

**PMAC weekly update 30th April to 7th May**

1. **Government agencies**: ICPR and Country Freedom status changes; MPI's new business units launched; New DDG Policy and trade; WTO Notifications; New Customs agreement with the European Union; Korea's Multi-Billion Dollar Habit; 25 MAY: Insights on India breakfast, Auckland; Explore Poland - new market guide online now; Hitting the bullseye in Germany; France and NZ: shared values and good business
2. **New Zealand News**: Government launches new biosecurity intelligence unit; Food safety for a foodie nation; New High Commissioner to Barbados announced; Food Safety Survey; Four candidates vie for Horticulture New Zealand Board; Tax system not broken, so doesn’t need to be fixed; Minister moving to protect high-grade farmland; Govt needs to urgently expand RSE scheme; Radfords awarded Callaghan Innovation Growth Grant; Alibaba Group Pilots Product Trial; Hellish' spread of wild kiwifruit prompts 'pest' call from lobby group; Zespri appoints new Head of Marketing – Americas

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1. **International news:** India signs deals with eight countries for farm exports; EU votes for outdoor ban on common insecticide over danger to bees; Calls for EC to link agriculture and health policy; Impact of Chinese tariffs applied to U.S. fresh fruit exports; All US fruit detained upon arrival in China for seven days; Main origins of fruit imported by the EU; BASF buys Bayer's vegetable seeds business for €1.7bn; Marketing examples from Europe; US: Nearly 100 people sick in romaine lettuce-linked E. coli outbreak; Hong Kong suspends import and retail of Romaine lettuce from Arizona; "USA leaving Europe behind on innovative New Plant Breeding Techniques"; The CRISPR toolbox gets bigger and better; No copy-pasting: how new plant breeding techniques differ from GMO

*No Editors comments this week*

1. **Agency news**



* 1. **ICPR and Country Freedom status changes**
* The ICPR for European Union (EU) has been updated with specific requirements for nursery stock of Acacia spp. and changes to Cornus spp requirements .
* The ICPR for Russia has been updated with changes to commodity specific requirements for fresh fruit to Russia and the EEU.

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

The Country freedom status database ([Country freedom status](http://mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/resources/registers-and-lists/country-freedom-status/)) has been updated to state that the following organisms are not known in New Zealand :

* The virus American plum line pattern ilarvirus
* The fungus Apiosporina morbosa

	1. **MPI's new business units launched**

MPI last week established 3 new business units yesterday – Biosecurity New Zealand, Fisheries New Zealand and New Zealand Food Safety. A fourth business unit for Forestry will be officially launched by Minister Shane Jones on 11 May 2018. [Full article available here](http://mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/mpis-new-business-units-launched/)

* 1. **New DDG Policy and trade**

Penny Nelson has just been permanently appointed to the role of Deputy Director General, Policy and Trade. Penny has worked across the private and public sectors and has held significant and influential leadership positions as an advocate for sustainable business practices, welfare reform, the policy response to the September and February earthquakes, and has a credible history in the primary sector having worked previously with DairyNZ and Landcare.  Passionate about the critical work MPI delivers, Penny joins MPI mid-August.

* 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:

* Brazil, Canada, Taiwan, Thailand and USA MRL changes
* Taiwan Draft changes for the Regulation for Systematic Inspection of Imported Food
* Russian Federation As of 2/5/2018 amendments to the Common quarantine phytosanitary

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

 

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* 1. **New Customs agreement with the European Union**

More streamlined trade and a secure trade scheme between New Zealand with key European markets will be one of the potential benefits of the new Customs Cooperation Agreement with the European Union. New Zealand already has secure trade schemes with China, Australia, South Korea, Japan and the United States. Under these schemes, each country recognises the other’s security measures and customs processes, ensuring that imported and exported goods are fully compliant with customs requirements at each step along the supply chain. [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-customs-agreement-european-union)



* 1. **Korea's Multi-Billion Dollar Habit**

South Korea (Korea) is home of the world’s fastest Internet. The South Korean peninsula is also one of the most densely populated places on earth with 211 people per square kilometre, compared with New Zealand’s 18 people per square kilometre.  In 2017 Korea's online shopping movement reached 78 trillion won (US$71.7 billion) and is expected to exceed 80 trillion won (US$73.6 billion) this year. Mobile-based online transactions accounted for 61 percent of the total online market. Food and beverage (F&B) online sales saw some of the biggest increase with a massive 38 percent rise.

This user-friendly shopping environment, combined with prices up to 40 percent lower than offline and the convenience of home delivery, has practically revolutionised Korea’s grocery sector.

The number of single and dual income households has risen rapidly in recent years and these urban professionals are all about convenience. Purchasing groceries online and having them delivered to the door at a time that suits has become the new normal in Korea.  Meal kit’s are very popular and the article describes the necessary qualities of a meal kit.

CJ, one of the leading F&B manufacturers in Korea, is aggressively promoting it’s online store, ONMART, which has exhibited double-digit growth every year since it launched. Unlike other online stores, over 90 percent of ONMART sales are generated by CJ brands.  F&B giant, Dongwon, also has a thriving online business. Their site sells its own brands, of which there are many, alongside products from COSTCO. [Full article available here](https://nzbusiness.co.nz/article/koreas-multi-billion-dollar-habit?utm_source=ubiquity&utm_medium=engage&utm_campaign=en17032016&utm_content=https%3A%2F%2Fnzbusiness.co.nz%2Farticle%2Fkoreas-multi-billion-dollar-habit)

* 1. **25 MAY: Insights on India breakfast, Auckland**

Get India market insights and exchange information with Joanna Kempkers, New Zealand's High Commissioner in New Delhi, at this breakfast event hosted by MFAT in Auckland. Topics covered will include an update on India's trade and economic environment - including reforms and opportunities for New Zealand businesses - as well as India's Asia-Pacific context and the upcoming Union elections in 2019. [Full article available here](https://www.eventbrite.co.nz/e/insights-on-india-breakfast-with-mfat-head-of-mission-joanna-kempkers-tickets-44864418684?utm_source=ubiquity&utm_medium=engage&utm_campaign=en17032016&utm_content=Read%20More%20Button%20-%2025%20MAY%3A%20Insights%20on%20India%20Breakfast%2C%20Auckland)

* 1. **Explore Poland - new market guide online now**

Located in the heart of Europe, Poland has racked up two decades of continuous GDP growth as part of its shift to a market economy - meaning diverse opportunities for New Zealand businesses. Check out our new Poland market guide for insights and useful information to start you off. [Full article available here](https://www.nzte.govt.nz/export-assistance/market-guides/poland?utm_source=ubiquity&utm_medium=engage&utm_campaign=en17032016&utm_content=Read%20More%20Button%20-%20Poland%20country%20guide)

* 1. **Hitting the bullseye in Germany**

Germany is rife with opportunities for New Zealand companies, but success doesn’t come without its challenges - with plenty of time, effort, and research to ensure your strategy will work. NZTE Trade Commissioner in Hamburg shares some insights for the German market. [Full article available here](https://www.nzte.govt.nz/about/news/blogs/in-germany-new-zealand-businesses-hit-the-bullseye?utm_source=ubiquity&utm_medium=engage&utm_campaign=en17032016&utm_content=Read%20More%20Button%20-)

* 1. **France and NZ: shared values and good business**

New Zealand’s business relationship with France is strong, longstanding and has the potential to grow significantly under the New Zealand-European Union Free Trade Agreement currently in negotiation. NZTE Trade Commissioner in Paris explains why. [Full article available here](Full%20article%20available%20here)



1. **New Zealand News**



* 1. **Government launches new biosecurity intelligence unit**

MPI has unveiled its future-focused biosecurity intelligence squad. The early waning squad was still in development but would work closely with its Australian counterparts. Biosecurity Minister, Damien O’Connor, said intelligence would be shared with both Australia and industry sectors. Mr O’Connor said the unit would use smarter technology and skilled analysts to source and look at all available information on overseas pest and diseases. He said that it gave a clear focus and a line of accountability within the MPI. Set up costs for the new units within MPI (which also include Forestry, Fishing and Food Safety) will be $6.8 million, with operating costs of $2.3 million per year. [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/103487286/government-launches-new-biosecurity-intelligence-unit)

* 1. **Food safety for a foodie nation**

Food Safety Minister Damien O’Connor says the establishment of New Zealand Food Safety will help raise the profile of food safety for all New Zealanders. It is one of four new business units created within MPI .“The integrity of the food safety system is particularly important to New Zealand because we are a nation of food producers and exporters, and we are trusted across the globe. “I have asked New Zealand Food Safety to work on five priorities to make compliance easier for businesses – particularly for small, regional or rural food businesses including providing guidance to market stallholders, rolling out templates to reduce costs and allowing those operating under several food safety laws to have one plan.

“New Zealand Food Safety brings together about 390 people from MPI’s food standard setting, verification and assurance teams into one strong and visible business unit.  [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/food-safety-foodie-nation)

* 1. **New High Commissioner to Barbados announced**

Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters has announced the appointment of diplomat Anton Ojala as New Zealand’s next High Commissioner to Barbados. The High Commission is also accredited to a number of other Caribbean states and liaises with the two major regional bodies - the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Mr Ojala is the outgoing Manager of Global Development and Scholarships at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He has had diplomatic roles in the Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea and Australia, and most recently in Niue as New Zealand High Commissioner.  [Full article available here](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-high-commissioner-barbados-announced)

**General**

* 1. **Food Safety Survey**

The Fresh Produce Safety Centre – Australia & New Zealand (FPSC A-NZ) is conducting an industry survey to better understand the food safety challenges and needs of the fresh produce industries in Australia and New Zealand. Your responses will be used to assist FPSC A-NZ and our partners deliver relevant food safety related information and services. [Survey available here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B39LTWN)

* 1. **Four candidates vie for Horticulture New Zealand Board**

Four candidates will vie for two positions on the Horticulture New Zealand Board as elections open today, with voting closing on 28 May 2018. John Cook is standing down from the nine-member Board and not offering himself for re-election. Mike Smith is offering himself for re-election, while new candidates for the vacant roles are Kathryn de Bruin, Bernadine Guilleux, and Lesley Wilson.

* Mike Smith has been involved in the kiwifruit industry for 20 years and currently grows kiwifruit in Welcome Bay, near Tauranga. He has been a Hort NZ director since 2015.
* Kathryn de Bruin is a grower, employer, chartered accountant, and experienced board member from Dargaville where, together with her husband, she grows kumara.
* Bernadine Guilleux father and his brothers established their Balle Bros operation in Pukekohe, where she is currently the group’s marketing manager.
* Lesley Wilson is a fruit grower and current President of the Hawke’s Bay Fruitgrowers’ Association

Directors are elected for a three year term and any active grower member of Horticulture New Zealand can vote. The election results will be announced on 1 June 2018. Full biographies of the four candidates are available [here](http://www.hortnz.co.nz/news-events-and-media/other-news/hortnz-director-elections-2018/). [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193837/Four-candidates-vie-for-Horticulture-New-Zealand-Board)

* 1. **Tax system not broken, so doesn’t need to be fixed**

New Zealand’s tax system is admired for being simple, efficient, and fair, and Horticulture New Zealand chief executive Mike Chapman says adding new taxes will undermine this. Hort NZ has made a submission to the Tax Working Group on the Future of Tax saying it does not support land tax. The submission is endorsed and supported by a further 17 organisations. "Any land tax would be a double tax, as land owners already pay rates to local government based on the value of their land," Chapman says.

As supported by the NZIER report [*Taxing times*](http://www.hortnz.co.nz/assets/Submissions/Taxing-times.pdf), Horticulture New Zealand says that using the tax system to create housing affordability, reduce the cost of productive land, and drive environmental outcomes, is asking too much of the tax system, will result in distortions, and create further unintended consequences.

"The value of land used for primary production is the key ingredient for the lending of money to support that same economic enterprise. Any reduction in the value of land will quickly translate into less funding being available to support growth, and the financial viability of the business. For that reason alone, we submit that a tax on land will have counterproductive effects that will reduce the overall taxation received by the Government," Chapman says.

"We believe the best way to address income inequality is to have a tax system that promotes employment." Horticulture New Zealand said exemption from GST on certain categories of goods, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, could be looked at, but that any change should be based on the tax principles identified by the Tax Working Group. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193839/Tax-system-not-broken%2C-so-doesnt-need-to-be-fixed)

* 1. **Minister moving to protect high-grade farmland**

The Minister for the Environment says he is troubled at the extent of urban growth on irreplaceable, highly productive land. David Parker’s comments come in the light of a report by the Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Statistics called ‘Our Land 2018’, a stocktake of impacts on the environment. Parker wants his officials to immediately start work on a national policy statement (NPS) on versatile land and high class soils. This notable move by the minister will elevate ‘versatile land’ to the same status policy-wise as freshwater management, renewable energy, electricity transmission and urban development and capacity.

Not surprisingly, the report also notes the shift from sheep and beef to dairying. It says while the total land used for horticulture and vegetable growing had decreased slightly, much more land is now growing fruit and berries. And about 3% (800,000ha) is now irrigated. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193920/NZ-Minister-moving-to-protect-high-grade-farmland)

**Industry news**

* 1. **Govt needs to urgently expand RSE scheme**

The Government needs to listen to the horticulture industry and urgently expand the RSE scheme to bring much-needed pickers into regions right across New Zealand, National’s spokesperson for Horticulture, Lawrence Yule says. “Media reports that Kiwifruit growers are requesting a change to immigration settings to cope with an unprecedented labour shortage should not be ignored,” Mr Yule says. [Full article available here](http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1805/S00014/govt-needs-to-urgently-expand-rse-scheme.htm)

* 1. **Radfords awarded Callaghan Innovation Growth Grant**

The New Zealand owned software product development company has been awarded an R&D Growth Grant by Callaghan Innovation. Radfords has been a key player in collaborating across the NZ kiwifruit industry to help it scale into the success story it is today.  Radfords help enable growers and pack-houses to meet stringent quality and process standards in a systematic way which in turn helps ensure New Zealand Kiwifruit is packed to a standard that delivers on the brand experience to the consumer.

In recent years Radfords has developed a generic range of software modules for the wider fresh produce market providing capability to manage orchard events, people and compliance, harvest, packing, quality control, inventory management, traceability, logistics and grower payments.  Radfords now partner with clients in NZ, Australia, Italy, France, Korea, Japan spanning the following produce categories: cherries, kiwifruit and kiwi-berries, peaches, apricots, plums, avocado, peaches, mangoes, strawberries, apples, kumara, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, citrus and chickens.

Radfords has made the decision to invest heavily into R&D to leverage the new wave of technologies to help bring a step change in the orchard to customer process and help fresh produce brands provide a seamless connection from orchard to consumer." The data collected through the end to end process will also enable supply chains to  the world’s food basket to participate in future blockchains, creating the visibility of brands to connect their consumer to the orchard. It will span across many fresh produce categories. Radfords are well placed to help make this a reality in collaboration with its clients and business partners to help grow the world's food basket.  [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193968/Radfords-awarded-Callaghan-Innovation-Growth-Grant)

* 1. **Alibaba Group Pilots Product Trial**

Alibaba Australia, a member of Alibaba Group Holding Limited, and a group of founding partners have launched pilot orders through its new Food Trust Framework, a Tmall Global initiative that uses blockchain technology to improve supply chain traceability. Taking place in Auckland, New Zealand, and hosted by CEO of Alibaba Group, Daniel Zhang, the pilot follows Alibaba’s announcement last year that it would engage PwC in Australia, New Zealand and China as a service provider to advise the company on the set up of a framework to protect product authenticity and provide a safe and trusted marketplace for consumers.

 Alibaba also signed a Memorandum of Understanding last year partnering with Blackmores, Australia Post, Fonterra and New Zealand Post in the Framework.Once the pilot is complete and if successful, the Framework could form the basis of a global supply chain model applied across all of Alibaba Group’s e-commerce markets.

The Framework aims to achieve end-to-end supply chain traceability and transparency to enhance consumer confidence and build a trusted environment for cross-border trade across Alibaba’s Tmall Global platform by incorporating a range of standards and controls to manage the supply chain process, including blockchain technology and product tagging with unique QR codes. These technologies are designed to authenticate, verify, record and provide ongoing reporting of the transfer of ownership and provision of products and goods.

Speaking at the launch in Auckland, Alibaba Group’s Alvin Liu, General Manager of Tmall Import & Export said: “Food fraud is a significant global challenge, particularly with the growing complexity of supply chains. In response, we have created a coordinated, world-leading and robust framework that involves stakeholders from across the supply chain to improve visibility and enhance the confidence of both end consumers and merchants.” [Full article available here](https://www.fmcgbusiness.co.nz/alibaba-group-pilots-product-trial/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_content=newsletter+Version+A+CID_959cc8bfe25cbadde7235b8816728cad&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=Alibaba%20Group%20Pilots%20Product%20Trial)

**Crop news**

* 1. **Hellish' spread of wild kiwifruit prompts 'pest' call from lobby group**

Kiwifruit Vine Health analyst and compliance officer John Mather wants councils to recognise wild kiwifruit as a pest. Outbreaks of wild kiwifruit are threatening to run amok through the country's native bush, carrying with them diseases and potentially harmful insects.Mather took his case to a pest management meeting in Marlborough this week, saying wild kiwifruit in the top of the south could have far reaching implications, especially for Marlborough's celebrated wine industry.

"Not only does wild kiwifruit impact indigenous biodiversity and production of forestry, it's also a reservoir for disease organisms such as PSA and pests such as fruit flies and stink bugs," Mather said. *The article has a range of suggestions for stopping the spread of kiwifruit.* [Full article available here](https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/103268242/hellish-spread-of-wild-kiwifruit-prompts-pest-call-from-lobby-group)

* 1. **Zespri appoints new Head of Marketing - Americas**

Zespri continues to expand its team to oversee what they say is an increased demand for kiwifruit. Raul Murguia has been appointed to the newly created position of Head of Marketing – Americas. Murguia’s fluency in both English and Spanish will help in this role of overseeing the marketing activities in North, Central and South America. Prior to joining Zespri, Murguia held various marketing roles in a variety of industries from food and beverage to home and personal care products during a span of over 17 years. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193705/Kiwifruit-producer-appoints-new-Head-of-Marketing-Americas)



1. **International news**

**Comment**

**Regulatory**

* 1. **India signs deals with eight countries for farm exports**

India has signed deals with eight countries, namely the United States, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Iran for agricultural exports. It is scouting for still more markets, as it seeks to liberalize trade in farm products and grow its farm exports. India has also filed market access requests for 35 agricultural products with over a dozen countries, an official familiar with the development said on condition of anonymity.

Agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh recently said he hoped to increase the value of agricultural exports to $100 billion by 2022-23. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193725/India-signs-deals-with-eight-countries-for-farm-exports)

* 1. **EU votes for outdoor ban on common insecticide over danger to bees**

European Union countries backed a proposal to ban all outdoor use of insecticides known as neonicotinoids as they can harm bees. European Commission Spokeswoman, Mine Andreeva, said the protection of bees was important as it concerned biodiversity, food production and the environment. Bayer responded by calling the ban a sad day for farmers and a bad deal for Europe. It said many farmers had no other way of controlling pests and it would result in more spraying. Environmental groups called for the total ban and sparked debate across the continent about the wider use of chemicals in farming. Campaign group Friends of the Earth described the decision as a tremendous victory for bees and the environment. [Full article available here](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-28/eu-votes-on-insecticide-ban-over-danger-to-bees/9706756)

Syngenta says "What we need today, more than ever before, is for farmers to ensure the supply of safe and affordable food – while minimizing the negative impact and amplifying the positive effects that agriculture has on the environment. The evidence clearly shows that neonicotinoids pose a minimum threat to bee health compared to a lack of food, diseases and cold weather.

The Commission’s reliance on an unapproved regulatory document (The Bee Risk Guidance Document) in order to propose a further ban of neonicotinoids is not sound and will not address the challenges we face in ensuring safe and reliable food supply while also taking care of the environment. In fact, the Bee Risk Guidance Document is so conservative and so far removed from the reality of agriculture that its application would see most, if not all agricultural chemicals banned, including for example, those used in organic agriculture. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42895/Neonicotinoid-decision-takes-European-farming-in-the-wrong-direction)

* 1. **Calls for EC to link agriculture and health policy**

European campaigners argued the European Commission should take a joint approach to its food, agriculture, and health policy by linking farmer payments to the healthiness of the food they produce.. Poor diet was now a leading contributor to ill health and early death according the European Heart Network. They suggested a healthy diet included vegetables, fruit and berries, whole grain products, nuts and seeds, fish, pulses, low-fat dairy products and non-tropical vegetable oils in moderation. [Full article available here](https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2018/04/27/Calls-for-EC-to-link-agriculture-and-health-policy)

**Business**

* 1. **Impact of Chinese tariffs applied to U.S. fresh fruit exports**

The People’s Republic of China’s Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) on March 23, 2018 announced a proposal to levy retaliatory tariffs impacting approximately $2.0 billion in U.S. food and agricultural exports to China in response to the recent U.S. 232 Trade Action on steel and aluminum.  Additional tariffs ( on top of existing tariffs) of 15 percent would be applied to exports of fruits, dried fruits and nuts (among other products) from the U.S. in retaliation for tariffs introduced by the United States. Chinese customs began levying these additional tariffs on April 2, 2018.

U.S. exports of fresh fruit to Mainland China and Hong Kong were valued at USD $544.5 million in 2017 (Source: UN COMTRADE). China is a sizeable market for U.S. fresh fruit exports. The actual impact of the tarrifs will be influenced by the competitiveness of U.S. Dollar and price sensitivity of Chinese consumers. The article provides as estimate of the impact on the key U.S. fresh fruit categories exported to China  - Citrus and Apples. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/194049/Impact-of-Chinese-tariffs-applied-to-U.S.-fresh-fruit-exports)

* 1. **All US fruit detained upon arrival in China for seven days**

Effective immediately, China's Customs has been instructed to detain and inspect all US fruit shipments for seven days upon arrival into China for pesticide residue testing. Previously only 30% of American shipment where tested at random, now this number has been increased to 100%. Other countries of which currently all 100% of shipments are inspected are Peru and Australia, due to past quarantine issues.

According to Chinese importers, China Customs has strengthened the visual inspection of all US fruit to find traces of for example bugs or rot. If traces are found, the shipments will be held for lab tests. In case these tests are proven positive, the shipment will be returned to the US or destroyed. Lab tests may take between 2 days up to 2 weeks. Time delays will result in deterioration of these products [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193720/All-US-fruit-detained-upon-arrival-in-China-for-seven-days)

* 1. **Main origins of fruit imported by the EU**

Data concerning Italian and EU imports and exports were discussed during the 69th Fruitimprese national assembly. The article provides charts of EU imports from third countries (apples, pears, table grapes, kiwis, oranges, peaches and nectarines, apricots, cherries, strawberries, table tomatoes and potatoes). New Zealand provides 27% of the imported apples and 73 % of the kiwifruit . [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193716/Main-origins-of-fruit-imported-by-the-EU)

* 1. **BASF buys Bayer's vegetable seeds business for €1.7bn**

In addition to the [agreement](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/41491/BASF-expects-to-earn-%E2%82%AC3.5-billion-with-crop-protection-innovation) signed in October 2017, BASF has signed an agreement to purchase further businesses and assets, which Bayer offered to divest in the context of its planned acquisition of Monsanto. The expanded scope includes Bayer’s entire vegetable seeds business,oilseed rape business in Australia; certain glyphosate-based herbicides in Europe, used predominantly for industrial applications; the canola-quality juncea research and certain non-selective herbicide and nematicide research projects. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42892/BASF-buys-Bayers-vegetable-seeds-business-for-%E2%82%AC1.7bn)

 **Marketing**

* 1. **Marketing examples from Europe**

The freshfel time is produced every two to three months by the Eurpoean fresh producers association. Fresh Times No 2/2018 [can be found here.](http://freshfel.org/fresh-times-1-2018-2/) In this edition, you can find the following initiatives:

* Note from the editor: School's in full swing!
* Italy: Get set, go! The F&V games!
* France: Health meals for volunteers!
* Spain: Discover fruit and vegetables
* The Netherlands: Let's talk
* Spain: Broccoli bonanza!
* Switzerland: Take one!
* The UK: No card, use an Avocard!
* Ireland: #Bananaday
* Poland: All about asparagus
* The Netherlands: F&V back in the picture
* Japan: New F&V song on the block

 **Food safety**

* 1. **US: Nearly 100 people sick in romaine lettuce-linked E. coli outbreak**

US health officials are still investigating a major E. coli outbreak involving romaine lettuce that has already affected 98 people in 22 states. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said 14 new cases were registered on Friday. Ten people have kidney failure and 46 are in hospital. No deaths have been reported. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193737/US-Nearly-100-people-sick-in-romaine-lettuce-linked-E.-coli-outbreak)

The Yuma E-Coli outbreak that has been linked to romaine lettuce has now resulted in the death of a person in California. At this stage, the only romaine lettuce producer linked with the E-Coli outbreak is a farm in Arizona, where production of romaine lettuce has finished for the season. California based growers of romaine are however now being impacted by the fallout from the outbreak. Consumers are avoiding romaine and the dumping order by the CDC has resulted in retailers being cautious. One grower has noted it will take time for the public to regain confidence in buying romaine lettuce. "The passing of time and the release of correct, valid information from the government organizations overseeing it, will help," he said. "Once the public understands that it is safe to consume romaine lettuce again, will we have a return to a steady market."[Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/194035/Romaine-lettuce-growers-feel-impact-after-E-Coli-outbreak)

* 1. **Hong Kong suspends import and retail of Romaine lettuce from Arizona**

The Food Safety Center in the Hong Kong Food and Environmental Health Bureau recently announced that the import and retail of Romaine lettuce from Arizona will be suspended, because there is suspicion the lettuce is contaminated with 0157:H7 coliform bacillus. The center also warns people to immediately stop using or selling products that contain Romaine lettuce from Arizona. [Full article available here](http://www.freshplaza.com/article/193983/Hong-Kong-suspends-import-and-retail-of-Romaine-lettuce-from-Arizona)

 **Innovation**

* 1. **"USA leaving Europe behind on innovative New Plant Breeding Techniques"**

After New Plant Processing Techniques (NBTs) have been allowed in the USA without restriction, Copa and Cogeca urge the EU to improve Europe’s challenging policy and regulatory framework.

Genetic crop improvements in EU agriculture can provide huge environmental benefits at the same time as protecting crops against pests and disease and delivering substantial benefits to the economy. This is vital to combat hunger and malnutrition when world food demand is set to rise by 60% by 2050, Copa and Cogeca Seed Working Party Chairman Thor Gunnar Kofoed insisted.
“But plant breeders in the EU face a challenging policy and regulatory framework. They need to be encouraged to invest in new breeding technologies instead of being held back. [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42493/USA-leaving-Europe-behind-on-innovative-New-Plant-Breeding-Techniques)

* 1. **The CRISPR toolbox gets bigger and better"**

Researchers are honing genome-editing systems, discovering new ones, and envisioning versatile CRISPR tools yet to come. Genome editing tools based on CRISPR systems are revolutionizing the world of life-sciences research and could one day spawn novel medicines — but there is still a long way to go. While experiments using CRISPR-based tools are revealing how genes operate in health and disease, researchers are hunting for new tools to add to this biological “Swiss army knife” while making existing ones more precise and versatile.

The CRISPR system was discovered in bacteria, where it functions as an adaptive immune system that recognizes and rapidly destroys foreign DNA from invading viruses. DNA-cutting enzymes disable these invaders by finding and cleaving specific sites in the viral genome. *The original article provides a lot of information on how CRISPR works and suggests a range of improvements* [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/42988/The-CRISPR-toolbox-gets-bigger-and-better)

* 1. **No copy-pasting: how new plant breeding techniques differ from GMO**

As the regulatory frameworks for new plant breeding techniques become clearer, it is time to take a closer look at their value creation models, which differ from the GMO market, where traits are mostly licensed out to third parties. Value creation for NBTs will revolve much more around granting access to technology instead, widening the potential pool of licensees.

The recent USDA statement regarding the regulatory framework for new breeding techniques (NBTs) may set the bar for regulators globally. The US has chosen not to regulate plant-breeding that could also have been developed through traditional breeding techniques, so NBTs do not fall under the GMO regulation.

In January, the advisor to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) proposed that mutagenesis should not fall under the strict GMO regime, creating expectations that the EU would take a similar stance as the US. The ECJ is expected to duplicate the advisor’s view soon, exempting NBTs from EU GMO regulation. As a consequence, individual EU countries may draft their own legislation, creating further fragmentation of plant-breeding policy.

*The article quantifies future gains from NBTs.* [Full article available here](http://www.hortidaily.com/article/43003/No-copy-pasting-how-new-plant-breeding-techniques-differ-from-GMO)

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