

**PMAC weekly update 14th to 21st September**

1. **Government agencies:** The benefits of New Zealand's Enhanced Partnership with Singapore
2. **New Zealand News:**  $ 9.5 billion at risk as horticulture sector struggles to find labour; Apple and kiwifruit interests partner in jobs project; Some apple growers think Minister Peters' suggestion isn't a bad idea; Let’s not pit anaerobic digestion against composting in the food waste fight; Some solid results for New Zealand's persimmon growers despite challenging year; Investors back NZ cherry developments; Waimea Group boosts growth with lab company purchase; A new potato disease in China; This year's unsolicited seed scare highlights the work of legitimate seed growers
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; More than 150 business leaders urge EU heads of state to set higher 2030 emissions reduction targets; Chile upbeat about Chinese recovery; Corona has hit high frequency locations particularly hard; COVID-19: what’s the ROI on the industry’s pandemic investments?; The move to online shopping; First Spanish horticultural plant certified against COVID-19; Antwerp ready for unexpected; China could consider banning blank sailings to lower trans-Pacific freight rates; The first 'track and trace' system for containers in Europe; Real-time tracking of import movements at the Port of Rotterdam; Hortifruit builds Chile’s first floating solar plant; Flower industry struggling to recover from COVID-19 fallout; Carrots and tomatoes may help reverse Alzheimer symptoms

**Comments**

A much quieter week this week but still interesting. The most significant articles in the New Zealand media this week deal with the looming labour crisis that could severely impact Horticultures ability to grow and harvest produce. The Government is looking to horticulture to employed some of the new unemployed while employers are sceptical that the new unemployed will be interested in the jobs that horticulture has to offer. Unfortunately, the election is liable to slow down any progress in this area.

Meanwhile, as discussed last week, internationally the number of articles about freight remain high. But the interesting article this week are not related to freight. The articles I would like to draw your attention to are two articles about Chilean horticulture one about their level of exports the other deals with a new floating solar plant. Chile is not only becoming a significant competitor for New Zealand exports one can see that it is also moving quickly into the 21st century in terms of the technologies it is using. The other article I’d like to draw your attention to is the call by 150 large businesses in the EU for the European Commission to driver faster and aim higher with its plans to implement the Green deal and reduce carbon emissions. For companies wishing to export to the EU in 2030 it is important every effort is made to reduce carbon emission and improve sustainability parameters.

1. **Agency news** 



* 1. **The benefits of New Zealand's Enhanced Partnership with Singapore**

Singapore is New Zealand's largest trading partner in Southeast Asia. A new free trade agreement between our two countries allows for greater ease of business, in everything from visas, to customs, e-commerce transactions and more.

An upgrade to our free trade agreement with Singapore offers new strategic benefits for New Zealand businesses. Signed in May 2019, the [New Zealand-Singapore Enhanced Partnership](https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/south-east-asia/singapore/new-zealand-singapore-enhanced-partnership) , which upgrades our 2000 free trade agreement, offers significant strategic and practical advantages for New Zealand businesses. New benefits include:

* Business visitors to Singapore will now be able to stay for 90 days at a time (from a previous limit of 30 days),
* Easier access at the border - New Zealand and Singaporean citizens are now able to use e-Gate/Frequent Traveller Programme
* enhanced customs commitments mean goods consignments can be cleared within 24 hours, or 4 hours for expedited consignments
* cooperation in the development of international food standards will make trade more seamless for our food and beverage exporters
* a new e-commerce chapter will allow New Zealand businesses and consumers to transact online with confidence, allow businesses to freely transfer data in the course of business
* a Partnership for Growth Arrangement between New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and Enterprise Singapore will help New Zealand businesses expand their operations in Singapore, by providing market knowledge and support to build networks

[Full article available here](https://my.nzte.govt.nz/article2/the-benefits-of-new-zealands-enhanced-partnership-with-singapore)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **$ 9.5 billion at risk as horticulture sector struggles to find labour**

In parts of New Zealand, the shortage of horticultural workers due to Covid restrictions is putting $ 9.5 billion of the country’s economy at risk. This was made clear by New Zealand Apples and Pears chief executive Alan Pollard. Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi said the government was "actively looking at additional options" to support the agricultural sector. “We are acutely aware of the pressures Covid-19 is placing on that sector, as well as many others across the economy.”“But the Government is also conscious of the need to ensure New Zealanders, who have lost jobs due to Covid-19, have the chance to redeploy into new jobs. Thousands of New Zealanders are facing unemployment because of Covid-19. We need employers to make every effort to give those people new job opportunities, and we know many are.” [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9249456/new-zealand-9-5-billion-at-risk-as-horticulture-sector-struggles-to-find-labor/?edition=5)

The horticulture industry in Hawke’s Bay, New Zealand has called for innovative thinking as the region and the rest of the country looks for solutions to current labour shortages. In a joint statement released by regional authorities, Hastings District Council and Hawke’s Bay Regional Council said the area’s horticulture and viticulture sectors in needed approximately 10,000 seasonal workers to work across the region starting from next month.

Sandra Hazlehurst, mayor of Hastings, said if the fruit is not picked, it puts thousands of permanent jobs in our community at risk. “More than 8,000 local people are permanently employed in Hawke’s Bay in and around the horticulture and viticulture sectors, from pack-houses to the port,” Hazlehurst said.

“But these permanent roles depend on the trees being planted and pruned and the fruit being picked – all of which is looking more and more difficult with a severe labour shortage pending.”

“The Hawke’s Bay economy has at risk NZ$715m (US$478m) of GDP in apples and pears alone, and well over NZ$1bn (US$669m) with wine and other horticultural crops,” Pollard said. “This is an issue facing many regions throughout New Zealand – putting at risk NZ$9.5bn (US$6.3bn) in the country’s overall economy. This just cannot happen.”

The statement said some of the solutions being considered included attracting unemployed New Zealanders, school leavers, and tertiary students, using workers from corrections facilities who can work during day release, flexible work hours, and new technology. [Full article available here](https://thespinoff.co.nz/food/31-08-2020/lets-not-pit-anaerobic-digestion-against-composting-in-the-food-waste-fight/)

* 1. **Apple and kiwifruit interests partner in jobs project**

Apple and kiwifruit businesses in Hawke's Bay are joining forces to support local workers looking for sustainable long-term employment. With help from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), a collaborative partnership has been established between the apple market interests of T&G Global (Turners & Growers) and Ngai Tukairangi Trust (NTT), a Tauranga-based family trust kiwifruit operation that expanded into Hawke's Bay with major kiwifruit orchard investment more than three years ago.

The partnership is intended to provide ongoing employment during the employers' quiet periods.

The apple and kiwifruit sectors have seasonal labour peaks and quiet times that could complement each other. The group are working on employment options whereby staff could easily transfer from one employer to the other. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/hawkes-bay-today/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503462&objectid=12363431)

* 1. **Some apple growers think Minister Peters' suggestion isn't a bad idea**

Foreign Minister Winston Peters has suggested using military aircraft to bring seasonal workers from the Pacific into New Zealand to work. The Foreign Minister says getting commercial airliners to Pacific countries hasn't been possible. Peters says there's still a large pool of seasonal workers who haven't returned home, but also told Mike Hosking if that pool of workers can't cover the horticulture labour shortage, the government needs to be taking proactive action. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9250713/nz-some-apple-growers-think-minister-peters-suggestion-isn-t-a-bad-idea/?edition=5)

* 1. **Let’s not pit anaerobic digestion against composting in the food waste fight**

**It’s not a binary choice of one or the other, writes Brian Cox, who says the two technologies can work together for the good of the environment.** In an opinion piece titled “Why industrial anaerobic digestion is not the answer to food waste”, [Kate Walmsley argued](https://thespinoff.co.nz/food/23-08-2020/why-industrial-anaerobic-digestion-is-not-the-answer-to-food-waste/) that composting provides better environmental and societal outcomes than anaerobic digestion. Globally, both composting and anaerobic digestion (AD) of organic waste are recognised as two well-proven and often complementary technologies. The choice of processing pathway depends on the composition of the waste and the desired products produced.

In general, high-energy feedstocks such as food waste are better suited for AD, whereas high-fibre feedstocks such as green waste are more suited to composting. Most importantly, they both keep waste out of landfills and hence substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental risks and impacts. *This article provides a discussion on the two approaches and their respective advantages. The article concludes*:

In sum, anaerobic digestion and composting are complementary technologies. They both provide sustainable alternative to landfill disposal; reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated at landfills and assist New Zealand in achieving its emission and sustainable development targets; preserve nutrients contained in food waste, enabling their reuse on land; reduce New Zealand’s dependence on largely imported synthetic fertilisers produced using mainly fossil fuel-driven processes; require adequate management of the biofertiliser product application to avoid adverse effects on the environment; and need to be designed and operated to high standard. The choice between using anaerobic digestion or composting for processing of organic waste needs to be based on lifecycle analysis, market demand for products and types and amounts of waste available. [Full article available here](https://thespinoff.co.nz/food/23-08-2020/why-industrial-anaerobic-digestion-is-not-the-answer-to-food-waste/)

* 1. **Some solid results for New Zealand's persimmon growers despite challenging year**

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, New Zealand persimmon growers still managed to pass the 1,200 tonnes for the 2020 season. Manager of the New Zealand Persimmon Industry Council, Ian Turk admits that the final volume was not far off the pre-season forecasts, due to drought conditions across the country. The 2019 season reached 1,600 tonnes.

Export is a major avenue of sales for New Zealand's growers, with persimmons sent across South East Asia, including Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and small volumes into Japan. The country has just gained access into China and the United States, which are developing markets, and new access is being sought in other parts of Asia.

One of the major challenges for the industry in 2020 was the severe increase in air freight charges due to the coronavirus, with a strong switch to sea freight. "Air freight costs skyrocketed a week out from the start of the season," Mr Turk said. "Normally we start the season with airfreight to get product into the market, followed by sea freight a month or so later. We send around 25 per cent by air - so that disappeared overnight and we had to run around and find sea freight options.

Customers were e looking for safe food and everyone still has to eat. So, we had quite strong demand, dependant on each government’s restrictions. But throughout Australia and South-East Asia, we were getting some strong interest - as long as we could get product into the market."

Harvesting and packing finished in May, with the last consignment shipped from New Zealand in early August. Mr Turk adds that the New Zealand persimmon industry was also nervous heading into the season, as their closest neighbours and biggest export destination Australia planned to introduce changes to export biosecurity arrangements. However, Mr Turk says that the NZ industry worked hard to put in place some protocols, including a requirement to apply Vapormate treatment and look for cold storage. That resulted in a "very impressive" 93,000 (4 kilogram) trays of fruit make it into Australia, or 408 tonnes. In addition, Singapore received 211 tonnes, Thailand 162 tonnes, Malaysia 94 tonnes, Hong Kong 67 tonnes, Canada 59 tonnes and China 28 tonnes.

The NZ persimmon industry is confident of some slight growth in coming years, with crops of young trees set to come online for a few of the country's growers. "We have got a strong number of committed growers in the export industry, although we have had one significant grower pull-out recently," he said. "So, there should be some significant size growth and their volumes are certainly going to grow.

[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9249411/some-solid-results-for-new-zealand-s-persimmon-growers-despite-challenging-year/?edition=5)

* 1. **Investors back NZ cherry developments**

Deep Creek Fruits New Zealand – established to develop two significant cherry operations in the Upper Clutha region of Central Otago – has [successfully raised the capital required](http://www.fruitnet.com/asiafruit/article/182216/new-name-in-nz-cherries) to begin its second phase of planting. The completion of the first tranche is the result of extensive interest from a range of New Zealand wholesale investors keen to take advantage of rising global demand for New Zealand cherries.

Investors include the landowners of Lindis Peaks Station and Mt Pisa Station, who initially approached Deep Creek Fruits' management company, Hortinvest, with plans to allocate a portion of their land for horticultural use.Stage two planting will see 25ha at Lindis Peaks and 72ha at Mt Pisa. This is in addition to 11ha planted at both locations last winter.

A packhouse will be constructed in time for Deep Creek Fruits’ first harvest and the first fruit will be exported to global markets in 2021/22. A board of directors has been appointed to report to investors on the progress of the development. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/asiafruit/article/182953/investors-back-nz-cherry-development)

* 1. **Waimea Group boosts growth with lab company purchase**

Horticulture company Waimea Group is continuing its growth with the purchase of the Hastings-based business Plant Propagation Laboratories Ltd. The tissue culture production was identified as a successful method of bulking up plant material, as well as being easier to produce virus and pathogen free plant material. The new business will be named Waimea Plant Laboratories Ltd . [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9249752/new-zealand-waimea-group-boosts-growth-with-lab-company-purchase/?edition=5)

 **Biosecurity**

* 1. **A new potato disease in China**

An undescribed disease has been observed on potato plants during the growing season, and in tubers during the storage period, from Nileke County, Qitai County and other locations in Xinjiang, China.

Scientists at Xinjiang Academy of Agricultural Sciences have isolated a particular fungus from the infected potato plants and tubers. The variety of the diseased potato was Atlantic. The leaves were found to be yellow and wrinkled with wilted edges of the leaves. The diseased tubers showed a large number of depressions and many black lesions, as well as cracks. Some lesions were easy to peel off.

[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9250368/a-new-potato-disease-in-china/?edition=5)

* 1. **This year's unsolicited seed scare highlights the work of legitimate seed growers**

If you've ever wondered where those vegetable seeds you sow come from, the answer of late seems to be in mysterious little packages from somewhere in China. You may have caught the recent headlines about thousands of Americans receiving what appear to be seeds of cucumbers, peppers and other popular plants of the home vegetable garden.

As of last week, the Agriculture Department had received 10,136 emails and 1,004 calls from residents in all 50 states; Washington, D.C.; and Puerto Rico about the seeds. From them, it has collected almost 9,000 seed packages. Some were mailed from China after the recipients ordered seed through online retailers. Other packages were unsolicited as part of what officials believe was a scheme to generate false online ratings.

The problem? The senders circumvented the official channels for seed importation, leaving the department and other public agencies scrambling to figure out how the seeds got through and to block additional shipments. Normally, imported seeds require a health certificate from the agriculture ministry in the originating country and often an import permit, too. As a rule, the packages are screened by plant inspectors in the United States before delivery to the recipient.

The authorities have reason to be vigilant. A new pest or disease from overseas can cause havoc in specific crops, just as the novel coronavirus attacks humans with no inbuilt resistance to it.

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9249349/this-year-s-unsolicited-seed-scare-highlights-the-work-of-legitimate-seed-growers/)



1. **International news**

**Comment**

* 1. **GAIN reports**

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

1. **EU Early Alert - Pesticides Review - September 2020** The information in this document provides interested stakeholders with advance notice of active ingredients under review and highlights which substances may have restricted or non-renewal of approval. [EU Early Alert - Pesticides Review - September 2020\_Brussels USEU\_European Union\_09-12-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=EU%20Early%20Alert%20-%20Pesticides%20Review%20-%20September%202020_Brussels%20USEU_European%20Union_09-12-2020)
2. **COVID-19 in India - Weekly Food Retail Update** [COVID-19 in India - Weekly Food Retail Update\_Mumbai\_India\_09-09-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20in%20India%20-%20Weekly%20Food%20Retail%20Update_Mumbai_India_09-09-2020)
3. **COVID-19 in India - Weekly Port Situation Update** [COVID-19 in India - Weekly Port Situation Update\_Mumbai\_India\_09-08-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20in%20India%20-%20Weekly%20Port%20Situation%20Update_Mumbai_India_09-08-2020)

 **Regulatory**

* 1. **More than 150 business leaders urge EU heads of state to set higher 2030 emissions reduction targets**

As the European Commission sits down to discuss proposals for a new 2030 emissions target in time for the State of the Union address on Wednesday Sept 16, more than 150 European businesses, investors and business networks, including Microsoft, IKEA, Deutsche Bank, Unilever, H&M, Google, Girteka Logistics, Signify and Apple are calling on EU leaders to back the ambition set out in the European Green Deal and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

In an open letter, CEOs from across Europe and the economy have outlined their determination to work with the EU to tackle impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic while delivering a more climate-resilient and regenerative recovery. The letter indicates the diversity of European business support for increased climate ambition, with companies from sectors including, manufacturing, heavy industry, finance, consumer goods, power generation and technology supporting the 55% target. They want to see an ambitious implementation of the recovery package focussed on achieving a green and digital transition, with the European Green Deal at its core and an elevated short-term emissions reduction target in its sights.

This in turn will provide them with the confidence needed to invest decisively at the necessary pace and scale to reduce emissions, create decent green jobs, drive innovation, and accelerate the rebuilding of a resilient zero carbon economy." [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9249857/girteka-logistics-urge-eu-heads-of-state-to-set-higher-2030-emissions-reduction-targets/?edition=5)

 **Business/ Industry**

* 1. **Chile upbeat about Chinese recovery**

The recovery of the Chinese economy augurs well for Chilean fruit exports to this market in the coming months according to Chile’s ambassador to China, Luis Schmidt. Schmidt noted that as Chile is redoubling efforts to comply with China’s demanding phytosanitary regulations as it prepares for the new fruit season amid the pandemic. He predicted that 2020/21 “will be a good cherry season so long as we can comply with shipments when they ask us, we arrive with an acceptable quality and we do not have coronavirus infection problems”.

China is Chile’s biggest trading partner, taking 28-30 per cent of exports, but so far this year it has received 37 per cent of Chile’s total export volume. The latest trade figures show that Chilean fresh fruit exports totalled 2.13m tonnes worth US$3.757bn FOB between January and August of this year. This was an overall decrease of 7 per cent in volume and 12 per cent in value compared with the same period last year. Cherry exports for the first eight months of 2020 totalled 145,000 tonnes, worth US$954m, representing an increase of 6 per cent in volume and a fall of 7 per cent in value compared to the year-earlier period. China absorbed 94 per cent of Chile’s shipment total. [Full article available here](Chile%20upbeat%20about%20Chinese%20recovery)

* 1. **"Corona has hit high frequency locations particularly hard"**

Comment from a swiss producer about the effects of the Pandemic - The Corona crisis has had a serious impact on sales in the food industry, especially in the hospitality industry. This is also being felt by manufacturers and suppliers in the convenience sector. "

While vegetable growing has progressed largely according to plan, sales in this exceptional marketing year have been rather sluggish so far. "The crisis has created variable effects in the food industry. The Food service sales areas have been hard hit, while delivery services, on the other hand, are currently experiencing a boom," Frey says. Overall, the fresh produce supplier is expecting a ten percent loss in sales over the financial year.

The crisis has also considerably inhibited the willingness to innovate in the product selection. "Innovation is currently very difficult because of Corona. Long-term product trends are therefore difficult to assess, which is why we as a convenience supplier are trying to maintain a certain flexibility in the recipe. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9251092/corona-has-hit-high-frequency-locations-particularly-hard/)

* 1. **COVID-19: what’s the ROI on the industry’s pandemic investments?**

Six months into the pandemic, the fresh produce industry has felt the economic impact of investing in greater resources around COVID-related safety—whether it’s educating workers, implementing physical distancing and more. But as this week’s PMA virtual town hall discussed: what effect have these resources had on the industry?

While sanitation and food safety have long been a significant focus for the fresh produce industry, the pandemic shone a spotlight on simple practices the industry could do even better such as masking all the time or putting up barriers. “And these hygienic practices are essentially free. They’re small investments that have a huge payback for companies that take them seriously”, Furthermore, before long, these hygiene practices could become commonplace. “

That said, investments made now in food safety will have long-term gain. “It will take some time to get through this pandemic and understand how to get our work done in light of the presence of this virus”, said Byron. “Whatever you invest in now will work for you for a long time”.

This includes the role of technology, which could be increasingly crucial pre- and post-harvest down the road. “The return on investment is going to come from technology”, Of course, throughout the pandemic, while everyone in the supply chain absorbed significant additional costs, it seemed like grower shippers were impacted disproportionately by factoring in things multiple safety measures. On the growing side for example, we spaced our employees further. Some growers harvested every other row and then turned the machines around to come back for the missed rows. This added tremendous time to the harvest cycle,” [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9251106/covid-19-what-s-the-roi-on-the-industry-s-pandemic-investments/)

* 1. **The move to online shopping**

Another article from a marketer talking about the move to online shopping and the changes that are needed to accommodate the “new normal”. He states in 3 years' time, 60% of the shops will be empty.

[Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9250229/corona-learn-to-play-outside-again/?edition=5)

* 1. **First Spanish horticultural plant certified against COVID-19**

The company SERVIAGRO 2000, devoted to the export of organic citrus fruits, has become the first company in its sector in Spain to obtain the Agro Covid-19 certificate issued by SOHISCERT, which serves to approve the measures adopted to guarantee protection against COVID-19.

The certificate has been awarded after an external audit, which has verified that SERVIAGRO 2000 provides workers, carriers and visitors with adequate safety measures against the coronavirus.

[Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9250337/first-spanish-horticultural-plant-certified-against-covid-19/)

* 1. **Antwerp ready for unexpected**

**The Port of Antwerp** are proud to have succeeded in keeping the port operational throughout the Covid-19 crisis. They’ve seen a decrease in volumes due to blank sailings, but in perishables the port recorded an increase of 23 per cent. Retail from China fell, but fresh products have boomed, as people think more about their health. Potatoes, bananas and tropical fruits have all increased in volume. In the second quarter, we saw perishables grow by 15 per cent compared with last year. While they had predicted growth in a diverse range of food products, they never expected this sort of increase. If this continues the Port will end the year with an average reefer increase of 15-20 per cent, which is big.

**Looking forward they are not sure what to expect but will be continuing working under Covid 19 restrictions** They note their commitment to invest in sustainability has not been affected. The European Green Deal is very ambitious. We want to be the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 and we believe we can make this happen even earlier.

**With regard to Brexit they have been have a** special team focusing on the preparations but have no idea what the impact will be on border checks or what the queues will be like. For perishables, phytosanitary checks will probably be necessary, although nothing is certain.

We are great believers in climate-neutral and it’s part of our business strategy. We are constantly investing in new energy such as wind turbines, we reuse energy from the locks, we are looking to see how we can store hydrogen energy from sister ports for use in Antwerp, and we try to move containers and reefers by rail and barge instead of by truck. These are long-term projects that we need to keep investing in. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/182945/antwerp-ready-for-unexpected)

* 1. **China could consider banning blank sailings to lower trans-Pacific freight rates**

According to a report by The Loadstar, China's communications ministry discussed refusing to allow shipping companies to increase spot rates from China to the US and reinstating cancelled trips as of October 12.

Last Friday, the Ministry of Transportation and the interested authorities held a conference with all the shipping companies that cover the trans-Pacific lines to discuss issues such as the standardization of the maritime freight registry, the additional requirements on trans-Pacific routes, as the registration of capacity, routes and hours, and compliance with the supplement of previous registrations, among other issues.

Peter Sand, BIMCO's head analyst, stated: "This week, we have seen signs that fares have continued to increase on routes from Shanghai to both coasts of the US. Fares to the East Coast have increased more than fares to the West Coast. "According to Lars Jensen of Seaintelligence Consulting, "this would have an unprecedented impact on the market and could derail the shipping companies' ability to manage capacity in the face of extreme demand volatility." "Banning blank rides is not a problem right now, in a tight market, but we are very likely to see another recession and this will become problematic if carriers can't manage the capacity," he added.

For the past seven weeks, US West Coast rates have increased. "We are also seeing a strong impact on the CCFI (China Containerized Freight Index) contract rate index for the USWC, where contract rate levels have increased by 12% in the last four weeks and by 44% since the beginning of the pandemic," Jensen said. “Spot rates on the Shanghai Container Freight Index (SCFI) jumped to their highest level since September 2012, reaching $ 1,263.26 on August 28 and increasing by 54.4% since April 24, when the SCFI was at its lowest point this year," Sand added. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9250515/china-could-consider-banning-blank-sailings-to-lower-trans-pacific-freight-rates/?edition=5)

* 1. **The first 'track and trace' system for containers in Europe**

P&O Ferrymasters announced the launch of an advanced track and trace service for its container customers, making it the first major logistics business in Europe to introduce the technology. The service will allow customers to receive real-time updates on the precise location of their goods as they are transported by rail, road and sea. This innovation improves efficiency, reduces costs and increases the speed of information exchange.

The new track and trace system is designed to advance the digitalisation of trade and significantly improve customers’ visibility of the supply chain. The technology is being introduced this month and is expected to be extended to more than half of the company’s 4,000-strong fleet of 45 foot containers by the end of the year, with the aim of completing the roll out by the end of 2021. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9250321/p-o-ferrymasters-to-enable-smarter-flows-of-trade-with-first-track-and-trace-system-for-containers-in-europe/?edition=5)

* 1. **Real-time tracking of import movements at the Port of Rotterdam**

Combining data from various sources allows shippers who import goods through the port of Rotterdam to visualise the supply chain more clearly. A pilot project of the Port of Rotterdam Authority is now a fully-fledged application called Cargo Tracker. Portbase will be developing the application in the coming months in collaboration with the market. The expectation is that companies will be able to use Portbase by the end of this year to monitor all import movements and they will be notified automatically about any delays. No more calling the shipping company or emailing the terminal to ask where a container has got to: just log on to a portal and see immediately where the cargo is. This service, known as Cargo Tracker, is available to everyone and one of Rotterdam's aims with the new option is to establish its reputation as a smart port. Cargo Tracker is the successor to Boxinsider, an app developed by the Port of Rotterdam Authority in 2019.

The service is currently available for imports but it will soon extend to exports, promises Baan. 'In addition, we are working on our reliability on two fronts.

The effectiveness of chain visibility was already evident during the first pilot project, says Baan. 'A large warehouse participated. They assumed that it took four days to get an order to the warehouse after arrival in Rotterdam. All their processes were geared to that assumption. However, it emerged during the pilot project that the average was not four days but just under eight days. So they were able to fine-tune their warehouse planning and set up consultations with their logistical partners to improve the process. In addition, it is now clear at a glance whether, for example, it makes sense to transport the container by inland vessel or whether a truck is the best option. The decision about ongoing transport is also important in terms of sustainability.' [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9250298/real-time-tracking-of-import-movements-with-cargo-tracker/?edition=5)



* 1. **Hortifruit builds Chile’s first floating solar plant**

Berry giant Hortifruit has inaugurated its first floating solar panel plant at its farm in Santa Teresa de Agrícola Mataquito in Chile’s Region V. The opening of the new solar farm means 53 per cent of the energy consumed in Santa Teresa will now be renewable, while the farm’s CO2 emissions will also be reduced. This is the eighth active solar plant installed in the different operations of Hortifrut Chile, as our goal is to replace at least 50 per cent of the energy used in our fields and production plants,” said Juan Ignacio Allende, general manager of Hortifrut.

The scheme is part of the company’s commitment to the environment and communities, ensuring progress in the development and implementation of renewable energy in its operations throughout the country. According to Hortifrut, the floating solar plant provides additional benefits compared to conventional installations, such as helping to reduce water evaporation from the reservoir and saving space. It also increases the efficiency of the solar panels, since being in contact with the water reduces their operating temperature. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/182916/hortifrut-builds-chiles-first-floating-solar-plant)

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**Floral news**

* 1. **Flower industry struggling to recover from COVID-19 fallout**

Members of the South African cut flower value chain has expressed serious concern about the challenges currently faced by the industry, including air freight delays. According to industry insiders, while there had been some recovery since lockdown restrictions were eased, the local cut flower primary value chain was currently operating at 30% to 40% below its pre-pandemic productivity.

“Many [cut flower] growers have either stopped growing, or have diversified into vegetable growing. They are definitely not operating as profitably as before lockdown, [and] are under severe pressure”.

James Kingsley, owner of The Flower Company cut flower exporting business in Cape Town, told *Farmer’s Weekly* that the country’s cut flower value chain was in the “worst ever” situation, and that stakeholders were “struggling”. He said that while there had been a gradual resumption of international air freight operations from South Africa, these were not anywhere near pre-lockdown levels, and the flights were operating with a number of problems. “Of all of the airfreight exports that we are handling, we’re only at about 70% of pre-lockdown levels”. [Full article available here](https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/agri-news/south-africa/flower-industry-struggling-to-recover-from-covid-19-fallout/)

  **Health**

* 1. **Carrots and tomatoes may help reverse Alzheimer symptoms**

Researchers at the University of Southern California, who have recently conducted a study on how diet can influence the development of Alzheimer's, are obtaining promising results. They specifically studied two plant-based compounds: epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), a key ingredient in green tea, and ferulic acid (FA), found in carrots, tomatoes, rice, wheat, and oats.

The researchers analysed the memory and thinking abilities of healthy mice and mice with Alzheimer's-After three months a combination treatment that included both EGCG and FA fully restored spatial working memory, and the mice with Alzheimer performed just as well as the healthy ones," said lead author Terrence Town. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9250059/carrots-and-tomatoes-may-help-reverse-alzheimer-symptoms/?edition=5)

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