

**PMAC weekly update 10th to 17th June**

1. **Government agencies**: ICPR Changes WTO Notifications; Opening new doors – business programme for Expo 2020; Have your say – AANZFTA upgrade; South East Asia Customised Market Readiness Programme; NZTE and Enterprise Singapore ink 'Partnership for Growth' Arrangement
2. **New Zealand News:**  Acknowledge, Evaluate, Accelerate: the 10th edition of the KPMG Agribusiness Agenda; Kiwifruit smaller but sweeter; New Zealand kiwifruit company Trevelyan's reports environmental gains; $39 million golden kiwi development at Tiniroto; Newly appointed director for Horticulture New Zealand board; Prices for winter veggies cool down in New Zealand; T&G celebrates new season apples & JAZZ™ day in Japan; Radfords extends global reach; Seeka appoints new SeekaFresh general manager; Sea algae research could hold solution to devastating kiwifruit disease; Robotics coming to the aid of New Zealand's asparagus industry; Provincial Growth Fund boost for New Zealand businesses; Māori perspectives on gene editing technologies; $68 million boost announced for Hawke's Bay, water the big winner; Solving the sticky fruit stickers snag; NZ prepares for its avocado congress bid
3. **International news:** Tech firm launches TraceFood; Freshfel's latest Headlines for the period April 2019 to beginning June 2019; Fruit & vegetable aisles: why some plastic should be retained; CSIRO study of food loss; Israeli start-up develops fruit picking drone; Bat-like drones 'could replace insecticides'; Scientists discover gene that could help crops grow faster

***Editors comments***

*Last week KPMG released its Agribusiness agenda at field days . The KPMG agenda is always thought provoking . This years agenda includes a review of how things have changed over the last decade as well as looking forward. Its worth a read.*

*This is the agendas 10th edition and while last years lead message encouraged producers and growers to tell honest stories relating to how products are grown, processed and distributed, to highlight the many positive attributes inherent in the products we grow and deliver to the world. This year the agenda states that organisations need to remain continuously relevant to consumers, develop new capabilities and make bold commitments to thrive in an ever changing environment. In particular they agenda identifies that as we move into the 2020’s, a decade that will be dominated by health and wellness, now is the time to place wellness front and centre in our agri-food story .*

*Four other themes identified in the agenda are particularly relevant to horticulture*

1. *Wellness of communities -It is important that we place more emphasis on the health of New Zealanders if our claims for our high quality food are to be believed internationally we cannot continue to be among the worlds unhealthiest societies . I would suggest while this means education it also means the right incentives from government and cheaper fruit and produce for those who cant currently afford it*
2. *Licence to operate – need I say more .*
3. *Potential impacts of Zero Carbon. To date there has been little public recognition about how this could affect horticulture. While there are the obvious effects on the price of fuel and the implications of the need to balance nutrient loss the agenda points out there is a recognition that land use and farming systems will in some cases have to change. It is possible a significant amount of land will change to horticulture. Have we the systems in place to deal with a lot of new producers and potentially huge increases in supply ?*
4. *Demonstrating that trade with New Zealand is inclusive and beneficial. Trade is being seen as a key contributor to inequality around the world., New Zealand requires as much access to markets as possible thus we need to collectively invest in demonstrating trade with New Zealand is inclusive and beneficial so that our market access is not constrained by protectionism.*
5. **Agency news**



* 1. **ICPR changes**

The ICPR for

* European Union has been updated with changed requirements for pure peat and the need for a wet signature for Spain :
* Russian and the Eurasian Economic Union has been updated with a note that New Zealand is free from *Xanthomonas campestris pv. hyacinthi*. This status has been added as a note in the Russian ICPR under section 3.3.2 Bulbs/tubers/corms/rhizomes commodity class requirements and 4.3.2 Bulbs / tubers / corms / rhizomes commodity specific requirements.:

Learn more: [Importing Countries Phytosanitary Requirements (ICPRs)](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/law-and-policy/requirements/icpr-importing-countries-phytosanitary-requirements/?utm_source=notification-email)

* 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:

* Australia Tomato seeds for sowing
* Canada and USA MRL’s
* Japan Revision of the Standards and Specifications for Foods and Food Additives under the Food Sanitation Act for vegetables

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



* 1. **Opening new doors – business programme for Expo 2020**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifNZTE last week launched its business leveraging programme for Expo 2020 Dubai, a two-year programme to make the most of opportunities tied to the World Fair and the growing markets of the Middle East. [Full article available here](https://www.nzte.govt.nz/about/news/news-and-features/business-programme-will-open-doors-to-expo-2020-opportunities)

* 1. **Have your say – AANZFTA upgrade**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifNegotiations to upgrade the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA are now underway. The upgrade will focus on key trading areas, including rules of origin, Customs procedures, services, e-commerce, investment, competition, government procurement, and trade and sustainable development. MFAT is accepting written submissions on the upgrade until 31 July 2019, so get in touch with your thoughts.

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gif[Find out more](https://mail.nzte.co.nz/mail/link/WCBelAh7SVN01AxiemNDOQ)

* 1. **South East Asia Customised Market Readiness Programme**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifIn partnership with ExportNZ, the Southeast Asia Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence has designed a Market Readiness Programme for businesses across New Zealand. This one-day workshop focusses on manufacturing businesses wanting to grow internationally, and provides insights into the challenges and opportunities Southeast Asia offers. [Register here](https://www.exportnz.org.nz/home/waikato/waikato-events/sea-cape-customised-market-readiness-technology)

* 1. **NZTE and Enterprise Singapore ink 'Partnership for Growth' Arrangement**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifCompanies from both New Zealand and Singapore can now look forward to more opportunities to learn and connect through various activities, such as business missions, business matching and market intelligence support, thanks to the signing of a two-year ‘Partnership for Growth’ Arrangement.[See here](https://www.nzte.govt.nz/about/news/news-and-features/nz-singapore-ink-partnership-for-growth-arrangement)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Primary sector exports continue to soar**

The Ministry for Primary Industries’ Situation and Outlook report for June 2019 was released last week The report forecasts primary industry revenue to reach $45.7 billion for the year to June 2019, slightly above the March 2019 forecast.

For the second straight year of substantial export growth “Horticulture and pasture-based production excelled in most areas, with red meat weights and milk production both high, and kiwifruit production up 25 percent on the 2018 harvest. “Growers are anticipating good demand for New Zealand apples from UK and continental Europe, as well as China, following the market success of new varieties.’’

Mr O’Connor says that over the next year, a focus on higher value products, combined with ongoing favourable exchange rates, is expected to support export revenue growth. You can read the latest Situation and Outlook report for primary industries [here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/economic-intelligence-unit/situation-and-outlook-for-primary-industries/sopi-reports/) [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/primary-sector-exports-continue-soar)

** Commentary**

* 1. **Acknowledge, Evaluate, Accelerate: the 10th edition of the KPMG Agribusiness Agenda**

Last week KPMG released [the 10th edition of the KPMG Agribusiness Agenda; Acknowledge, Evaluate, Accelerate](https://communication.kpmg.co.nz/e/lz0ygcb1xtdmycq/3b6155a6-8c8b-4ad1-be0f-303e744e43b4). The agenda acknowledges the progress that the industry has made over the last decade, evaluates perspectives of industry leaders on where the industry is today and explores changes coming to the sector and what needs to be done to accelerate a more prosperous future for all New Zealanders.

KPMG believes that as we move into the 2020s, a decade that will be dominated by health and wellness, now is the time to place wellness front and centre in our agri-food story if we really want to secure our share of the value we grow.

### ***The food people eat is central to preventative healthcare systems***

New Zealand’s agri-food sector is well positioned to take advantage of opportunities arising, as governments around the world prioritise investment in preventative healthcare. Over the next decade, food will become integral to how health and wellness is managed, with the role of food as a medicine dominating how organisations develop, produce and distribute their products.

A key recommendation made in the report is that the industry needs to take a far more active role in ensuring we feed every New Zealander properly. New Zealand can’t afford to continue to be home to one of the world’s most unhealthy communities if we want to tell the world about the natural, healthy, nutritionally dense food we grow in New Zealand. Having a plan to adequately feed all five million kiwis before the first tonne is exported should be a goal for the industry.

### ***The wellness of our environment, our communities and our economy***

The Agenda suggests that wellness extends beyond just health, with the industry clearly understanding the expectations of the wider community and that the license to operate it is granted is a privilege as opposed to a right. “Industry leaders are more prepared than ever to do the right things because they are the right things to do and recognise that they must place greater focus on listening to the wider community.

### ***The potential impacts of Zero Carbon***

The potential impacts of the Zero Carbon legislation were a popular topic in our conversations, which contributors reflected on as the most confronting change to face the sector since subsidies were removed in the 1980s. Leaders recognise the industry has a key role to play in transitioning to a zero carbon future but it is fair to say everybody is starting their journey from a different place in respect of personal beliefs and actions already taken. There was recognition that land use and farming systems will in some cases have to change. Rapid change will be best achieved through a mechanism that incentivises progress rather than delivering retribution for past actions.

### ***Biosecurity remains top priority***

Biosecurity retained the number one ranking in the annual priorities survey for the ninth consecutive year. As our borders become more open, the likelihood of an incursion from a pest like the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug grows, and leaders highlighted the need to invest ahead of an incursion. MBovis has demonstrated how quickly an incursion can move from being a national, governmental issue to localised and personal issue for those impacted, which highlights how important it is that every organisation has developed risk management plans for biosecurity.

### ***Demonstrating that trade with New Zealand is inclusive and beneficial***

The importance of market access was stressed by many contributors to the Agenda. Trade is being seen as a key contributor to inequality around the world. As a small exporting nation, New Zealand requires as much access to markets as possible thus there is a need to focus on trade as being more than transactional. We need to collectively invest in demonstrating trade with New Zealand is inclusive and beneficial so that our market access is not constrained by protectionism.

### ***The fourth industrial revolution***

Investment into technologies that fuse biological, physical and digital capabilities together to deliver disruptive solutions is transforming the agri-food sector globally. The Global Agrarian Revolution is transforming farming systems, the foods available and how we interact with food. The level of change in the sector is unprecedented and creates major opportunities for New Zealand’s agri-food industry, the mind-set that organisations approach change with will be critical to determining the outcomes they achieve.

To view the full agenda on our website [click here](https://communication.kpmg.co.nz/e/znu2wio3qbyy7fw/3b6155a6-8c8b-4ad1-be0f-303e744e43b4).



* 1. **Kiwifruit smaller but sweeter**

According to global marketer Zespri, this year's kiwifruit crop is a taste record-breaker. Long dry spells and good conditions during the 2018-2019 growing season produced higher dry matter content which has delivered the best tasting fruit ever, said chief executive Dan Mathieson. The flipside is that fruit - both green and gold - will be smaller.

Overseas shoppers may spot the difference but the top quality taste of the crop is expected to bring them back for more so sales volumes shouldn't be impacted, Mathieson said. Also, the smaller the fruit the lower the price, he said. The new selling year had started strongly, following last year's record volume crop of 150 million export trays, up from 122m the previous year. A feature of the new sales year was strong repeat orders, Mathieson said.

Zespri will make a decision later this year on whether to fully commercialise a new red fruit variety, which it had recently trialled in New Zealand and Singapore supermarkets to "an exceptional response". The company would also decide about this time on commercialisation of another new variety, a sweet green fruit. While the red variety has won over consumers with its sweet, ready to eat characteristics, Zespri still faced challenges over how to deal with its export storage because of its fast ripening tendency. The challenge would be more acute for red fruit bound for Europe which involves 5 weeks on a ship, than to Asia with a two week shipping time.

An advantage of both the new red and sweet green varieties is that they are ready early in the annual harvest, which smooths the market transition to the later available Sungold and Hayward green fruit, said Zespri. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9114904/nz-kiwifruit-smaller-but-sweeter/)

* 1. **New Zealand kiwifruit company Trevelyan's reports environmental gains**

Bay of Plenty kiwifruit company Trevelyan's has released a report showing the business has reduced its carbon footprint and is working towards operating as sustainably as possible. The company released its fifth annual Sustainability Report which indicated its carbon dioxide emissions had declined by 58 per cent per tray since 2010. Trevelyan's said it also diverted more than 300 tonnes of waste away from landfill last year and Trevelyan's managing director James Trevelyan said the company reduced the volume of waste going to landfill to 33 tonnes a year. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113381/new-zealand-kiwifruit-company-trevelyan-s-reports-environmental-gains/)

* 1. **$39 million golden kiwi development at Tiniroto**

Bay of Plenty’s Apata Group has started its $39 million development on 76 hectares of land on Tiniroto Road, on the land bought from the Wi Pere Trust. The development will be more than twice the size of any existing kiwifruit operation here and will result in the largest single kiwifruit orchard in Gisborne.

Apata secured the property through a tender process and in February called for investors to enable the property’s transition into a 62.3-canopy-hectare kiwifruit orchard. “Within four weeks the offer was fully subscribed,” said Weston. “When combined with the forecast bank debt required, the total investment in the property by all parties will eventually sit at around $39 million over a three year period.  [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113387/new-zealand-39-million-golden-kiwi-development-at-tiniroto/)

* 1. **Newly appointed director for Horticulture New Zealand board**

Horticulture New Zealand’s Board has appointed Dr Bruce Campbell, of Tai Tokerau Northland, as an appointed director. Dr Campbell is experienced in governance, innovation, talent development and the future development of a wide range of horticulture sectors and was, until 2018, the Chief Operating Officer at Plant & Food Research. He has a particular interest in building partnerships with Māori to create new food businesses and also in growing career pathways to get talented people into horticulture. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113441/newly-appointed-director-for-horticulture-new-zealand-board/)

* 1. **Prices for winter veggies cool down in New Zealand**

According to a report by Stats NZ, winter vegetables were cheaper in May. Broccoli, potatoes, and cabbages all dropped in price that month. In May, broccoli fell 12 percent, potatoes fell 3.0 percent, and cabbages fell 11 percent. “The cooler weather brought cheaper winter vegetables,” consumer prices manager Gael Price said. In the year to May 2019, kumara were 37 percent cheaper. “The average price of kumara was $4.86 per kilo in May, down from $7.77 per kilo a year ago, when prices were unusually high after wet weather led to a shortage,” Ms Price said.

Despite lower prices for winter vegetables, avocados hit a new record high in May. Avocado prices reached $5.73 per 200g, 13 percent higher than a year ago. “Avocado prices fluctuate greatly during the year, with supplies typically available between August and April, and prices typically peaking around May or June,” Ms Price said. Orange prices rose 18 percent in May, reaching a record high of $4.58 per kg, while kiwifruit prices fell 42 percent. Overall, monthly food prices rose in May 2019, up 0.7 percent, and increased 1.7 percent in the year to May 2019. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9114910/prices-for-winter-veggies-cool-down-in-new-zealand/)

* 1. **T&G celebrates new season apples & JAZZ™ day in Japan**

Representatives from Japan’s largest supermarket chain stores celebrated the arrival of New Zealand apples and upcoming JAZZ™ Apple Anniversary Day at a T&G Global event at the New Zealand Embassy in Tokyo last week.

JAZZ™ have proved so popular in Japan that they now have their own day which is celebrated in the country. June 28, known as ‘JAZZ™ Apple Anniversary Day’ in Japan, marks the day that the first container of New Zealand-grown JAZZ™ apples arrived in the country, eight years ago. Since then, the popularity of premium JAZZ™ apples has grown significantly to the point it is now the number one premium imported apple in Japan. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9114751/t-g-celebrates-new-season-apples-jazz-day-in-japan/)

* 1. **Radfords extends global reach**

Leading New Zealand fresh produce software company, Radfords, has been announced as a focus customer with international business development agency, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE). Radfords Chief executive officer Adam Cuming said the collaboration would drive and accelerate Radfords' growth from its traditional New Zealand base to existing and expanding markets including Australia, Europe, the United States and South America during the next five years.

"We've worked with NZTE for several years in a networking capacity. However, after sharing our ambitions for growth, NZTE has brought an intensive focus to provide specific market intelligence of our target markets to match our growth objectives," Cuming said. Understanding different market contexts will inform how we innovate our product to create the right value for that market. A relationship with NZTE is critical to accelerate that understanding."

Cuming said Radfords had "cut its teeth" on New Zealand's kiwifruit industry including deployment of its software products to all of the post-harvest sector that supplies Zespri International Limited's supply chain out of New Zealand, Italy, France, Korea and Japan. Radfords' diversification began 12 years ago with a foray into apples, glasshouse tomatoes, avocados, mushrooms, citrus and, more recently, mangoes, pineapples, onions, squash and even organic chicken. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/produceplus/article/178910/radfords-primed-to-extend-global-reach)

* 1. **Seeka appoints new SeekaFresh general manager**

Verena Cunningham has been appointed General Manager of SeekaFresh,. Ms. Cunningham will lead Seeka's Auckland and Christchurch operations including the marketing and sales of all New Zealand grown produce. As part of her role she will assist the Seeka Chief Executive and Board in leading the development and enactment of the Company’s strategy.  
  
Ms. Cunningham joins Seeka from T&G where she was Head of Strategy New Zealand and begins her new position at Seeka in September, replacing previous General Manager, Ray Hook.  
   
SeekaFresh is a key part of Seeka's retail services operation, marketing local, and imported produce in New Zealand including avocados, bananas, kiwifruit, lemons, melons, mandarins, oranges, pineapple and vegetables and overseeing the export crops not supplied through Zespri. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113407/seeka-appoints-new-seekafresh-general-manager/)

** Bits and pieces**

* 1. **Sea algae research could hold solution to devastating kiwifruit disease**

Two University of Waikato students believe marine algae could hold the key to controlling a disease that has devastated New Zealand's kiwifruit industry.Claire Voogt​ and Taylor Farr are both studying for a Master of Science and are investigating how the natural metabolites from algae can be used to treat pathogenic bacteria, particularly Psa. The pair are this years recipients of the Sir Don Llewellyn Fieldays Postgraduate Scholarship where the $22,500 prize is split between them.

Voogt said the competitive nature of coastal ecosystems have resulted in algal compounds evolving as natural chemical defences, and unlike natural products from land-based sources, terrestrial organisms have not encountered marine chemical defences and are therefore less likely to survive after exposure to them. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/business/113274179/sea-algae-research-could-hold-solution-to-devastating-kiwifruit-disease)

* 1. **Robotics coming to the aid of New Zealand's asparagus industry**

New Zealand’s Waikato University is working on robotic technology that may one day end the labour intensive task of harvesting asparagus. The robot was developed by engineering lecturer Dr Shen Hin Lim and PhD student Matthew Peebles. Lim said they were approached by a Levin-based asparagus grower to create the robot. They then approached Callaghan Innovations for startup funding and started working with Tauranga-based company Robotics Plus to create the machine.

It is powered by a generator and is towed slowly behind a tractor at 0.3 metres per second, using camera sensor technology to 'read' the asparagus stalk, which tells the robot's computer where to go to pick the vegetable. Once picked, it is then transferred to a storage tray. Lim said commercialisation of the machine was still five to 10 years away and he also hopes to eventually make the robot autonomous, removing the need for a tractor. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113942/robotics-coming-to-the-aid-of-new-zealand-s-asparagus-industry/)

* 1. **Provincial Growth Fund boost for New Zealand businesses**

The Provincial Growth Fund grants for two Wairoa businesses are expected to boost job opportunities for road and horticulture workers in the region and provide some hope for Wairoa’s prospects.

This week, the government announced it would provide $355,000 to fund expansion of The Limery( which processes locally grown limes) , as well as provide $60,000 to roading and civil contracting company QRS towards growing employment opportunities and enhancing organisation capability. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9114285/provincial-growth-fund-boost-for-new-zealand-businesses/)

* 1. **Māori perspectives on gene editing technologies**

Researchers are studying the Māori perspectives on the use of gene editing in New Zealand.

Gene editing has recently become a subject of public interest, thanks to its potential use in a range of applications, including improving primary production systems. [The research from Hudson and colleagues](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fbioe.2019.00070/full) looked into public perceptions of this new technology, with a specific Māori focus. The research reviewed literature about Māori views with biotechnology, refreshing this in light of the new gene editing technology.

The outcomes of this pilot study identified that while Māori informants were not categorically opposed to new and emerging gene editing technologies, they suggest a dynamic approach to regulation is required where specific uses, or types of use, are approved on a case-by-case basis. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9114824/new-zealand-maori-perspectives-on-gene-editing-technologies/)

* 1. **$68 million boost announced for Hawke's Bay, water the big winner**

$30.6 million has been allocated to four water security schemes across the Hawke’s Bay from the Provincial Growth Fund, with the projects to be managed by Hawke's Bay Regional Council. The largest chunk is $14.7 million to develop a Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) in Central Hawke's Bay. MAR replenishes aquifer levels by taking surface water during high flows, filtering it and releasing it into aquifers to replenish them. There has also been $12.9 million allocated to investigating small-scale storage options on the Heretaunga Aquifer, which supplies water to Napier and Hastings. The rest of the package includes two research projects to better understand the region's major aquifers, and develop a management plan for freshwater. HBRC Chairman Rex Graham reported that the funding will allow economic growth to continue without costing the environment. Regional Councillor for CHB Debbie Hewitt said there were no easy solutions for the CHB water storage issues, but that the announcement was a tremendous opportunity for the community [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/water/news/article.cfm?c_id=362&objectid=12239013)

* 1. **Solving the sticky fruit stickers snag**

Billions of fruit stickers go into the environment every year and now three 18-year-old tertiary students have an idea of how to solve this. Maggie Peacock, Sarah Wixon and Zoe Rookes have created the Uble, which is a plastic-free, biodegradable, warm water soluble alternative to the plastic fruit sticker. Miss Wixon stated that the warm water-soluble sticker encourages people to wash their fruit and that it is home compostable. The students have revealed that it is made up of an apple by-product and are in the process of getting the idea patented. The idea helped the students win the Hawke’s Bay Young Enterprise Scheme award . [Full article available here](https://farmersweekly.co.nz/section/horticulture/view/solving-the-sticky-fruit-stickers-snag)

* 1. **NZ prepares for its avocado congress bid**

Jen Scoular, CEO of NZ Avocado reports that the company has been preparing its bid to host the World Avocado Congress in 2023. Last year it was held in Colombia and Mrs Scoular reports that hosting the congress would be a big benefit for New Zealand which would bring between 1000 and 1500 avocado experts in the country sharing research, expertise and passion for the fruit. Tourism New Zealand is supportive of the bid. NZ Avocado Market Manager Bevan Jelley and Jen Scoular attended an excellent workshop in Auckland for associations and entities who have already won their bid, or are bidding in the future to host international conferences in New Zealand. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12237816)



1. **International news**

**Comment**

 **Business/ Industry**

* 1. **Tech firm launches TraceFood**

Digital technology company Shamla Tech has developed a new blockchain traceability solution tailored to needs of the global fresh fruit industry. TraceFood's blockchain solution gives all players in the supply chain access to a fruit’s history, shelf life and other related freshness metrics in a second – just by scanning a QR code on its pack, Shamla Tech said. “Once scanned, every detail to do with the fruit, from where it was grown and the fertilizers used to grow it, to the handlers of the fruits throughout the supply chain, is at your fingertips," the spokesman said. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/178957/tracefood)

* 1. **Freshfel's latest Headlines for the period April 2019 to beginning June 2019.**

Freshfel's Headlines number 2 of 2019 can be found [here](https://freshfel.org/freshfel-headlines-3-2019/).   
  
The Headlines gives an overview of the most recent Freshfel activities. These include;

* Freshfel Europe 2019 Annual Event held in London on 5-6 June
* Freshfel Europe 2019 Activity Report published
* Food Quality Working Group
* Procitrus Seminar in Lima, Peru: Freshfel Europe presents EU legislative framework for F&V imports
* Pan-EU promotion meeting co-organised by Freshfel Europe in Paris
* Attends sixth EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste meeting
* Hosts delegation of vegetable traders from the Balkans
* Attends WTO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade in April
* Participates in CDG on Organic
* Finalisation of the EuroMix project
* Update on ‘FV for a Healthy EU’ promotion programme
* Answers to European Commission consultation on agri-food and rural agenda of the Africa-Europe alliance



* 1. **Fruit & vegetable aisles: why some plastic should be retained**

Many people are exasperated by the large amount of packaging that supermarkets use, particularly for fruit and vegetables. Of course, most of these have their own natural protection. Nonetheless, a major reason that supermarkets use so much packaging is to protect food and prevent waste—particularly with fresh food. A 2016 review of studies on food waste found that 88m tonnes of food is wasted every year in the EU—that's 173kg per person and equals about 20% of food produced. Minimising this wastage is crucial for environmental protection, as well as food security.

Simply removing plastic from food packaging is not as sustainable as one might think. There are lots of cases where plastic packaging can be beneficial at reducing waste. But food sellers need to think of ways to reduce and reuse the plastic where possible. To reduce the amount of plastic that is needed, short food supply chains must be developed, as this involves very few intermediaries between where the food is farmed and where it is bought and consumed. It may mean switching to more seasonal diets. Farmers' markets, community-based growers and basket delivery systems help connect consumers to where their food is produced in ways that can also help reduce food packaging and waste.

Until a sustainable packaging alternative is developed, big retailers will continue to rely on plastic to protect food from going to waste. Plastic itself is a very useful material. We need to use it more effectively and more sparingly in some cases but we shouldn't get rid of it altogether.

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9113887/fruit-vegetable-aisles-why-some-plastic-should-be-retained/)

* 1. **CSIRO study of food loss**

CSIRO undertook Australia's largest study of food loss across the horticultural value chain to quantify the amount of human-grade edible food lost throughout the production value chain.

In the Western world, even though significant amounts of food waste occurs during the consumer phase, supply chains are also contributors to food loss inefficiency. Conversely, in South America, South-East Asia and Africa waste predominantly occurs during the production, processing and distribution phases. In total, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that around 1.3 billion tonnes - or one third of food - is lost across supply chains between the farm and fork. Horticultural products are known to be especially susceptible to damage and waste across the value chain. They are the most vulnerable type of food, when compared to grains, meat and seafood.

Though known to be significant, the extent of pre-retail fruit and vegetable losses across the value chain In Australia had never been examined before across the country's regions in detail.  
  
The CSIRO Australian food loss survey sought information on food losses from growers, packers and processors, and identified geographic regions which previously had not been sampled in food loss datasets. The collected survey responses accounted for a total of 13 fruits and 19 vegetables, out of the 59 crops produced commercially in Australia. Loss values in other crops were predicted based on peer-reviewed work to make up a "whole-of-Australia" regional food loss map.

The study found that on a national level, Australia loses at least an estimate 18-22 percent of its fruit and vegetable biomass during the production and processing/packing stages. Losses of up to 626 kilotonnes occur during production, and losses during packing and processing result in up to 830 kilotonnes of food waste. These losses were found to be proportionally similar to those incurred in Europe.

The findings of this work can be used to inform the development of improved logistics, environmentally sustainable, and diversion strategies to minimise waste. CSIRO are also working on developing regional value chain food hubs, where food losses can be diverted and transformed into other higher value food products and/or ingredients. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113043/how-much-food-is-lost-in-the-production-value-chain/)

 **Innovation**

* 1. **Israeli start-up develops fruit picking drone**

Although the automation of the fresh produce sector is in an advanced stage, fruit is still being picked by hand. An Israeli start-up now wants to dispense with labour intensive harvesting by utilising small drones. The drone developed by Tevel Aerobotics Technologies has a grab that picks the fruit and carefully places it in a basket on the ground. Maor says the robot picks most types of fruit without damaging it, The drone flies completely automatically through the orchard and can recognise different varieties of fruit and their ripeness. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113973/israeli-start-up-develops-fruit-picking-drone/)

* 1. **Bat-like drones 'could replace insecticides'**

Flying insects that threaten to damage valuable crops may soon have another thing coming in the form of automated, 'bat-like' drones programmed to mimic their flight patterns and eliminate them.

Following a small-scale trial at a flower nursery in the Dutch province of South Holland last year, a new research project due to take off this month will look at how the deployment of small drones can automate insect control and prevention.

According to those involved, the use of drones to protect production of fruit, vegetables and flowers could eventually contribute to greater sustainability in commercial horticulture, by reducing the need for chemical or organic insecticides and limiting the amount of time and money spent on monitoring their application.

A ten-week trial is set to be piloted by PATS Indoor Drone Solutions – a spin-off of the Delft University of Technology – and has the backing of several Dutch growers. It will focus on the control of Golden twin-spot moth at a test greenhouse planted with gerberas . “The objective of the pilot is not only to measure effectiveness, but also to improve technology. The drones are taught specific flight behaviour similar to the agile flight behaviour of this moth, You can best compare the drones with bats, a natural enemy of flying insects." [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/178952/bat-like-drones-could-replace-insecticides)

* 1. **Scientists discover gene that could help crops grow faster**

Plant scientists at the Universities of Cambridge and Bordeaux have discovered a gene that they hope can be used to widen a nutrient trafficking bottleneck and potentially increase crop yields. Increasing the efficiency of how plants transport sugars, proteins and other organic nutrients between different parts of the plant is one of the approaches that could contribute to this next Green Revolution.

Having an understanding of factors that affect local and long distance transport within a plant could enable plant biotechnologists to breed more productive crops in the future. Ultimately, it might be possible to direct transport of organic nutrients to specific parts of the plant that are harvested (seeds, fruits and storage tubers).

A novel gene Phloem Unloading Modulator (PLM has been identified that affects nutrient trafficking by altering the channels connecting neighbouring plant cells called plasmodesmata. These nanoscale membrane-lined channels traverse the cell wall barrier to link plant cells together and enable the transfer of essential substances. *The balance of this article provides good detail about how this gene operates in the plant* [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9113304/scientists-discover-gene-that-could-help-crops-grow-faster/)

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