

**PMAC weekly update 25th March to 1st April February**

1. **Government agencies**: Public asked to help with beetle surveillance; WTO Notifications; Mandatory Breach Reporting – what does it mean for your business?; Cracking Europe - webinar series through May 2019; NZCTA - China Business Awards 2019.
2. **New Zealand News:**  Net profit increases at EastPack; First charter ship carrying Zespri Kiwifruit sets sail for China and Japan; Zespri China sales still growing; T&G in apple robot first; New Zealand Research Organization and Yunnan to create "green food brand"; Weather impacts South Canterbury orchard fruit size - not quantity; Novel plant architectures and canopy management techniques bear fruit.
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; EU preparations for Brexit; "End the legal chaos at the European Patent Office"; "Patents were invented for a reason"; New intellectual property protection for new varieties in the US; MRL detections report in the EU stresses importance of pest control; Italy joins Belt and Road initiative; Uber Freight launches in Europe; Bayer's blind spot on Monsanto's roundup may cost billions"; Stand applications still open for ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA; US: Efficacy of biochemical biopesticides that may be used in organic farming; US: 2018 Vegetables Summary; China’s soaring demand for fruit to benefit foreign growers; Reduce blood clotting with kiwifruit?; Fruit and vegetables boost well-being; Doctors ‘prescribing fruits and veg’ could save the US $100 billion in medical costs.

***Editors comments***

*A wide range of articles this week. – but very much steady as she goes. The two interesting New Zealand articles deal with innovation . The first reports that T&G Global have worked with an American firm to develop an apple picking robot. This will mean a lot of changes in how orchards are planted to accommodate the robot but will free up businesses reliance on labour. The second reports on research undertaken by Plant and Food which shows that with the right approach to planting and pruning its possible to double production from the same area. These articles demonstrate the value of ongoing innovation across a range of fronts.*

*In the International section the need for / protest against plant patents is in the news. With three articles looking at plant patents. Also of interest is the launch of Uber freight in the EU. With 21% of freight kilometres in the EU travelling empty the use of Uber freight offers the opportunity for large savings.*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **Public asked to help with beetle surveillance**

Biosecurity New Zealand is asking the public to report any sign of the wood-boring granulate ambrosia beetle. The unwanted pest has been detected in 5 Auckland areas since 20 February.

This is the first time the beetle has been found in New Zealand. While it is unclear how the beetle arrived in New Zealand, the evidence to date suggests it may have been here for at least 2 years.

The beetle is regarded as a serious pest overseas. It is known to damage a wide range of broadleaf trees, including horticultural species such as avocado, and can spread fungal diseases. The beetle resides under bark, making it difficult to detect. A tell-tale sign is distinctive protrusions of frass (compacted sawdust) from bark that look like toothpicks. They are caused by the beetles pushing frass out of tunnels bored into the trees. Other symptoms include sap oozing from the tunnel entrances and branch dieback.

The beetle is native to tropical and subtropical East Asia. It has been found in many areas in the world, including Africa, the USA, Central America, Europe, some Pacific Islands, and most recently in Queensland. [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/public-asked-to-help-with-beetle-surveillance/)

* 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:

* MRL’s Brazil, Canada, EU and USA
* South Korea – Amendment to quarantine pest list
* Philippines- Regulated plant pest list
* Chinese Taipei- Regulations of import risk assessment for regulated articles with capability of propagation
* USA The FDA is extending, for covered produce other than sprouts, the dates for compliance with the agricultural water provisions in the "Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption" rule.

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



* 1. **Mandatory Breach Reporting – what does it mean for your business?**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifParliament is currently considering the Privacy Bill. This follows similar initiavties in Australia and the EU that you may have encountered in your dealings with those areas. The bill repeals and replaces the Privacy Act 1993, as recommended by the Law Commission's 2011 review of the Act. Under this new Act firms will need to report any breaches of an individual or companies privacy. This article covers what you should be aware of with the proposals on mandatory breach reporting. [Full article available here](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/new-privacy-law-mandatory-breach-reporting-what-does-mean-moyes/)

* 1. **Cracking Europe - webinar series through May 2019**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifThis series will help you successfully transition your New Zealand marketing strategy into Europe by giving you tools to understand cultural differences in key markets and advice on how to use them to your advantage. [Register here](https://www.nzte.govt.nz/events/cracking-europe-series-2019)

* 1. **NZCTA - China Business Awards 2019**

https://assets.ubiquity.co.nz/tspacer.gifEntries are now open for the New Zealand China Trade Association's (NZCTA) HSBC China Business Awards for 2019. There are six categories plus the supreme award, all with the aim of celebrating organisations (and individuals) that are contributing to the success of the business relationship between New Zealand and China. Entries are open now and close 18 April 2019. [Register here](http://www.nzctabusinessawards.co.nz/)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Net profit increases at EastPack**

A bumper kiwifruit harvest propelled EastPack to a record financial performance over 2018.

New Zealand’s largest grower-owned kiwifruit and avocado post-harvest operator posted a net profit of NZ$9.8m for the year ending 31 December 2018, a NZ$4.96m increase from its 2017 result.

The performance came on the back of a record kiwifruit crop, which saw 41.1m trays packed across EastPack’s six sites in the Bay of Plenty region. EastPack chief executive, Hamish Simson, said the co-operative’s growers generally observed high Class 1 pack-outs and strong storage performance in a year with later loadouts than 2017. “We also saw increased demand for Prospa, our orchard management service,” Simson explained. The Prospa team now covers over 900ha across all growing areas, a 10 per cent increase since 2017.”

“With the impending industry growth, EastPack has signalled the need to invest further in infrastructure alongside innovation”. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/asiafruit/article/178280/eastpack-grows-net-profit)

* 1. **First charter ship carrying Zespri Kiwifruit sets sail for China and Japan**

The first charter vessel carrying Zespri SunGold Kiwifruit left last week to China and Japan following this season’s early start to harvest. The Southampton Star departed from Tauranga Harbour carrying approximately 3,000 pallets of Bay of Plenty-grown SunGold Kiwifruit bound for Shanghai and Kobe. The vessel had earlier berthed in Gisborne where it picked up 1,600 pallets of SunGold Kiwifruit, marking the start of what promises to be another bumper crop.  
  
Zespri Chief Grower and Alliances Officer David Courtney says in total, Zespri expects more than 600,000 pallets of kiwifruit to be shipped offshore this season. “This will mean we’ll have more than 18,000 containers to ship this season. We’re also expecting to use 45 charter vessels - three to move our kiwifruit to Northern Europe, twelve to service our Mediterranean markets and thirty to take fruit up to Japan, China and Korea.“   
  
For the first time, Zespri is also expecting to supply more gold kiwifruit than green this season. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9086066/first-charter-ship-carrying-zespri-kiwifruit-sets-sail-for-china-and-japan/)

* 1. **Zespri China sales still growing**

As the season’s kiwifruit is gearing up for harvest, the China office for Zespri is preparing for another year of strong growth, especially in the SunGold variety. Kiwifruit is now among the top five most popular fruit in China’s largest cities. Ivan Kinsella, Zespri China’s Corporate Affairs Manager reported that expectations for this season are for the Chinese mainland market to take almost 30 million trays of fruit, with two thirds of that being Gold kiwifruit. This means that China will account for 15 percent of the company’s market sales. Zespri has been taking steps to have more control over the supply chain since 2011 and Mr Kinsella reports that the benefits of this are now showing through. Benefits include increased staff, better speed of delivery between wharves and closer relationships with distributors. Zespri is also making marketing changes to attract Chinese customers, such as using the Chinese characters that spell Zespri being adopted on packaging [Full article available here](https://farmersweekly.co.nz/section/horticulture/view/zespri-china-sales-still-growing)

* 1. **T&G in apple robot first**

T&G Global has carried out what it has described as a 'world first', in using a robotic harvester for a commercial apple harvest. According to the fresh produce grower, packer, shipper and marketer, the move marks the culmination of four years of working with US-based technology partner Abundant Robotics, which T&G’s parent company BayWa AG invested in two years ago as part of its strategy to expand digitisation across its agribusiness, and reflects the company’s commitment to innovation-led growth.

T&G global chief operating officer Peter Landon-Lane said the company was delighted to have reached a significant milestone in the evolution of the global apple industry, and for T&G’s home operations in New Zealand to be at the forefront. “Automation enables us to continue to scale to meet increasing global demand for food, in the face of current and future labour market challenges," he explained. "We’ve been actively driving towards this for the past few years, including preparing our orchards to be robot-ready.

High density planting and specific pruning methods have been implemented at T&G’s Hawkes Bay orchards to make them suitable for Abundant Robotics’ technology. Canopy innovation and trialling of different ways of achieving automation compatibility has been a feature of orchard expansion initiatives since 2017. Developing an automated apple harvester requires solving a number of complex technical problems in parallel, from visually identifying harvestable fruit and physically manipulating it to pick without bruising, to safely navigating the orchard itself.

“Apple-picking is tough physical work and it’s seasonal. Robotic technology complements the work our people do with its ability to pick a large proportion of the fruit, much of it at the upper levels of the trees, reducing the physical demands of the work for our people as well as boosting productivity.

“This will enable us to continue the exciting growth that is being achieved in the apple industry, without being constrained by the current shortages of labour,” said Landon-Lane. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/178267/tg-in-apple-robot-first) and  [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9086680/new-zealand-world-first-robotic-apple-picker-could-help-labour-shortage/)

* 1. **New Zealand Research Organization and Yunnan to create "green food brand"**

The Yunnan Research Bureau and the Yunnan Nongken Group have joined with Plant & Food Research, part of the Crown Research Institute in New Zealand, in Kunming on March 26th, 2019, to sign a three-way cooperation agreement.

The three parties will cooperate in the following fields: to establish a modern apple supply chain from seedling to fruit; to expand from apple plantation into blueberries and vegetables; and to develop close cooperation in the recruitment and training of talent, research, production, processing, and commercialization.

After the signing ceremony, the three parties entered into informal discussion on the creation of an integrated research and retail service platform for the agricultural industry in Yunnan and New Zealand. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9088224/new-zealand-research-organization-and-yunnan-to-create-green-food-brand/)

* 1. **Weather impacts South Canterbury orchard fruit size - not quantity**

A challenging growing season has had an impact on fruit size for a South Canterbury pip and stonefruit orchard but it expects to harvest all of its apple varieties by late May. Waipopo Orchards, a 80 hectare orchard in Seadown, grows a variety of apples for the export markets including Honeycrisp to North America, Royal Gala to Asia and Europe, Red Delicious to Asia and Braeburn to Europe.

The man in charge of overseeing operations, orchard manager Andrew Forward, says Honeycrisp apples attract a price premium of up to four times over other varieties in the USA.

"The harvest is progressing well, but this season has been challenging due to a very wet spring [November-December] and cool weather which is affecting final fruit size," Forward said.

"Fruit size is down compared to last season due to poor weather conditions during the spring."

Despite those challenges, it has been a reasonable season to date. "We expect to harvest all our apple varieties, approximately 70 tonnes of apples per hectare on average depending on variety."

He said hail damage has not been a problem this season but there had been too much rain in the spring, and "a little too dry over the past two months”. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9088393/new-zealand-weather-impacts-south-canterbury-orchard-fruit-size-not-quantity/)

** Bits and pieces**

* 1. **Novel plant architectures and canopy management techniques bear fruit**

Novel plant architectures and new canopy management techniques have nearly doubled the yield of Envy™ apples and improved the quality of Zespri® SunGold Kiwifruit. A Plant & Food Research team in Hawke’s Bay have optimised canopy management and tree architecture of the ‘Scilate’ cultivar, marketed as Envy™ apple, to enhance the efficiency of plant function and drastically increase the harvest index (the amount of fruit dry weight produced relative to the total dry weight of a tree).

They applied artificial spur extinction, a chemical-free crop load management technique, on trees to reduce the number of floral buds in winter in order to better allocate carbohydrate and nutrients during growth to the fruit bearing spurs.

“The results have exceeded our initial expectation. In the 10th year from planting, the annual fruit fresh mass yield reached up to 180 tonnes per hectare in our experimental systems of tall spindle trees, which is near double that of tall spindle trees managed conventionally in commercial orchards. The technique has also eliminated biennial bearing trees, allowing growers to take advantage of regular annual yield, and consistency of supply and quality.”

Principles developed from apples were applied to kiwifruit in Hawke’s Bay and Te Puke. The team applied recurrent lateral pruning to ‘Zesy002’, commonly known as Gold3 and marketed as Zespri® SunGold Kiwifruit. This method aims to reduce the pruning intensity of vines to promote cropping on short shoots of low vigour called spurs. Results to date have shown that this new pruning approach maintains yield. Added benefits include reduced winter pruning due to less shoot growth, more consistent fruit dry matter content, and earlier fruit maturation. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9087873/novel-plant-architectures-and-canopy-management-techniques-bear-fruit/)



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. **Chile Exporter Guide 2018**[Exporter Guide 2018\_Santiago\_Chile\_3-15-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide%202018_Santiago_Chile_3-15-2019.pdf)
2. **China Export Certificate Report** This report lists the major export certifications required by the Chinese government for imports of food and agricultural products.  [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Beijing\_China - Peoples Republic of\_2-26-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Beijing_China%20-%20Peoples%20Republic%20of_2-26-2019.pdf)
3. **El Salvador to use Single-Window import mechanism** The Salvadoran Central Bank (BCR) announced the launching of an online import permit system for food and beverage products.  [El Salvador to use Single-Window import mechanism \_San Salvador\_El Salvador\_2-27-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/El%20Salvador%20to%20use%20Single-Window%20import%20mechanism%20_San%20Salvador_El%20Salvador_2-27-2019.pdf)
4. **Ethiopia Export Certificate Report** This report summarizes the list of major export certificates, documentations and other regulatory requirements to export food and agricultural products to Ethiopia. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Addis Ababa\_Ethiopia\_3-22-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Addis%20Ababa_Ethiopia_3-22-2019.pdf)
5. **Israel Annual Country Report 2018** On December 25, 2017, the Israeli parliament’s Labor, Welfare and Health Committee approved new regulations requiring front of pack labeling for most prepackaged food products. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Tel Aviv\_Israel\_12-17-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Tel%20Aviv_Israel_12-17-2018.pdf)
6. **Israel Export Certificate Report 2018**The report lists and describes certificates that should accompany food and agricultural products to Israel. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Tel Aviv\_Israel\_12-18-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Tel%20Aviv_Israel_12-18-2018.pdf)
7. **Japan 220th Food Safety Group** On March 15, 2019, Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) announced revisions to Japan’s Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for the following agricultural chemicals, veterinary drugs and feed additives: [Japan 220th Food Safety Group\_Tokyo\_Japan\_3-15-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Japan%20220th%20Food%20Safety%20Group_Tokyo_Japan_3-15-2019.pdf)
8. **Korea Annual Country Report** [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Seoul\_Korea - Republic of\_3-22-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Seoul_Korea%20-%20Republic%20of_3-22-2019.pdf)
9. **Netherlands FAIRS Annual Country Report** This report is an addendum to the EU FAIRS report – E19004.  It lists the Dutch import regulations and standards that are not harmonized within the EU [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_The Hague\_Netherlands\_3-21-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_The%20Hague_Netherlands_3-21-2019.pdf)
10. **Pakistan Annual Country Report** This report outlines regulatory requirements and import procedures for food and agricultural imports into Pakistan. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Islamabad\_Pakistan\_3-21-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Islamabad_Pakistan_3-21-2019.pdf)
11. **Peru Export Certificate Report 2018** This report identifies Peru’s import requirements for (foreign) export certificates [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Lima\_Peru\_12-17-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Lima_Peru_12-17-2018.pdf)
12. **Poland Export Certificate Report** Poland applies European Union (EU) regulatory requirements animal and plant-origin food and agricultural products.  [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Warsaw\_Poland\_3-19-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Warsaw_Poland_3-19-2019.pdf)
13. **Russian Federation Amendments to EAEU Food Safety Regulation Notified to WTO**On February 12, 2019, Russia notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) of draft amendments to the Technical Regulation (TR) of the Customs Union “On Food Safety” via G/TBT/N/RUS/91 to eliminate an inconsistency between the TR and the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union and clarify a definition [Amendments to EAEU Food Safety Regulation Notified to WTO\_Moscow\_Russian Federation\_3-25-2019](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Amendments%20to%20EAEU%20Food%20Safety%20Regulation%20Notified%20to%20WTO_Moscow_Russian%20Federation_3-25-2019.pdf)

 **Regulatory**

* 1. **EU preparations for Brexit**

Almost three years ago the UK voted in favour of leaving the EU. Yet the original departure date of 29 March has been delayed and the government is searching for a way forward.

The longer negotiations have continued, the more pessimistic UK voters have become about how good a deal the UK will secure. Two years ago, there were almost as many who thought that the UK would obtain a good deal (33%) as thought it would find itself with a bad one (37%). However, that mood soon changed and by last summer as many as 57% reckoned the UK would emerge with a bad deal.

The EU for its part, completes preparations for possible “no-deal” scenario on 12 April. As it is increasingly likely that the United Kingdom will leave the European Union without a deal on 12 April, the European Commission last week completed its “no-deal” preparations.

The European Commission continues supporting administrations in their own preparations and urges all EU citizens and businesses to continue informing themselves about the consequences of a possible “no-deal” scenario and to complete their no-deal preparedness. This follows the European Council (Article 50) conclusions last week calling for work to be continued on preparedness and contingency. In a “no-deal” scenario, the UK will become a third country without any transitionary arrangements. All EU primary and secondary law will cease to apply to the UK from that moment onwards. There will be no transition period, as provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement. This will obviously cause significant disruption for citizens and businesses. [Click here for the full article on EU preparations.](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-1813_en.htm) [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9086712/uk-voters-critical-of-government-on-brexit-negotiations/)

* 1. **"End the legal chaos at the European Patent Office"**

The coalition No Patents on Seeds! published a new report on plant patents granted by the European Patent Office (EPO) in 2018 and at the beginning of 2019. Despite a prohibition on the granting of patents on conventional breeding, the EPO has nevertheless granted patents on melons, tomatoes, onions, lettuce, garden parsley and cucumber, all of which were produced without using genetic engineering. At the same time, oppositions against patents on barley were rejected. Faced with these developments, around 30 organisations have called for a joint protest in front of the EPO on 27 March. This is the day on which the Administrative Council representing the 38 contracting states of the EPO will meet. The assembly is requested to take measures to ensure that prohibitions are effective. The public protest will start on 27 March at 11 a.m. and end at around 2 p.m.

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9086109/end-the-legal-chaos-at-the-european-patent-office/)

* 1. **"Patents were invented for a reason"**

Patents in the fruit and vegetable sector are a recurring topic of discussion. The mixed signals sent out by the European Patent Office, who cannot seem to reach internal agreement regarding patenting of traditional breeding, doesn't help in this. Last December, the Dutch patent office issued a ruling that might make it possible to apply for a patent based on classical breeding. Arend Schot, regional director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa at breeder Syngenta, follows these developments closely. He has worked in various European countries, Brazil, and China in recent years, and has now been back in the Netherlands for two and a half years.

The full article makes a case for plant patents to support on-going innovation and provides examples to illustrate his points. .  [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9084647/patents-were-invented-for-a-reason/)

* 1. **New intellectual property protection for new varieties in the US**

In the US, the 2018 Farm Bill passed with language allowing the U.S. Plant Variety Protection Office (PVPO) to accept application for protection of vegetatively propagated varieties. Protection through the PVPO has long been offered for seed propagated crops, such as corn and soy beans.

Currently there are 3 avenues for IP protection for plants in the United States.

* A certificate from the PVPO, which has only been available for seed propagated crops. The PVPO operates under the USDA.
* Though the US Patent Office, plant breeders can obtain a plant patent. This is the protection most professional horticulturists are most familiar with. US Plant Patents are exclusively for vegetatively propagated varieties.
* Utility Patents, which have largely been used for seed propagated crops, as well as some new and interesting patents for vegetatively propagated plants, including Cannabis.

For now new applications cannot yet be filed with the PVPO. "We are expecting the first information regarding the new rules from the PVPO later this Spring, which will be followed by a public comment period", says Cassy Bright, Registered Patent Agent. The final regulations are expected to be published in the Fall of 2019. In its rule making process, the PVPO has sought input from various sources, including ASTA and American Hort. [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9086084/new-intellectual-property-protection-for-new-varieties-in-the-us/)

* 1. **MRL detections report in the EU stresses importance of pest control**

A recent report from the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) revealed the results of the official controls carried out by the member states of the European Union (EU) during 2018 on apples and peaches from the EU and non-European countries. This report said that, in the case of apples, of a total of 1,680 samples analyzed, 614 did not contain any pesticides, 1,020 contained some pesticides, and 46 presented MRL violations. In the case of peaches, of a total of 1,178 samples analyzed, 262 did not contain any pesticides, 893 contained some, and 46 presented MRL violations.

These figures demonstrate the importance of keeping a strict monitoring of the pesticide doses used in the orchards, so as to prevent that the work of a whole season is ruined by a violation of the MRL regulations. *The balance of this article warns Chilean producers they need to actively manage pesticide MRLs and lists the common pesticides found on Apples and peached*

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9085241/mrl-detections-report-in-the-eu-stresses-importance-of-pest-control/)

* 1. **Italy joins Belt and Road initiative**

Italy has become the first member country of the Group of Seven (also known as G7) major economies to support Beijing’s Belt and Road programme. Al Jazeera reported the European nation signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China endorsing the global infrastructure-building scheme.

A range of points were addressed in the MoU which encompassed 29 separate protocols that were signed by Chinese president Xi Jinping and Italian premier Giuseppe Conte in Rome on 23 March.

These included the export of Italian fruit to China, alongside cooperation between banks, construction companies and Italian ports.The Washington Post said Italy’s involvement in the programme gives China a crucial inroad to Western Europe and a symbolic boost in its back and forth pull with Washington.

The European Union has raised concerns over unfair competition from Chinese companies which benefit from the state’s financial backing. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/178261/italy-joins-belt-and-road-initiative)

 **Business/ Industry**

* 1. **Uber Freight launches in Europe**

Since launching in the US two years ago, Uber Freight has worked to revitalize the trucking industry and bring new opportunities to the entire logistics ecosystem. The Uber Freight app connects trucking companies of any size with loads to haul, giving drivers upfront pricing, fast payment and the ability to book a load with the touch of a button. Uber Freight also unlocks opportunity for shippers, providing access to a vast network of reliable carriers as well as real-time visibility into the status of their freight.

In Europe the launch starts in the Netherlands wherein the coming weeks, local carriers and drivers will be able to book and move their first loads with Uber Freight. From there, they plan to expand Freight access other parts of Europe in the near future. The European trucking market is experiencing a severe shortage of drivers, and of the time drivers are on the road, 21 percent of total kilometers travelled are empty. Inefficiency of this scale results in shippers struggling to find available drivers to move their goods.

Additionally, small- to medium-sized carriers in the EU make up more than 85% of the total carrier pool, and just like in other international freight markets, they experience the most difficulty connecting with larger shippers. A more efficient and transparent freight marketplace is something Uber Freight can bring to the table that will pay dividends to all, as well as reduce wasted miles and fuel. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9085710/uber-freight-launches-in-europe/)

* 1. **Bayer's blind spot on Monsanto's roundup may cost billions"**

A second U.S. jury has linked Roundup weedkiller to cancer. The uphill battle Bayer Chief Executive Officer Werner Baumann is fighting just got steeper. The company has lost more than $30 billion in market value since the first defeat last August, raising fresh questions about a deal he spearheaded. [Bloomberg's Alix Steel and Sterling Smith discuss the latest.](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2019-03-22/bayer-s-blind-spot-on-monsanto-s-roundup-may-cost-billions-video) [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9085802/bayer-s-blind-spot-on-monsanto-s-roundup-may-cost-billions/)

* 1. **Stand applications still open for ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA**

Last-minute applications for stands are still being accepted for exhibitors at ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA, Asia’s premier fresh fruit and vegetable trade show, which returns to AsiaWorld-Expo Center in Hong Kong on 4-6 September. Last year, ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA attracted more than 13,000 industry professionals from over 70 different countries. Now is the time to secure exhibition space and engage with the global fresh produce trade in one convenient location. Application forms can be downloaded from the official website:<https://www.asiafruitlogistica.com/en/Exhibitors/Application/>   
[Full article available here](https://www.producereport.com/article/stand-applications-still-open-asia-fruit-logistica)

* 1. **US: Efficacy of biochemical biopesticides that may be used in organic farming**

This article summarizes publicly available data on efficacy of commercially available, EPA-registered biochemical biopesticides for plant disease control. For a more detailed introduction see the related eOrganic article [Biopesticides for Plant Disease Management in Organic Farming](https://articles.extension.org/pages/29380/biopesticides-for-plant-disease-management-in-organic-farming).

[Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9086279/us-efficacy-of-biochemical-biopesticides-that-may-be-used-in-organic-farming/)

* 1. **US: 2018 Vegetables Summary**

In 2018, the USA’s production for the 26 estimated vegetable and melon crops totaled 753 million cwt, 1 percent below the final 754 million cwt estimated in 2017. The utilized production totaled 747 million cwt, 1 percent below 2017. Area harvested in 2018 was 2.50 million acres, a 3 percent reduction from the previous year. In 2018, the top three vegetables, in terms of area harvested, were sweet corn, tomatoes, and snap beans. In terms of total production, the three largest crops were tomatoes, sweet corn, and onions, which combined accounted for 56 percent of the all vegetables total.

The value of utilized production for 2018 vegetable crops was $12.9 billion, down 12 percent from the previous year. Tomatoes, head lettuce, and romaine lettuce claimed the highest values, accounting for 31 percent of the total value of production when combined. For the 26 selected vegetables and melons estimated in 2018, California continued to be the leading State in terms of area harvested, utilized production, and value of production. [Click here for the comprehensive report.](https://agfstorage.blob.core.windows.net/misc/FP_com/2019/03/26/Vegean19.pdf)

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9087277/us-2018-vegetables-summary/)

 **China**

* 1. **China’s soaring demand for fruit to benefit foreign growers**

The growing size of China’s middle class is generating an increasing demand for imported fruits such as cherries, avocados, and durian, bringing profit to foreign fruit farmers. The volume of avocados being imported has grown by nearly 10,000 times in just a few years in China, while pricey imported cherries are jokingly regarded as a new criterion for a person’s financial status by Chinese netizens. Moreover, some Chinese people are even flying to Thailand or Malaysia to get a bite of the local durian. *The article provides an overview of the trade in Chilean cherries* [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9087306/china-s-soaring-demand-for-fruit-to-benefit-foreign-growers/)

  **Health**

* 1. **Reduce blood clotting with kiwifruit?**

According to a study from the University of Oslo, in addition to helping us manage our blood pressure, kiwis can actually reduce blood clotting. A blood clot is a gel-like mass formed by platelets and fibrin in the blood to stop bleeding. A blood clot forms to try to repair damage to a blood vessel, either an artery or vein. When they form inappropriately inside an artery or vein, they may cause significant problems, such as symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, because blood flow past the clot is decreased. The University of Oslo found that eating two to three kiwis a day significantly lowered the risk of blood clotting. They were also found to reduce the amount of fat in the blood. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9087735/reduce-blood-clotting-with-kiwifruit/)

* 1. **Fruit and vegetables boost well-being**

Consuming more fruit and vegetables can improve your mental well-being, according to a new study, 'Lettuce be happy.' Researchers at the universities of Leeds and York analysed data from more than 40,000 people in the UK, and found that changes in fruit and vegetable consumption are correlated with changes in mental well-being. Specifically, the findings indicate that eating just one extra portion of fruits and vegetables a day could have an equivalent effect on mental well-being as around 8 extra days of walking a month (for at least 10 minutes at a time).[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9085819/fruit-and-vegetables-boost-well-being/)

* 1. **Doctors ‘prescribing fruits and veg’ could save the US $100 billion in medical costs**

Researchers have found that “prescriptions” for healthy foods could save more than $100 billion in healthcare costs. The study, published in the medical journal PLOS Medicine, followed adults between the ages of 35-80 who were enrolled in Medicare and/or Medicaid. It then established two scenarios: one in which Medicare/Medicaid covered the cost of 30% of fruits and vegetables, the other in which it covered fruits, vegetables, seafood, whole grains, plant oils, and other healthy foods.

The results showed that with such subsidies, subjects rely less on healthcare. The first scenario would prevent 1.93 million cardiovascular events (such as heart attacks) and 350,000 deaths, as well as cut healthcare costs by $40 billion. The expanded second scenario would prevent 3.28 million cardiovascular events, 620,000 deaths, and 120,000 cases of diabetes–and save the U.S. system a whopping $100 billion. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9087269/doctors-prescribing-fruits-and-veg-could-save-the-us-100-billion-in-medical-costs/)

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