

**PMAC weekly update 26th March to 3rd April**

1. **Government agencies:** Changes to MPI
2. **New Zealand News:**  "Employment law plans could destroy trust and not fit for this era"; Multimillion-dollar freight facility coming to Mount Maunganui; T&G announce new CEO and COO; Darling Group ready to start shipping New Zealand avocados to China; BayWa brings 2017 to a successful conclusion; Kiwifruit sales to China, Japan set to hit $1 billion; Three hundred apple pickers found but labour shortage extended; New Zealand growers to vote on Fresh Tomato levy; New Zealand onion crop affected by disease; Sales window for New Zealand imported onions tends to be shorter'; First New Zealand kiwis loaded for the Chinese market; The healthy snack alternative getting the most out of kiwifruit crops; Season’s first Royal Galas arrive in India from New Zealand; Fruit fly battle looms between states; Myrtle rust infects 93 Western Bay properties.
3. **International news:** GAIN reports; Australian import industry squeezed; Secretary Perdue issues USDA statement on plant breeding innovation; Japan launches online application system for new variety registration; Fertinnowa develops water book; China's three market supervision agencies will merge; China to improve market access for Indian agricultural products; China: Local fruit suppliers target the high-end market; China enters a golden age of investment in Australian farms"; Everyone wants to have a little slice of China; Retail, payment and supply in China; China: Vending machines are transforming into smart storefronts; The evolution of organic products; The 'dirty dozen' and the 'clean fifteen'; Monsanto plans to breed sweeter strawberries using Crispr

***Editors comments***

*With New Zealand horticultures heaviest export season in full swing articles on our main crops are evident in the New Zealand section. Also included in New Zealand news is an update of the changes underway in MPI in response to last year’s change in Government. Expect evidence of this over the next couple of months.*

*With regard to Australia there are two concerning articles. The first under the biosecurity section notes a second Queensland fruit fly larvae has been found in a Tasmanian supermarket from out of state fruit as a consequence of a failed fumigation. It can only be hoped that exported product is being more reliably treated than interstate trade.*

*The second area reports on Australian importers concerns about the rundown of the OPI system and long delays for at the border inspections which will make imports into Australia uneconomic. These concerns are privately echoed many New Zealand Exporters . For some time PMAC has had a working group working in this area . This group is meeting with MPI this week to see how we can align industry and Government activity to leverage Australian comments to best effect.*

Also Of note this week is news

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **Changes to MPI**

On 13 December 2017, MPI Ministers announced changes to MPI to align our structure to Ministerial portfolios, ensure accountability, and increase visibility of some of our core business.

Since Cabinet agreed to establish four branded business units, MPI has made good progress to establish: Biosecurity New Zealand , Fisheries New Zealand , Forestry New Zealand, and New Zealand Food Safety.

Consultation with all MPI staff on structural changes closed 20 March, and MPI expects to have a final decision in mid-April. From late April, MPI will start to make structural changes to enable the establishment of the four new branded business units. This will involve moving to new premises for some groups, but we are focused on minimising disruption to services and the way we work with stakeholders.

After branded business units have been established, the MPI brand will continue to be used in association with some of MPI’s functions, such as compliance, trade and corporate services. Our trade and market access functions will remain part of MPI’s core business. MPI remains the competent authority for all trade activity in the primary industries and work carried out internationally will remain associated with the MPI brand. Article from ACVM’s latest newsletter



1. **New Zealand News**

**General**

* 1. **"Employment law plans could destroy trust and not fit for this era"**

Proposed employment law changes are a step backwards, and could destroy trust relationships between employers and employees and result in lower productivity, New Zealand's horticulture industry says. Horticulture New Zealand, joined by 13 other horticulture industry groups, has submitted to the Education and Workforce Select Committee on the Employment Relations Amendment Bill before Parliament.

“While we acknowledge the intent of the Bill is to ensure key minimum standards and protections for employees, we submit that it is important for employment law in New Zealand to strike the right balance between meeting workers’ rights and enabling businesses to grow and prosper,” Horticulture New Zealand chief executive Mike Chapman says.

“We believe the proposals …. will increase complexity, impose additional processes and costs, and inhibit economic growth.” “Requiring workers to compulsorily become part of a union on first employment in today’s society will not be acceptable to many workers. We believe that voluntary union options made available in a timely and appropriate manner are more suited to 2018 and beyond. The submission is available [here](http://www.hortnz.co.nz/assets/Submissions/FINAL-Employment-Relations-Bill-Submission-30032018.pdf). [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42173/Employment-law-plans-could-destroy-trust-and-not-fit-for-this-era)

* 1. **Multimillion-dollar freight facility coming to Mount Maunganui**

Global logistics company Mainfreight will be developing a multimillion-dollar transitional freight facility in Tauranga’s Mount Maunganui. Mangatawa Papamoa Blocks last week signed a commercial lease agreement with Mainfreight.

The former owns industrial-zoned land near Baypark and has obtained resource consent to develop an 11.5 ha industrial subdivision. Of that, Mainfreight will lease 7 ha to establish a new transitional freight facility for the Bay of Plenty.[Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191710/New-Zealand-Multimillion-dollar-freight-facility-coming-to-Mount-Maunganui)

**Industry news**

* 1. **T&G announce new CEO and COO**

The Board of T&G Global Limited (T&G) has announced the appointment of Mr Gareth Edgecombe as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). His commencement date is yet to be confirmed. Additionally, Mr Peter Landon-Lane has been appointed as Chief Operating Officer (COO) and will be the Acting CEO effective 16 April 2018, until Mr Gareth Edgecombe starts.

Mr Edgecombe is currently CEO of Comfort Group. Previously, he was President for the Campbell Soup Company for the Asia Pacific region and President of The Coca-Cola Company South Pacific.
Chairman Professor Klaus Josef Lutz says: “We are delighted to appoint a CEO of Mr Edgecombe’s calibre to lead T&G Global through the next phase of growth with a strong customer focus supported by global brands.”

Mr Peter Landon-Lane is currently the CEO of Plant & Food Research Ltd where he led the merger of the Crop and Food Research Institute and HortResearch Institutes. Chairman Professor Klaus Lutz says, “The Board is delighted to appoint Mr Landon-Lane as COO and Acting CEO, particularly given his deep understanding of the horticultural sector and experience of T&G Global’s apple plant variety rights (PVRs) including JAZZ™, Envy™ and Pacific Rose™.”

Both Mr Edgecombe and Mr Landon-Lane will be based in T&G Global’s head office at Mt Wellington, Auckland. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191959/T-and-G-announce-new-CEO-and-COO)

* 1. **Darling Group ready to start shipping New Zealand avocados to China**

Following an audit in January by Chinese officials, Darling Group was given the green light to begin shipping avocados to China through their New Zealand avocado supply arm, Just Avocados Ltd.
An industry trial shipment of New Zealand avocados was sent to China in February. Darling Group will continue with shipping of commercial volumes in the coming season - August/September 2018.

Darling says there is work to be done in the market but following their successful citrus programme into Shanghai last year, is aware of what is required to establish the category. “Lessons from our 2017 citrus programme will be used to optimise our New Zealand avocado programme in the coming season. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/special-article/191595/Darling-Group-ready-to-start-shipping-New-Zealand-avocados-to-China)

* 1. **BayWa brings 2017 to a successful conclusion**

The international trading and services group BayWa AG brought the financial year 2017 to a successful conclusion with increased revenues and EBIT. Revenues rose to €16.1 billion (2016: €15.4 billion), while earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) increased to €171.3 million (2016: €144.7 million).

With regard to agricultural trade, this year, BayWa expects to see significantly higher EBIT than in 2017 due to increases in profitability and the expansion of the higher-margin speciality business. In New Zealand, the harvest and marketing expectations for pome fruit are extremely high, and Lutz also anticipates further increases regarding trade in tropical fruits. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/192059/BayWa-brings-2017-to-a-successful-conclusion)

* 1. **Kiwifruit sales to China, Japan set to hit $1 billion**

In 2016/16 Zespri has said sales to China were tracking at a record $500 million, while Japan looked set to make it double completing another half a billion dollars in sales. China and Japan are Zespri’s two biggest

Markets and most of the fruit sold there was from New Zealand. Zespri’s spokesperson, Rachel Lynch, said 2017- 2018 financial results were still being finalised but China and Japan were expected to bring in $1 billion in revenue between them. Ms Lynch noted the sales comprised 14.6 million trays of gold kiwifruit and 7.9 million trays of green. Zespri’s Chief Executive, Dan Mathieson, added that the gold fruit had been popular in Japan, and attributed the sales spike to their efforts to understand what Japanese consumers wanted. He added that tariffs imposed by Japan cost growers $26 million last season however they were confident the recent CPTPP deal would reduce the tariff to zero. [Full article available here](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12018908)

* 1. **Three hundred apple pickers found but labour shortage extended**

Half of Hawke’s Bay’s apples were waiting to be picked, and the government has extended the regional labour shortage to give it more time. Even with three hundred extra apple pickers who

have come forward to help out, MSD East Coast Regional Council Commissioner, Annie Aranui, said they still needed more. She added that the industry was important to the region and had a clear and immediate need, so they were actively working alongside the horticulture sector to help out. She noted they had placed a large number of people into work. Hawke’s Bay Fruitpickers Association President, Lesley Wilson, said growers were grateful for the extension but the region was still short of backpackers. Bostocks Labour Resources Manager, Vikki Garrett, added that while inquiries had been flowing in, they were not coming into fruition in terms of backpackers. Ms Garret noted pickers needed to pick three bins a day to break even with minimum wage, but good pickers could pick six to eight. [Full article available here](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12019692)

* 1. **New Zealand growers to vote on Fresh Tomato levy**

The commodity levy referendum will run from the 2nd July to the 13th August. Fresh tomato growers will be asked to vote for the Fresh Tomato levy that funds Tomatoes New Zealand, and for the Horticulture New Zealand levy.

For the levy to be approved, 50% of votes by number, and by value must be in favour. Onions NZ, Vegetables NZ, and Process Vegetables NZ will work alongside TomatoesNZ and they are in daily contact about the issues affecting growers. Those groups are also conducting their levy referendums alongside Horticulture New Zealand in July-August. The details of the levy proposal document are being finalized, which will be posted to voters during April. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42105/New-Zealand-growers-to-vote-on-Fresh-Tomato-levy)

**Crop news**

* 1. **New Zealand onion crop affected by disease**

New Zealand's onion crop has been slashed by at least 20 percent because of humid weather, which resulted in a leaf disease. The harvest period is wrapping up for the season, and Onions New Zealand chief executive Michael Ahern called it a mixed bag for the growers. The main problem was a leaf blight called *stemphylium*, which has damaged the plants. Mr Ahern: "We've had some difficulties in a number of the growing areas ... to that end we ran a crop forecast survey recently and we could be down by around 20 percent on yield ... even that could be increased by quality issues at packing time."

This year is the worst case of the leaf blight that anyone in the industry can remember, he said. "No one can recall an attack by this particular fungus to this extent ... so that does point potentially to, not a new pathogen, but more changing climate conditions.

[Radionz.co.nz](https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/country/353699/onion-crop-slashed-by-disease) reports how the country’s potato growers have also had a tough season, with water shortages, scorching temperatures and several large storms. Potatoes New Zealand chief executive Chris Claridge said it was a clear link to climate change. "What we're seeing is a direct impact on farmers' ability to plant and harvest potatoes, which is directly impacted on their profitability and on our ability to generate export receipts." [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/192001/New-Zealand-onion-crop-affected-by-disease)

* 1. **Sales window for New Zealand imported onions tends to be shorter'**

In the EU the first imported onions from New Zealand have been on the market for about a week. Because of the strong preference for domestic products of German consumers, and thanks to modern storage technology, the sales windows for imported onions are about halved, the experts say.

“Until a few years ago, we imported New Zealand onions for our customers over a period of nearly three months. Currently, however, the period is 6 to 8 weeks," said Antoine De Smedt - CEO of VIP Logistics from Cologne and an experienced trader when it comes to onion import. "The trend is that the sales period will be shorter and the volumes smaller. On the one hand, there is growing awareness from the consumer that the environmental footprint, due to the shipping conditions (20.000 kms) is considered more and more as problematic. ULO (Ultra Low Oxygen) Storage prevents germination of the onion, which extends its shelf life greatly."

“Until a few years ago, there were still imported onions from Argentina and South Africa, but these have practically disappeared.” The Egyptian onions are also of poorer quality. “[Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191851/Sales-window-for-New-Zealand-imported-onions-tends-to-be-shorter)

* 1. **First New Zealand kiwis loaded for the Chinese market**

The first kiwifruit has already been picked in New Zealand with orchards cleared to be harvested from the top of the North Island to the top of the South Island. Over 2,500 growers will be harvesting some 13,500 hectares of kiwifruit. The Klipper Stream will carry New Zealand’s first load of Zespri Kiwifruit from the Port of Tauranga to China and passed through the harbour entrance on Good Friday.

This year’s New Zealand-grown crop is expected to be about 20 million trays – 70,000 tonnes – higher than last year. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191956/First-New-Zealand-kiwis-loaded-for-the-Chinese-market)

* 1. **The healthy snack alternative getting the most out of kiwifruit crops**

A dried kiwifruit product that started in a tiny commercial kitchen under a house, is hopeful of becoming an international hit in coming years. Kiwi Bites are the result of a simple process of slicing them thinly and low temperature drying over 16 hours to retain all the nutrition of fresh kiwifruit, including enzymes, vitamins and minerals. Owner Sandy Mecredy says retaining the optimum level of moisture in the kiwifruit is the key for a delicious Kiwi Bite.

Kiwi Bites are sourced from fresh, export-grade Gold kiwifruit which is grown in Kerikeri under contract to Zespri International, and use two varieties of Gold kiwifruit – Hort 16A and G3. "This means they’ve passed all rigorous residue-free auditing standards and have optimum taste, but are rejected because they are less than perfect in appearance, slightly misshapen or with a proximity mark - which is perfect for Kiwi Bites," [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/special-article/191866/NZ-The-healthy-snack-alternative-getting-the-most-out-of-kiwifruit-crops)

* 1. **Season’s first Royal Galas arrive in India from New Zealand**

The season's first Royal Galas from New Zealand have touched down in India [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191734/Seasons-first-Royal-Galas-arrive-in-India-from-New-Zealand)

**Biosecurity**

* 1. **Fruit fly battle looms between states**

An inter-state battle is looming over Tasmania’s fruit fly incursions as a single larvae infected grapefruit was found in a southern supermarket over the weekend. With the grapefruit consignment labelled as fumigated under the new treatment requirements for fruit coming into the State, the discovery has caused despair amongst fruit and vegetable producers.

Industry representatives say the biosecurity regimes between the Australian States are not good enough – a position echoed by Biosecurity Tasmania. Biosecurity Tasmania general manager Lloyd Klumpp said the latest scare was further evidence Australia’s biosecurity system was “struggling” to deal with an increased fruit fly risk and needed strengthening. Dr Klumpp said the Melbourne treatment plant involved in supplying the nectarine remained suspended from supplying produce into the State, so a second Victorian facility was to blame for the grapefruit lapse.

The Tasmanian programme to prevent the establishment of QFF is progressing well with no other new finds in Tasmania.  [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191779/Fruit-fly-battle-looms-between-states)

* 1. **Myrtle rust infects 93 Western Bay properties**

Since last June ninety-three properties in the Western Bay of Plenty have been affected by the fungal disease myrtle rust, which attacks plants such as pohutukawa, manuka and rata. [Full article available here](http://www.floraldaily.com/article/14587/New-Zealand-Myrtle-rust-infects-93-Western-Bay-properties)



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. **China Imposes Additional Tariffs on Selected U.S.-Origin Products** On April 2, 2018, China’s State Council Tariff Committee (SCTC) announced that additional tariffs on 128 U.S.-origin products would be implemented effective immediately. These tariffs will impact roughly $2 billion in U.S. food and agricultural exports. U.S. exporters of fruit (fresh and dried), [China Imposes Additional Tariffs on Selected U.S.-Origin Products\_Beijing\_China - Peoples Republic of\_4-2-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/China%20Imposes%20Additional%20Tariffs%20on%20Selected%20U.S.-Origin%20Products_Beijing_China%20-%20Peoples%20Republic%20of_4-2-2018.pdf)
2. **EU Update of the Article 12 EU MRL Review Process** On March 5, 2018, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published an updated version of its MRL review progress under Article 12 of Regulation 396/2005 on its website, which includes the list of substances subject to the review process and the indicative time schedule of their review.  [Update of the Article 12 EU MRL Review Process \_Brussels USEU\_EU-28\_3-26-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Update%20of%20the%20Article%2012%20EU%20MRL%20Review%20Process%20_Brussels%20USEU_EU-28_3-26-2018.pdf)
3. **India Amendments in Licensing Regulation Invite WTO Comments**
India notified its draft amendments to the World Trade Organization (WTO) relating to licensing and registration of food business.  The WTO trading partners’ are invited to comment on these draft amendments; the comment period expires 60 days beyond the notification date listed on the WTO website (www.wto.org).[Amendments in Licensing Regulation Invite WTO Comments\_New Delhi\_India\_3-28-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Amendments%20in%20Licensing%20Regulation%20Invite%20WTO%20Comments_New%20Delhi_India_3-28-2018.pdf)
4. **Italy Stone Fruit Annual 2017** Italy is a leading EU-28 peach and nectarine producer.  Italy’s marketing year (MY) 2017/18 peach and nectarine production is forecast at 1,362,749 metric tons (MT), 8 percent more than the previous campaign (1,262,127 MT) due to increased volumes in the South …[Stone Fruit Annual 2017 \_Rome\_Italy\_3-27-2018](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/Stone%20Fruit%20Annual%202017%20_Rome_Italy_3-27-2018.pdf)

**Regulatory**

* 1. **Australian import industry squeezed**

The Overseas Pre-clearance Inspection (OPI) scheme, offered through Australia’s Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) since 2001, is about to disappear. The government department made a decision to eliminate the program in 2016 meaning importers will have to inspect and clear fruit for arrival onshore in Australia. A spokesperson from the DAWR told Asiafruit that the program is being phased out because on-arrival inspection provides greater opportunities for the DAWR to drive compliance and better allocate resources according to biosecurity risk.

Industry representatives are not convinced.

A member of the Australian Horticultural Exporters and Importers Association (AHEIA) told Asiafruit that wait times for onshore clearance are sitting at around 7 or 8 days, adding an extra week to their pre-order schedule. “The retailers don’t want to hear ‘I’m sorry but we can’t get an inspection for your program,’” they said. Industry sources told Asiafruit that Australia’s import sector is not only concerned about their business and relationships, but the flow-on effect for export deals.

“We know that in the past several of our neighbours have used non-phytosanitary issues to restrict fruit imports,” said Neil Barker, CEO at BGP International. “When they see how effective the DAWR protectionist policy has been I have no doubt they will consider adopting the policy. If an Australian grape shipment to Jakarta airport regularly spent seven days in the cargo terminal waiting for an inspection my guess is that the trade would stop.”

To curb the problem, the DAWR decided to implement a Compliance-Based Inspection (CBI) scheme last year, which was piloted during the New Zealand avocado season. The CBI scheme means that if a product reaches a certain number of approved inspections (for avocados it’s ten in a row), they will then move to a reduced inspection rate (again for avocados, inspections will reduce to one in five shipments). To date, no importers have achieved these reduced inspection rates,” New Zealand Avocados told Asiafruit in a statement.

“An overriding reason is the difficulty of accurately identifying often globally distributed organisms (and their eggs), down to a taxonomic level to confirm they are not of quarantine concern,” they said.

The same issue appeared in 2016 when lemons and limes from the US were subject to the trial and saw backlogs of up to ten days.

The DAWR said it’s working closely with industry and trading partners to optimise compliance and minimise any disruption, while facilitating safe trade. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/asiafruit/article/175139/australian-import-industry-squeezed)

"In a clear protectionist move the Australian Quarantine Department is now delaying perishable fruit import inspections for 7-10 days after the shipment arrival," according to Neil Barker from BGP International. He said the delays are causing greatly increased costs to importers in addition to serious decline in fruit quality. According to Neil, one shipping line executive complained that the quarantine delays will reduce availability of equipment in the leadup to the citrus export season.

"Australian Quarantine is dismantling off-shore pre-clearance arrangements and reducing domestic inspection staff levels in the strong drive to reduce fruit imports. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191827/Australian-Government-delays-imports)

* 1. **Secretary Perdue issues USDA statement on plant breeding innovation**

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue issued a statement providing clarification on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) oversight of plants produced through innovative new breeding techniques which include techniques called genome editing.

Under its biotechnology regulations, USDA does not regulate or have any plans to regulate plants that could otherwise have been developed through traditional breeding techniques as long as they are not plant pests or developed using plant pests. This includes a set of new techniques that are increasingly being used by plant breeders to produce new plant varieties that are indistinguishable from those developed through traditional breeding methods. The newest of these methods genome editing (CRISPR), expands traditional plant breeding tools because they can introduce new plant traits more quickly and precisely, potentially saving years or even decades in bringing needed new varieties to farmers. [Full article available here](http://www.floraldaily.com/article/14702/Secretary-Perdue-issues-USDA-statement-on-plant-breeding-innovation)

* 1. **Japan launches online application system for new variety registration**

The MAFF Electric Application System for Plant Variety Protection (EASPVP), based on The Plant Variety Protection and Seed Act, was launched in Japan on 26 March 2018.

The PVP system is a national registration system of new plant variety for protecting breeders’ right as one of the intellectual property rights. The number of current registration for plant variety is around 1,000 per year (the fifth largest in the world), and by introducing the MAFF EAS system is expected to improve convenience and efficiency for applicants. [Full article available here](http://www.floraldaily.com/article/14649/Japan-launches-online-application-system-for-new-variety-registration)

**Business**

* 1. **Fertinnowa develops water book**

The Fertigation Bible has been prepared to provide useful practical information to the horticultural sector of the diverse technologies available for all aspects of fertigation within the EU. The various stages of the “fertigation process” are described and the bible contains descriptions of the technologies related to these stages. A total of 125 such technology descriptions are provided.

Considerable effort was made to ensure that the Fertigation Bible is as comprehensive as possible. Various members of the FERTINNOWA project, from 23 organisations from 10 countries, have worked on this document to describe the most commonly-used and promising technologies that are commercially available or are expected to be so in the near future.[You can download the Fertigation Bible here.](http://www.fertinnowa.com/the-fertigation-bible/) [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42051/Fertinnowa-develops-water-book)

  **China**

* 1. **China's three market supervision agencies will merge**

The State Council put forward a plan for structural reform in March 2018.  This plan will merge the responsibilities of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce; the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine; and the China Food and Drug Administration.

This plan will establish the General Administration of National Market Supervision, which will report directly to the State Council. The General Administration will also organize enforcement of market supervision, undertake action to counter monopolization, and safeguard regular market functions.

[Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191363/Chinas-three-market-supervision-agencies-will-merge)

* 1. **China to improve market access for Indian agricultural products**

China has reaffirmed its commitment to accelerate the provision of market access for Indian agricultural products, including non-basmati rice, rape-seed meals, soya-meals, pomegranate and pomegranate arils, okra, banana and other fruits and vegetables. It will do so expeditiously as the two countries agreed on a roadmap for addressing the huge imbalance in their bilateral trade.

[Domain-b.com](https://www.domain-b.com/economy/trade/20180327_farm%20.html) writes how the Asian neighbours are the largest emerging economies of the world with 35 percent of the world’s population and around 20 percent of the world’s GDP. The relative volume of bilateral trade however, is less than 1 percent of global trade.The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation within the WTO and other multilateral and regional frameworks, to maintain their common interest. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191874/China-to-improve-market-access-for-Indian-agricultural-products)

* 1. **China: Local fruit suppliers target the high-end market**

In recent years, a large number of imported fruits have appeared on the Chinese market, which caused problems for the local farmers. In response to this "invasion" of imported fruits, many domestic suppliers have made efforts to enter the high-end market. They have not only improved the quality and the appearance of the fruits but also paid a lot of attention to the brand building. According to the McKinsey consulting firm's data, by the year 2020, about 400 million people in China will belong to the middle class. This kind of customer is more willing to pay for healthy, high-quality food.

The Guangzhou Jiangnan fruit and vegetable wholesale market is the largest market for imported fruits in China and large volumes are sent from here to markets across the country every day. In 2017, of the top 5 sales, all 5 positions were occupied by imported fruits. According to the data provided by them, the total amount of the imported fruit has a steady growth of 5%-10% every year.

[Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/192020/China-Local-fruit-suppliers-target-the-high-end-market)

* 1. **China enters a golden age of investment in Australian farms"**

The AATI (Australia Agriculture Technology Investment Holding Pty. Ltd). was established in November 2017. It is an Australian holding with a Chinese background that invests in Australian agricultural technology.

AATI has two main services:

1. The company introduces new product varieties and promotes plantation and retail. For example, the company promotes a new variety of French plums, Israeli citrus, and Japanese strawberries. The core of this service is to locate high-quality new product varieties worldwide, introduce them to Australian plantations, and then sell them to overseas markets. At the same time AATI seeks excellent vegetable and fruit products in China. AATI hopes to create brand awareness among Chinese consumers. AATI also provides off-season fruit.

2. The company purchases fruit farms to annex and integrate the industry. The AATI team believe that China will enter a golden age of investment in Australian farms, because bilateral agreements between the two countries have increased since November 2017 when China amended the rules for Australian cherry import. At the same time, China also opened up for import of Australian plums, wild peaches, and apricots. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191990/China-enters-a-golden-age-of-investment-in-Australian-farms)

* 1. **Everyone wants to have a little slice of China**

In 2018 alone, some 346 million people in China are projected to use food delivery services. The scale of this demand became increasingly evident during ANZ’s latest agriculture delegation to China, which examined the opportunities and challenges ahead for Australia’s horticulture sector.

For many of Australian agribusinesses -including horticulture- the issue of market access in China remains a challenge. What’s not widely understood outside of the sector is that the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement does not provide automatic access to the Chinese market. Instead, commodities are placed on a priority list with market access negotiated individually and over extended periods of time.

Market access was granted for Australian apricots, plums and peaches in December 2017, while in October apples and blueberries were added to the priority list. The good news is that the Deputy Director of Shenzhen’s Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau of the People’s Republic of China advised that the Chinese government is actively looking to make it faster and easier for more produce varieties to be imported. The process has also been recently streamlined given China’s tremendous demand for high quality produce. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191915/Everyone-wants-to-have-a-little-slice-of-China)

* 1. **Retail, payment and supply in China**

This articles talks about how quickly China is becoming a cashless society driven by oonline shopping and payments using mobile phone apps. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/191955/Retail%2C-payment-and-supply-in-China)

* 1. **China: Vending machines are transforming into smart storefronts**

In China, vending machines are becoming full-service convenience stores. Larry Song, sales manager at the Thintop Technology Company, a Shenzhen-based manufacturer of vending machines: In the future, e-commerce giant Alibaba wants to bring automotive vending machines to market that “will make buying cars as easy as buying a can of Coke,” Alibaba representative Yu Wei was quoted as saying.

While the goods are varied, the idea remains the same: put some money into the machine, and out comes the product. But what’s different is the vending machines themselves: they are smart and sophisticated. Modern, energy efficient machines are network connected, which enables operators to monitor inventory. Sensors track foot traffic and consumers’ buying patterns based on time of day, day of week and corresponding weather conditions. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42084/China-Vending-machines-are-transforming-into-smart-storefronts)

 **Marketing**

* 1. **The evolution of organic products**

The public profile of organic food surged in the early 2000s, when consumers began to see the connection between diet, health and the environment. As shoppers today turn to clean labels and demand transparency in what they eat and drink, organic is ideally positioned to address these concerns while providing growth in an industry that desperately needs it.

A recent research report estimated the global organic food market is projected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of more than 14% between 2016 and 2021.

The push toward more organic farming methods -fewer chemicals, better soil management and more biodynamic methods- isn't new. It actually began back in the 1940s, so organic is more of a return to how things used to be, although with better equipment, more streamlined supply chains and the benefit of today's modern marketing and retailing.Taste and flavour have been major contributors to today's organic trend. As consumers experimented, typically with organic fruits and vegetables at first, some claimed they had taste and flavours that conventional produce seemed to lack.

Nutrients are another factor assisting in organic's popularity, even though there is ongoing debate over whether it has a higher nutritional profile than conventionally grown food. Other shoppers are attracted to food raised and grown without synthetic pesticides. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/192015/The-evolution-of-organic-products)

* 1. **The 'dirty dozen' and the 'clean fifteen'**

Not everyone knows that conventionally cultivated, so-called “dirty” foods are actually fairly clean, whereas organic foods are not all free of pesticides.

The chronic reference dose of a pesticide residue is the maximum amount that is ‘okay’ to have if you would be eating that food every day of your life. This level, just to be safe, is 100 times less than the amount animals were able to consume with no effects during animal tests. That’s a big safety margin!
So how many of the "dirty dozen" exceeded the chronic reference dose? None. That means even the dirtiest of the dozen had pesticide levels that are very, very low.

The 2017 list of the ‘dirty dozen’ includes: grapes, nectarines, apples, celery, tomatoes, peaches, strawberries, sweet bell peppers, cherries, cucumbers, spinach and potatoes. The 2017 ‘clean 15’ include: sweet corn, pineapples, avocados, cabbage, onions, sweet peas frozen, papayas, asparagus, mangoes, eggplants, honeydews melon, kiwis, cantaloupes, cauliflower and grapefruits.

[Jg-tc.com](http://jg-tc.com/lifestyles/announcements/when-it-comes-to-organic-foods-keep-the-dirty-dozen/article_40615796-3580-5944-93ae-32e5c8b8b327.html) reports how, if you are trying to avoid pesticide risk, buying organic won’t necessarily reduce your pesticide intake. The national list of approved pesticides for organic certified farmers include some fairly toxic substances, like copper sulphate, with little to no regulations to how much a farmer may use.

And, the once used and now banned Rotenone was used because it was from a plant rather than a synthetic source, showing that not all organic pesticides are necessarily better for the environment either. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/192050/The-dirty-dozen-and-the-clean-fifteen)

 **Innovation**

* 1. **Monsanto plans to breed sweeter strawberries using Crispr**

In a move aimed at securing a place in the rapidly evolving food technology scene, the agricultural giant Monsanto has invested $125 million in a gene-editing startup called Pairwise.

The alliance could tee up Monsanto to introduce some of the first produce made using the blockbuster gene-editing tool CRISPR. Sweeter strawberries with a longer shelf-life could be among the earliest offerings. Monsanto and Pairwise aim to get some of the first fruits and vegetables made with CRISPR on grocery store shelves within the next five to 10 years, Bob Reiter, Monsanto’s global vice president of research and development, told Business Insider on Monday. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42187/Monsanto-plans-to-breed-sweeter-strawberries-using-Crispr)

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