

**PMAC weekly update 11th to 18th February**

1. **Government agencies**: Auckland fruit fly find under investigation; New Zealand primary products continue to clear China border as usual; WTO Notifications; Exports essential e-book Perception of Corruption report; Using the New Zealand story
2. **New Zealand News:**  FTA top of mind in Agriculture Minister and EU Commissioner meeting; Exporters expand despite global challenges; New Zealand bids for World Avocado Congress; World Potato Markets’ interesting picture for processors; Potato season looking good across South Canterbury region; Minimum wage affects labour-intensive fruit exporters; Munch'n™ Kiwiberry harvest underway; New Zealand apple industry under threat from climate change; Seasonal labour shortage declared in New Zealand's Hawke's Bay; New Zealand grown' labels; Tropical fruit options brings opportunities to New Zealand growers; Australia’s most threatening plant disease targeted; UK: Researchers rally against *Xylella fastidiosa*; Italy Container load compliance update in combat against stink bugs
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; Patents on classical plant cultivation should not be possible"; FDA issues Final Guidance on Voluntary Food Recalls; UK: Plant health inspection facilities at place of first arrival if there's no Brexit deal; European parliament passes medical marijuana resolution; European parliament passes medical marijuana resolution; Agreement with Singapore set to give a boost to EU-Asia trade; The slow boat to Brexit Oblivion is leaving soon; The most important European markets at a glance; Blockchain for improved distribution, food safety, quality and traceability; Port of Melbourne to upgrade infrastructure; Chinese fruit retail is in the process of expansion into regional markets; Envy apple featured again at New York Fashion Week; PMA Picks: Top Produce Retail Trends and Products; Learnings from the leafy green recall; New technology puts the heat on pests; Organic industry 2019 in Europe and worldwide; Articles on a number of more sustainable packaging and labelling approaches; Crowdfunding for sustainable agri-food; The world's most expensive and extravagant flower bouquet

***Editors Comments***

*Another full week news wise . The big news in New Zealand is the discovery of a single Queensland Fruit Fly. Let’s hope it remains a single. In the biosecurity section there are also reports of pre-emptive work underway in the UK and Australia to tackle Xyella and regulations in force in Italy to prevent the shipping of BMSB. This is the right place to be stopping incursions and its good to see reports about positive steps being taken by other countries.*

*There are two areas I’d like to draw your attention to in the International section. The first is the FDA’s learnings about the Romaine Lettuce E coli scare late last year. The FDA has identified that water used on the property, that was the source of the infected produce, was probably the source of the contamination. As such the FDA comments that neighbouring properties could also have had contaminated product and it won’t positively discount neighbouring properties in such food recalls. I can understand their rationale but can see this could have implications for water management.*

*The other comment I would like to make is about the increasing number of articles over the last few months associated with sustainability and waste management. Since Christmas they have increased significantly with new approaches to packaging dominant. This week there is an article that takes the move to sustainability one step further. From France it reports the retailer Carrefour will support an initiative to help producers move to more sustainable production methods. Surprising in its own right but also interesting is the fact they do not only mention organics but also agroecology.*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **Auckland fruit fly find under investigation** Biosecurity New Zealand is investigating a find of

a single male Queensland fruit fly in a surveillance trap in the Auckland suburb of Devonport. The Queensland fruit fly has been detected 6 times before in northern New Zealand – in Whangarei and in Auckland. Of these detections, only one, in Auckland in 2015, turned out to be a part of a wider breeding population and this was successfully eradicated by Biosecurity New Zealand.

As a precautionary measure, restrictions will be soon be put in place on the movement of fruit and vegetables out of the area. [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/auckland-fruit-fly-find-under-investigation-2/)

A detailed map of the controlled area and a full description of the boundaries and rules concerned is at [biosecurity.govt.nz/fruitfly](https://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/queensland-fruit-fly/) Check out the Queensland fruit fly page for further information and for regular updates. [Queensland fruit fly](https://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/alerts/queensland-fruit-fly/)

* 1. **New Zealand primary products continue to clear China border as usual**

New Zealand's primary products continue to clear the border in China as usual, MPI has not received indication of anything out of the ordinary in China's border clearance procedures for New Zealand products." said Tim Knox Director of Market Access at MPI.

Each month China Customs publishes a list of food import non-compliances that have led to product rejection at the Chinese border. No New Zealand product appeared on the latest December 2018 list. Non-compliances concerning New Zealand products in 2018 were the lowest since monitoring began.

"There are established mechanisms for resolving temporary technical trade issues, which includes working constructively with Chinese authorities and exporters," says Mr Knox. "The overall picture is one of a significant trade relationship working effectively, in both directions." [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/new-zealand-primary-products-continue-to-clear-china-border-as-usual/)

* 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

* Extending consultation period for the PRA for fresh cut flowers and foliage from all countries
* Final group pest risk analysis for mealybugs and the viruses they transmit on fresh fruit, vegetable, cut-flower and foliage imports
* Remaking the Imported Food Control Order

Chile – Plant protection and Food safety

Egypt - Phytosanitary regulations for all imports and exports of plant products

Indonesia – List of Quarantine pests

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



* 1. **Export Essentials e-book**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifNZTE has made available an export essentials guide that will give a .quick picture of what you need to think about for success in international markets.  [Download the pdf here](C://Users/Helen/AppData/Local/Temp/NZTE%20Export%20Essentials%20Guide%20eBook.pdf) Want to learn more? Check out our [upcoming workshops](https://mail.nzte.co.nz/forms/link/IJpvUlzgZLXe_GOLtlJiFg) to find one near you.

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gif

* 1. **Perception of Corruption report**

The [Corruption Perceptions Index](https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018) (TI-CPI) was recently released by Berlin based Transparency International and has New Zealand coming in second after Denmark. New Zealand is followed by Finland, Switzerland, Norway and Singapore (in that order) The TI-CPI measures comparative levels of corruption as perceived by those who have dealings with governments at any level. China and the United States, have both fallen to new lows.

Ranking 2nd certainly doesn’t mean New Zealand is corruption free but it does give us a valuable benchmark and more importantly, a sense of obligation and commitment to maintain this position.

Last week a report was also received on New Zealand’s performance on the Country Reputation Index. In order of reputation New Zealand came fifth Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Norway , New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Japan, Denmark and the Netherlands

New Zealand maintained its position and perceptions of New Zealand have been on the improve over the past four years. The reputation of a country has a direct impact on it’s ability to attract people, talent, investment, and open doors for exporters. It also opens doors and support for New Zealand to influence and impact environmental, societal, and human progress domestically and globally.

Unfortunately, we rank only 16th on one of the three dimension’s in this report. ‘Advanced Economy’ – which is about average according to RepTrak. Perceptions in this area have been consistent over the past seven years. We simply don’t have that many well-known brands, we’re not seen as a particularly important contributor to global culture, we’re not perceived as having high quality products & services, nor are we considered technologically advanced. [Full article available here](https://www.nzstory.govt.nz/blog/perception-or-reality/?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=eNewsletter&utm_campaign=February&utm_content=Perception%20or%20Reality%20-%20CTA)

* 1. **Using the New Zealand story**

A three hour, practical hands-on workshop is available to help you with your unique New Zealand Story. Run by experienced coaches it will help you to craft your own story to drive internataional sales. Two workshop options are available. 9:00am - 12:00pm or 1:30 - 4:30pm GridAKL, (in the John Lysaght building), 101 Pakenham Street Auckland [Register here](https://www.nzstory.govt.nz/resource/workshops/?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=eNewsletter&utm_campaign=February&utm_content=Workshops%20-%20Heading)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **FTA top of mind in Agriculture Minister and EU Commissioner meeting**

Commissioner Hogan was in New Zealand last week to learn about our agriculture production systems. Minister O’Connor and Commissioner Hogan discussed a number of matters, including negotiations towards a New Zealand-EU FTA in the area of agriculture, and New Zealand’s concerns about the EU and the UK’s approach to post-Brexit Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs).

Mr Hogan also met with the Primary Production Select Committee and members of the agriculture and horticulture industries, including a dairy farm visit and a horticulture field trip in Hawke’s Bay..

[Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/free-trade-agreement-top-mind-agriculture-minister-and-eu-commissioner-meeting)

* 1. **Exporters expand despite global challenges**

New Zealand’s exporters are signing new deals and improving the nation’s prosperity despite many global headwinds, Minister for Trade and Export Growth and Economic Development David Parker said today.  Commenting on the Government’s international business development agency, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE), as it conducted its annual report to a parliamentary Select Committee, David Parker said a co-ordinated approach to developing trade was working.

Highlights from NZTE’s annual report included:

Of the 12,000 exporters in NZ, 5500 are customers of NZTE including a high-focus portfolio of 700 companies;

* Those 700 companies grew their international revenue by around $3.5 billion, rising 9.2 per cent more than the benchmark group of exporters.
* The annual value of new trade deals was $1.7 billion, compared to a target of $1.5 billion;
* Four international regions increased the value of export deals year on year,
* NZTE has identified huge potential in the Māori economy
* NZTE was involved in 57 investment deals worth $800 million.

A key focus for NZTE was the development of digital services for customers and an extension of services for small and medium enterprises. NZTE’s 2017/18 annual report can be found [here](https://www.nzte.govt.nz/about?data-accordion-link=Publications).

[Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/exporters-expand-despite-global-challenges)



* 1. **New Zealand bids for World Avocado Congress**

New Zealand Avocado will present a bid to host the 2023 World Avocado Congress (WAC) event in New Zealand when they attend the forthcoming WAC in Columbia this September. Held every four years in different countries, the World Avocado Congress would take place over four days, bringing over 2,000 of the brightest minds in avocados including growers, researchers, marketers, tech innovators and investors from around the world to New Zealand. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9070694/new-zealand-bids-for-world-avocado-congress/)

* 1. **World Potato Markets’ interesting picture for processors**

China has been steadily increasing its potato imports since 2012 and 2018 was a record year with over 190,000 tons over their border.  “New Zealand’s early year sales to China this year have helped boost its exports of processed potatoes, making 2018 its second best year on record. 2018’s total of 72 681 tons was the first time New Zealand had hit the 70 000 tons mark since 2011 and is getting close to 2007’s record sales of 76 386.

The sales of just over 5 000 tons to China in January and February have meant that China has become New Zealand’s second largest export market. December saw China buy another 60 tons and exporters will be keeping their fingers crossed that the same success can be repeated this year.

New Zealand’s biggest export market, Australia, recorded a good month in December with sales up from November’s 2 663 to 4 119 tons in time for the holiday season. A 12% improvement over 2017  
  
Better news for New Zealand exporters has also emerged from the Philippines where home processors are struggling to make a profit using imports of raw material. Sales for the year have risen by 53%. Relations also appear to have improved again with Malaysia. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9070864/new-zealand-world-potato-markets-interesting-picture-for-processors/)

* 1. **Potato season looking good across South Canterbury region**

The early potato harvests are looking good for New Zealand’s South Canterbury. Heavy rain pre-Christmas resulted in some Black Leg and Powdery Scab in crops. However, this has not proved a problem in Canterbury where between 50% and 60% of the national crop is grown (most of that in South Canterbury).

An outbreak of the mop-top virus (PMTV) in potato tubers in both South and Mid Canterbury last year is still being monitored. “The majority of paddocks that have tested positive for the virus are in Mid-Canterbury region. Potatoes NZ is continuing to work with Biosecurity New Zealand on the response, to understand the spread and look at how industry can manage to minimise the impacts of the virus long-term,” The affected potatoes are from the Innovator variety, which are only used for potato chips. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071872/nz-potato-season-looking-good-across-south-canterbury-region/)

* 1. **Minimum wage affects labour-intensive fruit exporters**

For some NZ orchards, fruit may be left on trees and businesses face closure as steep rises in the minimum wage hit labour-intensive industries such as horticulture. Many exporters were facing higher costs due to employment law changes and the minimum wage lifting to $17.70 an hour on April 1, an increase of $1.20, a survey of 400 exporters has found businesses with 75 to 120 staff said the minimum wage increase would add an extra $120,000 to $800,000 to wage costs a year.

The Government's promise to increase the minimum wage to $20 an hour by 2021 will take it to just below the current living wage of $20.55 – the equivalent of $42,744 for a 40-hour week.

Michael Franks, chief executive of kiwifruit grower Seeka, said it employed up to 4000 people during peak season, when its packhouses ran 22 hours a day, six days a week. Seeka was looking to further automate packhouses. "We can't get enough New Zealanders to do the work and we need to beat the inflationary effect of wage increases," Franks said. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071395/new-zealand-minimum-wage-affects-labour-intensive-fruit-exporters/)

* 1. **Munch'n™ Kiwiberry harvest underway**

Freshmax are underway harvesting the first of their premium kiwiberry – this is significantly earlier than previous seasons and they are feeling positive about an outstanding season ahead. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9072261/nz-munch-n-kiwiberry-harvest-underway/)

* 1. **New Zealand apple industry under threat from climate change**

Climate change will threaten New Zealand's ability to grow apples which has prompted scientists to start developing new hot climate varieties. The qualities that make New Zealand apples like Jazz and Envy successful on the world stage are a result of the country's temperate climate, and require cold nights and warm days. Fruit produced in hot climates also don't store as well, affecting their ability to be exported.

Plant & Food Research has teamed up with IRTA, its equivalent in Catalonia, Spain, to establish a hot climate breeding programme. T&G Global will commercialise these new hot climate varieties in New Zealand and overseas. As well as safeguarding New Zealand's ability to grow apples in the future, it's hoped some of these new varieties expand the range able to be grown in more marginal regions like Central Otago, or open up new regions entirely[. Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/110420710/new-zealand-apple-industry-under-threat-from-climate-change)

* 1. **Seasonal labour shortage declared in New Zealand's Hawke's Bay**

The Ministry of Social Development has declared a seasonal labour shortage in Hawke's Bay. This means that people on visitor visas can now apply for a variation of conditions, which will enable them to work on orchards and vineyards in the region. The shortage is for a six-week period between 25 February and 5 April 2019, and came in response to discussions with top fruit leaders, industry experts, and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

Forecasts expect the peak harvest season for the Hawke's Bay industry may run until around mid-May 2019 and there is currently a worker shortage of about 300 to 400 people. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12204189)

* 1. **New Zealand grown' labels**

"New Zealand Grown" labels, indicating locally grown produce will in the next few months be rolled out on product on the supermarket shelves. The green labels, introduced by the membership-based Buy NZ Made campaign, are alternative stickers to the already existing NZ Made stickers, designed to be used by produce resellers and growers. The expected strong demand from horticulture, agriculture and primary producers. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12203665)

* 1. **Tropical fruit options brings opportunities to New Zealand growers**

Bananas, so often associated with warm tropical climates on the equator may prove to be another cropping opportunity for enterprising horticulturalists from Northland to Gisborne. Farming on a 40ha property near Parua Bay on Northland’s east coast near Whangarei Hugh Rose, head of Tropical Fruit Growers of NZ has a veritable fruit bowl of tropical produce growing. Fruit grown on the property ranges from pineapples to bananas, dragon fruit, pawpaw and sugar cane.  [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9072710/tropical-fruit-options-brings-opportunities-to-new-zealand-growers/)

 **Biosecurity**

* 1. **Australia’s most threatening plant disease targeted**

Australia will be better prepared for plant disease outbreaks with the appointment of a national coordinator to lead a three-year program to improve readiness for the potential incursion of the devastating Xylella fastidiosa. The role is a joint initiative between Wine Australia and Hort Innovation through the Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI) to coordinate research and emergency response activities to improve Australia’s preparedness. While Australia is currently free of Xylella, the disease has been catastrophic overseas infecting more than 200 million citrus trees in Brazil, destroying 1 million olive trees in Italy. [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9070825/australia-s-most-threatening-plant-disease-targeted/)

* 1. **UK: Researchers rally against *Xylella fastidiosa***

A major research programme focussing on building UK resilience to the bacterial plant pathogen *Xylella fastidiosa, met* for the first time this week. Dr Gerard Clover took up the post as Impact and Engagement Manager based at the John Innes Centre for the BRIGIT consortium. Dr Clover’s role will be to help develop an evidence-based policy and best practice framework for responding to the threat of the plant pathogen, reflecting the input of a wide range of industrial, policy and scientific stakeholders. The consortium brought together ten leading UK research organisations in a £4.85m programme to improve methods of diagnosis and detection of Xylella, to identify factors that could lead to its spread and to mitigate the risk of the pathogen to the UK. The first meeting of the whole consortium took place in London on the 6th February 2019.

The consortium will collaborate with international scientists and organizations, including the European Union-funded XF-Actors research project to improve prevention, early detection and control of *Xylella fastidiosa*.  [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9070818/uk-researchers-rally-against-xylella-fastidiosa/)

* 1. **Italy Container load compliance update in combat against stink bugs**

Following the discovery of stink bugs found in containers inspected in Australia last year, the Italian Fumigation Association has decided to impose more stringent loading requirements. VISA Global Logistics National Manager, Sam Curro, said all future consignments must be loaded with enough vacant space and separation between items to allow even distribution of hot air throughout the container and raise the core temperature of the consignment as follows: the consignment must be loaded off the floor of the container to provide free air space under the goods and to prevent cooling influences from the ground. Also, the consignment must be loaded with at least 30 cm of free air space between the goods and the container roof. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071867/italy-container-load-compliance-update-in-combat-against-stink-bugs/)



1. **International news**

**Comment**

* 1. **GAIN reports**

Gain reports are from the “Global Agricultural Information Network” and are produced by the USDA. They are designed to provide timely information on the economy, products and issues in foreign countries that are likely to have an impact on United States agricultural production and trade. The information in them is written for USA exporters but the majority is equally relevant to New Zealand. With regard to import regulations for a particular market New Zealand exporters should first check the countries ICPR on MPI’s web site. These are collated specifically for New Zealand product. However the Gain reports often provide additional information that is useful e.g. on grading and labelling, economic profiles. This week see:

1. **Argentina : Lemons, Fresh, Oranges, Fresh, Tangerines/Mandarins, Fresh Lemon, Orange and Tangerine** For MY 2018/2019, [Citrus Annual\_Buenos Aires\_Argentina\_2-11-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Citrus%20Annual_Buenos%20Aires_Argentina_2-11-2019.pdf)
2. **Belgium Annual Country Report** [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_USEU Brussels\_Belgium-Luxembourg\_2-11-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_USEU%20Brussels_Belgium-Luxembourg_2-11-2019.pdf)
3. **Brazil Export Certificate Report** This report identifies Brazil’s import requirements for foreign export certificates. An export certificate matrix and outline are included. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Brasilia\_Brazil\_2-13-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Brasilia_Brazil_2-13-2019.pdf)
4. **EU FAIRS Export Certificate Report**  This guide provides an overview of export health certificates needed for exporting plants, animals, foods and other animal origin products to the European Union.  [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Brussels USEU\_EU-28\_2-11-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Brussels%20USEU_EU-28_2-11-2019.pdf)
5. **EU FAIRS Annual Country Report** This report provides an overview of EU food and feed legislation currently in force. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Brussels USEU\_EU-28\_2-12-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Brussels%20USEU_EU-28_2-12-2019.pdf)
6. **France Senator Didier Guillaume named as the new Minister of Agriculture** Minister Guillaume has strong connections to organic agriculture,. [Senator Didier Guillaume named as the new Minister of Agriculture \_Paris\_France\_11-02-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Senator%20Didier%20Guillaume%20named%20as%20the%20new%20Minister%20of%20Agriculture%20_Paris_France_11-02-2019.pdf)
7. **French Farm and Food Bill aims at Limiting Non -EU Imports** France’s recently passed farm and food bill contains a provision that prohibits the imports of agricultural and food products produced with pesticides, herbicides, …  [French Farm and Food Bill aims at Limiting Non -EU Imports\_Paris\_France\_20-11-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/French%20Farm%20and%20Food%20Bill%20aims%20at%20Limiting%20Non%20-EU%20Imports_Paris_France_20-11-2018.pdf)
8. **U.S. Organic Food Exporters Set to Double Sales to EU** [U.S. Organic Food Exporters Set to Double Sales to EU\_Berlin\_EU-28\_2-11-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/U.S.%20Organic%20Food%20Exporters%20Set%20to%20Double%20Sales%20to%20EU_Berlin_EU-28_2-11-2019.pdf)
9. **Japan 2018 FAIRS Export Certificate Report|** [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Tokyo\_Japan\_12-20-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Tokyo_Japan_12-20-2018.pdf)
10. **Japan 2018 FAIRS Annual Country Report** This report is an overview and update of Japan’s general legal and technical requirements for food and agricultural imports.   [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Tokyo\_Japan\_2-5-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Tokyo_Japan_2-5-2019.pdf)
11. **Malaysia Annual 2018|Exporter Guide** Malaysia’s multi-billion dollar food industry is driven by an expanding economy, [Exporter Guide\_Kuala Lumpur\_Malaysia\_1-30-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide_Kuala%20Lumpur_Malaysia_1-30-2019.pdf)
12. **The Netherlands** The exporter guide provides an economic and market overview, demographic trends and practical tips to U.S. exporters on how to conduct business in the Netherlands.  [Exporter Guide\_The Hague\_Netherlands\_2-13-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide_The%20Hague_Netherlands_2-13-2019.pdf)
13. **Philippines Annual Country Report**This report outlines Philippine government requirements for the importation of food and agricultural products. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Manila\_Philippines\_12-11-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Manila_Philippines_12-11-2018.pdf)
14. **Philippines Export Certificate Report** This report outlines Philippine government requirements for the importation of food and agricultural products[Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Manila\_Philippines\_12-12-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Manila_Philippines_12-12-2018.pdf)
15. **Portugal Strengthens Cooperation with China and Secures new Access** [Portugal Strengthens Cooperation with China and Secures new Access t\_Madrid\_Spain\_1-18-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Portugal%20Strengthens%20Cooperation%20with%20China%20and%20Secures%20new%20Access%20t_Madrid_Spain_1-18-2019.pdf)
16. **Russian Federation Annual Country Report** [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Moscow\_Russian Federation\_2-13-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Moscow_Russian%20Federation_2-13-2019.pdf)
17. **Vietnam MARD Renews HS Codes for Goods subject to Import Inspection**   Specifically, this Circular provides HS codes for all import and export goods subject to MARD’s specialized inspection procedure prior to customs clearance, [MARD Renews HS Codes for Goods subject to Import Inspection\_Hanoi\_Vietnam\_2-12-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/MARD%20Renews%20HS%20Codes%20for%20Goods%20subject%20to%20Import%20Inspection_Hanoi_Vietnam_2-12-2019.pdf)

 **Regulatory**

* 1. **Patents on classical plant cultivation should not be possible"**

A ruling of the Technische Kamer van Beroep of the European Patent Office of December 5 2018, seems to have opened the door to patents on vegetables from classical cultivation. The ruling does lead to important plant properties possibly being patented, which would impair access to this property - if these would lead to the granting of patents for products of essential biological processes ."

[Read the entire parliamentary letter here.](https://agfstorage.blob.core.windows.net/misc/GN_nl/2019/01/29/brief.pdf) [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9067736/patents-on-classical-plant-cultivation-should-not-be-possible/)

* 1. **FDA issues Final Guidance on Voluntary Food Recalls**

Last week , the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced new plans, via the issuing of final guidance, for how the agency will issue public warnings about voluntary recalls.

The guidance shed light on how companies can determine whether or not they should issue a public warning about a voluntary recall. It also describes the general timeframe for companies to issue such a warning, discusses what information should be included in a public warning, and describes situations where the FDA may take action [Read the full announcement here](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/02/08/2019-01603/public-warning-and-notification-of-recalls-guidance-for-industry-and-fda-staff-availability). [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9070875/fda-issues-final-guidance-on-voluntary-food-recalls/)

* 1. **UK: Plant health inspection facilities at place of first arrival if there's no Brexit deal**

A recently updated guide from the UK Government details how facilities for plant health controlled commodities imported into England and Wales from non-EU countries via roll on roll off terminals can get designation if the UK leaves the EU with no deal.

The guide explains:

* how to request approval for your site to operate as a Place of First Arrival (PoFA)
* how to operate your PoFA site
* the site requirements for a PoFA
* plant health site inspections and enforcement

The manual relates to the approval and operation of facilities designated as Places of First Arrival (PoFA) for plant health controlled commodities imported into England and Wales from non-EU countries via roll on roll off (RoRo) terminals in a no-deal scenario. [Access the guide here.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approval-and-operation-of-plant-health-inspection-facilities-at-place-of-first-arrival)

[Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9071866/uk-plant-health-inspection-facilities-at-place-of-first-arrival-if-there-s-no-brexit-deal/)

* 1. **European parliament passes medical marijuana resolution**

The European Parliament is calling for an EU-wide policy for medical cannabis and properly funded scientific research. On 13 February, members of the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9072235/european-parliament-passes-medical-marijuana-resolution/)

* 1. **Trump might extend deadline for deal with China**

Last week, Chinese and US officials held high-level talks aimed at halting their trade war. US officials previously said March 1 was a hard deadline for achieving a deal to avert further tariffs.

"If we're close to a deal where we think we can make a real deal and it's going to get done, I could  see myself letting that slide for a little while," Mr Trump said referring to the March 1 deadline. "But generally speaking, I'm not inclined to do that." [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071929/trump-might-extend-deadline-for-deal-with-china/)

* 1. **Agreement with Singapore set to give a boost to EU-Asia trade**

The trade and investment agreements between the EU and Singapore last week received the approval of the European Parliament. Under the trade agreement, Singapore will remove all remaining tariffs on EU products and will commit to keep unchanged the current duty-free access for all other EU products. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9072249/agreement-with-singapore-set-to-give-a-boost-to-eu-asia-trade/)

 **Business/ Industry**

* 1. **The slow boat to Brexit Oblivion is leaving soon**

With shipping times to Asia as long as six weeks, companies are preparing to send goods without knowing exactly what will happen to them. The problem for British exporters is that the U.K. is yet to roll over the majority of the beneficial trade terms around the globe it gets through EU membership. That means goods being readied for dispatch that take as long as six weeks to reach destinations in Asia could end up sat in quarantine or face disputes over who pays any new customs duties.

Deals between the EU and other countries cover more than 11 percent of Britain’s trade. Liam Fox, the minister in charge of international trade, said last  month that the major deals would be rolled over before March 29, though others wouldn’t. Joe & Seph’s, a gourmet popcorn producer in London, has started air freighting its goods to markets such as Hong Kong and Singapore instead of sending them by sea, even though it costs more than double per shipment. The company’s co-foundersiad “My relationship with my customers is the most important thing. The uncertainty is a nightmare.’’

[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9070960/the-slow-boat-to-brexit-oblivion-is-leaving-soon/)

* 1. **The most important European markets at a glance**

The 2019 European Statistics Handbook, which can be downloaded from the FRUIT LOGISTICA website, provides a comprehensive overview of the most important European produce trading nations. Along with details on production volumes and information for import and export, the handbook outlines the unique characteristics and trends in specific markets.

The European fruit harvest in 2018 increased by around 9% over the previous year. While vegetable harvests in the EU declined by around 7% with significant differences for individual products. There was a significant decrease in outdoor vegetables, including onions, carrots and potatoes. On the other hand, there was an increase in zucchini and other varieties that grow in hot climates. Production in weather-independent greenhouses also increased significantly. [Full article available here](https://www.producereport.com/article/most-important-european-markets-glance-fruit-logistica-european-statistics-handbook-2019)

* 1. **Blockchain for improved distribution, food safety, quality and traceability**

With the passage of the Food Safety and Modernization Act (FSMA) food distribution is increasingly complex. Given the types of food safety hazards depicted as global food hazards over the past 10 years, food shippers, carriers, and receivers have been placed in the food safety bull’s eye. Food safety supply chain controls, preventive controls, and transportation rules provide a focus that leaves logistics in an unenviable position. No company will escape blame due to the range of shared liability established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rules.

With many supplier-customer relationships now requiring access to food safety data and with a growing number of companies moving to blockchain distributed ledger systems, the stage is set for combining food safety data (throughout the entire food supply chain) with a financial and legal (chain-of-custody) trail that moves vicarious liability into the forefront. By integrating financial, traceability, and food safety data into a single blockchain system, looking for probable causes based on calculable outbreak risk levels allows companies to quickly track back to recall origins.

The potential for consumer and company financial protection is enormous. Indeed, major players are already in the game: IBM, Walmart, Port of Rotterdam, Kroger, Unilever, Nestle, Dole, McCormick and Company, McLane Company, Driscoll, Tyson Foods, Golden State Foods, and even the government of Haiti are in play. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9070893/blockchain-for-improved-distribution-food-safety-quality-and-traceability)

* 1. **Port of Melbourne to upgrade infrastructure**

The Port of Melbourne has announced it is currently facilitating the arrival of vital equipment for important infrastructure projects. Once completed, the West Gate Tunnel Project will be Melbourne’s alternative to the West Gate Bridge acting as a vital link for freight into the Port of Melbourne and will remove trucks from local roads.  [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071878/port-of-melbourne-to-upgrade-infrastructure/)

 **China**

* 1. **Chinese fruit retail is in the process of expansion into regional markets**

The volume of fruit imported into China, and the volume of fruit produced in China, have both increased year on year in the last 5-10 years. For some types of fruit the price increase exceeds 100% per year. However, it follows that the ability of markets in some areas to absorb this increased supply volume has not kept up with the growth in imports and the production of fruit. This development signifies to traders that market competition is about to get more intense and this in turn means that the profit margins will shrink.

Wholesale fruit market Take 2018 as an example, most people in the fruit industry will say that this was a difficult year. The overall fruit market was in depression and sales conditions were chaotic. In many areas an abundant harvest was swiftly followed by a price drop. Losses are severe, whether for farmers or fruit traders. Is this only the result of growing production volume, a situation where supply exceeds demand? Or is it perhaps because retail strategy and market supply structures do not match?

*Lower tier markets* The number of wholesale fruit markets rapidly grew to better satisfy the consumer demand in first- and second-tier cities in recent years. The difference in price between most first-tier wholesale markets is minimal and there is no more room for profit. Third and fourth-tier cities, however, see the rapid rise of new wholesale markets right now. There is still great potential in market development. But of course, business opportunities and market competition exist side by side in this industry. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071608/chinese-fruit-retail-is-in-the-process-of-expansion-into-regional-markets/)

 **Marketing**

* 1. **Envy apple featured again at New York Fashion Week**

Making another appearance at New York Fashion Week (NYFW) last weekend, this time Envy™ apples created excitement through a partnership with Christian Siriano, a young designer from Project Runway. Guests of Siriano’s AW19 Runway Show and after party enjoyed an Envy™ apple tasting bar, signature Envy™ cocktail and other tasty treats as Siriano unveiled his latest collection.

While the apple took the spotlight on the catwalk, the apple is also doing well at retail, according to the marketers, claiming a 40 percent increase in year-over-year dollar sales as of December 2018. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071689/envy-apple-featured-again-at-new-york-fashion-week/)

* 1. **PMA Picks: Top Produce Retail Trends and Products**

The following are PMA’s 2018 fresh produce trends and some examples of the products that companies have created in response to those trends.

1. *The Mini Fresh Produce Craze Continues* There are many possible reasons why mini fruits and vegetables are a hit with US consumers. Obviously snacking and convenience are a big factor (see below), and snacking in particular is often emphasized on mini-produce packaging. The Rockit brand of apples is a club variety originally commercialized in New Zealand, where it was marketed as the world's smallest apple. It's already had a lot of success in Asian markets.
2. *Fresh Produce Keeps Growing More Colourful* Novel colours and shapes of produce are eye-catching on the shelf. Multi-coloured tomatoes have been especially popular .
3. *Snacking and convenience are at the heart of more and more products*
4. *People are busy.* They want things now. Companies are constantly experimenting with products that can be sold in or adjacent to the fresh produce section that will save consumers' time and energy. As part of the trend toward convenience and snacking, we noticed more and more instances this year of different types of produce being combined into one package.
5. *Living herbs for more freshness*
6. *Packaging:* Top-seal, stackable and sustainable As more and more produce is being sold pre-packaged, the industry is looking for ways to make packaging more innovative and more sustainable. Top-seal packaging is popular, as are their formats that are easier for consumers to stack inside of their refrigerators. [Full article available here](https://www.producereport.com/article/our-picks-top-produce-retail-trends-products-pma-fresh-summit)

 **Food safety**

* 1. **Learnings from the leafy green recall**

The FDA in regard to their investigation of November '18 outbreak of E. coli in romaine lettuce has stated that "FDA public messages will continue to include farms not responsible for E.coli contamination"

The traceback investigation identified multiple farms that may have been implicated in this outbreak. However investigators found one positive match to the outbreak strain in the sediment of an on-farm water reservoir, used for irrigation. Even though the outbreak was declared over, the FDA’s investigation continued. The FDA wanted to understand the factors that allowed this outbreak to happen and provide information to help prevent similar outbreaks from occurring again.

In the case of the FDA believes that the most likely reason was from the use of water from a reservoir as agricultural water. The water from the reservoir doesn’t explain how lettuce grown on other ranches or farms identified by traceback may have been contaminated. *It was noted that the use of a sanitiser in the irrigation water on this farm may not have been used correctly.*

*However,* it’s possible that the outbreak strain may have been present in the on-farm water reservoir for some months or even years before the investigation team collected the positive sample. It is also possible that the outbreak strain may have been repeatedly introduced into the reservoir from an unknown source. *Perhaps from wild animal activity or grazing land next door.*

To help ensure that leafy greens are safe and mitigate problems that might occur, it’s important to understand where leafy greens are grown and harvested and not simply the location of the business entity that shipped or processed the produce. It’s also important to be able to determine which farms and growing regions are responsible for supplying the contaminated product and the time frame when product was supplied. This information is crucial to the development of accurate public health messages to both protect consumers from exposure and empower retailers and consumers to take appropriate actions.

. Our first goal is working with federal, state and industry partners on implementing best practices to try and prevent these outbreaks in the first place. But when outbreaks occur, without the ability to identify the growing region or specific suppliers of suspected shipments, the public messages issued by the FDA and other public health partners during recalls or outbreaks will continue to be -- out of necessity -- broad and likely to include farms and growing regions that may not be responsible for the contamination. We know more needs to be done and there is a shared sense of urgency around these efforts.

We’ll continue to work with industry to explore better ways to assure quick, accurate and easy access to key traceability information. Advancing the safety of fresh leafy greens requires ongoing collaboration. We urge all segments of this industry, from farm to table, and our government partners to review the findings of our investigation and make necessary changes. We recognize and appreciate the efforts that the leafy greens industry has taken to date. But together, we also know more must be done on all fronts to help prevent future foodborne illness outbreaks. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9072747/fda-public-messages-will-continue-to-include-farms-not-responsible-for-e-coli-contamination/)



* 1. **New technology puts the heat on pests**

Relying on heat to battle pests. That’s the concept of a new machine designed for produce crops which will allow growers to reduce or even eliminate chemicals in the fight against pests and insects.

“It’s a broad-scale non-residue methodology for treating insects and fungal problems. There’s a growing awareness about using heat like this. The developer, who says that more technology information and scientific studies are available upon request, adds that there are also other benefits from the heat treatment. These include higher phenol and antioxidant levels, which are a result of the heat activating the natural self defence system of plants. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9071263/new-technology-puts-the-heat-on-pests/)

* 1. **Organic industry 2019 in Europe and worldwide**

*A fact filled article which deals principally with the German market Two of the most telling facts are* "In 2018, almost five farmers turned to organic farming every day," However despite the numerous switches to organic and the growing organic acreage, the number of farms in 2018 fell by about 3,100 to 266,690 (compared to 2017, the number of farms fell by about 7,600 to 267,800 farms).[Full article available here](he%20organic%20industry%202019%20in%20Europe%20and%20worldwide)

* 1. **Articles on a number of more sustainable packaging and labelling approaches**

# *Edible biomaterial coating for fresh produce to reduce food waste* An ecological packaging is a must on the fruit and vegetable market"A ready-to-use mat made from wood fibers for crate bottoms that has been developed in France is described in this article . [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9069617/an-ecological-packaging-is-a-must-on-the-fruit-and-vegetable-market/)

***Edible biomaterial coating to reduce food waste*** A company with a recently launched innovation that is designed to prevent food waste has an edible coating derived from silk that can be applied on any commodity to decrease the rate of oxidation and ripening, thus preventing decay and lengthening shelf life. This coating can be used on everything from avocados and lettuce to fish and meat," They are looking to commercial availability starting in early 2020. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9070890/edible-biomaterial-coating-for-fresh-produce-to-reduce-food-waste/)

# *Malaysian company uses stickers to keep fruits fresh*er A Malaysian company called Stixfresh has developed a sticker that will extend the shelf life of fruits by 14 days. The stickers are made with 100% organic materials. It comprises of sodium chloride and beeswax. The idea of the sticker is to reduce the ripening process by removing Ethylene, the ripening hormone found in fruits. It also inhibits the development of mould on fruits. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9072298/malaysian-company-uses-stickers-to-keep-fruits-fresh/)

* 1. **Crowdfunding for sustainable agri-food**

French retailer Carrefour has announced plans to back the launch of crowdfunding platform MiiMOSA. MiiMOSA aims to provide financial support for the transition to more sustainable agricultural systems such as agroecology and organic farming methods. MiiMOSA helps with the transition between systems and the support of companies such as Danone and Carrefour signify a ‘’paradigm shift’’ in funding models for agri-food businesses according to Florian Breton, MiiMOSA’s founder. In a separate announcement, Carrefour has announced that it will only stock seasonal produce in its Bio stores[. Full article available here](https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2019/02/07/Crowdfunding-for-sustainable-agri-food-Carrefour-joins-Danone-backing-MiiMOSA-Transition)

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* 1. **The world's most expensive and extravagant flower bouquet**

A rose preserved in 24-carat gold, two diamonds, and is glittered with diamond dust - those are the ingredients of what may well be the world's most expensive bouquet. Endura Roses, a shop focusing on couture arrangements in the U.K., was selling a Valentines day bouquet this years for $26,000. [Read more at House Beautiful (Elizabeth Gulino)](https://www.housebeautiful.com/entertaining/flower-arrangements/a26345696/most-expensive-flower-bouquet-diamonds/)

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