

**PMAC weekly update 30th July to 6th August**

1. **Government agencies**: Tour leader found with fruit fly; Update on entry across the Australian border WTO Notifications
2. **New Zealand News:**  Minister of Foreign Affairs to visit Singapore; Australia and New Zealand trade ministers meet for CER talk; NZ facing worst rise in trade protectionism in a generation; Horticultural employers must clean up their act; Plant & Food Research wins two 2018 KiwiNet Awards; MYBs generate 'wow factors' in fruits and vegetables; Hawke's Bay food producers win genetic modification free battle; Critical seasonal labour shortage may hinder kiwifruit industry growth – report; Kiwifruit growers group silent as members delay constitutional changes; Importers respond to MPI warning about delays; Question marks over science, agri creds at MPI's top table; Summerfruit NZ readies funding case for PGP; Gisborne's Cedenco takes top prize at Hawke's Bay Export Awards; Jen's pick: Female quota system useful; Pipfruit trailblazers recognised with award; Medical cannabis industry aims to match the billion dollar kiwifruit sector; Hopportunity knocks in Tapawera; Pipfruit trailblazers recognised with award; Christchurch couple quit their jobs to cold-press juices; Urban-rural battle looming among Bay of Plenty regional council; Opinion: Euro pest control red tape bad
3. **International news:** Bayer to appeal neonics verdict; Ideal for relishes, jams & juices’: Haskap berries gain novel food approval; AgroFresh launches FreshCloud

***Editors Comments***

*A very busy week for New Zealand news with news of two potential sectors that see increased opportunity for their sector ( hops and medical cannabis) and who also see the merits of being a well organised and working together to maximise returns .*

*MPI has found itself in the news again with three articles – warning that importers may experience delays as MPI toughen up its processes in the wake of the PSA verdict, concern about young trees that may need to be destroyed because they may be carrying diseases and questions about the credentials of top MPI officials. It can be easy to forget all the good work that MPI does on behalf of the horticultural and seed sectors – facilitating and opening up trade, operating our assurance system ( which by the way is recognised as one of the best most cost efficient systems globally) and ensuring our biosecurity system is operating and does keep the majority of the pests out the vast majority of the time. None of these areas are easy*

*Another area that has come up again this week is concerns about the labour shortage. Its good to see an apprenticeship scheme will be set up and that Massey will have a horticultural degree up and running next year. But as Mike says some of the horticultural employers need to clean up their act.*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **Tour leader found with fruit fly**

Fruit fly larvae carried by a tour party leader from Malaysia was intercepted last month in undeclared food from a holiday group at Auckland Airport. The larvae were found in chillies following x-ray screening of the tour leader's baggage. A caterpillar was also detected in some garlic bulbs carried with the undeclared food. The tour leader received a $400 fine for failing to declare the food package. [Full article available here](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/tour-leader-found-with-fruit-fly/)

* 1. **Update on entry across the Australian border**

The MPI / PMAC working group has released in latest update on the phase out of OPI. As a result of a working group meeting last week an updated communication has been released. The communication notes that

* OPI inspectors have a good number of time slots available for additional inspections over the next 6 weeks,
* Provides an overview of how MP:I is working with DAWR to rationalise the pest list for products entering Australia ( i.e. to make sure that only insects and diseases that pose a threat to Australia are regarded by border officials as a pest).

In the meantime MPI and DAWR have a number of initiatives underway to try to streamline entry into Australia. For the full communication see the August update on [this web page](http://www.pmac.co.nz/opi-cbis-working-group.html)

* 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 include:

* Canada MRL’s
* Taiwan The "Quarantine Regulations for Trans-shipment of Plants or Plant Products through Countries or Districts where Designated Diseases or Pests are Known to Occur"

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





1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Minister of Foreign Affairs to visit Singapore**

Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters travelled to Singapore to attend the ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit Ministerial Meetings last week. While in Singapore Mr Peters will have a number of formal bilateral meetings and informal interactions with foreign minister counterparts from the ASEAN and EAS countries, as well as countries attending as guests of the Singaporean government. [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/minister-foreign-affairs-visit-singapore)

* 1. **Australia and New Zealand trade ministers meet for CER talk**

Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, the Hon Steven Ciobo MP and New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth, Hon David Parker, met in Auckland . The Ministers noted the strong trade and commercial links and special relationship between Australia and New Zealand, and rejected protectionism and agreed on the importance for both nations to continue collaborating to improve the work of the World Trade Organization, as well as to strengthen the rules‑based trade architecture in the region, to benefit both Australian and New Zealand economies.

They discussed the initiatives agreed in March to grow **the Digital Economy and Maximising Opportunities for SMEs. As a consequence reviews of this areas will be undertaken by both countries productivity** Commissions with reports with the respective Ministers by January 2019.  [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/australia-and-new-zealand-trade-ministers-meet-cer-talk)

* 1. **NZ facing worst rise in trade protectionism in a generation**

Vangelis Vitalis, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who led the New Zealand team in key global trade negotiations says the world is seeing the worst rise in trade protectionism in 23 years.

He said years of eased trade rules were in danger of being reversed, and this must be dealt with.

"We have seen 400 new protectionist measures to May have been put in place."We know that non-tariff barriers cost the wider agricultural sector of New Zealand up to $6 billion a year in restricted access. These have a profound impact. "We are seeing the sharpest rise in protectionism since 1995, especially in the last six months." [Full article available here](https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/country/362989/nz-facing-worst-rise-in-trade-protectionism-in-a-generation)

**General**

* 1. **Horticultural employers must clean up their act**

The Bay of Plenty kiwifruit industry was short 1200 workers in May in its orchards and packhouses.

And Horticulture New Zealand chief executive Mike Chapman says horticulture industry needs to identify and clean-up its bad employers if it is to attract workers,.

Mike says the biggest proportion of its workforce continues to be New Zealanders. "We have a lot of employers in horticulture that are not playing the game as they should. They will pull all of us down. They could pull the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme down. We have to unite to deal with them," Chapman said.

People were urged to identify employers that should be visited by HortNZ's national seasonal labour co-ordinator, Jerf van Beek, for educating on good employment practice.  "Part of the solution to our worker shortage is Kiwis. There are 100,000 jobless in New Zealand and we have to get these people off the couch," Chapman said. "If we are going to get an extra 6000 workers, we are going to have to get out there, source them and put them into work."

Of horticulture's workforce, 52 per cent were New Zealanders and 31 per cent RSE workers. Only 13 per cent were backpackers and travellers "so these are not as essential as many people believe".

New Zealand permanent staff worked an average 38.4 weeks a year, RSE workers 25.3 weeks, and those on a working holiday 5.9 weeks. Chapman said it was appalling that an industry the size of horticulture, which generated $6 billion in returns, had no apprentice programme or degree course. "There is no pathway for people to go forward on."

Horticulture launched an apprenticeship programme at the conference and a horticulture degree and short course was planned to start at Massey University next year. HortNZ opposed Government moves to accelerate increases to the minimum wage, lifting it to $20 an hour by 2020.

He also says the seasonality of work was an issue with 30,000 people needed for a couple of months every year. "We are not just competing for seasonal labour, but for IT skills. At present we are concentrating on bringing horticultural-minded people into the industry and that needs to shift quite significantly." While automation technology was developing all the time, everything a grower needed to fully automate a packing line already existed. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/105745454/horticulture-employers-must-clean-up-their-act-to-address-its-worker-shortage)

* 1. **Plant & Food Research wins two 2018 KiwiNet Awards**

In early July Plant & Food Research went home with two of the five KiwiNet Research Commercialisation Awards, which celebrate impact from science through successful research commercialisation within New Zealand’s universities and Crown Research Institutes.

Plant & Food Research won the PwC Commercial Impact Award with the Amarasate™ extract – a 100% plant-based, world-first weight management extract. The award recognises excellence in research commercialisation that delivers outstanding innovation performance and the potential for generating significant economic impact for New Zealand.

Dr Andrew Kralicek, Science Team Leader Molecular Sensing won the BNZ Supreme Award for his research on harnessing insects’ receptors for commercial sensing. This award recognises a supreme entry which demonstrates overall excellence in all core areas of research commercialisation.

[Full article available here](https://www.plantandfood.co.nz/page/news/media-release/story/plant-and-food-research-wins-two-2018-kiwinet-awards/?utm_source=Plant+%26+Food+Research+E-Newsletter&utm_campaign=a9d6085d8e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_02_11_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5919b8ee23-a9d6085d8e-21882009)

* 1. **MYBs generate 'wow factors' in fruits and vegetables**

Novelty and health benefits play a major role in influencing consumers’ purchasing decisions and are often controlled in the plant by a family of proteins called MYBs. Understanding how these work could result in new fruits and vegetables on the supermarket shelves. MYB’s act as the facilitators that translate DNA into active substances in the plant.

Studies have found that changing, or selecting for changes, in the activity of a single family of genetic controls, called MYB transcription factors, enhances key traits of fruits and vegetables such as appearance, flavour, texture and nutritional content. Understanding the regulation of MYB transcription factors facilitates the breeding and production of completely new categories of fruits and vegetables with desirable consumer traits. These added potential health benefits, more attractive appearance, better flavour, better texture, better storage and more convenience. [Full article available here](https://www.plantandfood.co.nz/page/news/media-release/story/mybs-generate-wow-factors-in-fruits-and-vegetables/?utm_source=Plant+%26+Food+Research+E-Newsletter&utm_campaign=a9d6085d8e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_02_11_COPY_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5919b8ee23-a9d6085d8e-21882009)

* 1. **Hawke's Bay food producers win genetic modification free battle**

In 2015 the Hastings District Council became the first in New Zealand to secure a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)-free status, but the decision was appealed by Federated Farmers through the Environment Court. A recent ruling upheld the council's decision to prohibit the outdoor release and field trials of GMOs.

The decision was welcomed by both the council and Ngati Kahungunu Iwi Inc who have worked closely to protect and safeguard the environment. One of New Zealand's largest growers and exporters and a member of Pure Hawke's Bay, John Bostock, said the win was huge for everyone in Hawke's Bay. "Some of the world's most celebrated food regions - Tuscany, Province, Bordeaux - are officially GM-free. That's the world we want to be a part of," he said. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12099940)

**Industry news**

* 1. **Critical seasonal labour shortage may hinder kiwifruit industry growth - report**

A new report says that a critical shortage of seasonal workers could hamper the kiwifruit industry's predicted growth over the next decade. It will require an additional 7000 seasonal workers if its to double in size by 2027 as predicted. An industry body has called for Government support to complement efforts by those in the industry to attract people to pick, pack and prune kiwifruit.

This past season the industry body said the labour shortage hit earlier and more severely than anticipated. NZKGI chief executive Nikki Johnson said that while it was worrying for the industry, the situation "will escalate significantly if no action is taken". The report pointed to low unemployment rates, fewer people on working holidays choosing to work in the industry, the short-term work and what they have called "outdated perceptions" of worker welfare and pay rates. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12099643)

* 1. **Kiwifruit growers group silent as members delay constitutional changes**

NZKGI would not comment on its annual general meeting which was held up after growers halted constitutional changes. It tried to implement new powers for its executive committee which included giving delegated authority for decision-making. Growers were concerned it would mean the committee would have the power to negotiate how much they were paid by Zespri. All of the new rules were implemented as a single motion for simplicity purposes, which meant growers had to vote for all of the rules or none of them. Significant concerns were expressed about the rule. Te Puke

grower, Colin Olesen, was behind the amendment to get rid of the rule as it would give the executive too much power. He said the back down showed the problems with advance voting at shareholder’s meetings. Around 100 people attended the meet

* 1. **Importers respond to MPI warning about delays**

MPI has warned importers will face delays as they complete biosecurity protocols. The delays are due to a high court decision ruling the Government is liable for letting Psa into the country. The Government will appeal the decision. Car importers also faced a scare this year when stink bugs were found on ships headed to New Zealand. This halted the industry for days. The pest was the second most unwanted in New Zealand after the Queensland fruit fly and could cause $4 billion in exports to be lost. Importers Institute Secretary, Daniel Silva, said it was early days but there had been no noticeable delays since the court’s decision last month. He added there was always a risk inherent with importing things, and the question was how we manage it.

* 1. **Question marks over science, agri creds at MPI's top table**

Senior MPI managers notably lack science or agriculture credentials. Information released to the Herald by the MPI under the Official Information Act shows the head of Biosecurity New Zealand, Roger Smith, has no qualifications in science or agriculture and a career background in New Zealand Customs and MPI systems and China relations. Geoff Gwyn, the man heading the nearly $1 billion effort to eradicate the cattle disease incursion Mycoplasma bovis, is a former police inspector with a Master of Arts degree from Massey University.

Of six other MPI senior leadership team members profiled in the OIA response, only two have qualifications in primary industry science — Dan Bolger, is heading Fisheries NZ while the other, Julie Collins is head of Forestry NZ. MPI refused to give the qualifications and experience of senior MPI employees in leadership jobs in biosecurity response. MPI also refused to say how many are former police officers reporting to the response team.

In the M. bovis disease eradication effort farmers report a "huge disconnect between MPI and people on the ground," said Federated Farmers national dairy chairman Chris Lewis. "They feel they're dealing with bureaucrats. It takes five or six decision-makers to sign off on something. When you're dealing with animals and feed, quick decisions are crucial."

Lewis acknowledges leadership teams need some expertise not directly related to the focus subject, but in biosecurity he would expect " some to show affinity to the land, some connection”. The feedback is that some (MPI) decisions around M. bovis have perplexed. They haven't come from common-sense agriculture experience.

MPI director human resources Erina Clayton disagreed with the Herald's contention that the lack of direct background and qualifications in agriculture or science for all but two of MPI's senior leadership team — both currently in roles not immediately connected to biosecurity — was a serious deficiency.

"All of the individuals on MPI's senior leadership team have backgrounds that qualify them for the positions they hold as organisational leaders and decision-makers. In addition SLT members receive advice from a range of expert employees. "MPI also engages and consults with experts from a wide range of fields, including agricultural and biological science experts, across all its activities spanning primary production, biosecurity, food safety, animal welfare, fisheries and trade." [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12098468)

* 1. **Summerfruit NZ readies funding case for PGP**

Summerfruit New Zealand (SFNZ) has nearly completed its business case proposal for the Primary Growth Partnership (PGP), which if successful, will encourage innovation, add value and enhance the industry, chief executive Marie Dawkins says.

SFNZ had sent its initial application for a five-strand industry proposal to the PGP - a government funding programme - several months ago, and the panel immediately requested a more comprehensive and detailed business case. Since then, SFNZ staff and consultants have been working on the ''Sensational Summerfruit'' strategy, which was expected to cost about $16.7million, of which about 60% would come from industry and 40% from the Government. They hope to have it ready by September 1.''

The five key points covered opening new markets, including online sales, better understanding consumer requirements, developing improved packaging and transport to deliver fresher fruit faster, encouraging the adoption of new technology and innovation, and the development of more high performance orchards with higher volumes, new varieties and new production systems.

She said the goal was to give consumers an even better product. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12099052)

* 1. **Gisborne's Cedenco takes top prize at Hawke's Bay Export Awards**

Gisborne-based fruit and vege grower Cedenco last week emerged took the top award at the ASB Hawke's Bay Export Awards. The judges said Cedenco impressed them with its investment in market research, customer relationships, and research and development to get their product right for the customer. "We liked the level of engagement across the wider team in developing the company vision, and the continuous improvement and commitment to innovation was genuinely impressive."

The Judges' Choice Award was won by First Fresh. The judges said the Gisborne company was "snapping on the heels of the winner in their category".[Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12099662)

* 1. **Jen's pick: Female quota system useful**

Jen attended the Horticulture Conference in Christchurch in July and she notes figures constantly remind us that although there are a number of women in my sort of position, heading industry bodies or running their own horticulture business or orchard entity, women are still very poorly represented at board level.

When I was living in Germany, Norway implemented a quota system requiring at least 40 per cent women on the boards of every public company. It worked in the numbers, but debate continues over whether it set the scene for this to become a natural occurrence.It was legislated for public companies, but not for private companies and what it clearly showed was that the legislation is required because the percentage of women on the boards of the private companies did not change.

I see Cricket NZ has mandated that regional board won't receive their funding if there are not at least two women on those boards by March 2019.

In horticulture I know the capability is there, and there are probably equal numbers of women in horticulture as men, just not at the board table. I'm not proposing legislative change or quota systems. I am proposing that we really think about who we have representing us in organisations we are part of, how we should change that, and how important it is to think of governance as gender neutral.  [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12099905)

* 1. **Pipfruit trailblazers recognised with award**

Trailblazing efforts to boost Hawke's Bay's apple industry have been recognised by the New Zealand apple and pear industry. The immediate-past chair of New Zealand Apples & Pears Inc (NZAPI), Nadine Tunley (now living in Wellington), and Belgium-based international sales pioneer Tony Fissette have been recognised by their peers for outstanding contributions to the industry, with NZ Apples and Pears chief executive Alan Pollard calling the pair "trailblazers in their respective fields".

Tunley, who was elected the industry's first woman chair in 2012 after joining the board as a director in 2010 and oversaw the development of the 2013 NZAP strategy that set the goal of becoming a $1 billion export industry by 2022. During her eight years of service the industry's export returns grew from $340 million to more than $700m in 2017. Pollard said that during her leadership she ensured strong relationships with Government ministers and across primary-sector groups. She also represented the industry with distinction, including being a member of the previous Government's trade advisory group Biosecurity 2025; and the current Government's Primary Sector Council.

He said Fissette, who is T&G Global's general manager in Europe, was a keen advocate of innovation and the need to develop the right varieties for the right market. He has spent 44 years promoting the New Zealand industry within the European sales environment. He successfully introduced the New Zealand varieties Royal Gala and Braeburn to the European market, and in more recent years premium JAZZ™ and Envy™ apples.

"Just 10 years ago, Mr Fissette and his team celebrated selling the 100-millionth carton of New Zealand apples in Europe, and a few weeks back, they reached 10 million carton sales of JAZZ™ alone. The pair were officially recognised the NZ Apples and Pears annual meeting in Christchurch. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12097368)

**Crop news**

* 1. **Medical cannabis industry aims to match the billion dollar kiwifruit sector**

MediCann is a cannabis company that aims to build an agricultural industry to match the kiwifruit sector. It plans to follow a similar growing and cultivation model to Zespri’s. Managing Director, Brendon Ogilvy, said it had exclusive New Zealand rights to more than 30 medically certified cannabis strains. He added the company was ready to release grower licences pending final decisions by the Government on medicinal cannabis. Growers would apply to become a licenced producer. He noted it was an ambitious plan but the company was ready.

Horticulture growers and iwi had already expressed strong interest in partnering with MediCann. MediCann will purchase the crops and manufacture the products to meet estimated domestic demand and provide for future exports. Export opportunities could begin within a few years if the bill is passed. Board member, Elizabeth Plant, said it planned to produce the best quality pharmaceutical grade cannabis at the most affordable price for New Zealanders. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12095931)

* 1. **Hopportunity knocks in Tapawera**

Rural investment company MyFarm has launched a $17.64 million investment offer to fund New Zealand's largest hop orchard. The call for investors in the Tapawera Hop Garden Limited Partnership includes the purchase of a 96ha property and the lease of a second 50ha property which will be developed into a 116-canopy hectare garden.

MyFarm CEO Andrew Watters said half of the garden would be planted this spring alongside other development such as building hop picking and drying facilities and worker accommodation. Mr Watters said the offer included a $3m stake in new hop exporter Hop Revolution Ltd, which would manage the garden and market the hops offshore.

Hop Revolution chair John Loughlin said he believed the company could add considerable value to the way New Zealand hops were marketed internationally."Like Zespri and Rockit apples we're aiming to create brand value for growers by contracting directly with select craft breweries to supply them with commercial quantities of high quality hops of the varieties they're looking for,". Mr Loughlin said New Zealand's spray-free aroma hops were highly sought after by international brewers for the unique flavours and aromas they imparted in beer. New Zealand has about 600 canopy hectares of hop gardens, with all but one grower supplying the grower co-operative, New Zealand Hops Limited. [Full article available here](https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/country/363078/hopportunity-knocks-in-tapawera)

* 1. **Eight Central Otago orchards affected by biosecurity scare**

Eight Central Otago stonefruit orchardists have been affected by a biosecurity scare involving

apple and stonefruit plant material imported from Clean Plant Centre Northwest in Washington State, the United States, since June 2012.

MPI announced last week significant record keeping failures at the facility had been found and it could not be certain imported plant material was free of pests and diseases. About 47,500 plants and small trees at 32 nurseries, importers and growers nationally have been affected.

No major pests or diseases had been found on affected apple plant material, but more testing was required for lower-risk apple pests and diseases, and for affected stonefruit material, an MPI statement said. Affected apple plantings in New Zealand are able to be contained and monitored, but affected stonefruit plantings must be destroyed, unless they can be contained in suitable facilities.

This would be difficult, and meant the affected stonefruit material in Central Otago would most likely need destroyed. Of the eight orchards, seven had only ''test trees'' for new varieties, but one had significant plantings of a new variety and would need to destroy those trees.

The major loss from this situation would be one of potential earnings from the new varieties that were being tested, CEO of Summerfruit NZ Ms Dawkins said. ''Our [Summerfruit New Zealand] growth plan is based on regular new material, so we've lost the opportunity to build on potential new varieties. It won't stop the industry from growing, but it is a blow to the industry.'' MPI said it would supervise any containment process and destruction of plant material, and would ''consider claims for the direct cost of lost plant material''. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12099936)

**Other**

* 1. **Christchurch couple quit their jobs to cold-press juices**

Greenroots Juicery has produced cold-pressed juices in Christchurch since 2014, using locally sourced ingredients. They quit their full-time jobs to deliver fresh, cold-pressed juices to customers across the country – and it's paying off. They cold-press their juices for hundreds of weekly juice-cleanse subscribers and plan to open their first bricks and mortar store, including an eatery, at The Welder on Welles St, in June next year.

By January 2016 they were selling wholesale to cafes and eateries around Christchurch, and started cleanse programmes in July of the same year. Heenan committed full-time to Greenroots around the same time, and Ross cut his accounting job down to three days a week.  The pair credited their success to the quality of their fresh product and their social media following. They had almost 5000 Facebook followers and 15,000 on Instagram. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/105803734/christchurch-couple-quit-their-jobs-to-coldpress-juices)

* 1. **Urban-rural battle looming among Bay of Plenty regional council**

Political representation on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council is shaping up to become a battleground between urban and rural interests. Federated Farmers said representation on the council was out of balance in favour of Tauranga. Branch president Darryl Jensen was seeking a reduction in Tauranga's five representatives on the 14-member council. He said that because the regional council, with its three Māori constituencies, was at its legal limit of 14 councillors, the balance could be achieved by reducing representation for the populous but geographically small Tauranga constituency.

Jensen said he blamed the Local Electoral Act and its over-arching emphasis on population to determine effective representation. The representation of interests like farming had declined, despite their importance to the economy. The region's councillors last week decided unanimously to stick with the status quo . Barring a successful appeal to the Local Government Commission, it meant political representation on the regional council would not be rebalanced until the 2022 elections. [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12099989)

* 1. **Opinion: Euro pest control red tape bad**

Growing regulatory and political pressure for more sustainable agriculture in Europe is causing concern for local farmers. Restrictive regulatory processes and political decision-making based on gaining votes, rather than good science, mean very few new active substances are introduced.

A gradual loss of these substances will see farmers struggling to control pest populations in coming years. Trade barriers, threats to intellectual property, hazard-based assessments, and political change are all causing regulatory uncertainty. With these drivers, an uncertain future prevails.

Recently adopted European Union standards on endocrine disruptors resulted in complaints to the WTO from trading partners such as Canada, Australia and the USA It is critical that decision-making on MRLs and import tolerances are based on complete risk assessments. Currently, if a compound is identified as an endocrine disruptor or meets other hazard-based cut-offs, such as for reproductive toxicants, the classification decisions trigger regulatory non-approval and default MRLs, regardless of the actual risks.

Farmers support strict pesticide regulation and are well aware of the need to adopt a range of measures to discourage the growth of pest populations. This keeps pesticides and other interventions to economically justified levels and minimises risks to people and the environment. But taking valuable tools away from farmers without sound risk-based science is ludicrous. Withdrawing products is sensible when it's due to outdated chemistry, but not when it is brought about by political pressure, media 'untruths', or misinterpreted assessments.

Regulation needs to focus on science and safety, not political popularity. Europe's conservative approach to approving new agrichemicals is longstanding, but the current regulatory environment is out of control.

The European Commission is initiating a legislative proposal to make scientific assessments and decision-making on approving pesticides more transparent – mainly in response to the renewal of glyphosate. The Commission is proposing a rule-change to make scientific studies publicly available, so people can understand how far-reaching decisions to authorise or ban substances are made.

Political responsibility and greater transparency are two sides of the same coin. The problem is that it eventuates from pressure by activist groups, rather than sound risk assessment. The additional information will inadvertently give competitors information on what products are being introduced into the European market, earlier and in quite specific terms. This could erode confidentiality and allow competitors to undermine the new products via copycat formulations.

Additional market concerns in Europe include delays in the approval of crop protection products at European Member State level and the increasing costs of EU authorisation. The political sympathy towards biological and non-chemical options, and reducing the use of conventional solutions, is leading manufacturing companies to focus on markets outside of the European Union.

A highly politicised environment, with increasingly conservative evaluations by regulators (and some Member States), means the future of many products already in use is unclear.

A major concern is New Zealand regulators adopting EU practices for assessing products. Agcarm and its member companies are keeping a close watch on the situation. We remain focused on stewardship and ensuring that regulatory processes and decisions are sensible. Sensible regulatory systems allow the use of agrichemicals that are proven to be safe, environmentally-friendly, effective and targeted. This allows a variety of new products that offer pest control solutions for farmers - now and into the future. *- Mark Ross is chief executive of Agcarm, the industry association for companies which manufacture and distribute crop protection and animal health products.* [Full article available here](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12100720)



1. **International news**

**Business**

* 1. **Bayer to appeal neonics verdict**

Bayer announced that it would appeal against the ruling by the General Court of the European

Union in a case which covered neonicontinoids. The company said it was concerned about the verdict, and the far reaching consequences it could have on the certainty and predictability of active substance approvals in the European Union. In its appeal, Bayer aimed to ensure some general interpretations of the crop protection law were considered. The interpretations may have importance beyond the specific case. The group emphasised that it respected the European legislative process and accepted the recent decision to broadly restrict the use of certain neonicotinoids in agriculture. It stood by the safety of its products and confirmed the value that neonicotinoids had for farmers in managing pests effectively. [Full article available here](https://media.bayer.com/baynews/baynews.nsf/id/Bayer-to-appeal-against-recent-General-Court-verdict-on-neonicotinoids)

* 1. **Ideal for relishes, jams & juices’: Haskap berries gain novel food approval**

According to Soloberry, haskap berries have up to 13 times more antioxidants than blueberries and offered manufacturers a new ingredient with superfood credentials for relishes, jams and juices.

Soloberry’s request for novel food approval was granted which meant it could plan to commercialise the berry through the European Union. The berry had a taste described as a cross between a blueberry, blackberry and raspberry. It was native to Japan. Soloberry requested an opinion for three haskap varieties. Soloberry would supply frozen berries and estimated that 100 tonnes would be consumed annually in the UK. Development Manager at Soloberry, Piotr Janus, said they had taken time to understand the product and set standards with highly professional growers. It was also noted that there may in time be potential to sell fresh haskap berries to consumer. [Full article available here](https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2018/07/24/Ideal-for-relishes-jams-juices-Haskap-berries-gain-novel-food-approval)

* 1. **AgroFresh launches FreshCloud**

**A**groFresh Solutions, a global leader in produce freshness solutions, has announced the launch of its FreshCloud platform, a data-backed, insights-driven solution for monitoring the quality of produce throughout the supply chain.The initiative has been made possible by AgroFresh’s acquisition of Verigo, a disruptive Internet of Things (IoT) company that offers end-to-end visibility and management of cold chain logistics, adding proprietary technologies to its portfolio. [Full article available here](http://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/article/176267/agrofresh-launches-freshcloud)

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