

**PMAC weekly update 28th May to 4th June**

1. **Government agencies**: ICPR updates, Alternative protein reports published; WTO Notifications
2. **New Zealand News:**  Announcement of new Ambassador to Thailand; Foreign Affairs Minister concludes successful visit to China; Support for trade rules and EU-NZ talks on agenda; Export NZ May Trade Update; New report: Market Opportunities in Romania; New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth: RCEP could boost NZ-India trade; New Zealand needs a food integrity story; New Zealand avocado orchard up for sale; Strong avocado returns driving investment into industry; Bay of Plenty kiwifruit industry happy with cold snap; New directors elected to Horticulture New Zealand Board; Zespri International: India is strongest emerging market for kiwifruit; New Zealand citrus; Fresh tomato commodity levy referendum; Australian research: Disease-carrying insects are blown in by winds
3. **International news:** G-33 members want farm trade negotiations restarted; "Canadians expect mandatory GMO food labelling"; Dutch court rejects indoor farming patent; EU Commission proposal on water re-use "step in right direction"; Walmart organizes promotional activity in Xiamen for traceable packed vegetables; Risk of non-payment in Asian Pacific highest in India; Bayer is making good progress strategically; Consumers call for traceability after E.coli; UK: Soil management for horticulture; How probiotics could help grow veggies in microgravity; Sustainable clothing made from fungi

***Editor’s comments***

*A steady as she goes update with a number of topics worth a mention.*

*In the New Zealand news it’s great to see that there will be a female director on the Hort NZ Board. With three other women prepared to put their name forward for this election we can only hope that they are prepared to stand again next year so there is an opportunity for a second to be elected. It has been shown that gender identity on Boards is good for both businesses and Industries.*

*Another interesting item from New Zealand is the release of a report by MPI looking at the opportunities for plant proteins. Worth a read by industry leaders who are looking to move into up and coming areas.*

*In the Biosecurity section it is concerning to see that Australia has identified that insects and diseases are arriving by wind into Australia from South East Asia. Where does that leave New Zealand?– is Australia a good stepping stone for these same pests into New Zealand?*

*Internationally calls for improved traceability are noted in 2 articles one in response to the e coli issues in the USA and the other due to customer demand in China.*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **ICPR updates**

The ICPR for the following countries have been updated:

* Reunion Island - has been updated with wording regarding an additional declaration for fresh kiwifruit
* Russia - wording amended in the commodity class requirements in sections 3.1, 3.3 and 3.4 to give greater consistency over labelling requirements to Russia
* Tonga updated commodity specific requirements for Chestnuts in section 4.3 of ICPR

To see the updated ICPR see [Importing Countries Phytosanitary Requirements](http://mpi.govt.nz/law-and-policy/requirements/importing-countries-phytosanitary-requirements/)

If you need any further clarification please contact your Independent Verification Agency

* 1. **Alternative protein reports published**

MPI and Plant & Food Research last week released a joint report: The evolution of plant protein – assessing consumer response.

The report was commissioned to assess consumer responses to protein and highlight the potential impacts to the New Zealand agricultural industry. The report explores how consumers have become more aware of the long-term impacts of food production and signals change for traditional animal protein producers.

"In order for New Zealand to retain a competitive edge in our primary exports, we want to ensure we are looking ahead at what the future consumer might demand in our products and what opportunities are available for our sector," says Dr Jocelyn Eason of Plant & Food Research.

To assess where markets are heading in the next 5 years the report analysed consumer responses to plant-based proteins released in the United States and consumer attitudes to proteins in China. Our research has shown that wealthy western economies such as the US will require an innovative product that meets consumer needs.

The release of the report includes a package of 3 additional market insight reports that relate to alternative proteins and demonstrates the rapid change that may occur in the primary sector from new food innovations. These reports are in the public domain and are:

1. [Impossible burger case study](http://mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/29144-impossible-burger-case-study-report) (Authored by MPI)
2. [Protein: A Chinese perspective](http://mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/29150-protein-a-chinese-perspective-report) (Authored by Plant & Food Research)
3. [Opportunities in plant-based foods - proteins](http://mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/29147-opportunities-in-plant-based-foods-protein-report) (Authored by Plant & Food Research) To take advantage of the new consumer trends towards plant-based foods and “flexitarian” lifestyles, there are significant opportunities for New Zealand to expand and develop plant-based protein sources.

[Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/alternative-protein-reports-published/)

* 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 so that they can potentially make a submission to the notifying country. Changes notified over the last week includes:

* India – regulations to liberalize entry of 8 items
* Japan, the USA and Canada MRL’s
* Korea – amendment of special act on imported food

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



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Announcement of new Ambassador to Thailand**

Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters last week announced the appointment of Tahamoana Macpherson as New Zealand’s new Ambassador to Thailand. Mr Macpherson was until recently Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Auckland.  A diplomat for 20 years, he was Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, and DPMC Foreign Policy Advisor. Mr Macpherson has also served in London and Washington D.C. Mr Macpherson will also be accredited as New Zealand’s Ambassador to Cambodia and to Lao People’s Democratic Republic, based in Bangkok. [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/announcement-new-ambassador-thailand)

* 1. **Foreign Affairs Minister concludes successful visit to China**

Winston Peters undertook a three day visit to China with an agreement for future high level visits between the two countries to maintain and build on the bilateral relationship.

The Minister held a formal meeting and a working lunch with his counterpart, State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi.  Mr Peters also met with other high ranking Chinese officials, including Politburo member and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yang Jiechi, and the Minister of the Communist Party International Department, Song Tao.

* They confirmed dates for the next round of our FTA upgrade discussions, which will take place next month
* Had excellent discussions on issues of direct relevance for  peace and security in the Asia-Pacific.  [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/foreign-affairs-minister-concludes-successful-visit-china)
	1. **Support for trade rules and EU-NZ talks on agenda**

Fortifying support for international trade rules and preparing the way for New Zealand’s free trade talks with the European Union are key aims for Trade and Export Growth Minister David Parker during a visit to France and Germany this week. He will attend the OECD’s annual Ministerial Council meeting in Paris, which he will vice-chair. He will also join an informal gathering of World Trade

He said many of the challenges the Government is working to address – from multinational tax avoidance to climate change and inequality – are best tackled in cooperation with other countries. At the meeting David Parker intends to share key elements of the Government’s economic and well-being strategy, including the recently-announced Trade for All agenda.

While in Europe David Parker will also hold bilateral talks in Paris and Berlin, where he will discuss the launch of negotiations on an EU-New Zealand free trade agreement, following the EU’s adoption of its negotiating mandate this week. Full

**Export NZ**

* 1. **Export NZ May Trade Update**

As this is written there is a mixture of good and bad news on the trade front.  The best news is that the threatened US-China trade war may have been averted (for now).  The latest round of negotiations on the expansion of the Pacific Alliance is underway.  And we now have a date for the launch of FTA negotiations between New Zealand and the EU. But the dispute over US steel and aluminium tariffs remains.

Moreover the US decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal is a worry for those New Zealand exporters and investors who took hope from the Obama Administration’s lifting of sanctions. We recommend that you receive good advice on potential consequences should you be contemplating doing business with Iran at this point in time.  In the first instance you should approach MFAT and NZTE and get good legal advice. [Full article available here](https://www.exportnz.org.nz/news-and-information/news/2018/trade-updates-2018/trade-update-may/_recache?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20Exporter%20-%20May%202018&utm_content=The%20Exporter%20-%20May%202018+CID_3d602fcb73559fa2a8e07d69faff31f1&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Trade%20Update)

* 1. [**New report: Market Opportunities in Romania**](https://businessnz.cmail20.com/t/r-l-jydhditd-aekytdhr-s/)

Here's a useful report for anyone considering doing business in Romania - reported to be the most dynamic economy in Europe and a gateway to both the EU and Eastern European markets.

It covers the key sectors of potential opportunity for investment and export to Romania, for sourcing production and for relocation of operations. [Full article available here](https://www.exportnz.org.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/146651/Market-Opportunities-in-Romania-H1-2018-FRD-Center.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=The%20Exporter%20-%20May%202018&utm_content=The%20Exporter%20-%20May%202018+CID_3d602fcb73559fa2a8e07d69faff31f1&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=New%20report%20Market%20Opportunities%20in%20Romania)

**General**

* 1. **New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth: RCEP could boost NZ-India trade**

Currently, all players in the New Zealand to India trade are hoping that politicians will leverage the Regional Comprehensive Economic Agreement (RCEP), which includes ten countries of the ASEAN grouping. The India New Zealand Business Council signed a landmark agreement with the ASEAN New Zealand Business Council at an event in Auckland on Friday.

RCEP has the potential to be a high quality partnership agreement, mutually beneficial to India and New Zealand,” Parker said. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195412/New-Zealand-Minister-for-Trade-and-Export-Growth-RCEP-could-boost-NZ-India-trade)

* 1. **New Zealand needs a food integrity story**

According to agricultural trade envoy, Mike Petersen, New Zealand has a role to play in helping other countries with food security, business futures and innovation. He added food security was a real issue

for many countries, but as we have an abundance of food in New Zealand and we don’t take security seriously. He noted that it was about exporting our products but also about exporting farming systems to help other countries . It was our comparative advantage and something we could share and use offshore. He said New Zealand needed a new story that related to New Zealand, centred on humble people with more trust and the integrity of our products and systems. The story currently has three themes including open hearts, open spaces and open minds. He noted NZ needed to talk about the agri-food sector, not the primary sector. [Full article available here](https://farmersweekly.co.nz/section/agribusiness/deer/nz-needs-food-integrity-story)

* 1. **New Zealand avocado orchard up for sale**

One of the first large-scale commercial avocado orchards to be planted in New Zealand - as part of a multi-national growing consortium - has been placed on the market for sale. The 29 hectare property at Awanui just north of Kaitaia was originally established by Californian-based owners in 1990. It was planted with Hass on Zutano and Duke 7 avocado varieties grown on some 20 hectares of plantation land. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195539/New-Zealand-avocado-orchard-up-for-sale)

* 1. **Strong avocado returns driving investment into industry**

The New Zealand avocado industry has just posted the draft result for the 2017-18 seasons of $150m in sales, with $105m from export markets and $45m from the New Zealand market. This outstanding result has been achieved from 3.8m trays, just 50% of the production volume of the previous year, which achieved $200m across all markets. Avocado exporters and New Zealand avocado suppliers acknowledge it has been a phenomenal season for avocado demand, with record returns to growers.

NZ Avocado CEO Jen Scoular comments “Demand continues to grow in all markets, and the focus is now on increasing productivity of existing orchards and supporting new orchard development.”
“Over 1,000 hectares of dairy and dry stock farms in Northland have been converted to avocado orchards over the past three years, and some of these orchards are expecting their first crops in the coming season” says Scoular.

In the Bay of Plenty, orchardists are rejuvenating orchards and investing in implementing best practice orchard management to reap the high values being returned for premium quality avocados.
These new avocado plantings and improving production will enable further growth towards the industry goal of $280m in total sales value by 2023. This will also help to bridge the current gap between avocado supplies and demand in New Zealand and globally, [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195637/NZ-Strong-avocado-returns-driving-investment-into-industry)

**Industry news**

* 1. **Bay of Plenty kiwifruit industry happy with cold snap**

Temperatures in the Western Bay of Plenty plummeted last week and the kiwifruit industry couldn't be any happier. Overnight, temperatures were expected to reach as low as 4oC. These temperatures were among the coolest of the past month. A Seeka spokeswoman said they were delighted by the arrival of the cold snap. "This week looks perfect. It's cold but the sun is shining, and it will be a good picking week for us.” Seeka has already picked kiwifruit from orchards considered to be most at-risk from frosts. “We are pleased to see this weather. It raises the brix (sugar) level in the fruit and ... shuts down the vine. You need that, so the fruit matures. It's exactly what we've been wanting, although it's coming a little bit later than we'd hoped." [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195449/NZ-Bay-of-Plenty-kiwifruit-industry-happy-with-cold-snap)

* 1. **New directors elected to Horticulture New Zealand Board**

Horticulture New Zealand’s Board welcomes new director Bernadine Guilleux and re-elected director Mike Smith, after four well-qualified candidates contested two vacant roles on the Board. "We had four very strong candidates but there were only two positions on the Board and Mike and Bernadine secured the highest votes," Julian Raine says. "Mike has already made a significant contribution to the Board and we are thrilled to see him have the opportunity to continue that. Bernadine Guilleux has been immersed in horticulture since childhood, as her father and his brothers established their Balle Bros operation in Pukekohe, where she is currently the group’s marketing manager. She is focused on earning true engagement from all New Zealanders who enjoy fresh, healthy food.

"We are conscious the Board was all male, so it was great to see three women put their names forward for this election, with Bernadine being successful. The Board’s goal is that its membership embraces the diversity of Horticulture New Zealand’s grower members. "Directors are elected for a three year term and Mike’s and Bernadine’s new term starts after Horticulture New Zealand’s Annual General Meeting in July. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195706/New-directors-elected-to-Horticulture-New-Zealand-Board)

* 1. **Zespri International: India is strongest emerging market for kiwifruit**

New Zealand-based Zespri International Limited, the world’s largest marketer of kiwifruit, currently focuses on strengthening its position in the Indian market, which it views as the strongest emerging market for the fruit among its peer group. India, where the brand enjoys a majority of the market share, is one of the 59-plus countries to which Zespri exports kiwifruit. The United States, Germany, Spain, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand are the largest of these countries. The kiwi marketing giant is looking at growing its market share by increasing its export volume in 2018. The brand’s first shipment for this year has already arrived in India from New Zealand. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195545/Zespri-International-India-is-strongest-emerging-market-for-kiwifruit)

* 1. **New Zealand citrus**

New Zealand satsuma mandarin growers are forecasting a slight increase in production, compared to last year. New Zealand Citrus Growers Inc. (NZCGI) says the satsuma season kicked off in April and growers are around 50 per cent through harvest, with external quality and taste very good.

The NZ navel orange season is also soon approaching with a start date expected in late June, with volumes predicted to be similar to 2016 at around 9,700 tonnes. Mr Hall says growers have recently embarked on new techniques, which have helped improve taste for the consumer.

NZCGI says lemon volumes have increased as a year-round crop, with March and April volumes significantly up on 2017. They peak in New Zealand's winter months and a good proportion of NZ Lemons head offshore particularly into Asia. Limes have come on stream late February and peak in June, and while there are not a lot of large lime growers, collectively there is plentiful supply through the autumn and winter months before an expected shortage during the summer.

"Due to the bi-annual bearing nature of citrus, growers generally experience ‘peaks and troughs’ of volumes from their orchard," Mr Hall said. "This makes meeting market demand some years a challenge and then causes an oversupply situation in other years. Export demand for NZ satsumas has dropped off in the last two years for a number of reasons. New Zealand's contribution to global citrus production is less than 0.05 per cent, and Gisborne is the largest citrus growing region (56% of production), followed by Northland (34%), Auckland (9%) and Bay of Plenty (1%). NZ Citrus mainly supplies the domestic market ($61million) with export comprising $13million, of which lemon export dominates at $9.5million. The main export markets for NZ citrus are Japan, USA and China for lemons, Japan and the Pacific Islands for Mandarins, and Pacific Islands, China and Japan for oranges.

NZCGI say they are currently refreshing their strategy, and a big focus of this will be both to lift demand domestically and to develop existing, and open new export markets. Mr Hall says New Zealand produces some of the best citrus in the world and does not use any post-harvest fungicides, which means the country has a unique niche in the global market. He adds these quality benefits will complement the promotional work that is underway. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195701/New-Zealand-satsuma-mandarin-season-off-to-a-good-start)

* 1. **Fresh tomato commodity levy referendum**

TomatoesNZ shared some key information on the upcoming fresh tomato commodity levy referendum. All fresh tomato growers that have paid a levy during the twelve months to 30 June 2018 are entitled to vote. Voting packs will be sent to all known levy payers by early July.

[Click here for more information.](http://www.tomatoesnz.co.nz/hot-topics/fresh-tomato-commodity-levy-referendum-voting/) [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43707/New-Zealand-Fresh-tomato-commodity-levy-referendum)

**Biosecurity**

* 1. **Australian research: Disease-carrying insects are blown in by winds**

Research from the University of Western Australia's Institute of Agriculture has found foreign insects blown hundreds of kilometres across the ocean may have brought plant disease strains all the way from East Timor and Papua New Guinea to the northern part of the country.

They found genetic connectivity, where a sequence from one of our northern neighbours such as East Timor matches the sequence found in Australia," [Abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2018-05-28/wa-research-shows-foreign-insects-are-blown-into-australia/9803846) reports on Professor Jones saying it was an easier journey for pathogens to cross from South East Asia than you might think. “They're tiny things like aphids, they can be seen with the naked eye, and if they get up high with the winds they just get blown across. It has been recorded before these kinds of aphids; in the US they have been recorded blowing from the south to the north in jet stream winds and settling down and being deposited in crops which are huge distances away from where they originated."  [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195414/Australian-research-Disease-carrying-insects-are-blown-in-by-winds)



1. **International news**

**Regulatory**

* 1. **G-33 members want farm trade negotiations restarted**

The Group of 33 developing countries have prompted the World Trade Organization (WTO) to have agriculture negotiations ‘resume immediately’. The economic interests of the members of the G-33 bloc ‘should remain the cornerstone of the resumption of negotiations’.

The trade official, who is based in Geneva, said the G-33’s explicit demand was expressed during the informal open-ended meeting of the Committee on Agriculture on May 24. This was the committee’s first meeting in special session since agriculture negotiations broke down at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December last year.

The official, who was not authorized to speak for the G-33, told the [BusinessMirror](https://businessmirror.com.ph/phl-g-33-members-want-farm-trade-negotiations-restarted/) that the G-33’s message was clear: “It urged the negotiations to be resumed immediately and to be better structured for sufficient communications in the lead-up to MC-12. The G-33 opined that political will is key to achieving meaningful results."   [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195433/G-33-members-want-farm-trade-negotiations-restarted)

* 1. **"Canadians expect mandatory GMO food labelling"**

Canadians are divided on whether they believe genetically modified foods are safe and healthy, but they overwhelmingly believe that GMO food products should be labelled, a new study from Dalhousie University shows.

The preliminary results of the study, titled "Biotechnology in Food: Canadian Attitudes towards Genetic Engineering in both Plant- and Animal-based Foods", were published. An overwhelming 70% of survey respondents strongly agreed that GMO food and ingredients should be labelled on all packages. But respondents were divided on whether GMO foods are safe: 37.7% believe them to be safe; 34.7% think they are not. While 35% believe that we understand the health effects, more than 44% believe we do not.

The study shows that Canadians are least concerned compared with other foods about GMO fruits and vegetables. While the study points to concerns, GMO-free food isn't necessarily the most important consideration on shoppers' minds. Price, absence of hormones and antibiotics, nutritional content, familiarity with the product and location of production are still more important factors in purchasing decisions., [download the preliminary results](http://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/management/News/News%20%26%20Events/Dalhousie%20GMO%20Food%20Study%202018%20%28EN%29.pdf). [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43588/Canadians-expect-mandatory-GMO-food-labelling)

* 1. **Dutch court rejects indoor farming patent**

The Dutch court in The Hague has rejected PlantLab's patent on indoor farming yesterday. After a lengthy lawsuit, the patent was finally declared invalid due to a lack of inventiveness. The ruling is a victory for Certhon, which has been battling the indoor farming patent for years. The long-lasting court case is about the patent on indoor farming filed by PlantLab years ago. It concerns a method of growing plants in a fully or partly closed environment with the help of supplemental lighting and in which the root zone temperature of the plant is controlled. The patent has been fought and discussed broadly in the industry over the last years. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43676/Dutch-court-rejects-indoor-farming-patent)

* 1. **EU Commission proposal on water re-use "step in right direction"**

Reacting to the EU Commission proposal released this week for new rules to make agricultural irrigation safer and easier, Copa and Cogeca said it is a positive step. “Water storage and water re-use are important strategies to reduce the abstraction of freshwater and to further improve on-farm water use efficiency. Both tools are important measures to tackle the impact of climate change, bringing benefits to the environment and to farm economics”. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43636/EU-Commission-proposal-on-water-re-use-step-in-right-direction)

**Business**

* 1. **Walmart organizes promotional activity in Xiamen for traceable packed vegetables**

Walmart organized a "news conference to uncover great agricultural products in Xiamen and promote traceable vegetables" in Xiamen on May 23rd. This news conference takes a central place in the efforts of Walmart to promote product traceability. " With the start of the "promotional project for nationwide product traceability of packaged vegetables" in Xiamen, Walmart is taking advantage of the agricultural product quality and food safety tracing systems in Xiamen to provide consumers with comprehensive information on plantation, examination, purchase, processing, distribution, and retail. Consumers can follow the entire journey from plantation to supermarket. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195455/Walmart-organizes-promotional-activity-in-Xiamen-for-traceable-packed-vegetables)

* 1. **Risk of non-payment in Asian Pacific highest in India**

India has a closed economy, which makes them less vulnerable to trade restrictions than many Asian countries . The country is expected to remain one of the fastest growing economies in the region.

Exporters, however, must take into account the lack of payment morals in India. Dutch figures show the percentage of domestic late invoices in India is 57.8 percent, the highest in the region. This was shown by the Payment barometer for Pacific Asia by Atradius, which researched the payment morals of companies in Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan. The full report can be downloaded [here](https://www.atradius.nl/publicaties/).

 The percentage of late invoices in India is the highest in the region. In the last year there was an increase of 21 percent in the average payment time in domestic invoices. This is far above the region average of 7 percent. In India it now takes an average of 76 days for an invoice to be paid, compared to 63 days in the previous year. The number of late invoices is the highest in the chemical industry

There is a slight decrease in the number of bad debts (from 2.6 to 2.4 percent) it is still the highest percentage in the region. The main reason for this according to companies is that customers went bankrupt or ceased their activities. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/195401/Risk-of-non-payment-in-Asian-Pacific-highest-in-India)

* 1. **Bayer is making good progress strategically**

The Bayer Group is making great progress with the acquisition of Monsanto. “After almost two years of very diligent work, they have received nearly all the crucial approvals. We anticipate being able to close the acquisition of Monsanto in the near future,” said Werner Baumann, Chairman of the Board of Management of Bayer, at the company’s Annual Stockholders’ Meeting held in Bonn, Germanylast week. Operationally, Bayer’s sales and earnings in 2017 remained on a par with 2016.

Bayer has also made important progress strategically. This article outlines Bayer’s acquisitions and divestments over the last year

The United Nations estimates that approximately ten billion people will populate the earth in 2050. According to Baumann, it will be an enormous challenge to produce food in sufficient quantity and quality for all of them. Bayer and Monsanto together will be able to contribute more to addressing this challenge. “In the future, we will be better placed to help farmers worldwide produce healthy, safe and affordable food in a sustainable manner.” Bayer will offer them an outstanding portfolio comprising seeds and plant traits; chemical and biological crop protection; digital technologies, information and consulting. “Our offering will thus include many different options that reflect the diverse nature of agriculture worldwide,” said Baumann. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43620/Bayer-is-making-good-progress-strategically)

 **Food safety**

* 1. **Consumers call for traceability after E.coli**

Consumer and food safety groups called on the FDA to propose, within six months, requirements for comprehensive and rapid traceability of produce, including leafy greens.

The Centre for Science in the Public Interest, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, The Pew Charitable Trusts and five other organizations pressed the FDA in a letter to take action in light of the still unsolved multistate outbreak of E. coli infections linked to romaine lettuce that has sickened more than 170 people and caused one death. [Read more at the Center for Science in the Public Interest](http://cspinet.org/news/consumer-food-safety-groups-urge-fda-establish-industry-requirements-rapidly-trace-produce)  [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43585/US-Consumers-call-for-traceability-after-E.coli)



 **Sustainability**

* 1. **UK: Soil management for horticulture**

AHDB Horticulture has released a new [soil management guide](http://horticulture.ahdb.org.uk/publication/soil-management-horticulture). The guide is a practical manual for growers and agronomists with the primary focus on soil assessment and management in horticultural cropping systems. This guide provides information on how to assess soil texture, structure and condition and considers strategies to improve and maintain good soil structure. The guide has been produced as part of the AHDB GREATsoils research and knowledge exchange programme. You can find more resources on the [GREATsoils page](http://horticulture.ahdb.org.uk/greatsoils). [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43632/UK-Soil-management-for-horticulture)

 **Innovation**

* 1. **How probiotics could help grow veggies in microgravity**

Astronauts at the International Space Station are spending more time away from Earth, but they still need their daily serving of vegetables. In the quest to find a viable way for crew to grow their own veggies while orbiting — and possibly one day on the moon or Mars — student researchers are sending broccoli seeds coated with a healthy dose of probiotics to space.

The seeds are coated with two different species of bacteria, developed at the University of Washington, that can live inside crop plants and improve their growth. These “beneficial” microbes, also called endophytes, may also help plants grow better in extreme low-gravity environments, and where nutrients or water could be lacking.

The researcher has found that the plants thrive, even when given less water and essential nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. His work also confirms a 2016 study in which Doty and co-authors found that plants can better tolerate drought and other environmental stressors with the help of natural microbes that provide nutrients to their plant partners. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43544/How-probiotics-could-help-grow-veggies-in-microgravity)

* 1. **Sustainable clothing made from fungi**

Sustainability is the magic word for the future of the fashion industry. Wageningen University & Research is making this new breakthrough possible with innovative research into more sustainable resources for textiles, such as fungi and fruit waste, and by bringing in industry professionals to collaborate. “The textile industry is only second to oil when it comes to generating pollution”, notes “Wageningen is working on a more sustainable production chain, from the raw materials to the end consumer.”

In order to produce all that clothing, manufacturers primarily use new raw materials, particularly plastics and cotton. The cultivation of cotton requires a great deal of water and artificial fertiliser. All in all, the CO2 emissions generated by the fashion industry is equal to the amount produced by international flights and maritime transport combined.

 “Following earlier efforts made by the industry, such as organic cotton, the time has now arrived to take the next step: towards circularity”, says Poldner. As part of the search for renewable, sustainable raw materials for clothing, the students at the Circular Fashion Lab are researching fruit waste as a substitute for leather. Other renewable resources, such as fungi and hemp, are being analysed for their degree of sustainability as well.

Clothing made from plant-based alternatives could be composted and they do not release any plastics when they are washed. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43665/Sustainable-clothing-made-from-fungi)

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