

**PMAC weekly update 6th to 13th August**

1. **Government agencies**: ICPR and country freedom changes; Tighter import rules to stop stink bug; Proposed changes to the way organic production is regulated; WTO Notifications; Skyrocketing F&B imports to Thailand signals opportunity;
2. **New Zealand News:**  EU High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini meets Winston Peter; Foreign Minister concludes ASEAN meetings; Modernising our trade policy with Trade for All: have your say; Roundup called into question after US court finding; Fruit grower takes MPI to court over mass plant destruction; NZ dollar falls as RBNZ keeps OCR at record low; PGG Wrightson to sell seeds division for $421m; NZKGI established Zespri KPIs; T&G Global first-half operating profit up 40%; Hawke's Bay apple industry growing by 100 jobs a year ; New Cherish™ apple surprising Asia markets; NZ set for bumper avocado crop ; Australian irradiated tomatoes must be labelled; Young Growers to face-off in final; Panamanian pineapples could arrive in New Zealand
3. **International news:** Russia sets standards for organic food production; Indonesia to seek clarity from WTO on US trade dispute; BASF closes acquisition of businesses and assets from Bayer; Maersk introduces Remote Container Management; Maersk announces profit warning for 2018; European horticulture suffers greatest difficulties in 40 years; China Customs Launches New Integrated Declaration System; Success in China: An interview with Zespris Head of Global Marketing; Outbreak of Salmonella agona reported in five EU countries; Australia: Black and Gold frozen vegetables recalled over listeria fears; FDA says cattle feedlot could be to blame for E. coli in canal water used on romaine; Data shows Germany and UK reported nearly half of E. coli infections in EU; Cyclospora parasite infections hit UK for fourth consecutive year; e-GRO launches Nutritional Monitoring of Floriculture Crops book; US: Insect solutions guides available for ornamental growers; Veg picking robots not that far away; Data-based pest management system helps companies use pesticides more efficiently and safely

***Editors comments***

*A very full newsletter this week with a lot of international news after a 2 week close down by the international produce web sites. There are two areas in this space that are worth pointing out.*

*Food safety presents five articles all dealing with outbreaks overseas with three of them involving a number of countries. The ability to collect and analyse data makes identifying these outbreaks and trends possible However in all cases it takes a lot of detective work to find the source of the contamination( and in many cases the actual point of contamination is never definitively identified. .*

*In the innovation section there are two articles on data management and robotics. After several years of talking about new potential technologies these are two good examples of technologies which are fit for purpose and being used. I suspect it wont be long before there is a much wider range of good technologies for producers to use. It may be as Mike Chapman said a couple of weeks ago that New Zealand employers will be looking for IT specialists as much as field workers*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **ICPR and country freedom changes**

ICPR Changes this week include changes for

1. The European Union which has been updated in section 2.4 to include ‘wet signatures’ on certificates for consignments to Italy.
2. New Caledonia which as been updated with [amended additional declarations for fresh Annonaceae (Custard Apple), Annona cherimola (Cherimoya), Citrus spp., Litchi chinensis (Litchi), Mangifera indica (Mango)and Passiflora edulis (Passionfruit) fruit to New Caledonia.](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/670)

MPI has also confirmed an addition to the [Country freedom status](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/resources/registers-and-lists/country-freedom-status/) list The Country Freedom List has been update to state Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus (CGMMV) is not known to occur in NZ.

* 1. **Tighter import rules to stop stink bug**

New treatment and cleaning rules for imported vehicles and machinery will make it harder for brown marmorated stink bugs to make landfall in New Zealand, says MPI. MPI released the new import health standard for vehicles, machinery and equipment last week and it will come into force on 1 September – the beginning of the stink bug season.

The new standard has a big focus on Japan following biosecurity issues earlier this year with contaminated vehicle carriers. There are also new restrictions on imports from many European countries, recognising the spread of stink bug through this part of the world. Amongst other charges treatments must now be undertaken offshore . The approved treatment options are fumigation with methyl bromide or sulfuryl fluoride and heat treatment. [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/tighter-import-rules-to-stop-stink-bug/)

* 1. **Proposed changes to the way organic production is regulated**

# MPI last week provided a summary of submissions from the organic production consultation undertaken earlier in the year . A [Summary of submissions](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/30227-would-new-zealand-benefit-from-new-organic-regulation-summary-of-submissions) from the consultation has been placed on the MPI web site:

In summary the document states 208 submission were received, 85% supported a change in the way organics are currently regulated and 76% supported the introduction of a mandatory standard

The next step is for Government to consider whether and how it would like to proceed with work on new organic regulation. Should the Government decide to proceed with new organic regulation there will be further consultation on the legislation that will be required to support a standard and content of the standard itself.  Access the [web site here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-way-organic-production-is-regulated/)

* 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:

* India The Draft Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Amendment Regulations 2018 details the limit of Metal Contaminant, Aflatoxin and Mycotoxin.
* Japan Summary of the Revision of Pesticide Registration System
* Maurtius - Bill is to regulate, control and monitor the importation and use of pesticides in or on certain fresh fruits, plants, seeds or vegetables with a view to, inter alia, minimizing risks to human health and the environment.
* Russia Federation and USA – MRL’s

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



* 1. **Skyrocketing F&B imports to Thailand signals opportunity**

The popularity of imported food and beverage (F&B) has been on a steady rise in Thailand. Exclusive imported offerings alongside product quality and experience tailored to local taste preferences is creating a win-win for stakeholders, creating a buzz and strong word of mouth effect. Recent trade figures shows the value of Thailand’s imported F&B to have increased 36.7 percent since 2013 to NZ$ 16.6 billion.

This unique appeal of premium imported food among Thai consumers provides an opportunity that New Zealand businesses can potentially leverage in order to reach a wider consumer base in Thailand.  The article suggests these businesses should:

**1. Use existing channels to educate the Thai Consumer  
2. Be Kiwi but tailor branding and marketing tools beyond Point of Sale Materials  
3. Understand flavour drivers** [Full article available here](https://www.nzte.govt.nz/about/news/blogs/skyrocketing-f-b-imports-to-thailand-signals-opportunity?utm_source=ubiquity&utm_medium=engage&utm_campaign=en17032016&utm_content=Read%20More%20Button%20-%20Taking%20advantage%20of%20Thailand%27s%20imported%20F%26B%20boom)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **EU High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini meets Winston Peters**

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters met in Wellington last week

They reaffirmed the close and long-standing relations between New Zealand and the European Union. The partnership is defined by a shared commitment to the same fundamental values, including human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Among a range of other issues they agreed to continue to jointly promote and defend the international rules based system, which underpins our shared security and prosperity. They also welcomed the launch of negotiations towards an EU-NZ Free Trade Agreement, the first round of which took place in Brussels in July. The agreement, when concluded, will send a powerful message about our collective commitment to open, rules based trade and help us to fully realise the potential in our trade and economic relations.[Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/eu-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-meets-new-zealand-foreign-minister)

* 1. **Foreign Minister concludes ASEAN meetings**

Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters wrapped up a visit to Singapore early last week where he had attended the East Asia Summit Ministers’ Meeting; the ASEAN Regional Forum; and the Southwest Pacific Dialogue.  Mr Peters also co‑Chaired (with Indonesia) a meeting with Ministerial counterparts from the ASEAN countries.

Mr Peters also had an extensive programme of bilateral meetings, including with the US Secretary of State, and the Foreign Ministers of Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea, Timor‑Leste, Cambodia, Iran, the Philippines, and Turkey.

[Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/foreign-minister-concludes-asean-meetings)

* 1. **Modernising our trade policy with Trade for All: have your say**

This Government last week launched its Trade for All agenda and is inviting New Zealanders to have their say on what matters to them on trade policy and in trade agreements. David Parker has indicated “The key questions we need to answer is how we set trade policy to meet those challenges while ensuring all our people and all businesses benefit.”

The “Have Your Say on Trade for All” website is open where people can find more information and give their views.  [www.haveyoursay.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.haveyoursay.mfat.govt.nz) In addition public meetings and hui will be held throughout the country from mid-August to mid-October.

A Trade for All Advisory Board has been established that will bring together experts with a wide range of views, knowledge and experience to make their recommendations on progressive, sustainable and inclusive trade policy.”  The Board will be chaired by trade expert David Pine who brings extensive experience in the private and public sectors. [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/modernising-our-trade-policy-trade-all-have-your-say)

**General**

* 1. **Roundup called into question after US court finding**

New Zealand's Environmental Protection Authority says it still believes Roundup is safe to use, despite a US court ruling the weed killer contributed to a janitor's cancer and awarded him $NZ440 million.

Use of a popular weed killer in New Zealand has been called into question after the US court ruling.

[A San Francisco jury on Saturday ordered](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12105300) Monsanto to pay US$289 million ($439.1m) to a former school groundskeeper, on the basis its product Roundup had contributed to his cancer. The company insists hundreds of studies have established that the active ingredient in Roundup - glyphosate - is safe and reportedly plans to appeal the decision.

Dr Fiona Thomson-Carter, general manager of New Zealand's EPA's Hazardous Substances Group, said the authority was aware of the US court ruling." The EPA has not been involved in the court case, and is not aware of any specific evidence which was used in court. "There is no change to the science behind our current position, which is products containing glyphosate remain safe to use when you follow the instructions on the products label."

However Associate Environment Minister Eugenie Sage will be asking the EPA CEO to consider adding Roundup to the reassessment list in the light of the US decision," [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12105577)

* 1. **Fruit grower takes MPI to court over mass plant destruction**

A Cambridge fruit grower is taking the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to the High Court to try and save his livelihood. MPI wants tens of thousands of plant cuttings imported from an American facility to be destroyed or contained.

The new apple varieties imported from the US are resistant to the worst fungus, insects, and bacteria. But MPI wants them destroyed within weeks, which grower Andy McGrath says is unacceptable. MPI says concerns about testing procedures at an American facility means some of the imported young plants could be contaminated with viruses or bacteria. But Mr McGrath believes they've overreacted, and has lodged a judicial review in the High Court. Nurseries and large growers would be hardest hit, and the flow-on effects would cost regional economies hundreds of millions of dollars.. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/198867/Fruit-grower-takes-MPI-to-court-over-heartbreaking-mass-plant-destruction)

A group of five industry members have joined together to challenge last week’s directive by the MPI for nurseries and orchardists to contain and/or destroy tens of thousands of apple (Malus) and stonefruit (Prunus) plants. The group lodged a Judicial Review with the High Court in Wellington on Friday 03 August, seeking to overturn the decision, or at least extend the timeframes in order for MPI to gather and consider all relevant facts.

“We are asking MPI to act with due consideration of all the facts and to take a common-sense approach to this matter. MPI has set a date of 22 August for the containment and/or destruction of the plants, stating a requirement to act before these plants bloom. The horse has already bolted. Some of these plants have bloomed for the past three years and are already in bloom now,” added Mr Sixtus of Pattullo's Nurseries . [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/198985/Apple-and-stonefruit-group-launch-legal-action-to-overturn-MPI)

* 1. **NZ dollar falls as RBNZ keeps OCR at record low**

The New Zealand dollar fell by half a US cent after the Reserve Bank kept its official cash rate (OCR) steady at 1.75 per cent, where the bank expects it to remain until 2020.The currency has dropped on the back of the bank's more moderate view of economic growth. *The balance of the article outlines the reasons for the Reserve banks decision.* The OCR has been on hold since November 2016.  
 [Full article available here](http://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/news/business/nz-dollar-falls-as-rbnz-keeps-ocr-at-record-low/)

**Industry news**

* 1. **PGG Wrightson to sell seeds division for $421m**

PGG Wrightson Limited has agreed to sell its seed division to DLF Seeds for $421 million. The deal was subject to shareholder and Overseas Investment Office approval. DLF Seeds Chief Executive, Truels Damsgaard, says PGW Seeds was the leading temperate forage seed player in the Southern Hemisphere and presented a real opportunity for value creation. PGG Wrightson Seeds had operations in New Zealand, Australia and South America. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/106033773/pgg-wrightson-to-sell-seeds-division-for-421m)

* 1. **NZKGI established Zespri KPIs**

New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers (NZKGI) have established a series of KPIs that provides Growers with an authoritative and robust assessment of Zespri’s performance - this is an outcome of the KISP process.

These KPIs have been agreed with NZKGI’s Executive Committee and Forum, as well as Zespri Management. They will include an annual KPI grower dashboard to coincide with the Annual Reports of Zespri, NZKGI, KVH and KNZ which will be released in July/August each year. Zespri's Annual 2017/18 Key Performance Indicators’ grower dashboard includes performance measures of onshore and offshore fruit loss, average premium pricing (green), NZ supply overheads, margin and sales, R&D, global revenue per employee, brand awareness, Zespri Group Limited (ZGL) dividend, collaborative Marketing.. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199213/NZKGI-established-Zespri-KPIs)

* 1. **T&G Global first-half operating profit up 40%**

T&G Global, New Zealand's biggest fresh produce grower, distributor, marketer and exporter, posted a 40 percent jump in first-half operating profit due to improved performances from its pipfruit and international produce businesses, its two largest units.Operating profit, which gauges the underlying performance of the business, rose to $10.4 million in the six months ended June 30, from $7.5 million in the year earlier period, the Auckland-based company said in a statement.  
  
Pipfruit, T&G's largest unit which grows, packs, stores, sells and markets pipfruit worldwide, lifted operating profit to $13.1 million from $11.8 million. The unit benefited from an earlier harvest in 2018, resulting in fruit moving into the market quicker than the same period a year earlier, and the division was also be able to take advantage of European apple shortages caused by frosts in 2017. Still, those gains were offset by a lack of export quality fruit impacting sales in North America where smaller fruit drove prices lower, it said.  
  
Meanwhile, T&G's New Zealand produce business turned to an operating loss of $648,000 from a profit of $4 million a year earlier even as revenue rose $3.5 million to $111.9 million, which the company said reflected exceptionally high prices and margins in the year earlier period."Operating profit has been affected by unusually low prices experienced by the Covered Crop business unit early in 2018 and lower production volumes of high value sweet tomato varieties," it said. "This combined with the loss of a blueberry harvest because of rains experienced in Kerikeri have been the major drivers of the reduction in operating profit." [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199079/T-and-G-Global-first-half-operating-profit-up-40-procent)

* 1. **Hawke's Bay apple industry growing by 100 jobs a year**

The Hawke's Bay's apple industry is working with local schools and top-tier universities to fill more than 700 new permanent jobs across the region over the next seven years. Following the rise in overseas demand for apples, growers across the country are in the midst of planting one million new trees a year. The national pipfruit industry organisation, NZ Apples and Pears, says that means an extra 155 new jobs in New Zealand every year to 2025 - not including the need for more seasonal pickers. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12103931)

**Crop news**

* 1. **New Cherish™ apple surprising Asia markets**

Cherish™ apple, the new exciting variety from New Zealand exported exclusively by Golden Bay Fruit (GBF), was launched with great success in Asia this July, with promotions taking place across Tesco Lotus in Thailand and Big C in Vietnam, after only one season of commercial harvest of the fruit.

Cherish™ apples have been exported across the globe this season, more particularly in Asian markets such as China, Thailand, Singapore and now Vietnam due to strong and growing demand for premium and sweet apples like Cherish™. After the success of their UK office opened 5 years ago, New Zealand (NZ)-headquartered Golden Bay Fruit (GBF) has decided to replicate this strategy in South East Asia (SEA) to better serve its customers in the region. The Singapore office went live on 1st June 2018. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/special-article/198966/New-Cherish%E2%84%A2-apple-surprising-Asia-markets)

* 1. **NZ set for bumper avocado crop**

AVOCO, a New Zealand avocado export group, is predicting a strong fruit set this spring. Fruit successfully set during this period will grow into mature avocados harvested during the 2019-20 season. AVOCO is expecting to manage a crop of 2.28 million export trays this coming season and have made plans to ship 80 per cent of the volume to Australia, with the rest distributed to health-conscious Asian markets where AVOCO trades under its AVANZA brand. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199008/NZ-set-for-bumper-avocado-crop)

**Other**

* 1. **Australian irradiated tomatoes must be labelled**

Irradiated Australian tomatoes are on the shelves of fresh produce stores now, and TomatoesNZ is reminding retailers and the hospitality sector to ensure that produce is clearly labelled as "irradiated".  
Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) requires anyone selling irradiated produce to clearly label it at point of sale. The regulation applies to any irradiated tomatoes and products containing them, both raw and cooked. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199194/Australian-irradiated-tomatoes-must-be-labelled)

* 1. **Young Growers to face-off in final**

New Zealand’s top young fruit and vegetable growers will compete for the title of Young Grower of the Year in Napier on Wednesday, 22 August. Seven finalists - the most the competition has ever seen - will go head to head at venues along the Napier waterfront. During the day, finalists will rotate their way through four business and four practical activities. In the afternoon, they will take part in the Ballance Agri-Nutrients Leadership Panel to give their views on a contemporary leadership issue. Spectators are welcome to attend all events. The final test will be delivering a speech in front of the judges at an awards dinner. For those who cannot attend, both the panel and speeches will be live-streamed on the Horticulture New Zealand [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCySv2YTOQL2bC8ZVa76pW4g) channel. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199112/New-Zealand-Young-Growers-to-face-off-in-final)

* 1. **Panamanian pineapples could arrive in New Zealand**

Panamanian pineapples, the sweetest in the world, could arrive in New Zealand after two MPI representatives complete a Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) to determine the control measures which should be in force for the tropical fruit to be imported. The National Directorate of Plant Health (DNSV) of the Ministry of Agricultural Development informed that if the PRA was approved, twelve exporters and close to 150 producers cultivating 1,800 hectares would benefit from this market niche [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199170/Panamanian-pineapples-could-arrive-in-New-Zealand)



1. **International news**

**Regulatory**

* 1. **Russia sets standards for organic food production**

President Vladimir Putin has signed a new law regulating production, storing and transportation of organic produce in Russia. The decree bans agrochemicals, pesticides, antibiotics growth stimulators and hormones. The new law will enter force on January 1, 2020. The regulation introduces references to “organic produce,”“manufacturer of organic produce” and “organic agriculture,” as well as sets control over producing, storing, labeling, selling and transporting goods of the kind. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/198955/Russia-sets-standards-for-organic-food-production)

* 1. **Indonesia to seek clarity from WTO on US trade dispute**

Indonesia will clarify its position with the World Trade Organization after the United States asked the multilateral body to allow it to impose sanctions on Southeast Asia’s biggest economy after winning a trade dispute that it claims had cost US business up to $350 million in 2017.Indonesia lost its appeal against a WTO ruling in favor of the United States and New Zealand last year over its trade policies that limit imports of food, plants and animal products, including apples, grapes, potatoes, onions, flowers, juice, dried fruit, cattle, chicken and beef. The United States claims that Indonesia has yet to abide by the ruling.

According to the ruling, Indonesia was required to make the first phase of adjustments by July 22 this year at the latest, and the second phase before June 2 next year. Although Indonesia has taken steps to adjust its import regulations after consulting with the relevant parties in Geneva on July 27, the United States said this had not done enough. This assessment is based on information the US representative to the WTO received, showing that US producers still face obstacles when exporting horticultural products to Indonesia.  
  
Indonesia fell out of President Donald Trump’s favour over a surplus it has been enjoying in bilateral trade between the two countries since 2013. The United States also threatened to revoke its trade incentive, known as the Generalized System of Preferences, which has benefited Indonesia for more than three decades. The latest rift with the United States stems from Indonesia’s old policies on agricultural imports. One of the policies only allows US producers to export apples to Indonesia outside the apple harvesting season in the archipelago. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199176/Indonesia-to-seek-clarity-from-WTO-on-US-trade-dispute)

**Business**

* 1. **BASF closes acquisition of businesses and assets from Bayer**

BASF has closed the acquisition of a range of businesses and assets from Bayer. The transaction is a strategic complement to BASF's crop protection, biotech and digital farming activities and marks its entry into seeds, non-selective herbicides and nematicide seed treatments.

BASF signed agreements in October 2017 and April 2018 to acquire the businesses and assets Bayer offered to divest in the context of its acquisition of Monsanto. The agreements include Bayer's global glufosinate-ammonium business; seeds businesses including traits, research and breeding capabilities, and trademarks for key row crops in select markets; the vegetable seeds business; the R&D platform for hybrid wheat; a range of seed treatment products; certain glyphosate-based herbicides in Europe, used predominantly for industrial applications; the complete digital farming platform xarvio; as well as certain non-selective herbicide and nematicide research projects.

These transactions are now completed, except for the vegetable seeds business for which closing is expected in mid-August 2018. To reflect the expanded scope of its agriculture business, BASF has renamed the division from Crop Protection to Agricultural Solutions. In addition, the division has established a new global business unit for seeds and traits. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/44908/BASF-closes-acquisition-of-businesses-and-assets-from-Bayer)

* 1. **Maersk introduces Remote Container Management**

A groundbreaking innovation in refrigerated technology, Remote Container Management (RCM) allows you to monitor the conditions inside your container from the moment your goods are locked inside, right up to delivery at their final destination. To show the technology off, Maersk have published a video to see it in action. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199013/Maersk-introduces-Remote-Container-Management)

* 1. **Maersk announces profit warning for 2018**

There is ever-increasing pressure on transportation tariffs and high bunker prices. Maresk has announced a potential profit downgrade with an EBITDA in the region of $3.5 to $4.2 billion, with a positive amount below the line. Earlier they set a forecast of an EBITDA of between $4 and $5 billion.

In March, several large shipping companies introduced an emergency surcharge to cover the spike in oil prices. These companies included Maersk, MSC, CMA CGM, and Hapag Lloyd. According to these companies, the oil price rose so sharply that the usual contract compensation regulations were insufficient. Oil prices have been on the rise since halfway through last year. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/198990/Maersk-announces-profit-warning-for-2018)

* 1. **European horticulture suffers greatest difficulties in 40 years**

The heat and dry weather recorded in almost all of Europe throughout the month of July will cause the horticultural industry to suffer the greatest difficulties of the last 40 years, according to a spokesperson of the European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processors (Profel). He pointed out that this year's weather conditions have taken a particularly negative toll on the frozen and canned vegetable sector, as losses in the field have led to reduced and irregular supplies of fresh vegetables to the processing factories.

Profel also estimates that the legume production has been reduced by between 20 and 50%, and that of onions by between 15 and 50%. Moreover, courgette and spinach crops have also been affected. While the dry weather persists, there are also concerns about the crops that are harvested in autumn and winter, such as kale, white cabbage, red cabbage, Brussels sprouts and leeks. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199210/European-horticulture-suffers-greatest-difficulties-in-40-years)

  **China**

* 1. **China Customs Launches New Integrated Declaration System**

On August 1, customs authorities of the People’s Republic of China debuted a new integrated declaration system for imports and exports. Previous customs declaration and inspection declaration forms have now been merged into a new, single customs declaration system.

Now enterprises only need to declare goods once for customs clearance by using the “Single Window” or “Internet + Customs” platform instead of having to declare to both customs authorities and CIQ respectively. Before using the integrated customs declaration system, enterprises should complete three things: user registration (via single-window standard edition), enterprise qualifications registration and an e-Port application. China Customs has issued a notice to help importers, exporters and relevant employees better understand the requirement changes of the new customs declaration. In case of any problems, businesses may refer to the local customs hotline by calling 12360.

[Full article available here](https://www.producereport.com/article/china-customs-launches-new-integrated-declaration-system)

As of 1 August 2018, Customs Authorities in China will accept electronic documents (eDocs) at the point of Customs declaration, and will no longer require paper documents as a strict prerequisite for clearance. Namely, if the documents issued by the relevant competent authorities or agencies at home and abroad are used for online verification or internet access, only the document number or a scanned upload will be required. Thus, customs clearance can take place by referencing data from electronic documents.

The announcement also adds that certain requirements will need to be met in order to legally accept eDocs for clearance. Specifically, "if network verification has not been implemented and the Internet cannot be queried, a scanned copy is required." [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199028/China-now-accepts-electronic-documents-for-customs-clearance)

* 1. **Success in China: An interview with Zespris Head of Global Marketing**

Head of Global Marketing, Kok Hwee Ng. has been in the role since August 2017. Kok Hwee is in charge of the strategic direction for the Zespri brand globally - her responsibilities include all marketing development across brand, innovation, shopping, health, digital and media planning. *This article is an interveiw with Kok Hwee to learn more about* [*Zespri’s*](http://www.zespri.com/)  *work in major global markets like China. Underpinning her strategy is* quality, consistency, safety and dependability - that’s the consumer promise as a starting point, but most importantly it’s consumer-centricity.

She notes key to Zespri’s success is consistent quality it is incredibly important that that quality is maintained and delivers on the promise every time a customer buys their fruit . This is especially important in China where consumers are particularly conscious about food safety. She notes that with e-commerce being so strong I China, we have also utilized digital to get closer to our consumers. We focus on digital advertising and social media, such as WeChat and Weibo to deliver our campaigns to consumers and engage with them, to build a meaningful and distinct global brand

With regards to challenges from a consumer marketing point of view, one challenge we had was the pronunciation of the word ‘Zespri’ by Chinese consumers. As we got closer to the consumer, we realized that a lot of Chinese speaking people were having a really hard time pronouncing the word Zespri. We set out to find the right Chinese translation of our branding that would also allow for the right meaning and direction for our brand positioning. The current Chinese name for Zespri is ‘Jia Pei, which we use across all of our consumer touch points in China. It means, “additional and multiplication of vitality”. With the introduction of this locally relevant name, we saw a huge increase in our unaided brand awareness - it grew from 20% to 40%.   
  
Before investing in marketing , we spend a lot of time and effort to understand our consumers. What are their barriers, challenges and aspirations? How do they consume our fruit? What is it they’re seeking that could inform our communication, product innovation process and inform our retail strategy? We rely on data very heavily in order to effectively communicate with our consumers, ensuring the touch points we are using are the most efficient. This data informs our overall marketing mix, ensuring we’re delivering on our intent and effectiveness of our campaigns, constantly tracking and measuring.

### Key trends globally are safety, quality, convenience and the sustainability of foods. These trends are also emphasised in China as it’s being amplified by the huge growth in domestic income and consumption. The increased use of digital technologies is reducing the distance between grower, producer and consumer, which is allowing us to create a lot more value. The closer we can get to the consumer, the more value we will be able to extract, rather than just being a commodity. [Full article available here](https://content.compacsort.com/blog/success-in-china-an-interview-head-of-global-marketing-zespri)

 **Food safety**

* 1. **Outbreak of Salmonella agona reported in five EU countries**

A multi-country outbreak of the Salmonella enterica subspecies enterica serovar Agona (S. Agona) is under investigation in the European Union (EU), with cases retrospectively identified back to 2014.

Overall, 147 outbreak cases have been reported by five EU countries: 122 cases since 1 January 2017, and 25 historical cases between 2014 and 2016. The United Kingdom is reporting most outbreak cases (129), with Finland (15), Denmark, Germany and Ireland (one case each) reporting the other cases.

Based on the information available, the microbiological evidence suggests ready-to-eat products containing cucumbers as a possible vehicle of infection but so far it has not been possible to identify the specific point in the production chain where the contamination occurred. Further investigations along the food chain are therefore needed to identify the source of contamination. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/198835/Outbreak-of-Salmonella-agona-reported-in-five-EU-countries)

* 1. **Australia: Black and Gold frozen vegetables recalled over listeria fears**

A recall has been issued for frozen vegetables across three states that may be contaminated with potentially deadly listeria bacteria. The warning comes weeks after a similar listeria-related recall of popular frozen vegetable products sold in Aldi, Woolworths and IGA stores, some of which were imported from Europe. [Full article available here](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-01/listeria-outbreak-in-black-and-gold-vegtables/10061308)

* 1. **FDA says cattle feedlot could be to blame for E. coli in canal water used on romaine**

Outbreak investigators say a cattle feedlot near a canal providing water to growing regions in Arizona is a key element in their hypothesis about the source of E. coli that contaminated romaine lettuce earlier this year. Dust from such feedlots is a known vector for the spread of E. coli bacteria and other pathogens to growing fields and surface water. Producer growers in the area, including those who produce romaine and other leafy greens, have been meeting on a regular basis about the outbreak for months. The industry set up a Leafy Greens Food Safety Task Force to review growing practices. The task force has suggested tripling an industry-imposed 400-foot buffer zone to separate leafy greens growing fields from animal feedlots.

However as the FDA has stated, samples of canal water have tested positive for the outbreak strain of E. coli. Accordigngly the FDA continues to consider that contaminated water coming into contact with produce, either through direct irrigation or other means, is a viable explanation for the pattern of contamination”. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199030/FDA-says-cattle-feedlot-could-be-to-blame-for-E.-coli-in-canal-water-used-on-romaine)

* 1. **Data shows Germany and UK reported nearly half of E. coli infections in EU**

When combining all the recent reports of STEC/VTEC[[1]](#footnote-1) cases in 2016, it appears almost half of those reports originate from Germany and the United Kingdom, according to European statistics. A total of 6,619 confirmed cases of infections with Shiga-toxin/verocytotoxin-producing E. coli (STEC/VTEC) were recorded in Europe in 2016. Germany reported the highest number of confirmed cases at 1,843, followed by the UK with 1,373 confirmed cases. The two countries accounted for 47.7 percent of all EU/EEA cases.

Not all European countries had to deal with the disease as Cyprus, Bulgaria and Portugal did not report any cases, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) surveillance report. On average, a third of people with STEC infections, with known information, were hospitalized. Ten people died.

In 2016, nine STEC outbreaks were reported with known causative agents. The two largest outbreaks occurred in Finland with 237 cases and the UK with 170 cases. In both outbreaks, leafy green vegetables were implicated as the vehicle of infection. Three smaller outbreaks were caused by bovine meat and products thereof (STEC O157), two were caused by cheese (STEC O157 and O26), and one was connected to milk (STEC O80). [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/45008/Data-shows-Germany-and-UK-reported-nearly-half-of-E.-coli-infections-in-EU)

* 1. **Cyclospora parasite infections hit UK for fourth consecutive year**

Public Health England is investigating an increase in Cyclospora[[2]](#footnote-2) infections for the fourth successive year. Up to early August, 57 cases had been reported in England, Scotland and Wales, of which 46 had travelled to Mexico.  
  
Between 2005 and 2014, an average of 32 Cyclospora cases were reported in England and Wales each year. Foods commonly contaminated with the parasite are soft fruits such as raspberries and salad products such as coriander, basil, and lettuce. It appears that travellers to Mexico have been a major contributor to these stats.

In the United States, there are two ongoing multi-state outbreaks of cyclosporiasis. One is from Fresh Express salad mix sold at McDonald’s restaurants. A total of 395 cases have been reported from 15 states including 16 hospitalizations. The other is linked to Del Monte Fresh Produce vegetable trays where 237 laboratory-confirmed cases come from four states. The trays contain broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, and dill dip. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/199126/Cyclospora-parasite-infections-hit-UK-for-fourth-consecutive-year)

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**Floriculture**

* 1. **e-GRO launches Nutritional Monitoring of Floriculture Crops book**

A new book on nutritional monitoring for greenhouse, floriculture and vegetables is available from e-GRO, a collaborative team of university floriculture specialists and educators.

This book is a compendium of nutritional monitoring factsheets covering popular seed and vegetatively-propagated annual bedding plants, potted plants and vegetable transplants from basil to zinnia. The crop-specific nutritional factsheets provide the optimal crop-specific fertility requirements, pH and EC values . In addition, the book provides nutritional monitoring resources such as procedures of in-housing nutritional monitoring, establishing a nutritional monitoring tool kit, corrective procedures and conversion of measurements . The book can be downloaded for free from the Nutritional Monitoring of Floriculture Crops website led by Michigan State University Extension specialist.. [Download your free copy today](http://sites.google.com/view/fertdirtandsquirt/crop-factsheets" \t "_blank) [Full article available here](http://www.floraldaily.com/article/16570/e-GRO-launches-Nutritional-Monitoring-of-Floriculture-Crops-book)

* 1. **US: Insect solutions guides available for ornamental growers**

Syngenta has released three insect solutions guides to help greenhouse and nursery growers manage resistance while controlling whiteflies, thrips and aphids. The guides include susceptible crops, insect lifecycle details, as well as proven cultural and chemical recommendations for insect prevention and control from technical experts. The solutions guides include product active ingredients and IRAC group numbers, so growers can identify the appropriate product for their program. Rotating insecticides with different modes of action is essential to control any pest and avoid chemical resistance. All three guides can be downloaded at [www.GreenCastOnline.com/Ornamentals](http://www.GreenCastOnline.com/Ornamentals).  [Full article available here](http://www.floraldaily.com/article/16635/US-Insect-solutions-guides-available-for-ornamental-growers)

 **Innovation**

* 1. **Veg picking robots not that far away**

In the very near future, robots are going to be picking the vegetables that appear on grocery store shelves across America. Founded by two rising stars of the robotics industry, the 36 year old Josh Lessing and 28 year old Ryan Knopf, Root is an extension of work the two men had done as early employees at Soft Robotics, the company pioneering new technologies for robotic handling.  
  
The first product from Root AI is a mobile robot that operates in indoor farming facilities. It picks tomatoes and is able to look at crops and assess their health, and conduct simple operations like pruning vines and observing and controlling ripening profiles so that the robot can cultivate crops (initially tomatoes) continuously and more effectively than people. Root AI’s robots have multiple cameras (one on the arm of the robot itself, the “tool’s” view, and one sitting to the side of the robot with a fixed reference frame) to collect both color images and 3D depth information. The company has also developed a customized convolutional neural network to detect objects of interest and label them with bounding boxes. Beyond the location of the fruit, Root AI uses other, proprietary, vision processing techniques to measure properties of fruit (like ripeness, size, and quality grading).  All of this is done on the robot, without relying on remote access to a data-center. And it’s all done in real time. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/45017/Veg-picking-robots-not-that-far-away)

* 1. **Data-based pest management system helps companies use pesticides more efficiently and safely**

Founded in 2013 by Bachar and his partner Iftach Birger, FieldIn’s platform is an end-to-end solution that helps growers make pest management more effective and safe. Every year, billions-worth of produce is lost worldwide due to pests and diseases, and yet pest management has failed to make significant advances.

“No one across the value chain of a crop had any idea about the quality, safety, and efficiency of chemical applications,” says Bachar. “We’ve created a single, integrative solution for crop growers. Our platform provides them with visual insights and practical tools to manage every step of the pest control process. As a result, they use pesticide in a smarter, more efficient way, reducing costs and preventing mistakes.”

FieldIn uses precision agriculture to combat pests. “We make the growers' tractors or machinery smart. We outfit this machinery with a sensor that automatically monitors and records the whole spraying process and its quality,” explains Bachar. The apps and sensors monitor the health of the crop, which kind and how many of the pesticides are used, how and where they are being used, their quantity and pace, the weather, and countless of other parameters, he adds.

“Using big data-based insights, the ‘field scouts’ send feedback to the people in charge. The central dashboard collects all the information, and employs data analytics and artificial intelligence to find mistakes and alert the controller if and where there is a problem, such as a sudden weather change or the accidental use of an incorrect pesticide.”

 The company states it currently works with 40% of all Israeli citrus, vines, apples and almond growers. It has also been rapidly expanding to the U.S., Europe, and Africa. The company’s biggest market today is California, where FieldIn has partnered with three of the seven largest crop companies in the state. As part of FieldIn’s vision to make all agricultural pest-related activities data-driven, the company now runs, according to them, the largest and most comprehensive agricultural pests database in existence. FieldIn says it expects to cover 40% of the global citrus and vine markets by the end of this year.[Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/198952/Data-based-pest-management-system-helps-companies-use-pesticides-more-efficiently-and-safely)

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1. VTEC (Verotoxin producing E.coli) or STEC (Shiga toxin-producing E. coli) are disease causing strains of E. coli -the normal bowel bacteria. The commonest type of VTEC/STEC is E.coli O157. These bacteria can cause serious disease by producing a toxin (poison) that affects the bowel, blood and can damage the kidneys. Occasionally the disease is fatal. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cyclospora infection (cyclosporiasis) causes watery, and sometimes explosive, diarrhea. The one-celled parasite that causes cyclospora infection can enter your body when you ingest contaminated food or water. Fresh produce is the culprit in many cases of cyclospora infection. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)