



AGRIBUSINESS

# Field Notes

Weekly news update from the KPMG Agribusiness network



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02 April 2020 – This week's headlines



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## BLOG OF THE WEEK

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### Are we missing out on maximising the value of our story telling efforts because of antiquated operating models?

It has been interesting to observe the considerable level of investment made in ‘telling our story’ in recent years. It utilises the latest design-led, consumer centric thinking and enables us to adapt our brands and products to meet the everchanging needs of the consumer. Or at least that is our belief, right? It appears to me there is a disconnect between the level of investment occurring and the subsequent value being captured. Realised benefit to the country’s food and fibre sector feels incremental at best, and perhaps the cost/benefit curve could be a lot sharper.

It is clear consumers want to understand provenance and have the ability to attribute a product to a place. It is also clear that the value and supply-chain behind a product must be authentic and deliver positive impacts on communities. There is an added layer of complexity when you infuse a set of values to a product offering. Arguably any story tied to a cultural set of norms has a greater level of

authenticity associated with it, which in theory further lifts the perceived value of a product.

It reminds me of a saying “*in theory, theory and practise are the same*”, reality though tells us a different story (pun intended). Let’s look at the level of investment in three pieces, and then the disconnect?

First is that it is immensely helpful to have a dedicated agency such as New Zealand Story helping with deep, rich and insightful research on our most important markets, while working to enhance New Zealand’s reputation. It has added benefits of toolkits, workshops and even the FernMark Licence programme to promote and protect truly New Zealand products.

Second was in 2019 when our Primary Sector Council supported by Minister O’Connor launched the ‘*Fit for a Better World*’ vision using the concept of Taiao. It provides a platform to distinguish products at an entirely new level in the eyes of a consumer, balancing nature’s wellbeing with our own because of cultural principles. Taiao has the potential to differentiate our products to be less imitable by competitors, creating a sustained competitive advantage.

Third is the significant resources made by many organisations on their individual stories, with investment ranging from several million to hundreds of millions per annum. All of these are

designed to differentiate and capture value. Arguably, Māori organisations have a higher level of responsibility, as their organisations, brands and products are an extension of themselves, and their tūpuna.

What I am not seeing, or the 'disconnect' is that we are missing out on maximising value because it doesn't appear to induce change in our antiquated operating models, or how we may reassess these?

Do we ask important questions regarding relationships with in-market partners, such as their ability to bring a level of sophistication to pricing? Do we know if our partners are aligned to our vision, or assess their ability to execute on reaching the consumer our stories are designed to meet? Are our partners able to uphold the values and history of our organisations and brands to sell our products in an advantageous way?

How we assess values alignment is without doubt a difficult one. I continue to observe that dramatic value lost by selecting an inadequate or inappropriate partner who is not aligned. It isn't easy, and not answered by our people going to market for one or two weeks at a time to a myriad of markets, two or three times a year. It requires new methods, new metrics and leveraging every tool in our kete to 'capture' as much value as possible that has been 'created' by our story telling efforts.

Selecting the right partner will become even more critical in a post Covid-19 world when even visiting markets maybe challenging in the next year or two.

Ngā mihi, nā

## Andrew Watene

Ngāi Tuhoē  
KPMG Agri Food Sector Driver, Accelerating Exports Lead



## Food Innovation

[Farmed sea cucumbers: The new 'superfood' functional ingredient?](#)

[26 March, Flora Southey, Food Navigator] Norway researchers are investigating commercial farming practices for sea cucumbers as they believe these should be exploited as a raw ingredient for health products. The researchers regard the sea cucumbers as a superfood that will act as a natural, functional ingredient for food products. The marine animal has an elongated body covered in leathery skin, is high in protein and low in lipids, and also has the potential to provide value-added compounds that have therapeutic properties. Many sea cucumber species are threatened with extinction, so their commercial farming has become a hot topic. The researchers biggest challenge at the moment is getting their sea cucumbers to spawn and produce larvae that develops into adults and are trialling several farming techniques currently. The researchers believe that the organisms will grow faster in the controlled land-based system compared to in the ocean where they can grow up to 50cm in length.



## Apiculture

[The Israeli startup getting a buzz out of saving honeybees](#) [29 March,

Naama Barak, Israel 21c] The global bee population is decreasing at an alarming rate which is endangering our diets and well-being. Beewise is an Israeli start-up that has created the world's first autonomous beehive that uses computer vision, artificial intelligence and precision robotics. The device can house up to 40 bee colonies, or 2 million bees, with their health and upkeep being able to be controlled through an app. Currently, the average beehive comes with extensive manual labour for its upkeep. The autonomous beehive gives real-time responses to problems identified, and only requires human labour to fill the water and food

as well as when collecting honey. Beewise aims to be the new standard.



## Agribusiness

### [2020 Zanda McDonald Award winner announced](#)

[26 March, The Country] The 2020 Zanda McDonald Award has been won by Jack Raharuhi from Pāmu Farms. The prestigious award recognises and supports talented young individuals in the agricultural sector in Australia and New Zealand. The award was launched in 2014 by Australian Beef Industry Leader Zanda McDonald, who passed away at 41 after an accident on his Queensland property. Mr Raharuhi, 27 years old, is the Buller Dairy Group Operations Manager for Pāmu, where he looks after four dairy farms and is also a machinery syndicate at Cape Foulwind, and Health and Safety leadership for 10 dairy farms. On top of this, Mr Raharuhi is Chair of the West Coast Focus Farm Trust, and trains and mentors staff as part of the West Coast 2iC Development Programme. The judges report that Mr Raharuhi is a natural leader who is compassionate and that they are excited to develop their mentoring programme with him. The award provides a professional development package.

### [A rock to both the NZ and Moroccan economies](#)

[27 March, Pam Tipa, Rural News] Phosboucraa Foundation President Hagbouha Zoubeir reports that New Zealand farmers probably do not realise the difference they are making to the economic and community life of those situated in Southern Morocco. The region has supplied phosphate rock to Ballance and Ravensdown for 40 years which is made into fertiliser. Mrs Zoubeir claims that the operations at the mines are benefitting local people through various programmes that develop education, training and health outcomes. Phosboucraa company Chairman, Maoulainine Maoulainine states that some recent commentary about phosphate rock shipments to New Zealand has been selective, as Phosboucraa works with OCP Group to ensure all operations and activities comply and

exceed relevant standards, even in Western Sahara, where their phosphate is particularly suitable to New Zealand's soil conditions.

[Agri markets trade on](#) [27 March, Hugh Stringleman, Farmers Weekly] NZX capital markets used by farmers, have been very active during the early days of the lock-down. NZX Chief Executive Mark Peterson reports that all trading and settlement of activity has performed well so far. The main markets used by farmers are the Fonterra Shareholders Market and the Dairy Derivatives for both futures and options contracts. The S&P NZX primary sector equity index has dropped about 20% since the beginning of the year and its present level around 9000 is where it was in September 2017. NZX analytics head Julia Jones said continued use of the markets shows farmers are habitual traders and agribusiness companies have been less hurt by covid-19 than other sectors. Heightened world trade risks particularly due to Covid-19 has renewed interest in dairy derivatives.

### [Compact but productive: Taranaki permaculture farm wants to lead the food revolution](#)

[30 March, Renee Davies, NZ Gardener] Roebuck Farm's Founders Jodi Roebuck and Tanya Mercer are based in Taranaki and boast a compact but productive piece of land that offers a sustainable lifestyle and a viable income. They grow organic food on 2.8 hectares of land, with innovation being the key for the farm's success so far. Mr Roebuck stated that the key is looking after the soil. They follow the fast days to maturity business model, which involves investing in quick-growing, high-value annual vegetables for direct consumer market streams as well as stream-lining labour and production. Mr Roebuck particularly connects with the Japanese concept of kaizen, which is continuous improvement and considering what parts of the property are value-adding and which are not. The team also use intercropping to create favourable microclimates.

[Rabobank New Zealand announces new chair and board changes](#) [31 March, Voxy] Andy Borland has been announced as the new Chair of Rabobank New Zealand Limited. Sir Henry van der Heyden, current Chair is stepping down from the board due to regulatory changes. Mr Borland has acted as a Director since 2016, which will help to create a seamless transition and is also the Managing Director for Scales Group. Rabobank are also welcoming new independent director Brent Goldsack, with current directors Jillian Segal and Peter Knoblanche leaving. All changes will apply from 01 April 2020. Sir Henry will remain Chair of Rabobank Australia Limited.



## Horticulture

[Cannabis firm buys plant breeder](#)

[26 March, Richard Rennie, Farmers Weekly] Taupō based medicinal cannabis company Setek has purchased Southern Hemisphere Botanicals (SHB) to give it a vertically integrated plant-to-product operation. Medicinal cannabis sales are becoming legal in New Zealand from 01 April, when the Misuse of Drugs Regulations Act comes into law permitting the sales of therapeutic products. As the industry develops some companies have been working towards outdoor cropping whilst others such as Helius, an Auckland-based firm are situated in big, high-security, indoor growing facilities. Outdoor growing is often cheaper to achieve but comes with its own risks including security and theft risks as well as cross-contamination with hemp crops. Setek Chief Executive David Pearce states that he believes overseas products will flood New Zealand's market at first, while New Zealand's own companies grow and build their resources.

[Kiwifruit taste test goes south](#) [27 March, Farmers Weekly] Eurofins Bay of Plenty is the only taste testing facility for the dry matter component of kiwifruit and has suddenly decided to stop this service, now only testing for residues in fruit. The dry matter testing gives

Zespri and growers a direct indication of a fruit's taste profile and is directly linked to grower payments, accounting for 90 percent of incentive value. Post-harvest processors are now grappling with how to evaluate fruit quality and Seeka Chief Executive Michael Franks has reported that he believes Eurofins decision has let the industry down. Eurofins has had a challenging few years due to increased pressure on its resources and has reported that new Covid-19 restrictions imposed by The Ministry for Primary Industries has been hard to comply with.

[Local fruit, vege home deliveries ok — MBIE](#) [30 March, HortNews] The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) have approved door-to-door local fruit and vegetable box deliveries during the Level 4 Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. This advisory follows a query from Horticulture NZ, and also states that anti-transmission methods must be in place such as the 2 metre distancing rule and ensuring deliveries are done without individual contact, including payment online.

[Vegetable crops rot in the field as grocers and restaurants close](#) [01 April, Bonnie Flaws, Stuff NZ] New Zealand market gardeners have reported that vegetable crops will start going to waste unless alternative buyers can be found. This is due to grocers and restaurants closing during Covid-19 alert level 4 restrictions. The market gardeners report that crops such as broccoli and lettuce need to be picked daily, and if left will just rot in the ground. Growers report that they are facing a dilemma as that they need to continue planting so that when the lockdown is lifted there will still be produce to harvest for customers. Horticulture New Zealand Spokesman Andrew Bristol has reported discussions surrounding the excess crops are continuing with the Government.



## Aquaculture

[Supermarkets urged to act on fish feed 'scandal'](#) [25 March, Oliver

Morrison, Food Navigator] The Changing Markets Foundation and Feedback have created a report on the UK seafood industry which reveals that in 2019, 177,000 tonnes of wild fish was unknowingly consumed by UK citizens by eating popular farmed seafood products such as salmon and prawns. It is estimated that for every 100 grams of farmed fish consumed, 177 grams of wild fish and crustaceans used to feed the farmed fish is also consumed. The report claims that this has severe implications for the health of ocean ecosystems and those communities that depend on them. The report stated that supermarkets are not doing their part to ensure the sustainability of the products they sell, and also asked for greater transparency for consumers. Professor Skeaff recommends that consumers need to take responsibility for their actions including purchasing smaller quantities of fresh food, eating leftovers and correctly storing food.



## Economics and Trade

[Total exports increase despite coronavirus outbreak](#) [Esther Taunton,

25 March, Stuff NZ] Statistics New Zealand have reported preliminary data that has shown whilst New Zealand imports have fallen 11 percent, exports have risen 3.7 percent during the week ended 18 March 2020. The leading reason for this import fall was industrial transport equipment such as aircraft. Stats NZ state that higher prices for our dairy are offsetting plummeting demand for logs and fish during the Covid-19 pandemic. The total value of goods exports rose 4.5 percent in February 2020 compared to a year earlier, rising by \$212 million and driven particularly by dairy products such as milk powder. A fall in sheep meat volume was partly offset by a rise in beef exports, with average prices rising per tonne for both.



## Environment & Emissions

[Kivi households waste 10 times more food than supermarkets – study](#) [30 March, Voxy]

University of Otago researchers report that 77 percent of food waste produced by retailers such as supermarkets is being saved from landfill. With 46 percent of the food saved being turned into animal feed and 15 percent sent to food rescue charities. The researchers state that on average, New Zealand households produce almost 10 times more food waste than that produced by supermarkets. Co-author Professor Sheila Skeaff stated that citizens need to take ownership for food waste as it is one of the practical steps that can be taken at home to help reduce the impacts of climate change. Of the waste still sent to landfill by the supermarkets, the biggest contributors were found to be dairy at 23 percent, meat and fish and 21 percent, and bakery at 21 percent.



## Alternative Proteins

[Insects as food: Belgium takes a bite](#) [29 March, The Brussels Times]

Belgium's progressive regulatory system has allowed a new alternative protein sector to open up in the past few years introducing insects as a "novel food". Insects have the potential to be a high-value protein source for the rapidly-growing world population. The EU is changing its regulatory systems to accommodate insect products. Europe's largest urban insect farm was launched in mid-2017 and has sold tens of thousands of products to customers across Belgium. The biggest barrier so far is human perceptions surrounding eating insects, particularly in the western world where the practice is not commonplace. Citizens are warned to only buy insects from registered companies and avoid if you are allergic to Crustaceans or Acari as they share the same kind of allergens.





## Farming Systems

[Feeding the world](#) [30 March, Tony Benny, Farmers Weekly] Tony Benny

reports that New Zealand is well-placed to be at the forefront of research studying the ways that technology can help to increase food production in order to feed the growing global population. New Zealand is the first partner country of the initiative Farm2050 which aims to find new technology in order to find more sustainable ways of producing food. As part of the initiative, a three-year series of field trials will begin. The Farm2050 Global Nutrients Project has been identified as one of three high-impact projects for New Zealand to focus on by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment and other government departments as well as industry. The first aim of the Farm2050 project is to identify nutrients to improve plant yield, whilst increasing sustainability. The project is seen as a great opportunity for New Zealand to situate itself as global experts.



## Agri-Tech

[Solar-powered number plates for cows](#) [19 March, Kenneth Irons-

Precision Farming, Dairy News] Kenneth Irons, Managing Director at Precision Farming reports that Ceres Tag's ear tags offer significant financial, operational and managerial benefits to farmers. Ceres Tags offer electronic, solar-powered ear tags that provide farmers with accuracy and convenience. The tags generate electronic data automatically from cattle and allow farmers to gain insights which can help improve production, reduce inputs and optimise profitability as well as helping with compliance and sustainability. The tags battery life is around ten years which is longer than the average dairy cow or beef animal, and each animal has a unique tag that can be recycled at the end of its life. The GPS functionality also allows stolen animals to be discovered as well as wandering stock.



## Red Meat

[Whanganui meat business Coastal Spring Lamb wins another food](#)

[award](#) [28 March, Laurel Stowell, The Country] Richard Redmayne, Founder of Spring Coastal Lamb is over the moon after the announcement that their lamb backstraps have won a gold medal in the Outstanding New Zealand Food Producers Awards, with the winners announced on the 24 March. The awards are judged on criteria that places 75 percent of the outcome on taste, 15 percent on sustainability and 10 percent on brand. Judges reported that the backstraps have the sustainability factor, animal welfare is considered, and the land is cared for by the company. They are also 100 percent lean meat and simple to cook. Mr Redmayne reports that food competitions mean that the company puts extra effort into new ideas and innovations and are a good chance to measure their business against other food producers. Their meat is exported to 13 countries and also sold in some North Island Foodstuff supermarkets and restaurants as well as Farro Fresh in Auckland. The company is currently focusing on online sales during the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Covid 19 coronavirus: Greenlea takes the measure of the virus in accidental quirk](#) [30

March, Andrea Fox, NZ Herald] Tony Egan, Managing Director for Greenlea Premier Meats has reported that the company will be giving customer gifts that were planned for the Fieldays to their online home delivery meat orders. Mr Egan suggested that the tape measures which were originally ordered before the outbreak of Covid-19 could now serve an additional use for practicing social distancing. Greenlea's online orders have doubled over the last fortnight, providing to many elderly and accommodation guests. Mr Egan reports that they are taking all precautions for their staff and are ensuring that they are following lock-down rules when they head home for the day. Greenlea has two plants located in Hamilton and Morrinsville and employs over 360 people.

[Beef and bee products booming during coronavirus crisis](#) [01 April, Catherine Groenestein, Stuff NZ] Some Taranaki companies are hiring staff to keep up with demand due to the coronavirus crisis. Greenmeadows Beef Managing Director Nick Carey reports that they have hired five people that lost their previous jobs due to the impacts of Covid-19. The company has closed its retail shop but is still processing orders for supermarkets, export and home delivery customers, with its factory operating seven days a week. Egmont Honey is currently hiring new beekeepers to meet international demand for mānuka honey. Company Founder CEO James Annabell reports that the uplift in sales is partly due to customers seeking ways to boost their immune systems and partly due to panic buying. Both companies have implemented special protocols to ensure their staff are safe during the pandemic.



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## Viticulture

[Coronavirus: Wine industry's 'privileged position' concerns wider wine capital community](#) [26 March, Maia Hart, Stuff NZ] Wine production is able to continue during the imposed Covid-19 lockdown in New Zealand, however many Marlborough community members are concerned about the health risk this will impose on the area. Some are saying that wine is a "luxury" item, and not essential to the country and by continuing with the 2020 vintage, people's lives will be put at risk. Marlborough has the highest proportion of elderly people in New Zealand, and last year 76.6 percent of the country's grapes were harvested in the region. New Zealand Winegrowers Chief Executive Philip Gregan reported on Thursday morning if wineries could not prove the safety of their staff and the wider community, they would be shut down. Many workers have isolated themselves from others, with some living in campervans on site. Mr Gregan reports that the industry is doing all it can to meet the Government's criteria.

[Coronavirus: New documents show strict wine industry protocols during lockdown](#) [29 March, Maia Hart, Stuff NZ] New Zealand Winegrowers has advised wineries that if they are in doubt about what constitutes best practice during the lockdown, they should act as if everyone has the virus. A dedicated Covid-19 manager must be had if wineries have over 20 staff. Detailed records must be kept for each person working at a winery, including their living arrangements and who they are in contact with. Workers that are living off-site must send a photo to their manager to display that they are staying socially isolated. Shift times and rest breaks need to be staggered to ensure different teams did not cross paths. NZ Winegrowers Chief Executive Philip Gregan reported that the increased measures will result in a slower harvest than usual.

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## Rural Communities

[Docs want rural travel stopped](#) [27 March, Neal Wallace, Farmers Weekly] Rural medical professionals such as Rural GP Network Chairwoman Dr Fiona Bolden believe that the Government should restrict travel to rural areas in order to protect residents from Covid-19. Dr Bolden believes that people heading for their holiday homes could be dangerous as many rural areas already have stretched medical services. Associate Professor Garry Nixon from Otago University reports that geographic equity will become important during the coming months. They are asking district health boards to develop plans for rural practices and a staffing boost to be provided if the services become overwhelmed. Dr Bolden also noted that the rural health workforce is generally older than urban ones.

[Covid-19 coronavirus: Vodafone expands unlimited data to rural users - at least offpeak](#) [28 March, Chris Keall, The Country] Vodafone is now offering rural customers unlimited data during off-peak times during the Covid-19 lockdown, which matches what they have



already offered their urban customers. Off-peak is considered between midnight and 9am. The company is still asking their customers to take data-conserving measures during peak hours such as reducing quality on video-streaming services and turning off automatic updates for gaming consoles. Vodafone Technology Director Tony Baird stated that they are unable to offer unlimited data at all times, because the rural network is not made to withstand the increased capacity and would result in a decrease in quality. Spark and 2degrees are offering unlimited data at all times to all customers.



## Dairy

[MPs say limit Fonterra milk rule](#) [26 March, High Stringleman, Farmers Weekly]

The Primary Production Select Committee has recommended that Fonterra Co-operative Group softens its entry requirements so that milk will be purchased off any farmer that wants to supply it including those wanting to re-enter the programme. John Monaghan, Fonterra's Chairman has welcomed the move and reported that it is a unanimous cross-party recommendation to Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor. Mr Monaghan reports that it would help to level the playing field and ultimately keep more of the value created by dairy farmers in New Zealand. The legislation still has a few more steps before it becomes law, however the adjournment of Parliament until 28 April makes this timing uncertain. The committee suggested that new provisions should apply from 01 June 2022.

[COVID-19: Better than expected for Open Country Dairy](#) [28 March, DairyNews] Open Country Dairy have reported to staff and milk suppliers that they are nearly operating at business-as-usual levels during the Covid-19 level 4 restrictions. Chief Executive Officer Steve Koekemoer stated that there will be minor inefficiencies experienced during the lock-down, however reported that so far, they have not faced any restrictions on raw material orders or

shipping containers and milk volumes are tracking at forecast. On top of this, customers have been relatively unaffected in the process. Mr Koekemoer stated that non-essential capital projects have been put on hold until lockdown is over.

[OIO green light for Synlait purchase](#) [01 April, Sudesh Kissun, DairyNews] The Overseas Investment Office (OIO) has approved Synlait Milk's \$112 million bid for South Canterbury dairy processor Dairyworks. The conditional purchase was announced in October 2019, with the OIO reporting that the investment will allow Synlait to continue diversifying its business and to service the New Zealand domestic market through channels such as retail and food service.



## Food Safety

[High-salt intake bad for the immune system: study](#) [27 March, Oliver

Morrison, Food Navigator] A German study has found that consuming a high-salt diet has a negative effect on one's immune system and blood pressure. Finding that salt negatively affects part of the immune system was unexpected, as previous studies had noted that it generally has an immune-enhancing outcome. Immune cells tested after excessive salt intake fared much worse when exposed to bacteria. The researchers did not test virus responses and are unsure if the findings will play a significant role during the Covid-19 pandemic.



## International

[Analysis: Why have beef and lamb prices dropped this week?](#) [25

March, Andrew Meredith, Farmers Weekly UK] UK farmers have been questioning why beef and lamb prices have been dropping despite supermarket shelves clearing out. UK supply chains have been rocked by Covid-19. Supermarkets have been reminded to keep a diverse supply of cuts on their shelves, in order

to make the most from every carcass. Reconfiguring all supply into supermarkets is proving a challenge, as consumer eating habits differ to what people choose when dining out. A number of lamb auctions have been cancelled in order to avoid oversupply to the market. The oversupply is leading to a drop in prices, while stocks are used up.

[Coronavirus measures could cause global food shortage, UN warns](#) [26 March, Fiona Harvey, The Guardian] The UN's food body has warned that protectionist measures put in place by governments worldwide could provoke food shortages in the coming weeks. If governments try protecting their own food supply by restricting exports, then this will start to cause issues. Some countries are already doing this such as Vietnam suspending rice export contracts and Kazakhstan banning exports of wheat flour. The UN report that trade barriers will create extreme volatility and make the situation worse. It is expected that globally there will also be struggles in gaining the seasonal workers needed for fruit and vegetable crops. They reminded individuals to only buy what they need and resist panic purchases.

[Should land be used for solar panels or agriculture?](#) [26 March, Lynn Freehill-Maye] One emerging land-use solution is called agrivoltaics which is when solar panels are co-located along with agriculture, helping to produce both renewable energy and food. Lexie Hain Co-Founded the American Solar Grazing Association to help promote the idea to other American farmers. The practice is commonplace in countries such as the United Kingdom and Uruguay. Sheep grazing on fields supporting solar arrays can help produce solar energy, wool, meat, and increases to soil health through manure and hooves. The sheep keep the grass short and they benefit from the windbreak and shade of the solar panels. Other animals have been trialled such as cattle and goats although these animals required modifications such as high panels and hidden wires. Row crops are also being experimented upon.

[COVID-19 threatening global food security — UN](#) [27 March, Rural News] The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is urging G20 country leaders to take measures to keep global food systems working well during the Covid-19 outbreak. Qu Dongyu, FAO Director-General reported that it is very important that global food chains are not disrupted and the promotion of availability and production of safe and nutritious food for all must continue. Mr Donyu stated that lockdowns have the potential to disrupt food production, processing, distribution and sales, and these will hit the poor and vulnerable the hardest. My Dongyu encouraged actions to help provide transparent, stable and reliable sources of food supply.

[Farmers' Markets Are Providing Lifelines to Both Growers and Shoppers](#) [27 March, Larissa Zimberoff, Bloomberg] California farmers are used to extreme weather events such as droughts and wildfires, however Covid-19 is bringing its own challenges. The state has been ordered to "shelter in place", however farmers markets have been classed as an essential business. Many consumers are now turning to these for their local goods, when supermarket shelves are bare, and the shops are often filled with citizens in close-quarters. Local growers are grateful for the markets, especially because most restaurants are shut, which are usually their biggest customers. Growers are also turning to online sales to make up for lost revenue. In Oregon, one farmers' market is offering a drive-through option for customers.

[Dairy farmers may be asked to curtail milk supplies](#) [29 March, Fran McNulty, RTE] Dairy Industry Ireland has warned dairy farmers that they may need to reduce the amount of milk they produce in order to help ease pressure on dairy processors during the Covid-19 pandemic. The closure of a single processor would result in a range of negative impacts, such as the possibility of farmers needing to dispose of milk on their farms. The Irish Farmers' Association believes that there is no need for concern and

that all dairy co-operatives will continuing processing all milk. They suggested that an EU scheme could help co-operatives store processed product in order to help short-term storage challenges.

['Childhood obesity is an issue of inequality': New fund wants to make healthy snacking convenient, tasty and affordable](#) [31 March, Katy Askew, Food Navigator] The Good Food Fund has been launched in the UK which will support food and beverage brands who are targeting a reduction in childhood obesity linked to inequality. Investment fund Mission Ventures will run the accelerator programme, with venture capital firm Ascension Ventures managing the fund. The fund aims to change the landscape of healthy snacking and focus on price positioning. The fund believes that healthy food needs to be made cheaper so that low income families can also access these products. Successful applicants will receive business support and mentoring.

[Fresh food exports, medical supply imports assured by \\$170 million Government COVID-19 rescue package](#) [01 April, Kath Sullivan & Bridget Fitzgerald, ABC News] The Australian Government have announced a support package that will mean that hundreds of flights are re-launched to deliver fresh produce to key international markets. This aims to boost Australia's export sector which is facing lots of challenges such as supply-chain disruptions due to the impacts of Covid-19. AUD\$110 million (approx. NZD\$113.5 million) will go towards coordinating flights to China, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates. This announcement was particularly welcomed by Australia's seafood sector which was hit hard when China was experiencing Covid-19 related disruption.

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## Organisations referenced in this week's Field Notes include:

2degrees  
American Solar Grazing Association  
ASB  
Ascension Ventures  
Balance  
Beewise  
Ceres Tag  
Changing Markets Foundation  
Coastal Spring Lambs  
Dairy Industry Ireland  
Dairyworks  
Egmont Honey  
Eurofins  
Federated Farmers  
Feedback  
Fonterra Co-operative Group  
Good Food Fund  
Greenlea Premier Meats  
Greenmeadows Beef  
Helius  
Horticulture NZ  
Irish Farmers' Association  
Koanga Gardens  
Ministry for Primary Industries  
Mission Ventures  
New Zealand Winegrowers  
NZX  
Open Country Dairy  
Otago University  
Overseas Investment Office  
Pāmu Farms  
Phosboucraa Foundation  
Precision Farming  
Primary Production Select Committee  
Rabobank Australia Limited  
Rabobank New Zealand Limited  
Ravensdown  
Roebuck Farm  
Rural GP Network  
Scales Group  
Seeka  
Setek  
Southern Hemisphere Botanicals (SHB)  
Spark  
Statistics New Zealand  
Synlait Milk  
The a2 Milk Company  
The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment  
United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
University of Otago  
Vodafone  
West Coast 2IC Development Programme  
West Coast Focus Farm Trust  
Zespri

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