

**PMAC weekly update 5th to 12th October**

1. **Government agencies**: ICPR Changes; MPI Food Residues Survey Programme; Deferred payments for Custom brokers
2. **New Zealand News:**  Envy and Jazz expect strong US campaign; Tauranga man faces migrant exploitation charges; New Zealand flower grower to cultivate cannabis; Dole NZ and MG Marketing launch the "Good Bunch" programme; New Zealand government rejects calls for fruit pickers to be let into the country, for now; Samoan villagers desperate to pick fruit in Hawke's Bay; How to solve New Zealand’s seasonal labour shortage; Northland dams become increasingly important; Freshwater changes just don’t add up; The war on weeds
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; Funding for horticulture exports and seasonal workforce measures announced in Federal Budget 2020-21; Updates regarding EU plant protection product approvals; "CRISPR technology needed to achieve European Green Deal"; Japan’s fresh fruit imports slide; Maersk’s first block train from China arrives in Georgia; Malaysia, an interesting destination for Chilean fresh fruit; Health rises to top of agenda; Technology helps trace pickers during pandemic; Freshfel activities August/ September; Electrochemical weeding in agriculture; Invasive algae from the Strait of Gibraltar used to make packaging for fruit and vegetables; ClimateCalc certification is Floramedia’s next step towards a sustainable future; Produce choices come under the spotlight; Produce choices come under the spotlight; Spinach facilitating efficient energy use; Nobel Prize for discoverers of CRISPR/Cas9; Research shows benefits of post-harvest solution; Impact of UV-C radiation on disease sensitivity and fruit quality of strawberry

**Editors comments**

A very mixed assortment of articles this week with no specific theme. So, saying there are several articles about the need for additional labour to help New Zealand growers and exporters. The only other areas I would like to draw you attention to in the New Zealand section is links to a couple of hard hitting articles about the Governments new freshwater regulations. These report on a Southland farmer who questions not only the regulations but also the approach used to develop these regulations. While the issues she raises are not necessarily relevant to horticulture they do raises some interesting questions.

In the Gain reports this week there are a number of reports about the food service demand in a range of countries. All comment on the dramatic fall in demand since the arrival of Covid but most also predict increasing demand within the next 12 months. Institutional demand as we know is different to demand from retailers and can represent a different (additional) market for high quality produce. I have only included countries likely to interest New Zealand exporters but if this area interests you it is worth visiting the Gain web site and looking at reports released over the last month. The one other area worth noting in the international section is the support being provided to Australian exporters in the countries federal budget that was delivered last week. Like New Zealand Australia is looking to its primary producers to help trade its way out of the effects of the pandemic.

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

The ICPR for Samoa has been updated with a new section that deals with the re-exportation of Frozen Fruit and Vegetables. See [ICPR Samoa](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/684)

* 1. **MPI Food Residues Survey Programme**

The Food Residues Survey Programme is an annual programme administered by New Zealand Food Safety. The sampling and testing survey in 2020-2021 will begin on 12 October 2020 (Monday). This survey will be similar to surveys carried out in previous years and will include testing of crops from the following groups:  
A. Leafy vegetables (60 samples);  
B. Fruiting vegetables (60 samples);  
C. Berries and small fruit (60 samples).  
   
The details of the survey process and past survey reports can be found [here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-monitoring-and-surveillance/food-residues-survey-programme/) If you have any comments or questions about the residue survey or the FRSP review, please contact [residues@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:residues@mpi.govt.nz)



* 1. **Deferred payments for Custom brokers**

From Tuesday 27 October 2020 Customs will be changing the way they work with their brokers. Customs is introducing longer payment terms for their broker deferred account holders and are moving our deferred brokers account payment terms from fortnightly payment to monthly payments.

To prepare for the change Customs asks that:

* All brokers with deferred accounts to ensure their approved Customs credit limit is sufficient to support their business activity over the extended 50 days. If not sufficient, brokers need to request a credit limit review immediately. From 27 October, the new finance system will automatically manage the deferred account transactions against the approved credit limit.
* Be prepared for the scheduled Trade Single Window (TSW) system outage from 1800 on Saturday 24 October to 0600 on Sunday 25 October (NZT).
* Watch out for more updates over the next two weeks.   
  For more information about what is changing for our customers, or to request a credit limit review, email [revenue@customs.govt.nz](mailto:revenue@customs.govt.nz)

[Full article available here](https://www.customs.govt.nz/about-us/news/important-notices/changing-the-way-we-work-with-our-brokers/)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Envy and Jazz expect strong US campaign**

T&G Global is forecasting a strong North American harvest for both Envy and Jazz apples in the weeks ahead, backed by a variety of promotions to ensure widespread availability of the cultivars for consumers nationwide. Headquartered in New Zealand, T&G Global has a team in North America to manage the Jazz and Envy programmes in Washington, where total volume is projected to meet demand for both premium varieties this season.

Nielsen scan data collected in late August found Envy sustaining a strong premium price, countering a recent trend of wholesale price deflation among most branded apples. “Simply put, Envy is a deflation-buster for the category”, “We think this has much to do with increased brand loyalty for Envy”, said Cecilia Flores Paez, T&G Global's head of marketing, North America. “Consumers who are buying Envy are evolving into devoted fans, coming back regularly to purchase more. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/183154/envy-and-jazz-expect-strong-us-harvest)

* 1. **Tauranga man faces migrant exploitation charges**

A joint investigation by Immigration New Zealand, supported by New Zealand Police and the Labour Inspectorate, was launched in July after Zespri alerted authorities to allegations that two contracting companies were exploiting migrant workers. This led to a Jafar Kurisi, a Tauranga man, being charged under the Immigration Act 2009 with exploitation of an employee. This carries a maximum penalty of up to seven years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to $100,000.

General Manager of Verification and Compliance Stephen Vaughan told [sunlive.co.nz:](https://www.sunlive.co.nz/news/253618-man-court-facing-migrant-exploitation-charges.html) Information provided to INZ from different sources, including a comprehensive file from the kiwifruit industry allowed us to start building a picture of alleged worker exploitation by contractors in the Kiwifruit industry in the Bay of Plenty.” The kiwifruit industry says it is "totally committed" to protecting migrant workers from exploitation after a Tauranga man facing exploitation charges made his second court appearance last week. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9257179/tauranga-man-faces-migrant-exploitation-charges/?edition=5)

* 1. **New Zealand flower grower to cultivate cannabis**

Pharmaceutical company Rua Bioscience has secured one of New Zealand’s largest flower producers as its first major cultivation partner. Medbloom was established by Frans and Suzette van Dorsser, owners of Pukekohe nursery, Blooming Hill Flowers, to focus on greenhouse cultivation of medicinal cannabis. Medbloom has signed a commercial agreement to grow and supply Rua with cannabis plant material, which Rua will process into pharmaceutical grade medicinal cannabis products at its specialist pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in Gisborne. Under the agreement, the two companies will also collaborate on the development of new cultivation innovations for growing medicinal cannabis.

Frans and Suzette currently operate 20,000 sqm of controlled greenhouses in Pukekohe, and Medbloom is developing a purpose built cannabis cultivation facility on the same site.

“They bring significant experience, networks and infrastructure to help us meet the ambitious export targets for dried cannabis flower we have agreed to with our German distributor. With this partnership Rua can scale up quickly and bring new IP into our current and future cultivation operations at Ruatorea.

“The cultivation partnership will allow us to quickly increase access to cannabis plant material that meets export quality standards and complements our new indoor cultivation facilities at Ruatorea.

“It also provides geographical diversification to ensure a consistent supply of flowers to our own specialist pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in Gisborne. “This is another important milestone for the company as it moves towards plans to raise capital and list on the NZX, with an Initial Public Offering planned to open next week”. [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9255444/new-zealand-flower-grower-to-cultivate-cannabis/)

* 1. **Dole NZ and MG Marketing launch the "Good Bunch" programme**

MG, New Zealand’s leading wholesale grower-cooperative, and Dole, one of the world's largest producer of fruit, have joined forces to deliver a national initiative. The Salvation Army partners, MG Marketing and Dole New Zealand Ltd, have launched the "Good Bunch" programme, intent on donating 48,000 bananas annually to foodbanks throughout the country. The partnership will see cartons of Dole bananas donated weekly to local foodbanks through MG’s national network of nine branches.

"Dole is proud to launch this initiative as it aligns with our global objectives to work with our global network of partners to make a real and measurable impact in the communities they operate within,"

[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9255403/dole-nz-and-mg-marketing-launch-the-good-bunch-programme/?edition=5)

* 1. **New Zealand government rejects calls for fruit pickers to be let into the country, for now**

Growers around New Zealand are currently facing a tremendous crisis. Usually, about 14,000 workers come in to the country to work the apple season, taking part in the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme. But there's only about 6,000 in the country from last season, and not all of them want to remain in the country.

Minister of Immigration Kris Faafoi has stated that ideas like getting workers direct from COVID-free countries, or isolating outside of managed facilities, were too risky. Faafoi said he asked the industry to work with MPI and Immigration to see how they could maximise use of the workers already in New Zealand. He said there were solutions, such as using students, and the government had extended working holiday visas. "We didn't give them any commitments, we're just saying at the moment, 'we want you to do the best with what's here in New Zealand ... and that is a big challenge. If they get to the point where they have worked as a sector to say 'hey look, we still have a need for RSE', then they'll do that, but they've still got a bit of work to do”. "The managed isolation facilities that we've got for the government at the moment have a capacity of about 7,500 every couple of weeks. That is the filter that everyone must go through to make sure we keep COVID out of the country." [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9256646/new-zealand-government-rejects-calls-for-fruit-pickers-to-be-let-into-the-country-for-now/?edition=5)

* 1. **Samoan villagers desperate to pick fruit in Hawke's Bay**

Regional Seasonal Employment (RSE) workers from the Samoan village of Poutasi say they are desperate to come back to Hawke's Bay to fill a potentially massive labour gap. The horticultural sector in Hawke's Bay fears it will only be able to harvest 60 per cent of its spring and summer crop without the migrant workers they normally employ, which make up about a third of their seasonal workforce.

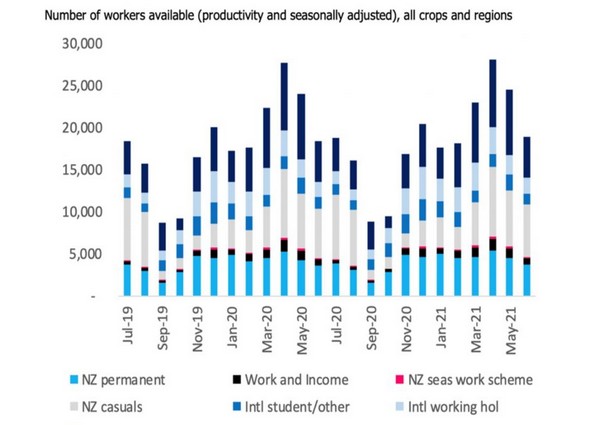
Poutasi paramount chief Tuatagaloa Joe Annandale normally sends around 130 workers from his village to New Zealand to start work every November, but as things stand, they can't come this season because of Covid-19 border restrictions.

If Poutasi's seasonal workforce can't go to New Zealand, Tuatagaloa said they will likely be left to work their plantations at home for very little money. "We'd prefer for them to be working in New Zealand when it's time to work because they do so well, it helps their families so much, so, so much," Apple grower Bostock New Zealand's seasonal labour manager Ali Lawn said the RSE programme is "the best form of aid that [New Zealand] can give" and New Zealand Apples & Pears CEO Alan Pollard has said bringing back a Pacific Island workforce is crucial to getting the crop harvested.

"About 80 per cent of them work in the orchards, which is very physically demanding work, tends to be done by migrant labour," he said. "Unlike rugby players from Australia or America's Cup crews from America, the workers would be coming from Covid-free countries." [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9255440/samoan-villagers-desperate-to-pick-fruit-in-hawke-s-bay/?edition=5)

* 1. **How to solve New Zealand’s seasonal labour shortage**

. The Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, which allows for up to 14,400 seasonal workers each year, mainly from the Pacific, to pick, pack and prune horticultural crops, provides a critical supply of seasonal labour during peak harvest periods. In a normal year without COVID-19 travel restrictions, RSE workers start entering the country in sizeable numbers from October onwards.

[](https://admin.freshplaza.com/web/2/article/create/#img1)

. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9255397/how-to-solve-new-zealand-s-seasonal-labor-shortage/?edition=5)

* 1. **Northland dams become increasingly important**

According to Te Tai Tokerau Water Trust, the potential for a second drought in Northland shows the vital importance of large-scale dams. The trust was formed this year to help progress water storage projects, helped along with $70 million in Provincial Growth Funding. Work is expected to start this month on a 750,000 cubic metre reservoir near Kaikohe – one of the towns so severely impacted by drought there was a real risk taps could run dry in February. However, the reservoir will not be ready for use until the first half of 2021.

Deputy chairman Dover Samuels said the 2020 summer drought was a real wake-up call in Northland, and more droughts are likely due to climate change: “Northland is a region that was severely affected by the last drought and it looks like it’s going to be repeated again this time, maybe worse”.

The drought was widespread across the North Island and saw the least rainfall in 50 years for parts of Northland. Niwa’s latest three-month climate outlook predicts a drier October in the north, with northeasterly winds introducing more moisture in November or December. However, soil moisture and river flows are most likely to remain below average. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9255453/new-zealand-northland-dams-become-increasingly-important/?edition=5)

* 1. **Freshwater changes just don’t add up**

*Two articles were published this week about an Otago Farmer Jane Smith and her views on the Governments approach to developing freshwater policy which she notes have not been subject to economic analysis and which she contends went against treasury advice. Both worth a read if you are interested in this area*. [Full article available here](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/rural-news/rural-general-news/changes-just-don-t-add-up?utm_source=Rural+News+Group+Weekly+E-Newsletter&utm_campaign=6ce6bc4ddc-RNG_06_OCT_2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fb79f8bfe8-6ce6bc4ddc-59798541&ct=t(RNG_06_OCT_2020)) . *The second is Critic calls for a major investigation* *into freshwater reforms*  [Full article available here](https://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz/rural-news/rural-general-news/critic-calls-for-a-major-investigation-into-freshwater-reforms?utm_source=Rural+News+Group+Weekly+E-Newsletter&utm_campaign=6ce6bc4ddc-RNG_06_OCT_2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_fb79f8bfe8-6ce6bc4ddc-59798541&ct=t(RNG_06_OCT_2020))

 **Biosecurity**

* 1. **The war on weeds**

A serious cropping pest, velvetleaf, has been found in fodder beet and maize crops throughout NZ and particularly in Southland. Lincoln University professor of plant biosecurity Philip Hulme warns that losing the war on weeds is challenging NZ’s position as a global leader in biosecurity, and little effort has been invested from the Government and landowners to manage weeds

*Philip comments on the lack of good communication and the detrimental effect it has on the response and notes* “It’s now less about what herbicide we use and the application rates, but much more about the governance issue, about how we manage these problems and how we work effectively as NZ Inc as opposed to individuals or separate parts of the Government”. [Full article available here](https://farmersweekly.co.nz/section/dairy/view/the-war-on-weeds)



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. To see the full report, click on the link in each notification This week see:

1. **China Releases Draft Administrative Measures for Food Safety Standards for Public Comment** [China Releases Draft Administrative Measures for Food Safety Standards for Public Comment\_Beijing\_China - Peoples Republic of\_10-07-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=China%20Releases%20Draft%20Administrative%20Measures%20for%20Food%20Safety%20Standards%20for%20Public%20Comment_Beijing_China%20-%20Peoples%20Republic%20of_10-07-2020)
2. **European Court of Justice Rules That National Schemes for Origin Labelling Should Be Justified** [European Court of Justice Rules That National Schemes for Origin Labelling Should Be Justified \_Brussels USEU\_European Union\_10-01-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=European%20Court%20of%20Justice%20Rules%20That%20National%20Schemes%20for%20Origin%20Labelling%20Should%20Be%20Justified%20_Brussels%20USEU_European%20Union_10-01-2020)
3. **EU Commission Unveils EU Climate Target Plan 2030** [EU Commission Unveils EU Climate Target Plan 2030\_Brussels USEU\_European Union\_09-26-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=EU%20Commission%20Unveils%20EU%20Climate%20Target%20Plan%202030_Brussels%20USEU_European%20Union_09-26-2020)
4. **France Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional** [Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional\_Paris\_France\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20Service%20-%20Hotel%20Restaurant%20Institutional_Paris_France_09-30-2020)
5. **India - Weekly Port Situation Update** [COVID-19 in India - Weekly Port Situation Update\_Mumbai\_India\_09-27-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20in%20India%20-%20Weekly%20Port%20Situation%20Update_Mumbai_India_09-27-2020)
6. **India - Weekly Food Retail Update** Weekly report as of October 1, 2020, of COVID-19 impact on India's food retail sector. [COVID-19 in India - Weekly Food Retail Update\_Mumbai\_India\_10-04-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20in%20India%20-%20Weekly%20Food%20Retail%20Update_Mumbai_India_10-04-2020)
7. **India Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional** [Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional\_New Delhi\_India\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20Service%20-%20Hotel%20Restaurant%20Institutional_New%20Delhi_India_09-30-2020)
8. **Indonesia Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional** [Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional\_Jakarta\_Indonesia\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20Service%20-%20Hotel%20Restaurant%20Institutional_Jakarta_Indonesia_09-30-2020)
9. **Japan Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Country Report** [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Country Report\_Tokyo\_Japan\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Country%20Report_Tokyo_Japan_09-30-2020)
10. **Japan Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Export Certificate Report** [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Export Certificate Report\_Tokyo\_Japan\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Export%20Certificate%20Report_Tokyo_Japan_09-30-2020)
11. **Singapore Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional** [Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional\_Singapore\_Singapore\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20Service%20-%20Hotel%20Restaurant%20Institutional_Singapore_Singapore_09-30-2020)
12. **UK Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional** [Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional\_London\_United Kingdom\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20Service%20-%20Hotel%20Restaurant%20Institutional_London_United%20Kingdom_09-30-2020)

 **Regulatory**

* 1. **Funding for horticulture exports and seasonal workforce measures announced in Federal Budget 2020-21**

The Australian Federal Government will invest $328 million to grow the nation's food and fibre exports, as part of the 2020 Budget, announced last week. “Agricultural exports are critical to Australia’s economic recovery. That’s why this Budget is delivering the $328 million 'Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters Package'”, Minister Littleproud said. “This suite of reforms will modernise Australia’s export systems by slashing red-tape and streamlining regulation and service delivery for our farmers. We’re making it faster and cheaper for farmers to get their product to market, while retaining the levels of quality and assurance that have made our exports world-class”.

Included in the package; $222.2 million over 4 years for digital services to help take produce to market. This will hopefully deliver a modern and reliable digital service to help farmers do business quickly and cost-effectively through a single touchpoint for exporters that is available 24/7.

In addition, $10 million will be spent over 4 years for removing congestion for plant export industries; streamlining border clearances for plant exports by reducing manual processes and improving service times and cost savings for exporters. While there is also $71.1 million over 3 years for Australian services to ensure products make it to export markets.

“The International Freight Assistance Mechanism has been a key part of ensuring that Australian fruit and vegetable exporters are able to continue sending Australia’s high-quality produce overseas and supporting jobs and growth in regional communities. The extension of funding will ensure that Australian summerfruit, cherries and table grapes will continue to be exported this season”,

The National Farmers' Federation notes the horticulture industry is expected to have a labour deficit of 26,000 workers come March 2021, and will continue to call for a designated workforce solution to address agriculture's ongoing labour challenges. [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9256728/funding-for-horticulture-exports-and-seasonal-workforce-measures-announced-in-federal-budget-2020-21/)

* 1. **Updates regarding EU plant protection product approvals**

The European Commission (EC) has recently issued notifications of the change of plant protection product (PPPs) approval status within the European Union (UE). Of particular interest is the non-renewal of approval of 2 key PPPs: benalaxyl and fenamiphos. Following non-renewal of EU authorizations and the expiry of all grace periods, the maximum residue levels (MRLs) are generally lowered to the limit of determination (LOD): 0.01 mg/kg. In most cases this will mean that these substances can no longer be used on crops for export to the EU.

In September 2020, the European Commission published a Regulation withdrawing the approvals for fenamiphos by September 23 2020 and the authorization for use in the EU by September 23 2021 (grace period).

***Non-renewal of benalaxyl*** *On* September 15 2020, the European Commission published a Regulation withdrawing the approval for benalaxyl by October 6 2020 and the authorization for use in the EU by October 5 2021 (grace period). The MRL for both substances will likely be reduced to the LoD, but the date of entry into force of the new MRLs is not yet known.

***Other PPP status changes introduces in September 2020*** [Table 1](https://eservices.coleacp.org/sites/default/files/file_fields/2020/09/Table%201.pdf) presents the list of other changes of status of PPP approval introduced in September 2020.

***All PPP status changes introduced to-date in 2020*** [Table 2](https://eservices.coleacp.org/sites/default/files/file_fields/2020/09/Table%202.pdf) presents a review of PPP status changes since the beginning of 2020. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9255392/updates-regarding-eu-plant-protection-product-approvals/?edition=5)

* 1. **"CRISPR technology needed to achieve European Green Deal"**

It will prove difficult to achieve the European Green Deal goals if the current stringent EU-legislation on the continuation of new breeding technologies such as CRISPR-Cas, remains in effect. Thus, say Wageningen researcher Justus Wesseler and his colleague Kai Purnhagen in a lengthy article in Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy.

The researchers speak out at the very moment the Nobel prize for Chemistry is awarded on 7 October to the researchers who developed CRISPR-Cas. ‘This technology has an unprecedented impact on life sciences, contributes to novel cancer therapies and opens possibilities to achieve the dream of curing hereditary diseases’, says the Nobel committee. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9257528/crispr-technology-needed-to-achieve-european-green-deal/)

 **Business/ Industry**

* 1. **Japan’s fresh fruit imports slide**

## Imports for August 2020 down 10 per cent, with historical data showing volume likely to remain low until March 2021. *Banana and Lemon imports have both shown substantial drops.* Avocado imports, however, showed strong signs of growth. A total 7,502 tonnes were imported in Japan in August 2020, up 33 per cent year on year. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/asiafruit/article/183104/japans-fresh-fruit-imports-slide)

* 1. **Maersk’s first block train from China arrives in Georgia**

Maersk’s intercontinental rail product portfolio expands, with the recent introduction of a block train solution connecting China and Georgia, the first such product implemented specifically for Georgian import. The first China-Georgia block train left Xi’an on September 10th, 2020 and arrived in Tbilisi on October 4th with 41 containers on board, inaugurating the new rail connection, which compliments Maersk’s current coverage of the Caucasian republics (Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9257636/maersk-s-first-block-train-from-china-arrives-in-georgia/?edition=5)

* 1. **Malaysia, an interesting destination for Chilean fresh fruit**

ProChile has recently published a study on the opportunities that Malaysia presents as an export destination for fresh Chilean fruit. Chile currently exports kiwis, apples, and table grapes to this market. In 2019, its kiwis achieved a 6.3% market share in Malaysia, positioning Chile as their third supplier after New Zealand and Italy. That same year, apples achieved a 0.1% market share, and table grapes an 8.6% market share.

Malaysia is a modern market with good purchasing power and a strong focus on quality and health. Consumers spend approximately 20% of their salary purchasing food products. Their main characteristics are:

* A preference for imported high-quality products
* They adapt to new food trends and e-commerce as a means of purchase.
* The quality/price ratio is an important factor in decision making.

 You can read ProChile's full report ( in Spanish) at the following [link](https://www.prochile.gob.cl/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Estudio-Fruta-Fresca-Malasia.pdf). [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9256428/malaysia-an-interesting-destination-for-chilean-fresh-fruit/?edition=5)

* 1. **Health rises to top of agenda**

**T**he rise home eating in the UK and a renewed focus on health augur well for fruit and vegetable sales in the coming months. But as the economic downturn worsens, retailers will need to become more price focused as consumers look to save money.

The research company Kantar has noted that new work patterns created by the coronavirus pandemic are likely to create long-term benefits for produce suppliers.

“Many people will probably continue working from home for one or two days a week. This means an additional £45m will be spent on take-home food each week, of which £9m is a realistic target for fresh produce,”. After reaching for indulgent products such as ice cream during the early stages of the pandemic, Shaw Roberts noted that consumers – and especially families – are now reprioritising health.

“The good news is that getting your five-a-day is the most important health need that consumers are focusing on, so you need to target families with this message.” The UK is now 1.6 items of fruit and veg away from hitting the five-a-day target and based on the current growth trajectory this will be achieved by 2025. This translates to an extra £5bn in retail spend based on current prices.

Research shows that three-quarters of people who bought more fruit and vegetables said they would continue to do so, and the industry needs to look at ways of capitalising on this, whether it’s focusing on seasonal products, reinvigorating promotions or through innovation. However one-third of respondents in the study said if Brexit pushed prices up this would force them to reduce their consumption of fruit and vegetables”. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/fpj/article/183139/health-rises-to-top-of-agenda)

* 1. **Technology helps trace pickers during pandemic**

AgPick - a harvest management system developed by South Australia’s Agricultural Picking Technology (APT) to capture harvest activities electronically - is proving its worth as an auditing tool ( to show compliance with Health Department requirements)during COVID-19 restrictions. APT chief executive officer Henrietta Child said AgPick, which captures and reports on field activities and helps managers track, analyse and improve crop outcomes, was also helping producers record picker movements under COVID-19-safe auditing practices.

“AgPick records when pickers clock on and off, what they pick and where they are, with real time data which was the selling point for us. It can record all outdoor activities including seasonal picker payroll reconciliation, traceability, on-farm crop management costs and yield comparisons. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9257175/technology-helps-trace-pickers-during-pandemic/?edition=5)

* 1. **Freshfel activities August/ September**

The Freshfel Europe Headlines give an overview of the most recent Freshfel Europe activities. This edition covers August and September 2020. available to read [here](https://freshfel.org/freshfel-headlines-5-2020/).   
  
In this edition Freshfel Europe recounts the following:

* Stephan Weist re-elected as Freshfel Europe President
* Freshfel Europe Annual Event with AREFLH “The Road Ahead: A sector fit for future challenges”
* Freshfel Europe & ESSA join forces to kick start multi-level food crisis management collaboration & dialogue
* Freshfel Europe Board member Jose Antonio Garcia reappointed CDG Horticulture Chair
* Freshfel Europe holds second Webinar Series for Members & Associated Members
* Freshfel Europe meets Chief Trade Enforcement Officer Mr. Denis Redonnet
* Freshfel Europe participates in the Symposium of ANIADE and MAPA on plant health
* Freshfel Europe replies to EU Questionnaire on the future of EU trade policy
* Freshfel Europe responds to European Commission roadmap consultation on revision of Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive
* Freshfel Europe responds to European Commission roadmap consultation on substantiating green claims
* Freshfel Europe contributes to the evaluation of the EU agricultural promotion policy
* Freshfel Europe as part of the IAG of the IPPC ephyto Solution calls on governments to support the adoption of ePhyto to facilitate international agricultural trade
* Follow me to be Healthy with Europe: the #400gChallenge continues over summer



* 1. **Electrochemical weeding in agriculture**

A new project SEWIA project is starting in the EU this year (selective electrochemical weeding in agriculture). It will develop new tools, enabling farmers to use modern methods for selective weeding in vegetable cultures, such as lettuce and other high-value specialty crops. The continuously decreasing number of herbicides approved in agriculture and horticulture and the limited applicability of suitable mechanical methods shows the need to develop economically viable alternatives for farmers, helping to protect a sustainable supply chain.

Furthermore, a reduction in herbicide use is in line with consumer demand, environment policies, and socio-economic framework guidelines. As an example, the EU Farm to Fork Strategy aims at reducing the use of chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030 – only a short 10 years away. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9255825/electrochemical-weeding-in-agriculture/)

* 1. **Invasive algae from the Strait of Gibraltar used to make packaging for fruit and vegetables**

The Algae-Copack project aims to convert the Asian brown alga, an invasive species that appeared on the shores of the Strait of Gibraltar a few years ago, into the raw material to manufacture sustainable and biodegradable trays to package the fruits and vegetables . The new packaging would replace the expanded polystyrene trays that the cooperative currently uses to package stew ingredients, vine tomatoes, and leeks, among other horticultural varieties. " [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9255601/invasive-algae-from-the-strait-of-gibraltar-used-to-make-packaging-for-fruit-and-vegetables/?edition=5)

* 1. **ClimateCalc certification is Floramedia’s next step towards a sustainable future**

ClimateCalc is designed to provide precise information about the CO2 footprint of an individual graphics product in a life cycle perspective. By providing insight into the CO2 emissions of different materials, customers can make better informed choices for their labels. In calculating the footprint, factors such as energy consumption, transport, emissions, processing of waste materials and packaging are considered.

Using this certified carbon management calculator, the CO2 footprint of a material can be shown for overall orders and individual labels. This new development enables customers to compare the CO2 footprint of different materials, both cardboard and plastics, per order and thus easily achieve environmental gains. [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9256737/climatecalc-certification-is-floramedia-s-next-step-towards-a-sustainable-future/)

  **Health**

* 1. **Produce choices come under the spotlight**

**T**he London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has carried out a study into the relationship between nutrition, the environment and health, which seeks to identify dietary changes that would be positive for human health and the planet. The study sets out four pathways encouraging people to eat more fruit and vegetables and assesses each one’s impact on health and the environment.

These are: increasing the quantity of the same fruit and vegetables currently consumed; adding an extra by two portions of vegetables and day; adding an extra two portions of home-grown fruit and vegetables, and adding an extra two portions of home-grown vegetables.

“People’s tastes are changing – they are moving more towards fruit and away from vegetables, and also eating more tropical fruits and less home-grown fruit. This is not good for climate change”.  
Green pointed out that around one-third of all the fruit and vegetables consumed in the UK now come from countries vulnerable to climate change and half comes from countries where water scarcity is an issue.

The study showed that all four pathways would lead to people living by an average of 7-8 months longer. In each case there would also be a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and water usage. But the diets would also be more expensive. Moreover, it calculates that increasing only vegetable intake is the least expensive option and would lead to the biggest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

While eating more UK-grown fruit and vegetables would yield slightly less benefit in terms of carbon footprint it would be more beneficial in terms of water savings, the study found. They types of products consumed would also change markedly. Currently, the most widely consumed products are baked beans, onions, carrots, tomatoes, peas, bananas, apples, pears and citrus. But encouraging people to eat more UK-grown produce, would lead to a greater consumption of products like cabbage, lettuce, courgettes, asparagus, leeks, strawberries and apples. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/fpj/article/183149/produce-choices-come-under-the-spotlight)

* 1. **Spinach facilitating efficient energy use**

“Spinach has the potential to help power fuel cells, according to a new paper by researchers in AU’s Department of Chemistry. Spinach, when converted from its leafy, edible form into carbon nanosheets, acts as a catalyst for an oxygen reduction reaction in fuel cells and metal-air batteries. An oxygen reduction reaction is one of two reactions in fuel cells and metal-air batteries and is usually the slower one that limits the energy output of these devices. Researchers have long known that certain carbon materials can catalyse the reaction. But those carbon-based catalysts don’t always perform as good or better than the traditional platinum-based catalysts.

Research shows they can produce highly active, carbon-based catalysts from spinach, which is a renewable biomass. Carbon nanosheets are like a piece of paper with the thickness on a nanometre scale, a thousand times thinner than a piece of human hair. To create the nanosheets, the researchers put the spinach through a multi-step process that included both low- and high-tech methods, including washing, juicing and freeze-drying the spinach, manually grinding it into a fine powder with a mortar and pestle, and “doping” the resulting carbon nanosheet with extra nitrogen to improve its performance. The measurements showed that the spinach-derived catalysts performed better than platinum-based catalysts that can be expensive and lose their potency over time.

The next step for the researchers is to put the catalysts from the lab simulation into prototype devices, such as hydrogen fuel cells, to see how they perform and to develop catalysts from other plants. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9257182/spinach-good-for-popeye-and-the-planet/)

 **Innovation**

* 1. **Nobel Prize for discoverers of CRISPR/Cas9**

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to award the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2020 to Emmanuelle Charpentier (Max Planck Unit for the Science of Pathogens, Berlin, Germany) and Jennifer A. Doudna (University of California, Berkeley, USA), “for the development of a method for genome editing”.

Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A. Doudna have discovered one of gene technology’s sharpest tools: the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors. Using these, researchers can change the DNA of animals, plants and microorganisms with extremely high precision. This technology has had a revolutionary impact on the life sciences, is contributing to new cancer therapies and may make the dream of curing inherited diseases come true.

“There is enormous power in this genetic tool, which affects us all. It has not only revolutionised basic science, but also resulted in innovative crops and will lead to ground-breaking new medical treatments”, says Claes Gustafsson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry.

Since Charpentier and Doudna discovered the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors in 2012 their use has exploded. This tool has contributed to many important discoveries in basic research, and plant researchers have been able to develop crops that withstand mould, pests and drought. In medicine, clinical trials of new cancer therapies are underway, and the dream of being able to cure inherited diseases is about to come true. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9256705/nobel-prize-for-discoverers-of-crispr-cas9/)

* 1. **Impact of UV-C radiation on disease sensitivity and fruit quality of strawberry**

Ultraviolet-C (UV-C) radiation is efficient in reducing the development of diseases in many species, including strawberry (Fragaria × ananassa). Several studies suggest that UV-C radiation is effective not only because of its disinfecting effect but also because it may stimulate plant defences.

In a new study, the effect of preharvest UV-C radiation applied during strawberry cultivation on plant growth, fruit quality, and susceptibility to major fungal diseases such as gray mould, powdery mildew, and soft rot was evaluated. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9257033/impact-of-uv-c-radiation-on-disease-sensitivity-and-fruit-quality-of-strawberry/)

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