

**PMAC weekly update 26th October to 2nd November**

1. **Government agencies**: ICPR Changes, WTO Notifications, PMAC AGM and Annual Report
2. **New Zealand News:**  Zespri welcomes new Fresh Carriers vessel MV Kowhai into its shipping fleet, Council and kiwifruit industry collaborate to control pest plant; Potato growers still chipper, Growers call for regulation change in Horowhenua, Strawberry farm anticipates losing one-third of its crops due to lack of pickers, Let the fruit pickers in, Concerning' times for Nelson Tasman fruit growers as harvest approaches, Fruit-picking jobs going begging: Who is really to blame?, Horticulture work 'really hard' at first, but there's decent money to be made, New Zealanders called up for kiwifruit duty, People Capability Manager ready to promote careers in horticulture, New 5+ A Day Recipe eBook, Scientists are cracking kiwifruit pollination, DOC summary reveals split views , Medicinal cannabis firm Rua Bioscience debuts on NZX , Government assigns $38.5m to plant imports
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; CAP reforms “insufficient”, 'EU fruit & vegetable sector managed to absorb shock of first Covid-wave thanks to producer organizations', Sydney empty container backlog intensifies due to congestion; Traceability a “game changer” for citrus industry, Asia Briefing looks at China post-Covid, Healthy diet trend on rise, Pandemic ‘sparks rise in demand for green products, AU: New project to help horticultural exporters, Call for comment on irradiation of fruits and vegetables, Predictive analysis: How it is used in the industry to drive business, Mastercard to open up to small farmers in south Indian farm sector, "Transforming UK horticulture sector through use of Hydrogen-as-an-energy-service", Phased enforcement of environmental registration and environmental certification

**Comment**

Another interesting set of articles this week. The lack of labour dominates the New Zealand section and there are a number of articles in the international section that provide interesting reflections on the ongoing effects of the pandemic.

I’d like to comment today however on a documentary not mentioned in main text of the document . Namely David Attenborough’s “A life on our planet” This is a very powerful “eye witness” statement from a well-known 93 year old about the dramatic changes that have taken place in the environment during his life time. It is very sobering and if you have access to Netflix is essential viewing . It provides even greater urgency for movements already accepted and underway across New Zealand’s primary industry . David identifies 7 initiatives that will make a difference - green energy ( as opposed to fossil fuels), slowing population growth by eradicating poverty, adopting a more plant based diet and sustainable farming methods. He then provides a couple of examples to show where these initiatives are already making a difference. I am confident it will provide those who watch it the courage and conviction to make changes. A good summary of the documentary can [be found here](https://medium.com/climate-conscious/david-attenboroughs-witness-statement-59a2c86f5ec)

1. **Agency news** 
   1. **ICPR changes**

The ICPR for Israel has been updated with a [link to Israeli Plant Protection Inspection Service treatment manual in Section 2.9 Treatments.](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/655) [Importing Countries Phytosanitary Requirements](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/law-and-policy/requirements/icpr-importing-countries-phytosanitary-requirements/?utm_source=notification-email)

* 1. **WTO Notifications**

Please find attached the most recent WTO notifications from countries that are considering changes to their plant import requirements for specific products. If you have any concerns about the notifications being presented please contact [Plant.exports@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Plant.exports@mpi.govt.nz) so that they can potentially make a submission to the notifying country. Changes notified over the last week include:

* Canada and Japan MRL’s

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

* 1. **PMAC AGM and Annual Report**

Last Wednesday PMAC held its AGM and released its annual report. The report contains a summary of how the funds cost recovered by MPI as part of the phytosanitary certification fees are used to support exports. [For a copy of the PMAC annual report see here](http://www.pmac.co.nz/uploads/1/4/1/0/14100200/pmac_2020_annual_report..pdf)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Zespri welcomes new Fresh Carriers vessel MV Kowhai into its shipping fleet**

The New Zealand kiwifruit industry will be boosted by three specialised reefer vessels following significant investment by operator Fresh Carriers, underpinned by their confidence in the kiwifruit industry and their longstanding relationship with Zespri. The first of the three vessels, MV Kowhai, arrived at the Port of Tauranga last week to begin loading 4,219 tonnes of Zespri Kiwifruit ahead of its maiden kiwifruit voyage bound for Japan. In recognition of the fact kiwifruit would be the main cargo transported, Fresh Carriers provided the kiwifruit industry with the opportunity to name the three new ships. Former grower Lynda Hawes’ suggestion of Kowhai was selected, symbolising the golden kiwifruit that continues to strengthen the bond between New Zealand and Japan, with the remaining two ships to be named Kakariki (Green) and Whero (Red), ensuring a full spread of Zespri’s portfolio of golden, green and red kiwifruit.

“Each year Fresh Carriers transports around 190,000 tonnes of kiwifruit from New Zealand, and we’re pleased to deliver the first of our three brand new vessels that will ship fruit to some of Zespri’s top Asian markets,” says Mr Nisbet. “The new vessels can ship more trays of kiwifruit through a higher deck, and the engines are built to the latest standards in fuel efficiency. New technology in the vessels also enable remote monitoring of fruit conditioning. Zespri are one of the most successful fruit companies worldwide and one of the most committed to chartering specialised reefer vessels for their shipping needs. It is evident that maintaining control of their logistics into key global markets has underpinned Zespri’s success.” [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9263859/zespri-welcomes-new-fresh-carriers-vessel-mv-kowhai-into-its-shipping-fleet/?edition=5)

* 1. **Council and kiwifruit industry collaborate to control pest plant**

A new agreement has confirmed a decade of action against the pest plant wild kiwifruit as part of the efforts to control its spread in the Bay of Plenty. The kiwifruit industry, represented by KVH, has partnered with the Regional Council in helping manage wild kiwifruit since 1998 and this agreement will ensure the work continues over the next 10 years. Kiwifruit Vine Health and New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated had asked that wild kiwifruit be declared a ‘progressive control pest’ in the Council’s new Regional Pest Management Plan. The agreement will see increased effort to control wild kiwifruit, building on the collective work we’ve been doing with industry since 1998,” Mr Ingle said.

Under the new agreement, Kiwifruit Vine Health will manage the administration involved in the running of the programme while also contributing $150,000 annually towards control costs and surveillance costs. Regional Council will contribute $100,000 per annum and support Kiwifruit Vine Health in gathering landowner contributions. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9263826/council-and-kiwifruit-industry-collaborate-to-control-pest-plant/?edition=5)

* 1. **Potato growers still chipper**

Supplying McDonald's with all their potatoes means a Canterbury grower has been able to avoid the worst effects of a Covid-19-inspired glut of overseas potatoes on the New Zealand market.

Canterbury-based Hewson Farms produces around 22,000 tonnes of potatoes every year - 12,000 tonnes of which end up as McDonald's fries. However, a 2.6 million tonne surplus of the vegetable in Europe – floods of spuds – is causing headaches for New Zealand growers and processors.

"There has been an enormous glut of potatoes (in Europe) some of which found its way to markets here," says the company's owner Ross Hewson. While he says the impact is hard to gauge, the company is flagging a 10 per cent cut in planting this growing season.

McDonald's has committed to continue sourcing its potatoes from McCain and Hewson says without that his operation would not grow potatoes at all: "McDonald's spokesperson Simon Kenny says it sources the majority of ingredients from local suppliers and has been working with McCain Foods since 1990. McCain supplies the more than 170 McDonald's restaurants with potatoes for 100 per cent of their fries. "We value the long term relationship we have with our suppliers and we have no plans to change," he says.

In media reports earlier this year, Potatoes NZ said trade data showed exports of frozen potato products from the European Union to New Zealand were up about 50 per cent in June. It called on Kiwis buying chips in a café, restaurant or supermarket to check the label and ensure they were buying products of New Zealand origin. "They may buy cheaper chips but the long-term consequences really lie with what that does to the New Zealand potato industry," spokeswoman Gemma Carroll was reported as saying. She urged businesses seeking a cheaper option to look at long-term rather than short-term gains. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/sponsored-stories/potato-growers-still-chipper/7QFVRGBPTFZ6GBOJYQKBSZ6EMY/)

* 1. **Growers call for regulation change in Horowhenua**

Growers and Horticulture NZ have been among those to present submissions to a panel considering Horizons (Manawatu-Whanganui) Regional Council’s proposed Plan Change 2. Although growers and Hort NZ support the plan change’s goal of improving water quality in the region, they say treating commercial vegetable growing in the same way as pastoral farming fails to recognise the differences between the two and threatens an industry crucial to NZ’s fresh green vegetable supply. Instead of being judged alongside pastoral farming, they favour an approach where those growers would have to comply with industry-based best practice standards and those growers not already meeting those would be provided with a timeframe and pathway to get up to speed.

Vegetable growers will be subject to high costs to prepare and lodge an application for resource consent with a heavy burden of proof of environmental effects and the effectiveness of best practical option mitigations with no certainty of outcome. “No commercial growers were consulted with in the formation of the revisions included in proposed Plan Change 2 and no feedback from commercial vegetable growers was included after it was first shared prior to public notification,” he said.

“Woodhaven considers that the proposed mechanism puts mass vegetable production at risk through imposing consent processes that cannot guarantee security of operation far enough into the future,” he said. He says this lack of security undermines the confidence of commercial vegetable growers in their ability to operate sustainably. Woodhaven Gardens has already spent plenty of time and money reducing its environmental footprint, in particular nitrogen and sediment loss. The suite of practices includes more gradual fertiliser delivery, utilising GPS, growing maize as a nitrogen catch crop and retiring about 18% of low-yielding growing land.

The changes, which have included significant investment in precision agriculture, have cost about $4.5 million in capital expenditure so far, and another $2m a year to run. They are not changes that growers can make overnight, which is why he says a consenting pathway is needed. Some of the changes made at Woodhaven, the 2020 Regional Supreme Winner at the Horizons Ballance Farm Environment Awards have only been possible because it’s a large-scale operation, so may be unrealistic for smaller growers. [Full article available here](https://farmersweekly.co.nz/section/horticulture/view/growers-call-for-regulation-change)

* 1. **Strawberry farm anticipates losing one-third of its crops due to lack of pickers**

Strawberry Fields, a berry farm near Hamilton, is struggling to find fruit-picking workers due to a nationwide labour shortage. Farm owner Darien McFadden is anticipating one-third of his 10-hectare commercial crop will rot due to the labour shortage. “Fruit will go to waste and it will create both a supply and demand issue for both export and domestic markets,” said Mr McFadden. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/agribusiness/123179398/strawberry-farm-anticipates-losing-onethird-of-its-crops-due-to-lack-of-pickers-)

* 1. **Let the fruit pickers in**

How long are we going to keep pretending Kiwis are going to fill tens of thousands of fruit picking jobs?

The boss of Summerfruit NZ reckons it’s already too late to stop huge losses and about 20 percent of crops already is going to be lost. *This article considers two of the common statements made and comments on them:*

* *Just lift pay rates, - but workers can earn close to $30 an hour if they work fast.*
* *The work is seasonal and so people will have to move* - It’s a nice idea that we can plug 10,000 fruit picking and other RSE jobs with Kiwis who are looking or work or on the dole. But it’s not realistic. [Full article available here](https://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/on-air/heather-du-plessis-allan-drive/video/heather-du-plessis-allan-let-the-fruit-pickers-in/)
  1. **Concerning' times for Nelson Tasman fruit growers as harvest approaches**

Nelson’s apple growers have grave concerns for next year’s harvest, unless an allowance is made for overseas workers to come into the country. Growers in Nelson say while they are getting by on current staff during the apple thinning period, there is expected to be a massive labour shortage by the time the harvest arrives in March. *The article notes that some RSE workers have stayed on but there will still be a lack of labour, growers cannot understand what the concern is since islands like Tonga are Covid free*

“From a regional perspective in Nelson we’ll be OK for thinning, talking amongst colleagues and looking at our own situation, there seems to be enough RSE, working holiday people, and Kiwis to do that job.

“But there could be impending disaster coming, if we don’t get a good chunk of RSE workers back before the harvest.” *Its noted there are* only about 12,000 people on working holiday visas in New Zealand, down from the previous figure of 75,000. For RSE workers those figures had dropped from 14,000 for last year’s harvest to about 5000.

ANZ agriculture economist Susan Kilsby says the sector’s crisis would be felt long-term. While orchards would be under-picked this summer, the reduced quality of the harvest could impact New Zealand’s reputation for high-quality produce. “We’re ranked right up there with the highest yield and quality in the world because we go back to orchards to pick them three or four times, picking only the ripest apples, for instance. With a shortage of labour, you might only do one pick. That has a quality and quantity impact, which could damage our long-term reputation.” [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/123188063/concerning-times-for-nelson-tasman-fruit-growers-as-harvest-approaches)

* 1. **Fruit-picking jobs going begging: Who is really to blame?**

*This article gives the best overview of the current situation*. The nation’s fruit growers are in crisis. A [massive labour shortage has left the horticulture and viticulture sectors facing a nightmare harvest](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/123055187/thousands-of-jobs-go-begging-because-unemployed-kiwis-wont-take-them). Fruit will grow as it always does in the abundant fields of Hawke’s Bay, the Bay of Plenty, and Central Otago, but there aren’t enough hands to pick it.

Richard Palmer, chief executive of Summerfruit New Zealand, says the horticulture sector might not be able to pick 30 per cent of its harvest this year, a shortfall which could see it lose $1.25 billion in export earnings. The fruit industry says it will be thousands of workers short when the season begins. The first cherries are due to be picked next month. “In a region like Central Otago, that’s about $50 million of export earnings. The region’s tourism industry has already plummeted. It would be economic suicide to throw this season away.”

What can be done to solve the fruit industry’s labour crisis? Making the visa system more flexible would help. Currently, people on working holiday visas can transfer to a Supplementary Seasonal Employment (SSE) visa to stay here if their old one expires between October and March. But [growers say 2500 people whose visas expired before October are finding it difficult to get an SSE without a confirmed job, and may have to leave the country](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/122848586/visa-changes-will-help-ease-labour-shortage-crisis-for-kiwi-growers).

We also need to reassess our strict border controls. RSE workers from Pacific Island nations pose little risk to our Covid-19 defences, with case numbers low across the islands throughout the pandemic. The Government should look at ways to open up the border to low-risk key workers, or at the very least, allow them to quarantine as they enter and leave New Zealand, perhaps even onsite.

It seems [unfair that the US cast and crew of Avatar, and golf course designers for billionaires, are allowed to enter New Zealand](https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/celebrities/123145008/kirsten-dunsts-nanny-deemed-an-essential-worker-enters-nz), while essential workers from Covid-free countries are prohibited. The pandemic has highlighted our reliance on key workers and the domestic food supply chain, so it’s surprising the Government has offered so little support so far. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/opinion-analysis/300138256/fruitpicking-jobs-going-begging-who-is-really-to-blame)

* 1. **Horticulture work 'really hard' at first, but there's decent money to be made**

 Summerfruit NZ chairman and chief executive of Cromwell-based orchard 45 South Tim Jones says stone fruit producers in Central Otago are worried about labour shortages this harvesting season.

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Robert Doig spent three months pruning vines in Canterbury to take a break from his usual job as an auto industry sparkie. The 31-year-old Cantabrian said he earned decent money in the spell from June to August, got fit, grew some muscles and loved working outdoors. Now, he’s recommending horticulture work to people who’ve been left jobless as a result of the Covid-19 economic recession.

Cantabrian Robert Doig enjoyed a spell pruning vines. Skill, not youth and muscle, was the key to success working for piece rates. And, he said: “It was easy enough to equal or better my original pay of $31-an-hour, and some days was making up to $40-an-hour if it went well.

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In a bid to attract more short-term young workers, Horticulture NZ and the New Zealand Apples and Pears Inc have launched a jobs service to place city youngsters in fruit-picking jobs.The service is called Pick Tiki, and was created by recent university graduates Emma Boase and Summer Wynyard, who recognised the work opportunities that exist for young people in the summer hotspots of Hawke’s Bay, Nelson and Central Otago. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/123203930/horticulture-work-really-hard-at-first-but-theres-decent-money-to-be-made)

* 1. **New Zealanders called up for kiwifruit duty**

It's that time of the year as Bay of Plenty kiwifruit orchards put out the call for more than 14,000 workers to help prepare the vines for next season. "We're moving into the October to December period, which is our second-largest peak for work requirements after the harvest period which will start in March."

"Clearly with Covid that situation is a little bit unclear at the moment, so we're not entirely sure that we'll have enough of those people and we're actually really keen to attract New Zealanders and locals into the industry. *This article has encouraging comments from locals who have started to work in horticulture* [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/local-focus-new-zealanders-called-up-for-kiwifruit-duty/ZSR3A4FPINMVKPNVFNXABC2RRQ/)

* 1. **People Capability Manager ready to promote careers in horticulture**

Emma Boase has been appointed to the new role of People Capability Manager at Horticulture New Zealand. The role has been created to help develop and promote careers in the horticulture industry.

As the new People Capability Manager for HortNZ, Emma will be supporting and coordinating the established nationwide network of Career Progression Managers.

Emma has considerable experience in promoting careers in horticulture. She has worked on various research and engagement programmes in her previous role as a Capability Research and Engagement Coordinator for NZ Apples and Pears. Emma also has experience developing graduate placement programmes while working as a Horticulture Engagement Coordinator for Massey University and HortNZ.  [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9262540/new-zealand-people-capability-manager-ready-to-promote-careers-in-horticulture/)

** Bits and pieces**

* 1. **New 5+ A Day Recipe eBook**

Written by Niki Bezzant, the recipes feature fresh fruit and vegetables in season during spring: asparagus, avocados, new potatoes, tomatoes, tangelos, fresh herbs and more.  
   
The book is designed to give inspiration for those cooking for one or two. Niki says,  “Here’s a simple, delicious week of food, packed with the goodness of fresh fruit and vegetables, that’s inexpensive, doesn’t repeat the same meal over and over, and will inspire you to take the time to cook this spring.   
The ebook is available for download from our website, [link here.](https://5aday.us20.list-manage.com/track/click?u=6da879b6faf5dc2e07794a680&id=2257b03d9e&e=0ff94fdc1c)

* 1. **Scientists are cracking kiwifruit pollination**

**P**lant & Food Research scientists and collaborators from the US have created ‘digital twins’ ( mathematical models) of pollination processes in kiwifruit orchards to help growers can optimise their fruit set. This digital twin, created with more than 30 years of field-based data, give researchers the ability to examine complex scenarios which examine multiple, intertwined factors at once.

Using this digital twin, the researchers predict that optimal fruit set is achieved with 60-75 per cent female flowers in the orchard and that most pollination benefit is gained from the first six to eight honey bees per 1,000 flowers, with diminishing returns thereafter. The research suggests that fruiting success is more sensitive to variation in plant traits and the female-to-male flower ratio than bee density, provided this minimum density is achieved. The team is currently working to scale up the model to investigate more complex questions such as the influence of diverse pollinator species and the effect of the spatial layout of orchards. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/produceplus/article/183336/scientists-are-cracking-kiwifruit-pollination-code)

* 1. **DOC summary reveals split views**

The government is consulting on a new Aotearoa NZ Biodiversity Strategy to determine, monitor and protect biodiversity on private land. Compiling nearly 3000 submissions, the Department of Conservation released a summary which shows split views between protecting nature and prioritising economic interests. “This is a critical time, with recognition of the increasing number of threatened or endangered species and ecosystems, rising awareness of the importance of biodiversity and growing action in the area of nature conservation,” the summary authors said One council observed (the) DOC needs to be careful about placing obligations on private landowners, so existing and future grassroot initiatives are not alienated. This sentiment was generally supported by land-based industry submitters,” they said. Of the nearly 3000 submissions, close to two-thirds (1846) were from Forest and Bird supporters.. [Full article available here](https://farmersweekly.co.nz/section/agribusiness/view/doc-summary-reveals-split-views)

* 1. **Medicinal cannabis firm Rua Bioscience debuts on NZX**

Medicinal cannabis company Rua Biosciences has successfully raised $20 million from its initial public offering, debuting on the New Zealand stock exchange at 70 cents per share. The company’s chair Trevor Burt said: "It was certainly well over-subscribed. The priority offer was way oversubscribed and so we've had to scale it back." Rua Biosciences emerged from a Ruatoria-based medicinal cannabis firm Hikurangi Enterprises four years ago. [Full article available here](https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/business/428935/medicinal-cannabis-firm-rua-bioscience-debuts-on-nzx)

* 1. **Government assigns $38.5m to plant imports**

Plant and seed imports are vital to New Zealand, as a source of new varieties of food and ornamental plants, and for clean virus-free propagation material. NZPPI have been advocating for change in the plant imports system and they are pleased with the increased focus and investment in this important area. The allocation of $38.5 million in the 2020 budget for development of the plant imports system has been welcomed by the sector. [Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9262570/new-zealand-government-assigns-38-5m-to-plant-imports/)

It is noted in the last week MPI has announced the appointment of the Plant Germplasm Import Council (PGIC). This group was set up from a shared desire to see a highly functioning plant germplasm import pathway. The Council will ensure that this pathway supports the commercial needs of a developing horticultural sector, while maintaining strict biosecurity measures to protect New Zealand.

The PGIC was established after a joint MPI-industry review, which indicated that a more strategic focus was needed for the plant germplasm import pathway between pathway users, stakeholders and MPI (as the regulator). It will identify, prioritise and implement strategic, system-level improvements to the pathway. The Council will also be tasked with developing a joint strategy for the pathway. Twenty nominations were received for the 12 person Council. The pool of nominees represented a significant depth of knowledge and experience from across the germplasm import pathway, as well as industry representatives. In our selection, we aimed to deliver the right balance of participation from across the pathway, including importers, post-entry quarantine operators, nurseries (commercial and ornamental) along with industry sector leaders.



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. **Brazil Introduces Additional Import Requirements for Apples and Pears** [Brazil Introduces Additional Import Requirements for Apples and Pears\_Brasilia\_Brazil\_10-28-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Brazil%20Introduces%20Additional%20Import%20Requirements%20for%20Apples%20and%20Pears_Brasilia_Brazil_10-28-2020)
2. **EU Member States Adopt Their Position on the Biodiversity Strategy** This strategylays down the position of the Council on different initiatives listed in the Strategy such as plant protection products, protected areas in the EU and biotechnologies. Separately, Hungary published an official statement to express its discontent that some of the targets seem impossible to achieve. [EU Member States Adopt Their Position on the Biodiversity Strategy\_Brussels USEU\_European Union\_10-26-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=EU%20Member%20States%20Adopt%20Their%20Position%20on%20the%20Biodiversity%20Strategy_Brussels%20USEU_European%20Union_10-26-2020" \t "_blank)
3. **EU Parliament and Council Move Forward on Landmark EU Climate Law** [EU Parliament and Council Move Forward on Landmark EU Climate Law \_Brussels USEU\_European Union\_10-27-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=EU%20Parliament%20and%20Council%20Move%20Forward%20on%20Landmark%20EU%20Climate%20Law%20_Brussels%20USEU_European%20Union_10-27-2020)
4. **COVID-19 in India - Weekly Port Situation Update** [COVID-19 in India - Weekly Port Situation Update\_Mumbai\_India\_10-20-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=COVID-19%20in%20India%20-%20Weekly%20Port%20Situation%20Update_Mumbai_India_10-20-2020)
5. **Israel Food Service -** [Food Service - Hotel Restaurant Institutional\_Tel Aviv\_Israel\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20Service%20-%20Hotel%20Restaurant%20Institutional_Tel%20Aviv_Israel_09-30-2020)
6. **Russian Federation Draft Amendments to EAEU Phytosanitary Requirements Notified to WTO D**raft amendments to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) phytosanitary requirements adding provisions on tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV), pepino mosaic virus (PepMV), and tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV) via G/SPS/N/RUS/198 and G/SPS/N/KGZ/16, [Draft Amendments to EAEU Phytosanitary Requirements Notified to WTO\_Moscow\_Russian Federation\_10-23-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Draft%20Amendments%20to%20EAEU%20Phytosanitary%20Requirements%20Notified%20to%20WTO_Moscow_Russian%20Federation_10-23-2020)
7. **Taiwan Fresh Deciduous Fruit Annual** [Fresh Deciduous Fruit Annual\_Taipei\_Taiwan\_11-01-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Fresh%20Deciduous%20Fruit%20Annual_Taipei_Taiwan_11-01-2020)
8. **UAE Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Country Report** [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Country Report\_Dubai\_United Arab Emirates\_09-30-2020](https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Country%20Report_Dubai_United%20Arab%20Emirates_09-30-2020)

 **Regulatory**

* 1. **CAP reforms “insufficient”**

**T**he EU organic movement has criticised last week’s vote on CAP reform by members of the European Parliament, which saw agriculture ministers reach a compromise agreement. The European Parliament voted against amendments to the proposed new Common Agricultural Policy, “burying hope of real reform”, according to Friends of the Earth Europe.

They bemoaned the lack of proper incentives and support from CAP to change farming systems and practices when the vast majority of farmers wanted to do more for the environment. The Parliament and member states will negotiate with the European Commission with the aim of reaching a final agreement on the new CAP next year. The new policy will last until 2027.

The European Commission has adopted various environmental targets as part of its Green Deal plans, including dedicating 25 per cent of agricultural land to organic farming, cutting the use of chemical pesticides in half and prioritising biodiversity on 10 per cent of agricultural areas. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/183332/small-green-steps-insufficient)

* 1. **'EU fruit & vegetable sector managed to absorb shock of first Covid-wave thanks to producer organizations'**

Last week the European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and rural development organised a hearing on the lessons learned during the first wave of the COVID crisis. For Luc Vanoirbeek, chairman of the Working Party Fruit and Vegetables at Copa-Cogeca, if the fruit and vegetable sector resisted and adapted to fast changing conditions, it has been mainly due to the support of producer organisations, mainly cooperatives. A fact that should be acknowledged, explained and further supported.

As part of the European agri-food chain, the fruit and vegetable sector had done critical work during the first Covid-19 wave, the supply chain never stopped and the shelves remained full. The sector's reaction capacity, the extraordinary effort made on the ground and its faultless responsibility have contributed to the fruitful performance of the fruit and vegetable market during these critical months.

Growers, as well as fruit and vegetable producer organisations that are conditioning, grading, packaging and delivering fruit and vegetables to retailers, have resisted and reversed the successive difficulties. A fact that should not be taken for granted.

For Luc Vanoirbeek, the policy lesson that should be learnt from this first wave is clear, “The reaction capacity and resilience of the fruit and vegetable sector is largely based on its ability to work together. Fruit and vegetable producer organisations that have been established with

Considering the role played by the European Commission during the crisis, Luc Vanoirbeek believes that the Commission reacted fast and quite adequately by giving guidelines to keep the single market open and took relevant decisions to avoid extra threats related to the free movement for seasonal workers and essential goods such as packaging.

The conviction of European consumers that fruits and vegetables are essential for a healthy lifestyle lead to increasing demand for high quality and nutritious fruit and vegetables in general. Nevertheless, the extra costs that have accumulated throughout the chain were not fully compensated by the higher price received in the market. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9263389/eu-fruit-vegetable-sector-managed-to-absorb-shock-of-first-covid-wave-thanks-to-producer-organizations/)

**F**reshfel Europe general delegate Philippe Binard highlighted that the sector had shown "tremendous resilience" but noted that Freshfel Europe’s May Covid-19 Impact Assessment identified that adjusting to challenges across the supply chain resulted in an estimated added cost for the sector of at least €500m per month," he outlined. "This excludes loss from the foodservice stage in the chain from which sales represent 15-25 per cent of the total fruit and vegetable market as well as costs at retail level which were felt by all sectors.”

He outlined that mounting pressure on prices due to the impending economic crisis, continued additional costs in the supply chain, the need to quickly re-direct produce to other market channels due to restrictions on foodservices, shortages of seasonal workers and maintaining trade opportunities would prevail over the coming months, all in the shadow of Brexit, which would bring its own costs and constraints.  [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/183339/sector-shows-resilience-in-face-of-covid-19)

 **Business/ Industry**

* 1. **Sydney empty container backlog intensifies due to congestion**

According to Shipping Australia Limited (SAL), there is a massive backlog of empty containers in Sydney and to a lesser extent in other capital city ports in Australia. The ongoing container disruption in Sydney due to industrial action has resulted in availability issues on additional berth slots, which shipping companies need to bring in the sweeper ships ( to pick an remove surplus containers). "But it is next to impossible to berth sweepers at Sydney because of congestion. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9262611/australia-empty-container-backlog-intensifies-due-to-congestion/?edition=5)

* 1. **Traceability a “game changer” for citrus industry**

A $200,000 trial of traceability technology for citrus exports has seen more than 400,000 kg of premium fruit traced and verified from Mildura orchards through to international retail markets. The pilot, which has now concluded, used ‘digital fingerprint’ labelling developed by Laava ID and blockchain technology provided by Trust Provenance. Fruit was scanned at over 50 retail and wholesale locations by overseas consumers, allowing them to verify that the fruit is a genuine Victorian product and to view the journey from “tree to table”.

“The scope and audacity of IP theft cost individual citrus businesses and the wider citrus industry millions of dollars every year,” Mr Hancock said. “Our industry relies on its quality and the safety of the product we produce here in Australia. We have a premium product in our export markets and we need to be able to prove to our end supplier the origin of our product.”

“By using the digital fingerprint labelling on our packaging and our blockchain, it will help us protect our brands and also will allow the customer to directly access proof of origin and also the features of our fruit,” This technology is providing benefits throughout the supply chain, from legitimising plantings and fruit through to the protection of brands.”

Laava ID uses advanced computer vision technology developed in collaboration with CSIRO to produce a unique ‘fingerprint’ that can be scanned by any smartphone. Unlike barcodes or QR codes which have been used in the past, Laava’s Smart Fingerprint technology is much harder to impersonate or replicate (a technique known as ‘spoofing’) and much more secure, making it more resistant to counterfeiting. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9262957/traceability-trial-a-game-changer-for-citrus-industry/?edition=5)

* 1. **Asia Briefing looks at China post-Covid**

As China’s recovery from its initial Covid-19 outbreak continues, a clearer picture of the lasting trends is emerging, a picture further explored by Asia Briefing: Marketing to China.

While the rest of the world remains in the grip of the pandemic, life in China seems to have largely returned to normal in the last quarter of 2020, and the economy is bouncing back but while Chinese consumers are spending again, what they buy and how they buy are changing post-pandemic.”

Chinese consumers continue to buy groceries online or in stores near residential areas, meanwhile, financial uncertainties are prompting people to be more value conscious, and demand better quality, lower prices or both. “Health benefits play an important part in purchasing decisions when it comes to fruit and vegetables, and Chinese consumers rely on both western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine for guidance, this presents opportunities for fruit categories beyond Vitamin C-rich citrus products,” While conventional indoor tasting is out, marketing activities are back in full swing and online streaming and other digitals solutions are providing marketers with more tools than ever to connect with their target demographics and to tell their stories in meaningful and intimate ways.”

China’s monthly moving annual import total, a statistic used to measure the total 12 months of imports by month moving forward, peaked in August 2019 at 5.9m tonnes, but by August 2020 it had dropped to 5.3m tonnes or 10 per cent lower.

Many of China’s temperate fruit imports from January to August 2020 declined year-on-year, as did citrus imports where Northern Hemisphere suppliers such as Egypt (down 40 per cent) and Spain (Down 90 per cent) felt the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the start of the Southern Hemisphere season the results appear similar with Australian citrus exports to China down 55 per cent and South Africa’s citrus exports to China down 14 per cent.

**The meeting considered the work** Zespri has been doing in China following the company’s brand refresh and described the increasing consumer interest in health during the pandemic. She said Zespri had been working with key opinion influencers to communicate the health benefits of its kiwifruit to consumers, particularly in the increasingly important e-commerce space.

The growth in e-commerce was accompanied a number of other emerging trends during the pandemic.

People are buying groceries online… the other is people are spending more time at home and they are investing in their home and cooking at home, a lot of them are more confident now and are more aware in the way the cook.”

With global logistic capacity down and other countries still dealing with the pandemic, fruit imports have suffered, but this has left a gap for premium domestic fruit. In the post pandemic market products should have great value, great quality or be truly special”.

“What Chinese consumers, particularly premium consumers, were increasingly doing, was creating a subset of products where they would not compromise. “ The good news is food and produce were very much part of that subset that Chinese consumers were creating.”  Clode said international suppliers should be optimistic about the China market post-pandemic as although consumers are cautious, the caution is driving demand for premium food products. Once consumers establish a connection and begin to trust a brand, their loyalty becomes locked in to the point they will even share brands they trust on their own social media networks. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/produceplus/article/183349/marketing-to-china)

* 1. **Healthy diet trend on rise**

According to an INC Consumer Study, demand for foods that boost energy, support digestive health and bolster the immune system is expected to grow rapidly in the next five years following the Covid-19 health crisis. According to the study, the market size for products boosting energy is forecast to grow by 50 per cent, while the market for products supporting digestive health is expected to grow by 32 per cent. " [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/183366/healthy-diet-trend-on-rise)

* 1. **Pandemic ‘sparks rise in demand for green products**

**C**onsumers are actively seeking out more sustainable products and services and rewarding environmentally friendly businesses in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new study from E.ON. The energy provider says its ‘Renewable Returns’ report suggests the pandemic has caused a major shift in consumer behaviour, with more than a third (36 per cent) of those surveyed saying they’re now buying more products from companies with strong environmental credentials.

The research shows the food and drink processing industry has seen significant pressure for change.

Knowing the commercial opportunities, 79 per cent of businesses in the sector said improving their sustainability credentials is a top priority over the next 12 months. However, two thirds (66 pe cent) felt there wasn’t enough guidance on how to improve their environmental practices.

Of the consumers surveyed, 72 per cent said they pay attention to whether a business acts in a climate-friendly way, and 65 per cent feel it’s important the products or services they buy do not harm the environment. Consumers are willing to pay a premium, too. The research shows that 34 per cent of people have already knowingly paid more for ‘green’ products since the pandemic struck, while 51 per cent think the environmental credentials of a product or service are now just as important as the price they pay for it. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/fpj/article/183358/pandemic-sparks-rise-in-demand-for-green-products)

* 1. **AU: New project to help horticultural exporters**

Delivering premium fruit into export markets is essential for the success of many Australian horticultural industries, particularly to make the most of newly ratified free trade agreement (FTA) opportunities. However due to phytosanitary restrictions because of fruit fly in many parts of Australia, most of our fruit exports need an additional end-point treatment for market access.

These end-point postharvest treatments include cold treatment, fumigation and low dose irradiation. While not all markets accept these phytosanitary treatments, their effect on product quality after treatment and out-turn are sometimes perceived as 'variable'. There are many studies on the effects of different market access treatments on final product such as fumigation, but there is no direct comparative information on the effects of the different phytosanitary tools ( cold treatment, low dose irradiation and fumigation).

*A one-year project has been funded* which will provide commercially relevant information on the direct comparison of different market access treatments on final fruit quality to assist large export industries (citrus, table grapes) and growing export industries with potential (cherries and blueberries). [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9262181/au-new-project-to-help-horticultural-exporters/?edition=5)

* 1. **Call for comment on irradiation of fruits and vegetables**

Food Standards Australia New Zealand is calling for comment on an application to irradiate fresh fruit and vegetables. FSANZ CEO Mark Booth said the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has applied for permission to irradiate fresh fruit and vegetables as a way to stop the spread of pests like fruit fly when food is moved across quarantine borders.

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“Only a small proportion of fresh fruit and vegetables are likely to be irradiated as the majority of fresh produce in Australia and New Zealand is grown and sold in the same quarantine jurisdiction. There are already 26 fruits and vegetables allowed to be irradiated in the Food Standards Code. We completed a thorough safety assessment for this application, looking at the potential toxicological and nutritional impacts and found no public health and safety concerns. Any nutrient losses that may occur are likely

The public consultation period closes 6pm (Canberra time) 11 December 2020. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9263902/call-for-comment-on-irradiation-of-fruits-and-vegetables/?edition=5)

* 1. **Predictive analysis: How it is used in the industry to drive business**

This week’s PMA virtual town hall focused on the rapidly growing field of predictive analytics, which helps companies draw from past data trends to make informed decisions about the future.

Predictive analytics can be useful in a variety of avenues. -At Oppy they use it to understand what is happening within a category, what the volumes and pricing are like, and look at the ‘why’ behind the numbers. We also collect market intel, such as import and export trends and how they influence the domestic production, which is impactful from a retail perspective. Finally, we also look at potential expansion opportunities – we’ll see if we need to adjust the volumes of an item already in production, or if we want to introduce a new product into the market,”.

Predictive analysis can be particularly useful when companies are looking to introduce new products into the market. Perkins shares: “A few years ago we were considering introducing Brussels sprouts into our portfolio. The data helped us understand that the overall consumption has gone up and that it’s no longer limited to specific holidays. We were also able to find a time of year where there wasn’t much volume in the markets and with all of this information, we were able to introduce them at a very opportunistic time.”

For AeroFarms, the use of predictive analysis is slightly different. “We look at the continuity and predictability for our yields and quality, and how we can leverage the data to get the best outcomes possible. It’s partially about optimizing the plants themselves – how much nutrition is in a plant, the flavor balance, the organoleptic qualities, and more. Leveraging the data has allowed us to be more agile as an organization. One example of this is that we were able to use the data to go from a 16-day growth cycle to a 14-day growth cycle. Through this, we’ve been able have growth cycles throughout the year and produce more efficiently,” Kathleen DeBrota shares. The balance of the article talks about how to start . [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9263376/predictive-analysis-how-it-is-used-in-the-industry-to-drive-business/)

* 1. **Mastercard to open up to small farmers in south Indian farm sector**

Mastercard is eyeing the Indian farm sector to deploy its technology platform: the Mastercard Farmer Network (MFN). It claims this would help farmers connect directly with buyers, input suppliers and financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies. [Full article available here](https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9263418/mastercard-to-open-up-to-small-farmers-in-south-indian-farm-sector/?edition=5)



* 1. **"Transforming UK horticulture sector through use of Hydrogen-as-an-energy-service"**

CambridgeHOK have signed an agreement with London-based Protium Green Solutions to work together and help speed up the decarbonisation of the UK horticultural sector through the increased use of green hydrogen energy solutions.

Protium is a green hydrogen and renewable energy project developer that works with clients to support their transition to zero emissions through developing green hydrogen solutions. To help establish projects without large upfront capital expenditure for clients, Protium has developed a Hydrogen-as-an-energy-service (HESCO) model, where it raises project financing alongside its own capital to finance green infrastructure and then provides HESCO services to clients over a fixed offtake period.

The collaboration showcases the horticultural industry’s desire to revolutionise how their businesses operate, in order to create a brighter, more sustainable future for the UK. [Full article available here](https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9263889/transforming-uk-horticulture-sector-through-use-of-hydrogen-as-an-energy-service/)

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**Floral news**

* 1. **Phased enforcement of environmental registration and environmental certification**

The Management Board of Royal FloraHolland is taking the advice issued by the Members’ Council on 8 October, and will be implementing phased enforcement of digital environmental registration and environmental certification. It will also continue to focus on the commitment of trade and on outlining the preconditions. The digital environmental registration and environmental certification obligation is a challenge for a number of growers. To accommodate them, Royal FloraHolland will start phased enforcement, based on turnover volume. This will give smaller growers with a lower turnover and growers outside of the Netherlands more time to orient themselves with regard to the possibilities for digital environmental registration and environmental certification. [Click here for more information.](https://www.royalfloraholland.com/en/news-2020/week-43/royal-floraholland-management-board-opts-for-phased-enforcement-of-environmental-registration-and-environmental-certification)

[Full article available here](https://www.floraldaily.com/article/9262068/phased-enforcement-of-environmental-registration-and-environmental-certification/)

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