

**PMAC weekly update 19th to 26th November**

1. **Government agencies**: ICPR update; New biosecurity fines to be introduced; Brexit trade planning underway; DAWR draft pest risk analysis for cut flower and foliage imports; Nutritional labelling to GCC; Working Tariff Document reprint
2. **New Zealand News:**  Support to Pacific Horticultural and Market Access Plus programme; Have your say on a United Kingdom-New Zealand trade deal; Export NZ Trade Update; Blockchain system for exporters could speed trade up; Small business success is at the heart of a thriving Asia-Pacific region; A coalition of powerful business groups urges a complete overhaul of the resource management system; China's slump - is the dragon running out of fire?; Zespri takes top honours among stellar cast; What it takes to win the Ballance farm environment award; Increase in Pacific worker numbers good for horticulture; Central Otago frost - disaster avoided; Fears after peonies flattened by snow; CSM, Forestburg Eggplants; Can marijuana save this Maori town in New Zealand?; New Zealand blueberry growers expecting bumper sales; New Zealand police find record 190 kg of cocaine in banana container; Australia saves New Zealand from billion-dollar stink bug invasion
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; Rabobank: Global food price stability in 2019 threatened; Five large shipping companies want to create an association; Five large shipping companies want to create an association; Understanding Good Food Safety Culture; UK: Worker facial recognition feature launched for fruit and vegetable producers; US research: Robotic hands, sensitive enough to pick soft fruit; Orange juice, leafy greens & berries tied to decreased memory loss; "Onions help against antibiotic resistant bacterial, viral or fungal infections”

***Editors Comments***

*This week I’d like to start with a comment about what is not in this newsletter - commentary on Brexit. Time for decisions about Brexit are running out and the news changes almost daily. The EU has agreed to a draft deal but the UK Government also needs to agree. Whether they will is another matter. You will see however that MPI has Brexit planning guidelines up on its website for March 29th next year and MFAT is starting the consultation process to inform a UK FTA negotiation. Brexit is yet another destabilising factor for world trade which will affect New Zealand exporters to the EU.*

*This update however has a particularly diverse range of articles – many of them positive. For those looking to the future there are calls for a major review of the RMA. The article mentions an alignment of regulations which hopefully will bring more consistency into regulations affecting growers. There is also a report that major shipping companies which wish to standardise digitalisation and interoperability of the container transport industry. This facilitate the use of Blockchain and assist traceability. Its need is highlighted by another e coli event involving romaine lettuce in the USA where lack of traceability is preventing the source being identified*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **ICPR changes**

The ICPR for Tonga has been updated with amended commodity specific requirements for potatoes (Solanum tuberosum) which includes a link to Potato Cyst Nematode and Potato Wart Official Assurance Programme. [ICPRs by country](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/law-and-policy/requirements/importing-countries-phytosanitary-requirements/icprs-by-country/)

* 1. **New** **biosecurity fines to be introduced**

Arriving vessels, transitional and containment facilities and cruise ship passengers will face new infringement offences for sloppy biosecurity practices that expose New Zealand to risk from harmful diseases and pests. The new offences will introduce fines of $400 for individuals and $800 for other entities, such as companies, for low-level offending that is not significant enough to warrant prosecution.

Under the changes, Biosecurity New Zealand's quarantine officers will be able to infringe transitional and containment facilities that do not have an approved operator or don't comply with operating standards. International vessels will face fines for failing to notify Biosecurity New Zealand of their arrival and for failing to declare what steps they have taken to meet relevant craft risk management standards when asked to do so. The new offences will come into force early next year. Biosecurity New Zealand also intends introducing a new declaration process that will allow it to bring in similar fines for passengers who only temporarily leave cruise ship. [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/new-biosecurity-fines-to-be-introduced/)

* 1. **Brexit trade planning underway**

MPI has started planning for a potential "no deal" situation between the EU and the UK over Brexit. To be approved and in operation by 29 March 2019 the deal needs to be done by mid-December to permit an orderly transition. If there is no deal – then there will be real issues getting goods into the UK including:

* UK only has six days food supply so needs to be able to import food, but bottle-necks at UK ports are extremely likely
* There is limited availability for refrigerated containers at the ports while goods are being processed on arrival
* No third country exports will be accepted from the EU into the UK – only EU products will be able to be exported from the EU to the UK

 For more information, click [here](https://hortnz.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=aecda7aaa04d433b3c1267c8e&id=82ae692b32&e=2b699d0a67).

* 1. **DAWR draft pest risk analysis for cut flower and foliage imports.**

A draft pest risk analysis for cut flower and foliage has been released by DAWR in Australia for public consultation. Written comments and submissions are invited by 31 January 2019. The draft report assesses species of mites, aphids and thrips on the commercial fresh flower and foliage pathway, and proposed phytosanitary measures to mitigate the risks to achieve Australia’s acceptable level of protection.

If you have any queries or comments please discuss them with MPI’s technical team in Plant Exports. Please see below the link to biosecurity risk analysis for cut flowers and foliage. It is a significant piece of work by DAWR and provides significant insight into current and future approach to regulation. See

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/memos/ba2018-30>

* 1. **Nutritional labelling to GCC**

The Gulf Cooperation Council has notified a new standard on “Requirements for Nutritional Labelling” fresh fruit and vegetables are excluded from scope but dried or frozen items may be included. Exporters should check with their importers to clarify their inclusion. MPI doesn’t normally get involved in labelling but considered it may be useful for industry to be aware of these proposed changes . Comments on the document are due by 15th Jan 2019. Please contact [info@pmac.co.nz](mailto:info@pmac.co.nz) for a copy of the notification

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* 1. **Working Tariff Document reprint**

The Working Tariff Document is to be reprinted with an effective date of 30 December 2018. The reprint has been brought about by the significant changes to be made by the Tariff (CPTPP) Amendment Order 2018, bringing benefits to New Zealand from the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership from 30 December 2018.  
  
The reprint will also consolidate the extensive amendments that have been made to the WTD since the last reprint. [Read more here](https://www.customs.govt.nz/about-us/news/important-notices/working-tariff-document-reprint/)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Support to Pacific Horticultural and Market Access Plus programme**

Last week Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters announced that New Zealand will contribute $13.5 million over four years to support the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) Plus programme, a new joint New Zealand–Australian initiative.

PHAMA Plus will target select export products of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and other Pacific Island countries such as Niue and Cook Islands, and help producers, processors and exporters improve their productivity, quality of production, and capacity to meet export market biosecurity requirements. [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-announces-further-support-pacific-horticultural-and-market-access-plus)

* 1. **Have your say on a United Kingdom-New Zealand trade deal**

The Government is calling for public submissions on a post-Brexit free trade agreement with the United Kingdom. Submissions can be made in writing to UKFTA@mfat.govt.nz.  For more information on the UK-NZ FTA visit [www.mfat.govt.nz/ukfta](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/ukfta).    [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/have-your-say-united-kingdom-new-zealand-trade-deal)

**Export NZ**

* 1. **Export NZ** [**Trade Update**](https://businessnz.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jtlilrlt-aekytdhr-h/)

In this month's trade update: differences between China and the US disrupt APEC leaders meeting communique, presenting a challenging time for hosts Papua New Guinea.  [***More...***](https://businessnz.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jtlilrlt-aekytdhr-k/)

* 1. [**Blockchain system for exporters could speed trade up**](https://businessnz.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jtlilrlt-aekytdhr-yh/)

A blockchain-based system which would speed up the paperwork needed for exporting is being tested in New Zealand. ASB Bank and technology firm VerifyUnion unveiled the technology on Thursday with one of the country's biggest meat exporters Greenlea Premier Meats making the first trade with a large Korean importer.The technology creates a safe place where exporters can upload and share certificates of origin, government approvals, traceability information and other key documents with importers. [***More...***](https://businessnz.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jtlilrlt-aekytdhr-yk/)

**General**

* 1. **Small business success is at the heart of a thriving Asia-Pacific region**

The New Zealand members of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and the New Zealand International Business Forum (NZIBF) have warmly welcomed a new [report](http://info.marshall.usc.edu/academic/gpp/abac/SiteAssets/ABAC%202018%20Final%20Report.pdf) on how to help small businesses, including those led by women, to be more successful in trade and multi-country ‘global value chains’. The report is based on interviews with 500 businesses and policy-makers around the region, and provides some valuable concrete recommendations on how to help these firms to internationalise

The digital economy and services sector will be central to this. The research highlighted the importance of building basic business readiness as well as trade-related capability; the need for easier access to information about markets and trade requirements; the benefits of better access to finance, and the value of opening up opportunities for MSMEs through networking and sharing best practice.

* 1. **A coalition of powerful business groups urges a complete overhaul of the resource management system**

The Resource Reform NZ group , are calling for a complete overhaul of the resource management system in New Zealand. The Environment Minister David Parker had indicated a wide-ranging review commencing in 2019. Stage one would reverse some changes made by the previous Government in 2017. Stage two would be a more comprehensive review of the resource management system and build on Government priorities in urban development, climate change and freshwater. Resource Reform NZ has been calling on the Coalition Government to be bold and visionary by undertaking a review that covers the whole planning system including the complexity of the laws, the interrelations between the responsibilities of local, regional and central government and the lack of funding to ensure roles are completed by appropriately resourced organisations. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/108708515/A-coalition-of-powerful-business-groups-urges-a-complete-overhaul-of-the-resource-management-system)

* 1. **China's slump - is the dragon running out of fire?**

Amid a trade war and rising tension with the US, China is grappling with signs of a sharp slowdown in economic growth – one that could cause serious problems for New Zealand exporters in coming months. Infrastructure and construction growth have slowed, Chinese property prices are soft, share prices have plunged into a bear market and there have been unexpectedly bad numbers for car and retail sales. And all that before the US tariffs on Chinese exports have even started to bite. It is possible there will be further softening next year. *This comprehensive article summarises a range of views and encourages New Zealand exporters to continue to develop other markets and recognise China’s growth cannot continue at the same levels that it did in the 2000’s.* [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/rural-business/news/article.cfm?c_id=1504329&objectid=12163797)

* 1. **Zespri takes top honours among stellar cast**

Zespri has taken out top honours as Deloitte Digital/Marsh Company of the Year in the 2018 Top 200 Awards — partly due to an impressive 38 per cent lift in net profit and record payments to its growers. This year, the judges said Zespri was a deserving winner of Company of the Year, recognising that its superb returns represent the culmination of its long-term premium brand-led strategy. Thanks to the company's turnaround since the Psa outbreak in 2010, they say the kiwifruit industry is now a great success story for New Zealand innovation.

Given Zespri's success, it is plain to see why Peter McBride was awarded New Zealand Herald Chairperson of the Year. In the role since 2013, he was recognised by judges for his understated style as a consultative chair, running a highly cohesive, functional board. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12163945)

The kiwifruit marketing body — which represents 2500 New Zealand growers — lifted profits by 38 per cent to $101.8 million in 2018. And it expects higher returns still in 2019, forecasting earnings of up to $180m and a dividend per share of up to $1.40, compared to 76 cents per share last season.

[***More...***](https://businessnz.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jtlilrlt-aekytdhr-jj/)

* 1. **What it takes to win the Ballance farm environment award**

Trying different things, learning from mistakes, and working with Mother Nature are part of the ethos of this year's national Ballance farm environment award winners, Bay of Plenty kiwifruit growers Mark and Catriona White.

The Whites are not only at the front of the pack in terms of lightening their environmental footprint – the award judges praised their respect for the Maori principles of kaitiakitanga (guardian, conserver) – they're also certified organic (BioGro) and they're the first orchardists to win the New Zealand crown. A decade ago the couple bought a 13ha grazing block on Catriona's parents' organic dairy farm near Opotiki. They did most of the orchard development work themselves, pushing through trial and error to the point where last year – despite cyclones and a very wet and windy Autumn - they produced 23,483 trays of Zespri Organic Green kiwifruit and 38,362 trays of Zespri Organic Sungold (G3). *The article describes how the Whites have worked with nature to ensure the best balance grow a healthy crop.*

Catriona firmly believes the millennial generation is a "game changer" for food producers. They're willing to pay a premium for food they see as pesticide-free and safer, "the kind of fresh, organic, natural whole foods their grandparents or great grandparents ate. "In the next five years, perhaps 80 per cent of millennials will become parents, and they're going to be purchasing those kinds of foods for their kids."Mark notes that at the other end of the spectrum, baby boomers with lots of disposable income are also waking up to organic. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12164493)

**Industry news**

* 1. **Increase in Pacific worker numbers good for horticulture**

The kiwifruit industry welcomes more Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers for next season, as the government has approved a large increase in the number of RSE workers by 1,750, to reach 12,850 nationally. “The additional RSE workers will contribute to alleviating the pressure of the labour shortage but the industry will still need to work hard to attract the rest of the workforce required,” Johnson says. RSE workers make up fewer than 20% of the seasonal workforce in kiwifruit.  [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9047036/new-zealand-kiwifruit-industry-welcomes-more-workers/)

Horticulture New Zealand is pleased Social Development Minister Carmel Sepuloni and Immigration Minister Iain Lees-Galloway have increased the amount of Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers who will be available for the upcoming busy fruit harvest season. Harvest and pruning are intensive periods that require about 30,000 workers; about one-third of these workers come from the RSE scheme. The majority of RSE workers are in New Zealand from March through to May for the kiwifruit and apple harvests. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9039816/increase-in-pacific-worker-numbers-good-for-horticulture/)

**Crop news**

* 1. **Central Otago frost - disaster avoided**

Central Otago winegrowers and orchardists are feeling "positive" about the upcoming season and are pleased to have dodged a bullet in the form of a once in a lifetime frost. Extremely dry air conditions at the time of the -5oC frost meant there was a "freeze" rather than a frost, Dicey said. The phenomenon had been "totally, 100% unheard of" for at least 60 years, but the unusual nature of the conditions meant there was very little damage and viticulturists had "dodged a bullet", only losing about 5% to 10% of grapes overall.

Some orchardists have lost 10% to 20% of their cherry crop because of the October frosts, but  the resulting wider spacing of cherries on branches means the fruit may grow bigger, so tonnage could be about the same as last season. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9045605/new-zealand-central-otago-frost-disaster-avoided/)

* 1. **Fears after peonies flattened by snow**

Naseby peony growers have an anxious wait to assess the damage to their flowers. Snow in Central Otago last week flattened a good portion of crops just as harvest season was beginning. [Full article available here](http://www.floraldaily.com/article/9046037/new-zealand-fears-after-peonies-flattened-by-snow/)

* 1. **CSM, Forestburg Eggplants:**

Kees van der Eijk and Svend Pedersen are business partners who co-own CSM Limited, established in January 2001.  CSM limited are the largest eggplant growers, by area and volume, in New Zealand.  Together they have built an amazing high-tech greenhouse facility with some brilliant ingenuity.   Since converting from capsicum production to eggplant production in 2005, Kees and Svend have together transformed the NZ eggplant market. *This comprehensive article tells the story of their business and how it has developed and changed over the years.* [Full article available here](http://www.grower2grower.co.nz/news/post/csm--forestburg-eggplants/)

* 1. **Can marijuana save this Maori town in New Zealand?**

An article from the New York times - As New Zealand prepares to legalize the production of medicinal cannabis, companies are racing to secure the first and biggest slices of a market that has proved lucrative in the United States and Canada. One of those companies is also racing to save the town of Ruatoria, population 750 and falling. “Employment would make a huge difference.” And so Ms. Kupenga, like hundreds of other residents of Ruatoria and nearby towns, became a shareholder in Hikurangi Cannabis, a start-up founded by two local men, Manu Caddie and Panapa Ehau. They say they want to bring more than 100 jobs to the area in the next two years. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9045003/can-marijuana-save-this-maori-town-in-new-zealand/)

* 1. **New Zealand blueberry growers expecting bumper sales**

Blueberry growers are gearing up for another good season, as more and more New Zealanders enjoy the fruit. New Zealand's blueberry industry is rapidly expanding with 600 hectares planted at present in both the North and South Islands. The berries are proving increasingly popular with New Zealanders, with almost half of all households purchasing fresh blueberries last year. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9044623/new-zealand-blueberry-growers-expecting-bumper-sales/)

**Other**

* 1. **New Zealand police find record 190 kg of cocaine in banana container**

New Zealand police have made the country’s largest cocaine seizure, with 190 kilograms of the drug found in a container of bananas shipped from Panama in August. The bust came after the shipment was identified as suspicious following an investigation into an Australia-based organized crime group.

[Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9044626/new-zealand-police-find-record-kg-of-cocaine-in-banana-container/)

**Biosecurity**

* 1. **Australia saves New Zealand from billion-dollar stink bug invasion**

Australian officials have stopped a ship bound for New Zealand after it was found to be carrying stink bugs.   The ship, the Armacup Triumph, was intercepted in Australia and has been sent offshore. It was due to dock in Auckland on November 5, but is now at anchor off the coast of Queensland until a treatment plan can be agreed. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9044989/australia-saves-new-zealand-from-billion-dollar-stink-bug-invasion/)



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 Apples, Fresh, Pears, Fresh** For 2018/2019, apple and pear production is forecast to increase over last year,[Fresh Deciduous Fruit Annual\_Buenos Aires\_Argentina\_11-16-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Fresh%20Deciduous%20Fruit%20Annual_Buenos%20Aires_Argentina_11-16-2018.pdf)
2. **Australia 2018 Exporter Guide** Australia is a prosperous and industrialized nation with a stable economy.   [Exporter Guide\_Canberra\_Australia\_11-7-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide_Canberra_Australia_11-7-2018.pdf)
3. **Austria 2018** In Austria, consumer-oriented food and beverage products remain the most important agricultural import category from the United States.   [Exporter Guide\_Vienna\_Austria\_11-16-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide_Vienna_Austria_11-16-2018.pdf)
4. **Austria FAIRS Export Certificate Report 2018**This report covers specific export certificate requirements for Austria, [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Vienna\_Austria\_10-29-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Vienna_Austria_10-29-2018.pdf)
5. **Bulgaria Stone Fruit Annual Report** Post forecasts that Bulgaria’s stone fruit crop in marketing year (MY) 2018 will be stagnant.  [Stone Fruit Annual Report\_Sofia\_Bulgaria\_11-13-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Stone%20Fruit%20Annual%20Report_Sofia_Bulgaria_11-13-2018.pdf)
6. **Chile Export Fruit Crops Put at Risk due to Unexpected Hail Storms** On Monday, November 12, a highly unusual hail storm damaged fruit crops that were in development in the O’Higgins region, one of the top fruit producing areas in Chile.  The hail damaged fruit crops including cherries, apples, pears, blueberries, nectarines, plums, and peaches.    [Export Fruit Crops Put at Risk due to Unexpected Hail Storms \_Santiago\_Chile\_11-15-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Export%20Fruit%20Crops%20Put%20at%20Risk%20due%20to%20Unexpected%20Hail%20Storms%20_Santiago_Chile_11-15-2018.pdf)
7. **China General Administration of Customs Reorganization** In March 2018, China’s State Council announced a government reorganization aimed at improving efficiency and customer service in many parts of the Chinese government. [General Administration of Customs Reorganization\_Beijing\_China - Peoples Republic of\_11-14-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/General%20Administration%20of%20Customs%20Reorganization_Beijing_China%20-%20Peoples%20Republic%20of_11-14-2018.pdf)
8. **Czech Republic: Exporter Guide 2018**  This exporter guide provides practical tips for U.S. exporters on how to conduct business in the Czech Republic [Exporter Guide\_Prague\_Czech Republic\_11-19-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Exporter%20Guide_Prague_Czech%20Republic_11-19-2018.pdf)
9. **Czech Republic FAIRS Export Certificate Report 2018**   The Czech Republic has implemented all EU regulations regarding required export certifications.  [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Prague\_Czech Republic\_11-1-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Prague_Czech%20Republic_11-1-2018.pdf)
10. **Germany FAIRS Export Certificate Report** Germany is a Member State of the European Union (EU) and applies the certification requirements described in the EU-28 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Certification 2018 Report.  [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Berlin\_Germany\_11-13-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Berlin_Germany_11-13-2018.pdf)
11. **Hungary FAIRS Export Certificate Report – 2018** Hungary has fully implemented EU regulations for the imports of products of animal and plant origin.  U. [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report\_Budapest\_Hungary\_10-24-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Report_Budapest_Hungary_10-24-2018.pdf)
12. **South Africa Apples, Fresh, Pears, Fresh, Grapes, Table, Fresh Deciduous Fruit Exports Expected to Rebound from the Drought** The export of pears and apples is forecast to increase by 4 percent in the 2018/19 [Fresh Deciduous Fruit Annual\_Pretoria\_South Africa - Republic of\_11-8-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Fresh%20Deciduous%20Fruit%20Annual_Pretoria_South%20Africa%20-%20Republic%20of_11-8-2018.pdf)

**Business**

* 1. **Rabobank: Global food price stability in 2019 threatened**

A “melting pot” of risks – including US trade war with China and extreme weather – threaten global food price stability next year, according to research from Rabobank, the specialist food and agribusiness bank.

In short the trade war between the US and China has shaped 2018. If, as expected, it continues into 2019, it will alter global trade flows in the year ahead and beyond. Soybeans will be most affected. The US dollar is currently at an 18-month high and it is anticipated to continue to strengthen into late 2019 before stabilising. US exports will subsequently continue to suffer from a lack of competitiveness abroad, further challenging US farmer profitability.

With an 80 per cent chance of El Niño being formally declared by the end of the winter in the Northern Hemisphere, Rabobank expects the weather event to drive further uncertainty across commodities markets. [Full article available here](https://www.rabobank.com/en/press/search/2018/20181115-rabobank-global-food-price-stability-in-2019-threatened-by-trade-wars.html)

* 1. **Five large shipping companies want to create an association**

Five container transport companies want to create an association with the purpose of paving the way for the digitalization, standardization, and interoperability of the container transport industry.

The executives of AP Moller - Maersk, CMA CGM, Hapag-Lloyd, MSC, and Ocean Network Express are discussing the creation of common information technology standards that will be available openly and free of charge to all interested parties in the container transport industry. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9045826/five-large-shipping-companies-want-to-create-an-association/)

 **Food safety**

* 1. **Another E. coli outbreak in the USA**

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration have released a statement saying ."Avoid eating romaine lettuce - it may be contaminated with E.coli." They are advising consumers to avoid eating romaine lettuce until more is learned about the outbreak. It should be noted this outbreak and the consumer advisories are limited to romaine lettuce only.

 No grower, supplier, distributor or brand has been identified in the current outbreak, in which 32 people across 11 states fell ill.

A media release by a group of open field produce industry associations is urging an industry-wide voluntary withdrawal of all romaine currently in marketing channels and held in inventory. For more information on the consumer advisory, visit the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-11-18/index.html) or [FDA](https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm626330.htm) websites. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9046162/situations-like-this-remind-us-why-traceability-and-transparency-are-so-important-in-our-food-system/)

* 1. **Understanding Good Food Safety Culture**

The article provides content is an extract from Dr Luning’s webinar on Thursday 15 November 2018 hosted by The University of Sydney, ARC Training Centre for Food Safety in the Fresh Produce Industry, and the Fresh Produce Safety Centre Australia & New Zealand.  
  
Food safety culture is the product of shared values, beliefs and norms that affect mindset and behaviour towards food safety across an organisation. Food safety culture is not prescriptive, however, the first step requires businesses to assess their food safety culture. There are some tools available – [see attached presentation](https://fpsc-anz.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c73673335989d1fc2801530c8&id=7b4b1a4563&e=f93013672e) – that provide ideas on whether the issues and challenges are in the people (attitude, mindset) or if there can be improvements to the circumstances that facilitate people doing their job.



**Sustainability**

* 1. **UK: Worker facial recognition feature launched for fruit and vegetable producers**

To make it easier for fruit and vegetable producers to manage their seasonal workers, Consus Fresh Solutions has developed a new Facial Recognition feature for its traceability software. Machine learning is used to identify staff and permit access, making clocking on and off a thing of the past and improving allocation of tasks and accountability. The system compares the photograph in the human resources (HR) database with that of the person trying to enter the packhouse. If recognised, the worker is allowed access and can be given a task, which is then logged on the system.

Consus has developed an intelligent software-based system that reduces the burden of audits and improves productivity. By linking HR records to labour deployment the facial recognition module enables accurate costing of all products and improved traceability. If there is a product recall further up in the chain you may need to be able to identify exactly who was working on a specific product line on a particular day if later audited by a customer. “The facial recognition system works with the procedures that a packhouse will already have in place but instead of RFID tags it uses a camera to identify the staff. Details are recorded electronically and updates or amendments made remotely.″

[Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/9044970/uk-worker-facial-recognition-feature-launched-for-fruit-and-vegetable-producers/)

* 1. **US research: Robotic hands, sensitive enough to pick soft fruit**

A new breed of robots with humanoid hands capable of performing delicate tasks such as picking soft fruit has been made possible by a technological breakthrough from Stanford University scientists.

Researchers in the US have developed electronic gloves designed to give robots an improved ability to touch and grasp delicate objects in a similar way to human hands. The technology is likely to be useful for companies developing farming robots, which need to be able to handle delicate crops without damaging them. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9046472/us-research-robotic-hands-sensitive-enough-to-pick-soft-fruit/)

  **Health**

* 1. **Orange juice, leafy greens & berries tied to decreased memory loss**

Eating leafy greens, dark orange and red vegetables and berry fruits, as well as drinking orange juice may be associated with a lower risk of memory loss over time in men. These are tentative conclusions of a study published in the November 21, 2018, online issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

The study looked at 27,842 men with an average age of 51 who were all health professionals.

The men who consumed the most vegetables were 34 percent less likely to develop poor thinking skills than the men who consumed the least amount of vegetables. The men who drank orange juice every day were 47 percent less likely to develop poor thinking skills than the men who drank less than one serving per month

The researchers also found that people who ate larger amounts of fruits and vegetables 20 years earlier were less likely to develop thinking and memory problems, whether or not they kept eating larger amounts of fruits and vegetables about six years before the memory test. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9046490/orange-juice-leafy-greens-berries-tied-to-decreased-memory-loss/)

* 1. **"Onions help against antibiotic resistant bacterial, viral or fungal infections”**

Antibiotic resistance is a deadly threat to modern medicine and to mankind. Now we are in the entrance of post-antibiotic era. Researchers are continuously looking to use plant parts to prevent infection including bacterial, viral and fungal. Investigation on the bulbs from Persian shallot (Allium stipitatum) shows antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties.  They are used to lower blood cholesterol and sugar levels. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/9046668/onions-help-against-antibiotic-resistant-bacterial-viral-or-fungal-infections/)

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