new-normal-positive-effect-of-covid-19-pandemic), the Department of Agriculture (DA). The agency recently launched e-Kadiwa, a website allowing members of the private sector to sell their product.

**India Covid leads to dip in perishables exports from Bengaluru airport** [exports of perishables cargo from the Kempegowda International Airport falling by nearly 50 per cent](https://www.outlookindia.com/newsscroll/covid-leads-to-dip-in-export-of-perishables-from-bengaluru-airport/1826264) in April. The Karnataka government had allowed the movement of essential products and services, including fruits and vegetables amid the lockdown. In April, the airport processed several varieties of vegetables and fruits to be air lifted by 10 airlines, including two Indian ones, to 28 international destinations.

**India** [The COVID-19 lockdown has put hundreds of Kashmir apple growers in a difficult position.](https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/NewsDetail/index/9/18703/Apple-Farmers-in-Kashmir-Hit-by-COVID-19-Lockdown) They don't know how to sell their stored apples, stuck in cold chambers now for more than 6 months.

**India**  Lack of workers has Indian mango traders facing a dilemma an [acute shortage of workforce in the orchards, market yards and trading centres](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/lack-of-migrant-workers-puts-mango-traders-in-a-dilemma/article31521650.ece). The nationwide lockdown since March 23 has blocked the entry of migrant workers from the north, forcing the stakeholders to depend on the local workers at considerably higher wages.

**€10 million aid package approved for Greek floriculture sector**

The European Commission has approved a €10 million Greek State aid scheme to support the floriculture primary production sector in the context of the coronavirus outbreak. It will help these farmers to cover their immediate liquidity needs and continue their activities during these challenging times. The support will not exceed €100,000 per company. Aid under the scheme can be granted until 31 December 2020. The TFEU and the conditions are set out in the [Temporary Framework](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_496).

<https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9215236/eu10-million-aid-package-approved-for-greek-floriculture-sector/>

**Royal FloraHolland focuses on crisis recovery**

On May 6, the total turnover (clock and direct) at Royal FloraHolland was 11.1% less compared to the same day last year (Wednesday 8th May 2019) and clock turnover amounted to 19.4% less compared to the same day last year.

Even though the corona crisis isn't over yet, the focus is shifting. We have to adapt to the 1.5-metre society. A society in which we always keep an appropriate distance from each other, both in business and in private life. This means that the safety measures that have now been taken at Royal FloraHolland will be maintained for the foreseeable future. Royal FloraHolland is now going to focus more on recovery, during and after the crisis. The Crisis Management Team (CMT) has been transformed into the Corona Recovery Team. https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9214782/royal-floraholland-focuses-on-crisis-recovery/

**Corona to cut Kenya's farm exports by 1.4 billion USD**

<https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9215161/corona-to-cut-kenya-s-farm-exports-by-1-4-billion-usd/>

1. **Agency news** 
   1. **ICPR changes**

The ICPR for Chile has been updated by replacing replacing *Brassica kaber* with current name *Sinapis arvensis* under section 2.4 Weeds

* 1. **WTO Notifications**

Please find attached the most recent WTO notifications from countries that are considering changes to their plant import requirements for specific products. If you have any concerns about the notifications being presented please contact [Plant.exports@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Plant.exports@mpi.govt.nz) so that they can potentially make a submission to the notifying country. Changes notified over the last week include:

Indonesia -re acceptability of electronic / digital and scanned phytocerts during the pandemic

The embedded files for the last week (which has links through to the original notifications)is available here 

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1. **New** **Zealand News**



* 1. **APEC economies agree to keep markets open and trade flowing in response to COVID-19**

The 21 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) ministers responsible for trade have committed to work together to ensure trade and investment continue to flow to help counter the impact of COVID-19.

“This new commitment will promote a more stable trading environment for our food exporters. It will also help provide reliable access to the critical medical supplies we need.

APEC trade ministers also acknowledged the economic impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable communities and sectors, and undertook to ensure their recovery was a focus.    New Zealand, and other like-minded countries, see trade as playing a key role in the economic recovery from COVID-19.

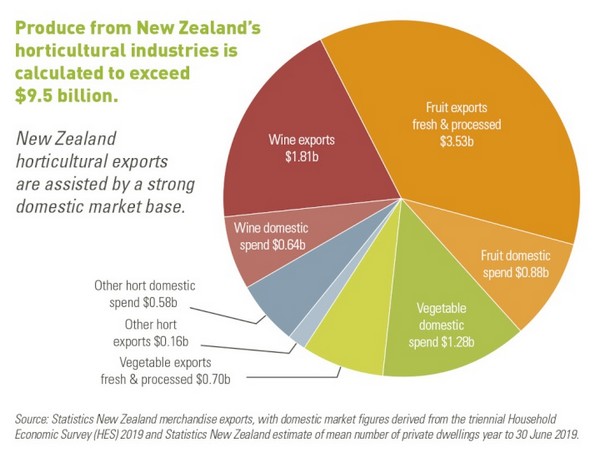
So New Zealand has also joined other WTO Members overnight in a statement supporting the multilateral trading system and highlighting its role in responding to COVID-19.

[Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/apec-economies-agree-keep-markets-open-and-trade-flowing-response-covid-19)

 Commentary

* 1. **New Zealand horticulture exports grow to $6.2 billion**

New Zealand horticulture exports reached a record breaking $6.2 billion in the year ending June 2019 - an increase of $720 million from the previous year, and more than 10% of New Zealand’s total merchandise export income.

A significant $3.4 billion of this was fresh fruit exports, which grew by $54 million since 2018. 

New Zealand horticultural produce was exported to 130 countries in 2019. The top five markets are Continental Europe, Australia, the USA, China and Japan. Exports to Asia were $2.6 billion, 42% of total NZ horticulture exports. The 2019 Fresh facts is available here <https://www.freshfacts.co.nz/files/freshfacts-2019.pdf> [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9215214/new-zealand-horticulture-exports-grow-to-6-2-billion/" \t "_blank)

** Industry**

* 1. **Unmanaged host trees of codling moths pose risks to apple industry**

The New Zealand apple industry has achieved great success in controlling codling moths on orchards using biocontrol to meet the increasing demands for sustainable ultra-low residue fruit and strict phytosanitary requirements of over 60 export markets.

Since adult codling moths can fly several kilometres, depending on wind conditions and topography, on-orchard control alone would never eradicate the regional population. Researchers from Plant & Food Research and the University of Auckland set out to assess the uncontrolled populations of the pest in the peri-urban area of Hawke’s Bay, the heart of the New Zealand apple industry. Assessments were conducted in Hastings, a city of 70,000 people surrounded by commercial apple orchards, and Ongaonga, a small rural settlement near a pilot codling moth eradication zone.

Using sex pheromone traps, the research team caught nearly 1,000 moths in one season in Hastings. The catches were heavily clustered around host trees such as backyard walnut and apple trees across different suburbs. Many host trees in Ongaonga surrounding the pilot eradication orchards also had populations of codling moths. The findings highlight the external risks the industry continues to face and the importance of integrating town and country in pursuing area-wide suppression and reducing the risk of migration of codling moths from peri-urban host trees to commercial orchards. An expansion of the successful Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) programme could be one of the special measures on the cards.  [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9213341/nz-unmanaged-host-trees-of-codling-moths-pose-risks-to-apple-industry/)

* 1. **Horticultural labour shortage could mean New Zealand food shortages**

According to horticultural industry experts, production of some food could become a casualty of the campaign against Covid-19. The industry said it strongly supported the fight against the disease, but no one should be blind to its real costs. These included the risk of some growers quitting the business for lack of markets and workers, thereby reducing New Zealand's food supply.

The comments come in the wake of a desperate plea from a Northland producer Brett Heap who grows zucchini on 30 hectares near Kerikeri. He was an early pioneer and long-standing supporter of the RSE scheme because, he said, he could not get New Zealanders to do the back-bending work of picking his crop. Heap said he worried about paying big money for fertiliser to plant in winter and harvest in spring because RSE workers might not be available at that time. That would leave a lot of sunk costs that might not be recovered, so an entire year's crop might not be planted - and a year's income could go down the drain.

Horticulture New Zealand chief executive Mike Chapman said with or without the coronavirus, New Zealand had no real strategy on providing food security for its people, and that had to change.

"We need to develop ways in which to give growers certainty so they can plant their crops and give a secure supply of food to all New Zealanders. We don't know whether borders are going to reopen or not, we don't know if we are going to get on top of Covid-19 or not.” [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9213567/horticultural-labour-shortage-could-mean-new-zealand-food-shortages/)

* 1. **New Zealand runs out of lettuce**

In an opinion piece published this week in the News Hub, Mike Chapman, CEO of Horticulture New Zealand, warned that authorities hadn't heeded the producers' warning regarding the dangers that the country's food security faces, the consequences of which have begun to become evident after the coronavirus outbreak.

The day New Zealand moved from level 4 to level 3 , Mc Donald's alone sold 300,000 hamburgers, twice as many hamburgers as on the same day of last year, depleting the chain's lettuce reserves. "Mc Donald's ran out of lettuce!" Chapman said. Horticultural producers stopped planting when the total isolation started, as they didn't know how long the Level 4 isolation would last and there was no way to channel their products so they could be sold. "It takes around 90 days in summer and around 150 days in winter for lettuce to grow from seeds and be delivered to retailers or any other point of sale such as the Mc Donald's chain,"

According to Mike Chapman, "this shortage is just one example of why we as a country need a food security and supply policy: it takes a long time to grow the products we need." "This is the time to develop and implement that food security policy and plan that Horticulture New Zealand producers have been working on before it is too late," he concluded.  [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9215022/new-zealand-runs-out-of-lettuce/)

* 1. **Kiwifruit growers decide to appeal PSA ruling**

Kiwifruit growers, whose livelihoods were decimated when the Government let the deadly PSA disease into New Zealand in 2009, have today started the appeal process in the Supreme Court to hold the Government to account for their negligence.

They are challenging the Court of Appeal’s decision that the Government is exempt from liability under the Crown Proceedings Act because they get to take advantage of immunities for employees under the Biosecurity Act,” said Mr Cameron. “The Court of Appeal followed an outdated Supreme Court case which we believe is plainly wrong and fails to address our entitlement under the Bill of Rights.”

[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9215182/kiwifruit-growers-appeal-after-government-confirmed-as-culprit-behind-release-of-devastating-virus/)

 Biosecurity

* 1. **Q-Flies have a good sense of smell**

A study published in [Scientific Reports](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-64138-6) by researchers from Macquarie University Applied BioSciences reveals that Queensland Fruit Fly (Q-fly) can detect the presence of potential predators by smell. Incredibly, the study also found that Q-fly modify their behaviour based upon this detection, adopting predator-specific responses.

The flies showed a significant reduction in foraging, mating and egg laying activity in the presence of predatory insect scent cues. “Each of these activities is essential for insect survival and so the impact of the olfactory cues is noteworthy”. The predatory insects also significantly influenced the movement of the Q-flies as well, with both increased and decreased movement rates, depending on species.

The findings have the potential to influence our management of Q-fly as a pest insect. Head of Applied BioSciences Professor Phil Taylor agrees, saying “The idea that fruit flies can smell and respond to their enemies, without ever coming into contact, is highly novel. This has not been found in any species previously and is a major step forward in our understanding of the relations between fruit flies and their enemies”. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9213683/a-nose-for-trouble/)



1. **International news**

**Comment**

* 1. **GAIN reports**

Gain reports are from the “Global Agricultural Information Network” and 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. With regard to import regulations for a particular market New Zealand exporters should first check the countries ICPR on MPI’s web site. These are collated specifically for New Zealand product. However the Gain reports often provide additional information that is useful e.g. on grading and labelling, economic profiles. The reports can be accessed by clicking on the links or by going to <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/search> This week see:

1. **Canada COVID-19 Impact on Ministerial Exemptions for Potatoes** Potato imports into Canada continue to be permitted providing import requirements are adhered to.. [COVID-19 Impact on Ministerial Exemptions for Potatoes \_Ottawa\_Canada\_05-05-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20Impact%20on%20Ministerial%20Exemptions%20for%20Potatoes%20_Ottawa_Canada_05-05-2020)
2. **Denmark Extends Support to Businesses During the COVID-19 Crises** [Denmark Extends Support to Businesses During the COVID-19 Crises\_The Hague\_Denmark\_04-29-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Denmark%20Extends%20Support%20to%20Businesses%20During%20the%20COVID-19%20Crises_The%20Hague_Denmark_04-29-2020)
3. **COVID-19 in India - Weekly Food Retail Update** [COVID-19 in India - Weekly Food Retail Update\_Mumbai\_India\_04-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20in%20India%20-%20Weekly%20Food%20Retail%20Update_Mumbai_India_04-30-2020)
4. **India - Weekly Port Situation Update** [COVID-19 in India - Weekly Port Situation Update\_Mumbai\_India\_04-29-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20in%20India%20-%20Weekly%20Port%20Situation%20Update_Mumbai_India_04-29-2020)
5. **Japan To Implement a Positive List System for Food Packaging and Container Substances** Japan will begin to implement the system on June 1, 2020 with a five-year transition period.

[Japan To Implement a Positive List System for Food Packaging and Container Substances\_Tokyo\_Japan\_04-29-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Japan%20To%20Implement%20a%20Positive%20List%20System%20for%20Food%20Packaging%20and%20Container%20Substances_Tokyo_Japan_04-29-2020)

1. **Japan Farmers Eligible for COVID-19 Cash Allowance** [Farmers Eligible for COVID-19 Cash Allowance\_Tokyo\_Japan\_04-28-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Farmers%20Eligible%20for%20COVID-19%20Cash%20Allowance_Tokyo_Japan_04-28-2020) and **COVID-19 Related Tax Relief**
2. [Japanese Farmers Eligible for COVID-19 Related Tax Relief\_Tokyo\_Japan\_04-25-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Japanese%20Farmers%20Eligible%20for%20COVID-19%20Related%20Tax%20Relief_Tokyo_Japan_04-25-2020)
3. **Sweden Extends Support to Businesses During the COVID-19 Crises** [Sweden Extends Support to Businesses During the COVID-19 Crises\_The Hague\_Sweden\_05-04-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Sweden%20Extends%20Support%20to%20Businesses%20During%20the%20COVID-19%20Crises_The%20Hague_Sweden_05-04-2020)
4. **Thailand Moves Forward with Ban on Paraquat and Chlorpyrifos on 1 June 2020** [Thailand Moves Forward with Ban on Paraquat and Chlorpyrifos on 1 June 2020\_Bangkok\_Thailand\_04-29-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Thailand%20Moves%20Forward%20with%20Ban%20on%20Paraquat%20and%20Chlorpyrifos%20on%201%20June%202020_Bangkok_Thailand_04-29-2020)
5. **Turkey Update on Effects of Covid-19 on Food and Agriculture** As Turkey implements measures to combat Covid-19, the food and agricultural sector has faced challenges as well. Export restrictions from Black Sea regional trading partners, weekend lockdowns (including the closing of all grocery stores), and fluctuating produce prices have all been topics of discussion among government officials, the media, and the private sector. New measures, including a 6 month delay in repaying government loans for farmers, a new online digital marketplace to connect producers with buyers, and additional duty-free grain tenders, aim to assist producers and ensure that the food supply meets demand.
6. [Update on Effects of Covid-19 on Food and Agriculture \_Ankara\_Turkey\_04-24-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Update%20on%20Effects%20of%20Covid-19%20on%20Food%20and%20Agriculture%20_Ankara_Turkey_04-24-2020)
7. **UK and Irish Food and Retail Updates - April 20 to 30** Over the last week, the UK foodservice sector and non-grocery retail chains continued to face a dire economic situation as the government lockdown measures remained in place. Consumers are changing to the online marketplace to look for items that they cannot buy in store, leading to massive surges in online sales. Supermarkets have continued to enjoy strong growth and are adapting quickly to provide consumers more options to shop online. Labor shortage on food production remains a concern, particularly in the horticulture sector[UK and Irish Food and Retail Updates - April 20 to 30\_London\_United Kingdom\_04-29-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=UK%20and%20Irish%20Food%20and%20Retail%20Updates%20-%20April%2020%20to%2030_London_United%20Kingdom_04-29-2020)
8. **Ukraine's MRLs for Microbiological Contaminants** This report lists Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for microbiological contaminates in different food products. [Ukraine's MRLs for Microbiological Contaminants\_Kyiv\_Ukraine\_04-27-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Ukraine's%20MRLs%20for%20Microbiological%20Contaminants_Kyiv_Ukraine_04-27-2020)

 Regulatory

* 1. **European Commission adopts package of measures to further support the agri-food sector**

The Commission [published](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2020:140:TOC) the latest [package of exceptional measures](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_722) to further support the agricultural and food sectors most affected by the coronavirus crisis.

On top of the market measures announced in the 22nd April , the Commission propose allowing Member States to use rural development funds to compensate farmers and small agri-food businesses with amounts of up to €5,000 and €50,000, respectively.

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9214207/european-commission-adopts-package-of-measures-to-further-support-the-agri-food-sector/)

* 1. **Trade disrupting issues that should not be forgotten**

The Economist’s chief editor in his weekly email last week reminded readers that while coronavirus has understandably been dominating discourse over the last few months there are a number of other significant events and trends that will have a big impact on business and government throughout the rest of 2020.

These include:

* Simmering US-China tensions- Given the lack of demand and absence of serious trade diversion away from alternative suppliers, it is going to be hard for China to meet the purchase commitments agreed in the first-phase deal. That will give Donald Trump (the US president) the excuse to escalate should political expediency (or just impulse) command it
* The US presidential election in November is shaping up to be close the two competing administrations are very different administrations and will have very different effects on the USA
* Brexit. The coronavirus crisis means that a hard Brexit is now likely at the end of 2020: there is no focus on negotiations, and the timetable was already very tight. Further, with the disruptions to trade, supply chains and movement, many of the costs of a hard Brexit have effectively already been incurred and firms will make permanent adjustments ahead of the deadline.
* China's long-term challenges of an ageing population, declining productivity growth and an indebted corporate sector remain globally significant.
  1. **"If we can bridge the gap between technology and reality, the sky is the limit for horticulture"**

Last month Maren Schoormans joined Viscon Group as Chief Business Development Officer. In this article he tackles some biases, shares his own (biased) prediction, touches on local prediction and the role of the Dutch horticultural sector in spreading this. “Let's continue to inspire and help other countries build their own local production facilities.”

I read many predictions on what the world, society and the food and agriculture business could look like after the crisis. We’re beginning to realize that we’re just at the beginning of a global economic crisis and recovery may take several years.

Blockchain experts tell me the crisis could tip over the existing financial system and give rise to the crypto currency. Maybe, but who really understands these phenomena?

Robot developers tell me that we will see the accelerated adoption of robotics in horticulture shortly. Eventually yes, but the technology has yet to see the ascent stage and it’s not unlikely that workers become available because of jobs that are lost in other sectors.

Vertical farmers tell me this will be the definitive age of the breakthrough of growing without daylight. I am excited about the potential and the technology, but it’s still work in progress as the business case is not solid yet, and feasibility is still mostly limited to specialty leafy crops.

Then there’s artificial intelligence. Some claim that a couple of years from now we don’t need experienced growers anymore. I love that ambition and we want to help accelerate this but be realistic for now. Running a profitable greenhouse operation takes a lot more than automatic optimal setpoints for climate and irrigation. But it’s a great start.

In the next couple of years, people must mind the chasm, Maren states. “There’s a gap we need to bridge. New AI and robotics are underway, but not yet able to enable limitless scalability of controlled environment agriculture. It is wise to look for the best systems and technologies that are tested and proven, team up with experienced partners and invest time and money in training staff.

Consumer behaviour has changed over the course of just weeks. “I hope that the crisis will give a final blow to mindless consumerism. The economic downturn and exuberant government spending will have a big impact on jobs, taxes, funding and people’s incomes. Many people will buy what they really need and think twice before flying 3000 miles to go shopping and skiing in the desert.

And for fresh produce you can add the questions: ‘is it good for me?’ and ‘does it taste good?’ The share of stomach of fresh produce and plant-based foods will increase on the cost of meat and ‘empty’ carbs. Vegan and vegetarian food could become the new and delicious mainstream. This opens tremendous opportunities for innovation and new varieties of produce, coming from a wide array of big and small, existing and new types of controlled environments.”

Which leads to the most popular prediction, the rise of local food production and as a result a decline of the acreage in the large exporting countries like The Netherlands. And if so, at what speed?

“Building significant production systems in new markets requires large investments and competent people to build and run the operations. In fresh produce chains, efficiency will remain key and importing affordable sustainably produced veg and flowers often makes more sense than local production.

The world needs ideas, concludes Maren. “We invite companies outside our group to team up with us and create something great together. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9214905/if-we-can-bridge-the-gap-between-technology-and-reality-the-sky-is-the-limit-for-horticulture/)

 Business/ Industry

* 1. “**Greenhouses interesting and promising part of Batwa’s strategy”**

“2019 has been a pleasing year,” says Benedikt Mangold, Head of Global Produce at BayWa. He said The national and international fruit business developed positively in the past year and subsidiaries T&G Global Ltd. and TFC Holland B.V. had a pleasing performance.

Benedikt points at the successful project of greenhouse production in the United Arab Emirates. The project was started in 2018 with partner Al Dahra and is aimed at the greenhouse-production of tomatoes in the UAE in order to support an increase in the self-sufficiency of the country that imports 89 percent of its tomatoes. “

“The current Corona crisis clearly shows, that it is critical to secure food supply from local sources as national and international logistics can be disrupted at short notice”, Benedikt says. “This crisis provides us with the opportunity to gain helpful experience and further optimize our strategic orientation to make us even more resilient throughout our whole business. Climate change and the growing desire for self-sufficiency in many regions of the world will lead to more goods produced in climatic greenhouses on the market in the future”, Benedikt continued.

Sustainability does play an important role in BayWa’s fresh produce division and Benedikt thinks it’s going to be key for the industry. BayWa has developed and adopted a sustainability and climate strategy that sets goals for the entire Group in terms of carbon emissions and renewable energy. Goals include e.g. a 22 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 (compared to 2017) and climate neutrality by 2030. Beyond the concerns about carbon we are looking to improve other parts of the supply chain.

Benedikt also talks about further developing their blueberry category and targeting year round supply for consumers. They are also considering other categories that could be developed in this way.. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9213917/greenhouses-interesting-and-promising-part-of-our-strategy/)

* 1. **Maersk opens China-Turkey rail service**

Increased demand sees launch of weekly cargo route between Xi’an and Izmit. Maersk has launched its first rail service from Xi’an, China to Izmit, Turkey, a new route that is part of Maersk's Intercontinental Rail service network. “After having successfully launched our Intercontinental Rail (ICR) service from China to Europe three years ago we have seen increase in demand by our customers for this particular service from different locations across both Asia and Europe,"[Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/181688/maersk-opens-china-turkey-rail-service)

* 1. **Asia Fruit Logistica reschedules to November**

Asia Fruit Logistica is rescheduling to 18-20 November 2020 in Singapore . “Registration numbers from all over the world for Asia Fruit Logistica 2020 are good and broad and we believe it is right for exhibitors and visitors alike that we reschedule to mid-November. This will give them more than six months from now to plan their participation.”

The Asiafruit Congress will now take place at Singapore Expo on Tuesday 17 November 2020. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9214646/asia-fruit-logistica-reschedules-to-november/)

** Marketing**

* 1. **Freshfel times**

The 2nd edition of Freshfel Europe's Fresh Times for 2020 is out now with examples of marketing initiatives in Europe. The Fresh Times Edition 2, 2020 is available [here](https://freshfel.org/fresh-times-2-2020/). In it is news of the following initiatives:

* Editor’s Note: COVID-19 adaptations
* Spain: Immune system boost
* The Netherlands: Look out for each other
* Belgium: Royal visit
* Italy: Safe F&V
* UK: On your doorstep
* Europe: Chiquita on Fruitbox
* MENA: Fresh e-commerce
* Spain: Watermelon TV star
* The Netherlands: Bring out the cress
* Australia/NZ: An avo at home
* Global: FeedUP@
* UN

All the latest editions of the Fresh Times can be found at <http://freshfel.org/newsroom/fresh-times/>



**Floral news**

* 1. **An economic overview of ornamental flowers and plants in Brazil**

A new report from the Universidade Federal do Maranhão looked at the floriculture and ornamental plants sector in Brazil, highlighting the main aspects related to area, production and distribution in the national scenario and consumption, the material used to obtain the data regarding the research carried out, was extracted from sources of research. [Access the full study at ResearchGate.](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341034596_Economic_overview_of_ornamental_flowers_and_plants_in_Brazil)

[Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9213665/an-economic-overview-of-ornamental-flowers-and-plants-in-brazil/)

 Innovation

* 1. **Mexican scientists research edible corona vaccine**

Since the 1990s, several research groups have worked on the modification of edible plants and fruits that generate an immune response in the intestinal epithelium of animals after oral intake.

Genetically modified crops — still at the experimental, not commercial, level — used to create “edible vaccines” range from potato, tomato, lettuce, papaya, carrot and rice to quinoa, alfalfa, banana and algae. They have focused on hepatitis B, rotavirus, Norwalk virus, malaria, cholera and autoimmune diseases, among others.

This route was the one chosen by Daniel Garza, a young biotechnologist and entrepreneur with a research stay at the Institute of Biotechnology of the Autonomous University of Nuevo León (UANL) in Mexico, as an approach to developing a vaccine against COVID-19. “Under this premise, this problem would be addressed with the focus of developing a fusion protein with the characteristics of a vaccine to be expressed in tomato plants.” [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9215168/mexican-scientists-research-edible-corona-vaccine/)

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