

**PMAC weekly update 3rd to 10th December**

1. **Government agencies:** Country Freedom addition; Cruise ship fines start; Government and industry partners release report on biological emissions; WTO Notifications
2. **New Zealand News:**  Pacific diplomatic footprint; Special Envoy for Commonwealth Trade Integration announced; New President and Vice-President elected to HortNZ board; National standard for organics; CPTPP trade deal will hugely benefit New Zealand growers; “India trade deal is a valuable prize”; Horticulture growth retains momentum; New housing is eating our lunch; Zespri looks at North America for kiwifruit orchards; Potato virus here to stay; Tasman District Council gives Waimea dam project final nod; Rain hurts South Canterbury potato production; No record volumes but good sized cherries this season; Tulip growers fined for illegal water takes; Samoa back on track with banana export to New Zealand
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; China-US Tariff Ceasefire a Hopeful Development for US Fruit Exporters; UK government to ration ferry space under no-deal Brexit; Copa and Cogeca make statement on Brexit process; "The basics of plant breeding must remain free for further use by all breeders"; Freshfel headlines; Imported fruit "loses status"; The first list of antidepressant foods; NASA technology to grow crops faster; Measuring the taste of a tomato with an iPhone

***Editors comments***

*Two weeks to Christmas and we are still talking about China/ USA trade tensions and Brexit . From a trade perspective these two matters seems to have dominated the news for at least the last 6 months. Both matters I suspect will continue to be high profile and continue to influence international trade well into 2019*

*The first article in the international section reports the US and China are talking again and have given themselves 90 days to either sort out their concerns or increase tariffs to 25% . Trump is demanding China buying more product from the USA to provide a better balance of trade for the USA. The article also alludes to the negative impact the Chinese tariffs had on the sales of American cherries and apples last season. The likelihood of a hard Brexit and an economic shock for the UK remains high. News that planning is in place to prioritise the import of food after the March deadline shows how concerned politicians are.*

*In the New Zealand sections there are a couple of interesting articles that deal with cherries ( amongst other commodities). China has become a very important market for Cherries. There are indications however that imported fruit into China does not always command a premium. In fact there it I said imported fruit has “lost status” . However both the articles note that New Zealand’s cherries are the best quality of the southern hemisphere cherries and as a consequence they are “often sold in high-end markets” New Zealand product has a good reputation for quality and with changing trade patterns quality is our producers best insurance against a downturn in returns.*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **Country Freedom addition**

MPI’s Country Freedom List has been updated stating Meloidogyne graminicola (rice root-knot nematode) is not known to occur in New Zealand.

* 1. **Cruise ship fines start**

Biosecurity officers now have the ability to fine cruise ship passengers who bring ashore foods or other items that could carry dangerous pests or diseases. The new fines came into place last week, allowing officers to issue infringement notices of $400 to cruise ship passengers who unintentionally break New Zealand's biosecurity rules. So far no fines have been imposed.

The article has a list of the tools used by quarantine officers to manage biosecurity risk from cruise ships. [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/cruise-ship-fines-start/)

* 1. **Government and industry partners release report on biological emissions**

A new report shows many farmers want to take action to reduce emissions, but need more information about what steps they can. The Biological Emissions Reference Group Report (BERG)is the culmination of 2 years of research into the opportunities, costs and barriers to reducing biological emissions in New Zealand's primary industries.

BERG is a joint agriculture industry-government working group of 9 key organisations: Beef + Lamb NZ, DairyNZ, Deer Industry NZ, Federated Farmers, The Fertiliser Association of NZ, Fonterra, HortNZ, Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), and Ministry for the Environment (MfE).  Many of the grpoup recognise providing tailored advice to help primary producers is an important next step.

BERG commissioned 9 new research projects. The work has already informed advice to the government on options for the 2050 emissions target, and will feed into future planning and policy. It has also been used by the Productivity Commission, the Interim Climate Change Committee, and industry.   The BERG plans to host an event in early 2019 to discuss the analysis and findings in more depth. [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/government-and-industry-partners-release-report-on-biological-emissions/)

* 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:

One from the EU which presents information of interest too horticultural exporters in chapters:

* 6 (Live trees and other plants),
* 7 (Edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers),
* 8 (Edible fruit and nuts; peel of citrus fruits or melons). For the full document see [**EN**](https://docs.wto.org/imrd/directdoc.asp?DDFDocuments/t/G/SPS/NEU272A1.DOCX)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Pacific diplomatic footprint**

Winston Peters announced details last week on how New Zealand will increase its diplomatic and development presence in the Pacific. 14 new diplomatic and development positions are being created offshore. Ten new positions will be rolled out across our posts in Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and Honolulu. As well, four new positions are being placed in Tokyo, Beijing, Brussels, and New York, to coordinate development policy and partnerships for the Pacific region,” he said.   [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/pacific-diplomatic-footprint)

* 1. **Special Envoy for Commonwealth Trade Integration announced**

Winston Peters last week announced the appointment of diplomat Jeremy Clarke-Watson to the newly created role of Special Envoy for Commonwealth Trade Integration.

“Commonwealth members have increasingly expressed interest in better trade integration, and officials have advised it’s an area worth exploring.  For that reason the government agreed to appoint a special envoy to work in this area. Mr Clarke-Watson is currently New Zealand’s Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and the State of Qatar. Prior to his appointment as Ambassador in Abu Dhabi, Mr Clarke-Watson was the Director of MFAT’s Auckland Office, and has served in Riyadh and Ha Noi. He has also worked for the Commonwealth Secretariat in London and the New Zealand Ministry of Defence. [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/special-envoy-commonwealth-trade-integration-announced)

**General**

* 1. **New President and Vice-President elected to HortNZ board**

The Horticulture New Zealand board elected Barry O’Neil as its new President and Chairman. Mr O’Neil replaces Julian Raine, who has been President and Chairman for six years. Mr Raine has stood down to pursue other business interests. Bernadine Guilleux was elected Vice-President, with both positions effective from 1 January 2019.

Mr O’Neil has been a grower since 1984, when he did all the work on his kiwifruit and avocado orchard in Whakamarama. Since 2003, he has been growing kiwifruit in Katikati, also in the Bay of Plenty. Between orchards he held a number of government roles including New Zealand Trade Counsellor to the European Union and Chief Veterinary Officer for the Ministry of Agriculture. He lobbied for, and in 2005 led, the first entity wanting to achieve an integrated approach to biosecurity for Aotearoa New Zealand, Biosecurity New Zealand. He was the chief executive of Kiwifruit Vine Health for six years, driving the industry recovery from Psa, and has held a number of board positions including being deputy chair of Scion, Chair of Tomatoes NZ, and Chair of the kauri dieback review panel. He has been an independent director on the Horticulture New Zealand board since April 2015, but with his appointment as Chair, he will now stand as a grower elected director at the 2019 director elections. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9050867/new-president-and-vice-president-elected-to-hortnz-board/)

Grower representative on the HortNZ board, Bernadine Guilleux, was elected vice-president. Ms Guilleux has a strong marketing background, in New Zealand and Europe, and said she will be using those skills to help tell New Zealand's unique horticulture story to the wider public. Both positions are effective from January 1, 2019. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9051257/new-zealand-new-hortnz-president-excited-about-the-future/)

* 1. **National standard for organics**

A national standard for organic production will be progressed as a Government bill next year.

“A national standard gives consumers confidence in organic claims and businesses certainty to invest and innovate in the growing sector, Damien O’Connor said. “It’ll also help grow our organic export trade as it brings us in line with international approaches to regulation. We are one of only two of the top 25 organic markets in the world that have voluntary instead of mandatory standards.”

“A majority of public submissions earlier this year supported the Government’s approach of a single set of rules for organic production. The next step is to draft an organics bill to be introduced next year. There will be opportunities for the public and the sector to feed back at the Select Committee stage. Information about the proposed changes can be seen at [Proposed changes to the way organic production is regulated](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-way-organic-production-is-regulated/). [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9049921/nz-government-national-standard-for-organics/)

* 1. **CPTPP trade deal will hugely benefit New Zealand growers**

Due to the CPTPP, from the end of the year, exporters will start to get the benefits of tariff cuts, with the 60-day countdown now triggered.

Squash growers are going to be saving about $1.5 million a year from the lifting of tariffs, about $50,000 per farmer, according to Trade Minister David Parker. Leaderbrand makes up between 15 and 20 percent of the country‘s squash exports. Its chief executive Richard Burke said New Zealand exports between 70,000 and 90,000 tonnes of the vegetable, about three quarters of which went to Japan, one of the signatories to the deal. He said the tariff into Japan for squash was already quite low, although any help was a bonus. However, Burke said it was hard to say how much benefit in dollar terms there would be as the prices for products were constantly negotiated. “Anything that can reduce our cost and simplify the way we do our business is of benefit, but to actually put your hand up and say I returned X amount more is bloody near impossible to judge.”

Summer fruit is also expected to do better under the agreement. Summerfruit New Zealand chairman and 45 South orchard CEO Tim Jones said less than one percent of New Zealand cherries exported went to Japan but he hoped the tariff reduction would make the growers more competitive in a market dominated by Northern Hemisphere producers. “There‘s been a lot of investment by the industry to go in to give us market access into Japan and it would be good to see that repaid.”

As reported by [herdongazette.com](https://herdongazette.com/how-the-tpp-trade-deal-will-benefit-nz-fruit-growers/124277/), Canada, Australia, Mexico, Japan, Singapore and New Zealand have all ratified the 11-country deal. Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Peru and Vietnam are still yet to ratify.

[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9050449/tpp-trade-deal-will-hugely-benefit-new-zealand-growers/)

* 1. **“India trade deal is a valuable prize”**

According to a statement from the Horticulture Export Authority, India could become a major export market for fruit and vegetable growers if progress could be achieved on reducing tariffs on New Zealand goods. Exports of apples and avocados to India have roughly doubled since 2016, while kiwifruit sales there have also grown significantly in that time. And that is despite India imposing tariffs of 30 to 50 percent on most commodities. It charged about $27.4 million on New Zealand produce in the year through June, up from $16.4 million in 2016. “This represents 44 percent of the value of all exports to India, which is by far the highest rate of any export destination in 2018,” the authority said in its biannual report on export trade barriers. “These high tariff rates highlight the value to horticulture of progressing the New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement -in tandem with the RCEP agreement.

India, with about 1.3 billion people is the world’s second-most populous country and the seventh-largest economy. New Zealand has been seeking a free-trade agreement for more than a decade. A joint study was completed in 2009 but 10 rounds of formal talks ended in Delhi in 2015 without result. Unfortunately, talks on the 16-country Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership deal –which includes India– also appear stalled. India’s reluctance to lower tariffs on goods in 2019,in an election year, is a factor. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9050087/india-trade-deal-is-a-valuable-prize/)

* 1. **Horticulture growth retains momentum**

Horticulture growth retained momentum with a seven percent growth in export earnings since 2016, according to an updated report, with tariffs on exported produce down by 12 percent since 2012.

The New Zealand Horticulture Export Authority (HEA) and Horticulture New Zealand commission the report New Zealand Horticulture – Barriers to Our Export Trade every two years, with funding support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, NZ Fruitgrowers Charitable Trust, and industry.

The report, released at an event in Wellington last week , says horticultural produce exporters paid an estimated $214 million in tariffs, a reduction of 12 percent on 2012’s figure of $241 million.

About 60 percent of New Zealand’s total horticultural production of fruit and vegetables is exported, valued at $3.62 billion.

This report confirms the real value from our trade agreements, and our need to sustain efforts developing new agreements to maintain our international competitiveness. The elimination of an estimated $36m in tariffs on trade with Japan under CPTPP will provide new impetus to this objective.”

There remains a notable trend for many importing countries to apply non-tariff trade measures (NTMs), such as sanitary and phytosanitary issues, and other technical compliance requirements. The specific New Zealand Horticulture report addresses both tariff and non-tariff measures, and relies on current 2018 trade data to update earlier reports dating back to 2004. The Executive Summary of the report is available on the Horticulture Export Authority [website](http://www.hea.co.nz/images/Executive_summary_4-pages.pdf). [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9049940/new-zealand-horticulture-growth-retains-momentum/)

* 1. **New housing is eating our lunch:**

A report produced by Rachel McClung of Horticulture New Zealand as part of her Kellogg Rural Leadership programme, finds NZ set to struggle to grow enough fruit and vegetables and suggests that vertical farming, is unlikely to replace traditional growing. Ms McClung said that spread of urban development into areas with prime soils, such as Pukekohe, and the impact of climate change on regional weather patterns, made it an appropriate time to look at alternative growing methods. However in recognising the benefits of vertical farming, Ms McClung said the cost of the electricity needed for artificial lighting and temperature control, combined with the high capital investment and operational costs need to also be taken into account and as a consequence the costs currently outweigh the benefits. The report found vertical farming was limited to leafy greens and herbs and unable to grow the full range of fruits and vegetables, and that also nothing was known about how it aligned with the cultural values of Māori.

Her report urged recognition that horticultural production was not just important for its economic

benefits as the rural economy supported rural communities, but also because food production values were a platform for long-term sustainability of communities through the provision of food security, jobs and tourism. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12166982)

**Industry news**

* 1. **Zespri looks at North America for kiwifruit orchards**

North America is set to be Zespri's next kiwifruit growing territory as consumer demand there soars for its Sungold variety. Chief executive Dan Mathieson said Sungold sales jumped 32 per cent this year in the US and Canada. Trials are underway to grow the fruit locally to meet demand in what is becoming a major target market

This year Sungold fruit comprised 4.7m trays, compared to 3.3m last year while 2.6 million green fruit trays were sold against 1.3m. Zespri also cashed in on what Mathieson called an organic foods boom across North America, with 640,000 organic fruit trays sold compared to 370,000 last year. Much of the Sungold fruit for North America was sourced from Zespri's Italian growers. Zespri has been pushing hard into North America for about four years. Its target consumer cities include New York, Chicago, Washington DC, Los Angeles and Boston.

"I think for the foreseeable future the majority of our fruit will be grown in New Zealand. As we look out in our 10 year plan towards 2025 it will still be about 80 per cent New Zealand and 20 per cent grown in the northern hemisphere for those four or five months when we can't supply from New Zealand," Mathieson said. "What we are focused on at the moment is trying to create sources of really great quality fruit outside New Zealand. But rather than going far and wide we want to focus in, and we see Italy as a really good opportunity to do that. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9049995/zespri-looks-at-north-america-for-kiwifruit-orchards/)

**Crop news**

* 1. **Potato virus here to stay**

Potatoes New Zealand Chief Executive, Chris Claridge, said the decision to keep the potato

mop top virus (PMTV) in New Zealand may be in the best interests the industry in the long term. He said technical experts have indicated that they don’t believe it is technically feasible to eradicate the PMTV, but it might well be possible to contain it through good management practices. The international advice they had was there would be too much disruption to the industry if they went down the eradication path, with Mr Claridge adding that it was ‘important any cure did not kill the patient’. [Full article available here](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/rural-news/rural-general-news/potato-virus-here-to-stay)

* 1. **Tasman District Council gives Waimea dam project final nod**

The $105.9 million Waimea dam project will proceed after Tasman district councillors voted 9-5 in favour of the controversial proposal to construct a 53m concrete-faced rockfill dam in the Lee Valley, near Nelson. The council will have a joint-venture partner in the project –Waimea Irrigators Ltd (WIL). A council-controlled organisation, Waimea Water Ltd, will deliver it. Mayor Richard Kempthorne said he expected work on site could begin early next year. Local MP, Nick Smith, who has spoken out strongly in favour of the project over many years said that the vote was a hugely positive decision for the future of the Nelson and Tasman region. He added that the construction of the project will mean a cleaner and healthier river, enables growth of key horticultural industries and secures household water for the huge growth in population in the region. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/news/108983010/Tasman-District-Council-gives-Waimea-dam-project-final-nod)

* 1. **Rain hurts South Canterbury potato production**

A very wet November has mushed up to 10 percent of the potato crop of a South Canterbury farmer. Potato grower Jeff Bleeker, a supplier to Makikihi Fries, said significant surface water had caused seeds to rot. "I'd say I might of lost 10 percent of my crop. You're talking about a lot of money, in terms of earnings and what it actually costs to put them in."Bleeker said it hadn't been since the mid-1990's that he had lost such an amount of crop. However, he was confident of a better December: "It's just a percentage of some of the crops [lost].” [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9050441/new-zealand-rain-hurts-south-canterbury-potato-production/)

* 1. **No record volumes but good sized cherries this season**

The main commercial cherry harvest will start in around three weeks’ time at New Zealand’s cherry export company, Trophy Ridge Cherries and run on to the third or 4th week in January. Rain and frost are likely to reduce volumes of New Zealand cherries this year . “

Chilean volumes this season may also be reduced by around 25% after a serious hail event a few weeks ago, they are a competitor in the Asian markets but not directly as they produce on totally different scale than New Zealand. “We produce around 6000 tonnes while Chile produces around 150,000 in a good year. Chile also has less quality than New Zealand and due to the distance and volumes they ship the fruit by sea, whereas we airfreight everything. Chilean producers also have a lot of support from their government which is fantastic, and they are learning fast and improving the quality.”

“Due to the devaluation of the Yuan against the dollar, it has dropped around 12%, our customers in China have asked for more 1Kg boxes instead of the normal 2Kg, I hope this will make them more affordable for consumers who like their premium cherries. We have various packaging for the different markets, the pink one in the shape of a heart which is popular in Taiwan, but for China it has to be red.

"There is a lot of demand from Russia for New Zealand cherries and they are willing to pay a lot for our cherries, but unfortunately, we cannot export there due to their phytosanitary regulations on brown rot." Last season saw the first big volumes of cherries go to Asia from mainland Australia, but Graeme said they have a very different cherry to the New Zealand one. “They have an entirely different climate, often very hot and dry so the cherries tend to be smaller, similar to the Chilean ones. The best Australian cherries come from Tasmania which are direct competition to the NZ central Otago ones." [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9050486/new-zealand-no-record-volumes-but-good-sized-cherries-this-season/)

In an article from China there is *a comparison of the quality of cherries from the different Southern hemisphere countries and it states* “New Zealand cherries are durable and do not contain preservatives, which is the main reason why New Zealand cherries are often sold in high-end markets” [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9051173/china-great-cherry-battle-about-to-begin/)

**Other**

* 1. **Tulip growers fined for illegal water takes**

A Southland tulip business has been fined for unlawfully taking about 3.6 million litres of water during what was described as the region's driest year since 1971. Horizon Flowers New Zealand Ltd was fined $53,400 in the Environment Court on two charges of unlawfully taking water and one charge of breaching an abatement notice.

On December 1, 2017, Environment Southland granted a resource consent to the company allowing it to extract water from Winton Stream. At the time, the region was experiencing drought conditions and under a condition of the consent, water was not to be taken when levels of the Otapiri Stream and Oreti River were below specific figures. However, on December 4, 2017, regional council officers found the company had taken a total of 3636 cubic metres of water, or 3,636,000 litres, over two days when flow rates had fallen the specified figures. [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9050483/new-zealand-tulip-growers-fined-for-illegal-water-takes/)

* 1. **Samoa back on track with banana export to New Zealand**

After its first two successful shipments passed border checks by New Zealand’s MPI, Samoa is back on track for banana exports. Samoa’s green bananas are being sold through dairies and small fruit retailers mostly in South Auckland.

New Zealand Samoa Trade & Investment Commissioner Magele Mauiliu said there were teething problems ( ants) with the first shipment but commended New Zealand’s Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) for not destroying the whole shipment, instead choosing to fumigate. It was an important decision at a pivotal stage in Samoa’s banana export history.

It has been 50 years since Samoa’s last banana exports arrived into New Zealand and 30 years since interest in growing fell, due to availability of plant materials and the impact of climate change weather patterns. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9051640/samoa-back-on-track-with-banana-export-to-new-zealand/)



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. This week see:

1. **Australia Export Certificate Report** This report lists examples of the major export certificates and other documentation required by the Government of Australia for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products.  Australia’s import requirements for food and agricultural products are complex and change frequently. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Canberra\_Australia\_11-28-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Canberra_Australia_11-28-2018.pdf)
2. **Australia Country Report**  All foods sold in Australia must comply with a range of laws designed to protect consumer, plant, and animal health.  These laws apply equally to imported and locally produced foods.  All imported food must comply with quarantine and imported food requirements, [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Canberra\_Australia\_11-16-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Canberra_Australia_11-16-2018.pdf)
3. **Germany Exporter Guide** Germany has 83 million of the world’s wealthiest consumers and is by far the biggest market in the European Union. The German market offers good opportunities for U.S. exporters of consumer-oriented agricultural products.   [Exporter Guide\_Berlin\_Germany\_11-27-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide_Berlin_Germany_11-27-2018.pdf)
4. **Hong Kong Exporter Guide** Hong Kong remained the 4th largest export market for U.S. consumer-oriented agricultural products, by value. With a dynamic food culture, sophisticated buyers, and a world-class logistical infrastructure, [Exporter Guide\_Hong Kong\_Hong Kong\_11-27-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide_Hong%20Kong_Hong%20Kong_11-27-2018.pdf)
5. **India Food and Agricultural Trade Show Calendar 2019** This report provides a list of food, beverage and agricultural shows held in India. The Indian trade show industry holds a large number of shows dedicated to the various aspects of the food and agricultural industry. Indian agricultural and related imports in 2017 were $30.2 billion. [Food and Agricultural Trade Show Calendar 2019\_New Delhi\_India\_10-25-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Trade%20Show%20Calendar%202019_New%20Delhi_India_10-25-2018.pdf)

**Regulatory**

* 1. **China-US Tariff Ceasefire a Hopeful Development for US Fruit Exporters**

China and the US declared a ceasefire December 1st in the ongoing trade dispute that is [hurting both sides](https://www.producereport.com/article/produce-products-suffer-both-sides-trade-war-intensifies), striking an agreement at a bilateral meeting during the G20 summit, one provision of which being that both sides will cease raising or enacting any new tariffs until at least January 1st, 2019.

The White House [announced in a statement](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-press-secretary-regarding-presidents-working-dinner-china/) that for the time being it would not go forward with plans to raise the tariff rate from 10% to 25% on more than $200 billion worth of Chinese imports.

The statement continued, "China will agree to purchase a not yet agreed upon, but very substantial, amount of agricultural, energy, industrial, and other product from the United States to reduce the trade imbalance between our two countries. China has agreed to start purchasing agricultural product from our farmers immediately."

The back and forth of escalating tariffs and [other trade barriers](https://www.producereport.com/article/china-quarantine-authority-orders-stepped-inspections-us-fruit), which President Donald Trump of the US [sparked off in March of this year](https://www.producereport.com/article/breaking-china-proposes-15-tariff-most-us-fresh-fruits-dried-fruits-nuts), has been particularly hard on US farmers. In the fresh fruit sector, [Western US cherries took a big hit this year](https://www.seattletimes.com/business/trade-disputes-have-cut-washington-exports-by-as-much-as-28-percent-report-says/), with foreign sales down by more than 20 percent and weak prices, which were believed to be largely due to the Chinese tariffs on US fresh cherries. US apple exporters are also predicting poor exports off the 2018 crop, which has already been harvested.

The G20 agreement leaves 90 days for China and the US to try to reach a lasting agreement that could pave the way for a return to pre-dispute trading between US fresh fruit and ag exports and Chinese importers. If at the end of this period of time, the parties are unable to reach an agreement, the 10% tariffs will be raised to 25%."[Full article available here](https://www.producereport.com/article/china-us-tariff-ceasefire-hopeful-development-us-fruit-exporters)

* 1. **UK** **government to ration ferry space under no-deal Brexit**

UK prime minister May’s cabinet is drawing up plans to ration space on ferries carrying vital supplies to Britain, amidst preparations for a no-deal Brexit that could leave supermarkets devoid of some food stuffs. Transport Secretary Grayling has warned the cabinet that trade on the key Dover-Calais route could be cut by up to 87 per cent in the event of a disorderly exit, as checks and customs controls will then be implemented in France. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9050790/uk-government-to-ration-ferry-space-under-no-deal-brexit/)

* 1. **Copa and Cogeca make statement on Brexit process**

On November 25th, the endorsement by the European Council of the Withdrawal Agreement is a new step forward an orderly Brexit, further minimising the prospect of a 'no-deal’ scenario which would be catastrophic for both EU and British farming communities. 60% of UK agri-food exports go to the EU. EU-27 exports make up an average total of between 70% and 99% of all UK imports.

Copa and Cogeca (the union of the two big agricultural umbrella organisation ) are positive about steps taken to prevent a hard Brexit and *this article outlines its thoughts on this matter*.

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9050492/copa-and-cogeca-make-statement-on-brexit-process/)

**Business**

* 1. **"The basics of plant breeding must remain free for further use by all breeders"**

On December 5, 2018, in an oral hearing on a patent on pepper plants, the European Patent Office declared the new rule 28(2) invalid, paving the way again for patents being granted on plants obtained by essentially biological processes. The European Seed Association (ESA) had advocated this change and welcomed the new Rule 28(2) and its practical implementation by the EPO. Rule 28(2) was a major step in clarifying that not only crossing and selection but also the resulting products cannot be subject to patent protection.

ESA regrets that the Technical Board of the EPO decided to overturn the situation, creating new legal uncertainty. This disregards the intention of the EU legislator and the clear political direction that the contracting parties of the EPC decided to follow as well as the effects on the plant breeding sector. The issue must now be clarified as quickly as possible; as the administrative decision of the EPO is apparently insufficient to resolve the matter, other solutions now will need to be considered,” continued von Essen.The non-patentability of products obtained by essentially biological processes remains a major cornerstone of [ESA’s position on intellectual property protection](https://www.euroseeds.eu/system/files/publications/files/esa_12.0100_0.pdf) and ESA will continue its advocacy to achieve respective legal certainty as soon as possible. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9051793/the-basics-of-plant-breeding-must-remain-free-for-further-use-by-all-breeders/)

* 1. **Freshfel headlines**

Freshfel is the European Fresh Produce Association and is the forum for the fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain in Europe and beyond and a non-profit association. See [here](https://freshfel.org/freshfel-headlines-6-2018/). For their latest headlines for the period October and November 2018 . It includes reports on meetings with regulators and industry bodies.

  **China**

* 1. **Imported fruit "loses status"**

Wholesale fruit traders in China state that the market price of fruit dropped more severely this year than it did in recent years. More recently the price has fallen to an absolute "freezing point". However, the market also shows a polarization between expensive fruit varieties where supply can not meet demand, and cheap fruit varieties that are ignored by clients.

Chilean cherries are an excellent example to illustrate the recent price fluctuations. The falling price was not accompanied by a growing sales volume. Similarly, imported oranges enjoyed equally pessimistic prospects. Not long ago imported oranges sold for 380 yuan [55.21 USD] per box of 16.5 kg. More recently, however, the price dropped to 220 yuan [31.96 USD].The avocado market has been depressed for quite some time as China has increased the number of countries allowed to export avocados to the Chinese market. The price keeps falling. Even the price of top-quality, standard-size avocados does not exceed 3 yuan [0.44 USD] per piece. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9050303/china-imported-fruit-loses-status-cherries-are-first-to-suffer/)

  **Health**

* 1. **The first list of antidepressant foods**

We know eating has an emotional effect, but you cannot separate emotions from psychology as they are the basis of your mental states. A [recent study](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6147775/), published in World Journal of Psychiatry, investigated 34 nutrients, extracting data as it relates to foods high in at least one of 12 antidepressant nutrients: Folate; Iron; Long-chain omega-3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA); Magnesium; Potassium; Selenium; Thiamine; Vitamin A; Vitamin B6; Vitamin B12; Vitamin C and Zinc.

There is evidence that the lack of key nutrients, including omega-3 fatty acids, B-vitamins, zinc, magnesium, and vitamin D, result in depressive symptoms. In fact, clinical treatment often involves supplementing one or more of these nutrients. The fact that we can get plenty of vitamin D with just a few minutes in the sun is one indicator that our lifestyle patterns are missing essential components for optimal health.

The foods researched , along with their Antidepressant Food Score (AFS), are listed in the full article.

According to the mean score by category, vegetables top the list at 48 percent, followed by organ meats (25 percent), fruits (20 percent), and seafood (16 percent). The list concludes with legumes, meats, grains, nuts and seeds, and dairy, all coming in below 10 percent. Unlike traditional guidelines, this list does not focus on what not to eat:

There is no single food source that will end depression. Rather, the authors write, it seems to be a confluence of events that have led to our abandoning essential nutrients, including increased inflammation due to the "standard" American diet and a lack of dietary fiber. With an increased understanding of the microbiome in overall health, we're gaining clarity over just how influential nutrients are for every aspect of our health. [Full article available here](https://bigthink.com/surprising-science/antidepressant-foods-study-discovers-which-foods-help-fight-depression?rebelltitem=4#rebelltitem4)

 **Innovation**

* 1. **NASA technology to grow crops faster**

NASA has created a new technology to grow crops on other planets with the prospect of establishing colonies on Mars or another planet in the future. The researchers have applied the new technology in a greenhouse at the John Innes Center in Norwick (United Kingdom). Researchers conducted rapid genetic improvements using shorter crop growth and harvest cycles, in addition to improved LED lighting. The research, which was published in the scientific journal Nature Protocols, shows that this method of cultivation can produce crops that are resistant to diseases, climate challenges, and that are more nutritious to feed a growing world population.

This technique uses improved LED illumination and day regimes of up to 22 hours to optimize photosynthesis and promote rapid crop growth. It accelerates the plants reproduction cycle: for example, it allows producers to grow six crops of wheat in a year, well above the two crops per year that are achieved with traditional improved farming methods. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9049014/nasa-technology-to-grow-crops-faster/)

* 1. **Measuring the taste of a tomato with an iPhone**

Measure the taste without tasting. Wageningen University & Research (WUR) is looking into a selection of non-invasive sensors this year, including VIS / NIR Hyperspectral Imaging & Transmission Spectroscopy, various handheld sensors and TeraHertz. The aim is to develop a new taste model with the help of these sensors to measure the taste of a fruit. That is simpler and therefore cheaper than with the current taste model, which uses a panel of tasters, and faster and more complete than with just a brix measurement.

The user-friendliness follows from the fact that the sensors are 'non-invasive': the tomatoes are tested from the outside, so they do not have to be destroyed. This makes it possible to perform taste research already in the greenhouse of, for example, a breeder. In addition, a number of the sensors to be investigated are already built into some smartphones. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9051778/measuring-the-taste-of-a-tomato-with-an-iphone/)

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