



AGRIBUSINESS

Field Notes

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07 May 2020 – This week's headlines



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The 'now normal' future: Food and fibre in a world emerging from Covid-19

With New Zealand now moving past the initial shocks of the impacts of Covid-19 on our daily lives, now is the time for the food and fibre sector to consider the 'now normal'.

The 'now normal' future: Food and fibre in a world emerging from Covid-19 is a special supplement to the annual KPMG Agribusiness Agenda which explores the changes the food and fibre sector is already seeing in consumer behaviours, the opportunities that inevitably arise from disruption, and how we now need to move on from traditional perspectives and act at pace to embrace the 'now normal' future ahead of us.

"The potential for the food and fibre sector to accelerate value creation and lead New Zealand's economic recovery makes for a more exciting future for the sector than we could ever have envisaged in last year's reality," says Ian Proudfoot, KPMG Global Head of Agribusiness.

The 'now normal' future explores some of the shifts we have observed in the global food system over the last few weeks and considers what these may signal for the future.

"Now is the time for organisations to radically accelerate plans that enhance their position in the 'now normal' while being prepared to cancel projects that have become irrelevant," says Ian.

"The change we have experienced is so extensive that plans that had been discarded as impractical or impossible may now be achievable. Now is the time for organisations to be bold in the investment decisions they choose to make."

The 'now normal' future: Food and fibre in a world emerging from Covid-19 is a precursor to this year's KPMG Agribusiness Agenda, which is due to be released in June.

The full document can be accessed [here](#).

Research & Development

[CRISPR genome editing to address food security and climate change: 'Now more than ever we are looking to science for solutions'](#) [04 May, Katy Askew, Food Navigator] Dr Oliver Peoples, CEO of Yield10 Bioscience reports that there are changing attitudes to the science of gene editing. The company uses metabolic engineering technologies using predictive models to facilitate gene discovery. Their ultimate goal is to help major food crops become more productive to help feed the growing population worldwide. Dr Peoples reports that the largest gains can be achieved through CRISPR genome editing in staple food and feed crops. CRISPR can be used as an advanced plant-breeding tool and unlike GMOs do not introduce new genes into the crops. Gene editing provides speed and precision, meaning improvement can be seen quickly. Dr Peoples reports that public attitudes towards gene editing appears to be shifting and focusing on the benefits that could be provided by the technology.



Agribusiness Education

[Upgrades for rural schools](#) [30 April, Farmers Weekly] Education Minister Chris Hipkins reports that classrooms at 600 small and remote state schools and kura will be upgraded as part of a \$160 million property improvement programme. Mr Hipkins states that the Government is bringing forward infrastructure projects to help reboot the economy, as the package will create and support jobs for both local tradespeople and businesses. Schools needing improvement will receive them, and work is expected to start later in the year. 84 state-integrated schools will also be able to opt into the programme.



Rural Communities

[Rural broadband upgrade](#) [29 April, Peter Burke, Rural News] The

Government have announced \$15 million to improve rural broadband across the country. The money will go to upgrade existing mobile towers as well as wireless backhaul and install external antennae on households to improve coverage. Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media Minister Kris Faafoi reports that broadband services will be brought to rural households which do not currently have internet access and will help rural communities to be better equipped once lockdown is exited. Mr Faafoi states that connectivity is becoming even more important with increasing numbers of New Zealanders using broadband for education, work and social purposes.

[Women get behind safety project](#) [05 May, Farmers Weekly] Safer Farms has partnered with Alex Thomas to bring the #PlantASeedForSafety project based in Australia to New Zealand. The project aims to raise the voices and boost the confidence of rural women and to inspire people to make safer and healthier choices. It profiles women from rural industries and communities making positive and practical improvements to the health, safety and wellbeing of those around them and aims to save lives. 23 people were killed in Agriculture work-related incidents between April 2019 and March 2020. Many people are already on board and other supporting organisations include Rural Women, WorkSafe, Dairy Women's Network, the Rural Support Trust, Farm Source, Pamu and LIC. Women can submit their stories on the website, which also displays positive and practical solutions to improving health, safety and wellbeing on-farm and in communities.



Farming Systems

[Not your typical sheep paddock: why sunflowers and lentils herald](#)

[NZ's regenerative revolution](#) [25 April, John McCrone, Stuff NZ] New Zealander Peter Barrett spoke at a recent regenerative farming conference at Lincoln University about his philosophy when. Mr Barrett reports that he believes that if you put bits of everything in the ground, then nature will define what grows. Mr Barrett has 4000 sheep and cattle that graze on his pastures, which are constantly shifted through the day to ensure the pasture remains at shin height. Mr Barrett reports that because it has a deep root structure, the pasture grows back faster. He believes that above ground biodiversity results in thriving sub-soil ecology. There is increased interest in regenerative farming both in New Zealand and globally, as it is easier on the land and often cheaper for the farmer due to low inputs. Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor has endorsed the regenerative approach to farming. Beef + Lamb NZ announced earlier this year that it would spend 2020 doing a global study of regenerative agriculture. Regenerative farming meets two current market drivers, health and climate change.

[Paerua farmers leading the way in biodiversity](#) [30 April, Steph Rangī, Stuff NZ] Paerua Farmers Mark and Felicity Brough have been named as the 2020 Regional Supreme Award winners at the Waikato Balance Farm Environment Awards run by the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust. The couple is committed to biodiversity at their farm and this has brought back native birds and improved water quality. The judges stated that the Paerua farm is an excellent example of farming within the capabilities of the land and that the Broughs are great role models in terms of their farming systems. The couple have had the farm for twenty years, and during this time have completed extensive planting around waterways and significant fencing to wetlands and drains. They have also created two large dams and are planning to fence off significant blocks of mature native bush. They have beehives to encourage clover growth, poplar poles to help control erosion and nearly all paddocks have water troughs for stock. The

couple are involved in off-farm initiatives both locally and nationally. The Broughs also won the Beef + Lamb New Zealand Livestock Farm Award and the Waikato Regional Council Water Protection Award. They will now go into the running for the Gordon Stephenson Trophy and the national award winner will be announced at a later date.



Agribusiness

[Coronavirus: Trade Me launches fresh food boxes](#) [01 May, Esther Taunton, Stuff NZ] Trade Me announced last week that it is working with local suppliers to sell fresh grocery boxes including organic meat, fruit, vegetables and baked goods. They are working with companies such as Hyper Meat, Paddock to Pantry, Celebration Box and Clarkes. Even social enterprise Eat My Lunch is involved, with the sales of the fresh groceries helping to keep their staff employed and operations running, with demand falling significantly for their "buy one, give one" lunch scheme. Eat My Lunch is providing families with food during the Covid-19 pandemic, and states that demand for its services are growing every day.

[Virtual farm visits offer agriculture education during pandemic](#) [03 May, Brooke Bechen, The Country Today] The Wisconsin Youth Livestock Program, UW-Madison Animal Sciences and the Division of Extension have partnered up to host a series of virtual farm tours of their agricultural research stations in Arlington and Lancaster to help keep youth engaged and learning during the pandemic. Bernie O'Rourke, Youth Livestock Specialist in UW-Madison's Department of Animal Sciences reported that the weekly zoom calls have been well attended, and participants have asked insightful questions. The scientists at the research stations share facts and information on their jobs as well as showing the tasks they complete each day when working on the farm. Agricultural teachers in Wisconsin have expressed an interest in using the videos for their students.

[Ag sector in a strong position to reboot economy](#)

[04 May, Peter Burke, Rural News] Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor reports that strong international demand for New Zealand's food, even with the global effects of Covid-19, could mean that more New Zealanders begin working in the primary sector and that opportunities will be available. Mr O'Connor states that in a post-Covid world, around 50,000 more people will be needed to be part of the primary sector's skilled workforce. The roles include manual jobs, as well as ones in professional environments. Mr O'Connor states the latest provisional trade statistics show that between 01 February and 22 April this year, \$890 million worth of fruits and vegetables have been exported from the country as well as \$6.18 billion worth of meat and dairy products. Mr O'Connor reports that the sector is looking into ways to increase the workforce through the Government's \$100 million redeployment scheme.

[Government called on to fund 10,000 produce boxes for desperate communities](#)

[05 May, Nikki Preston, The Country] 5+ A Day Charitable Trust redirected their fruit boxes from children at low decile schools to communities in need when the Covid-19 lockdown began. United Fresh, the produce industry body running the trust has now called on the Government to fund \$350,000 to provide an extra 10,000 boxes to meet the demand. The initiative is feeding hungry families and also helping to use some of the surplus produce that has not been able to be used by the hospitality industry.

[Bicentenary of agtech breakthrough](#) [05 May, Hugh Stringleman, Farmers Weekly] the first plough was used to break ground for wheat in New Zealand on 03 May, 1820. Within sight of Kororipo Pa at Kerikeri, one of Ngapuhi chief Hongi Hika's strongholds, a single-bladed plough was drawn behind six bullocks. The plough was brought to New Zealand to improve vegetable and cereal growing and to help Māori expand their already productive gardens. An 1819 deed is the first legal document recording a transfer of

land in NZ and shows the land at Kerikeri being sold to the missionaries in return for 48 axes.

[Rabobank NZ teams up with KiwiHarvest to reduce food waste](#)

[06 May, Rabobank- Press Release] Rabobank New Zealand have partnered with food rescue charity KiwiHarvest to help reduce food waste in New Zealand. Research has shown that New Zealand produces more than enough food to feed its people, yet due to a range of reasons it does not always get to those in need. On top of this, large amounts of edible food is wasted every year. The new partnership complements Rabobank's sponsorship of TVNZ programme *Eat Well for Less* which helps kiwi families to save money and builds awareness of the issue of food waste. KiwiHarvest was established in 2012, and since then has saved over 4.1 million kilograms of food, and delivered it to those in need. KiwiHarvest have reported that Rabobank's support has enabled them to invest in much-needed resources and equipment, particularly in their South Auckland warehouse, as well as a new refrigerated vehicle.



Horticulture

[Horticultural labour shortage could mean food shortage, industry warns](#)

[04 May, Eric Frykberg, RNZ] The horticulture industry has warned that the campaign against Covid-19 has meant that some growers have been forced to quit the business due to a lack of markets and workers which will reduce New Zealand's food supply. Many businesses usually rely on RSE workers to supplement their workforce and Immigration Minister Iain Lees-Galloway has reported that the border is closed and will remain closed during the pandemic. Horticulture New Zealand Chief Executive Mike Chapman stated that with or without Covid-19, the country has no real strategy on how to provide food security for its citizens, and that that needs to change, as the pandemic has had serious implications for growers. Many fruit and vegetable growers are now making planting

decisions and when the produce is picked, will have to decide whether there will be a market for what they produce and whether or not they will be able to source the labour they need to get the fruit out on the market in the first place. Under alert level 4 and 3, many restaurants as well as farmers markets and other outlets remain closed for these grower's produce, which makes it hard for them to find new ways to distribute their goods.



Aquaculture

[Mussel farm proposed for Mercury Bay gets go-ahead despite majority opposition](#) [29 April, Kelley Tantau, Stuff NZ] An independent commission have granted a 20-year resource consent for a mussel farm in Mercury Bay, despite over 95 percent of submissions being opposed to the idea. Coromandel Mussel Farmer Peter Bull and Ngāti Hei Representative Joe Davis lodged the application for the spat catching farm last February and have formed the company Ohinau Aquaculture Limited to facilitate the joint venture. There were 195 submissions against the operation, with many concerned that the farm will affect the landscape, natural character and visual amenity values of Mercury Bay as well as negatively impact marine life. Submitters now have two weeks to lodge an appeal against the decision. Waikato Regional Council reported that they are happy the commissioners took in the opinions of relevant experts and the evidence provided in their decision. 104 conditions have been imposed on the farm including best practice management, noise and biosecurity.



Poultry

[Covid 19 coronavirus: Dunedin egg farmers get creative](#) [30 April, Shawn McAvinue, The Country] Dunedin egg farmers have faced a dramatic drop in sales since local eateries were closed under Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. As a result, some are

turning to online sales to adhere to the lockdown restrictions. Pieter Bloom, Co-Owner of Bloem's Pig and Poultry Farm reports that they usually produce and sell over 20,000 eggs a week, and once lockdown started, 95 percent of their customers stopped buying eggs creating a surplus. Their new website sells discounted eggs and a home delivery service to customers. Mr Bloom states that the website has helped build a new customer base for the business and that their online sales will continue for as long as it takes for the hospitality sector to recover. Brighton Gold Free Range Eggs Owner Cavan Jenkinson is also completing home deliveries to homes in the wider Dunedin area after they lost 50 percent of their usual customer base. Mr Jenkinson reports that the company is thriving under the new business model and is currently sold out of eggs. Mr Jenkinson plans to continue home deliveries of eggs, even once cafes have reopened and is looking at putting on another 2,000 hens in the next six months.



Food Innovation

[Bay's gin liqueur wins best in the world award](#) [02 May, Linda Hall, Hawke's Bay Today] Hawke's Bay The Damson Collection has just had its damson gin liqueur named the World's Best Fruit Liqueur at the World Liqueur Awards 2020. The plum liqueur also took out the gold award for the Best New Zealand Fruit Liqueur. Owner of the Damson Collection Fiona Tomlinson is extremely pleased with the result, especially as due to the Covid-19 pandemic they were not aware that the judging process had gone ahead. Mrs Tomlinson states that many of her customers had sent lovely emails about the liqueur after they won the award, and she is very grateful for their support. Over 150 entries were recorded in 18 genres of liqueur, which were then tasted by judges in isolation. The Damson Plum Liqueur was praised for its aromas of tropical candy and vibrant flavour. Mrs Tomlinson reports that their damson are grown using sustainable practices and that their plum liqueur is a versatile spirit.



Environment & Emissions

[Soil assumptions don't hold water](#) [30 April, Farmers Weekly] Lincoln University Doctoral Student Balin Robertson has been researching water storage in stony soils and reports that this may be underestimated which will have potential implications for efficient irrigation and nutrient management including leaching losses. Mr Robertson has studied the topic over the last three years, looking at stony soils around Canterbury and is the first to quantify the soil's water storage. The study aims to give farmers and regulators robust data for irrigation management, farm environment plans and nutrient budgets derived from Overseer. Before the study it was assumed that water retention in the stony soils was only due to the fine earth between the stones, however the research has revealed that stones account for around 10 percent of water retained to a depth of 60cm. Mr Robertson is now studying how dynamic the water held in the stones is and whether it is available to plants, with the results around a month away.

[Water quality – not just farming's problem](#) [05 May, Peter Burke, Dairy News] The Government's newly released Our Freshwater 2020 report gives evidence that New Zealand's freshwater is being impacted by farming and is also equally affected by urban development, forestry and other human activities. The report states that climate change is set to make the issues faced by our freshwater environments worse than they currently are. DairyNZ have stated that the report highlights the environmental challenges faced by New Zealand and reinforce that our dairy farmers are committed to helping to protect the environment and are ready to take action on farm to make that happen. Federated Farmers says the data and findings in the report provide evidence for the case for greater investment in water storage.



Viticulture

[Tropical terroir made to produce award-winning wines](#) [05 May,

Richard Whitehead, Beverage Daily] Taiwan is finding success in viticulture, with two types of wines taking out gold medals at the 26th Vinalies Internationales competition in Paris. The wine industry in Taiwan was in danger of dying out completely around two decades ago but has since faced significant growth due to the removal of a monopoly system, allowing private winemakers to make a move. Taiwanese wine pioneers have brought a variety of techniques into the industry including the Dry Iced Soak step which freezes the wine and adds complexity and fullness to the taste. Taiwan's wines are reported to pair well with local Asian food including prawn dumplings and spicy noodles.



Trade & Exports

[Covid 19 coronavirus: NZ food exports still in demand despite virus](#)

[impact](#) [02 May, The Country] Trade data that has been released shows that New Zealand's food is still in high international demand currently despite the impacts of Covid-19. Primary exports earned the country nearly \$8.2 billion between 01 February to 22 April. The amount is \$40 million less than the same period last year but compares with \$7.4 billion in 2018. Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor states that the figures show New Zealand has a head start in recovering from Covid-19, and that the primary sector is in a strong position to help us reboot our economy as there is no shortage of demand. Mr O'Connor noted that there are around 50,000 jobs that need filling in the primary sector. On the other hand, seafood export revenue from China is down 36 percent from last year, and forestry products are also facing weaker demand than usual.

[Exporters must be trustworthy](#) [04 May, Farmers Weekly] Synlait Milk Chief Executive Leon Clement reports that in a post-Covid world international customers will be looking for trustworthy and sustainability-focused suppliers. Mr Clement emphasised the importance of New Zealand having a strong story to market our products to other countries. Mr Clement states that Synlait has not had operational damage from Covid-19 so far, due to good risk planning and quick dealings with the supply challenges initially arising in China. Synlait has been focused on adaptability and Mr Clement reported that they expect to be facing disruption for a while, as the global impacts of Covid-19 are not yet fully understood. Synlait completed their purchase of Dairyworks on 01 April and Mr Clement saw this as a positive as demand has increased for their products during Covid-19 as people stay home. Synlait supplies nearly half of New Zealand's cheese and a quarter of its butter.



Farmers & Producers

[Sale yards to open at level two](#) [05 May, Farmers Weekly] Stock agencies PGG Wrightson and Carrfields state that the fact stock yards are able to open again in Covid-19 alert level 2 will provide certainty for farmers. Carrfields reports that its stock yards will be opening with strict social distancing requirements and specific protocols for staff. Both agencies report that they will open as soon as they can, to help lessen the pressure on farmers.

[Half-million dollar fund to help farmers recover from drought](#) [06 May, Maia Burry, The Country] A \$500,000 fund has been announced by Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor to help farmers and growers recover their businesses from this season's drought impacts. Extremely dry conditions have affected certain areas in both the North and South Islands, and the situation remains dire in some areas such as Central and Southern Hawke's Bay. The new fund will allow farmers to access up to \$5,000 of

advisory services to equip rural businesses with the professional and technical advice they need to survive through this time period. Two feed coordinators are also being appointed to help farmers who are facing serious feed shortages. Mr O'Connor acknowledged that some farmers will be dealing with the effects of this drought for at least a year, if not more.



Arable

[Feed grain on offer](#) [01 May, Annette Scott, Farmers Weekly] Arable yields are up 16 percent in 2020 on the 2019 harvest according to the latest Arable Industry Marketing Initiative report. Despite 6,000 fewer hectares being planted this season, yields substantially increased from 796,700 to 873,080 tonnes. This occurred even with a severe early season hailstorm, as well as flooding for some regions and variable weather across the board. Federated Farmers Grains Vice-Chairman Brian Leadley stated that the results show that our arable farmers are world class. Mr Leadley reports that there has been increased demand for locally produced milling wheat, and growers have responded, with a greater area of the wheat being planted for next season. Due to decent stocks in the silos, growers are confident that they are in a position to supply good volumes of feed grains. The Ministry for Primary Industries and partner agencies DairyNZ, Beef + Lamb, AgFirst and Federated Farmers are offering free feed-planning support to farmers and livestock owners in all parts of the country.



Wool

[Wool sector just needs a push](#) [30 April, Annette Scott, Farmers Weekly] Craig Smith, Chairman of the National Council of New Zealand Wool Interests has reported that now is the time to reset the industry into a new normal. Mr Smith has spent 31 years in the wool industry and has worked

along the entire supply chain within the country and also overseas in successful mills. Mr Smith states that the international relationships he has built through his career have helped business to carry on. He is honoured with his new role as Chairman but states that New Zealanders have some work to do in selling out wool story to the world as there are some holes throughout the supply chain here. Mr Smith states that customers need to recognise how special New Zealand wool really is in terms of quality and fibre, so a combination of education and promotion is the way forward and is working on getting backing from the Government to help do this. Mr Smith highlighted the fact that there are openings in the sector for young people.



Red Meat

[Coronavirus: Alliance Group adapts to changing global markets](#) [29 April,

Louisa Steyl, Stuff NZ] The Alliance Group have been forced to adapt quickly to changes in global markets. The co-operative sends meat and co-products to over 65 countries. The cooperative has addressed both the safety and health issues posed in the workplace by Covid-19 and have imposed social distancing requirements as well as other considerations. Mr Surveyor reports that food markets are slowing down globally, however the drop of beef production in countries such as the US, may pose an opportunity for the cooperative. There has also been an increase in online sales. The cooperative continues to add automated processing technology into their plants to help alleviate constant labour shortages. Mr Surveyor reports that they had been planning for a possible market disruption ahead of the pandemic, so were ready to adapt to the constantly changing markets. Alliance Group have joined other forums and the Meat Industry Association to help provide the Government with advice to support the sector during a recovery.

[Go easy on Chinese, SFF says](#) [01 May, Farmers Weekly] Simon Limmer, Silver Fern Farms Chief

Executive has reported that the company hopes the Government will be sympathetic in the position it takes on moves for a global investigation into the source of Covid-19 as it is important to maintain relationships. Mr Limmer believes their strategy at targeting the wealthy with grass-fed beef is the right way to go, particularly as Chinese consumers are already seeking their product as China starts to recover from Covid-19. Co-Chairman Rob Hewett reports that the company's positive 2019 results shows the benefit of their partnership with Shanghai Maling, as it offers them plenty of opportunity.

[Meat demand soars](#) [05 May, Rural News]

Beef+Lamb NZ's General Manager for Market Development Nick Beeby reports that there is a massive demand for New Zealand beef and lamb in the United States due to Covid-19 creating supply chain issues for them. Big meat processing plants in the US have been forced to close down during the pandemic, which has in turn reduced the supply of meat. Many consumers in the United States have been panic buying red meat which exacerbates the problem. Mr Beeby reports that the disruption from Covid is the biggest he has ever seen in the food service sector, but that New Zealand's meat processing, exporting and marketing companies have proved themselves to be very agile during the pandemic.



Dairy

[Fonterra boosts milk payments](#) [30 April, Hugh Stringleman, Farmers

Weekly] Fonterra Co-operative Group are enhancing the Co-operative Difference loyalty scheme by increasing the advance rate payments that farmers receive for their milk. In the new season, it will begin paying 65 percent of the mid-point of the forecasted farmgate milk price range each month between July and January and increase percentages after that. The monthly payments will also be brought forward from the 20th of each month to the 15th. Five working days after the annual results are

declared, the final retrospective payment will be made. Fonterra reports that the average farmer will receive over \$30,000 by the end of January, based on a \$7-plus pay-out. Chairman John Managhan states that the improvements will not reduce the strength of the co-operative's balance sheet. The first announcement of milk price forecasting will be made in late May. Fonterra's board has appointed Holly Kramer as an Independent Director from 11 May and is expected to boost the collective skillset of the board, bringing experience in customer-centred leadership and transformation.

[New system to help evaluate performance of New Zealand's dairy genetics](#) [01 May, The Country] The Ministry for Primary Industries are helping to fund a new project aimed at developing a new genetics information system for New Zealand's dairy sector along with New Zealand's not-for-profit dairy cattle breed societies such as Holstein Friesian NZ and Jersey NZ. The system will record and collate data on a range of important traits for dairy cows to help fast track genetic gains. The current system used by breeding societies is over 20 years old and is a threat to the dairy sector's competitive advantage according to Holstein Friesian NZ General Manager Cheryl Watson. MPI is contributing \$792,000 to the 10-month project, as genetic improvement is good for the environment, animal welfare and the profitability of the country's dairy sector according to MPI Director of Investment Programmes, Steve Penno. The new system is expected to be completed and ready to be used by November this year.

[Kiwis left scratching their heads as butter turns white](#) [01 May, Esther Taunton, Stuff NZ] Farmers and consumers have been questioning why New Zealand butter has been getting progressively lighter. Anchor Marketing Manager Katie McClure has reported that the change in colour has occurred due to a change in cows' diets, partly due to extreme weather faced by much of New Zealand this season. Grass-fed cows result in a natural yellow pigment in butter.

Mrs McClure reports that the colour change does not indicate a difference in quality. Lewis Road Creamery's General Manager Nicola O'Rourke reports that they have not seen a noticeable change in the colour of its butter as they are committed to ensuring that its products come from animals that are predominantly grass-fed or supplemented only with hay. Mrs O'Rourke states that the colour of their butter is a selling point for them, particularly in the US where it contrasts with their pale domestic butter.

[Head shows DairyNZ has changed](#) [04 May, Hugh Stringleman, Farmers Weekly] DairyNZ's Chairman Jim van der Poel reports that the industry-good organisation is seeking farmer approval to extend the 3.6c/kg milksolids levy, after they have been spending above their income for a few years and milk production is not on the rise. 76 percent of DairyNZ's expenditure is spent on three main work areas including farm systems and resilience, research and development as well as biosecurity. DairyNZ report that they have surveyed farmers with the results showing that all their work is important to them and making a difference. Mr van der Poel also stated that he does not welcome the standstill of the Essential Freshwater reforms as uncertainties are creating issues for farmers, and they need to understand what is expected of them, especially in the volatile markets.



Forestry

[A plan for more forestry workers](#)
[01 May, Rural News] The

Government is planning to attract another 5,000 workers to the forestry and wood-processing sectors through the Workforce Action Plan. Forestry Minister Shane Jones states that the sectors will play a critical role in helping New Zealand's economy recover after the Covid-19 pandemic. The action plan addresses challenges faced in the sectors and suggests ways to overcome them through building on existing initiatives and beginning new ones.



International

[Mars patents heat-resistant chocolate that maintains taste and shape in hot climates](#)

[30 April, Flora Southey, Food Navigator] Mars, Inc. have patented a heat-resistant chocolate that it states maintains its taste, mouthfeel and shape during handling in hot climates. The chocolate composition is made with a sugar replacer that has a boiling point of at least 105 degrees Celsius which is combined with multilayer container packaging that also helps to protect the chocolate in hot conditions. The product was designed to cater for the customer in hot climates, where chocolate currently can become a storage or product quality concern, particularly in countries with limited availability of refrigerated storage.

[Chocolate balls for immune health: Singapore firm's new product for kids amid COVID-19](#) [30 April, Tingmin Koe, Nutra Ingredients Asia] Avida Health, a Singapore dietary supplement firm are launching a functional food in the shape of a chocolate ball amid the current Covid-19 pandemic. The product is targeted at improving the immunity of children between the ages of four and 12, containing a number of key bioactives including probiotics. These include fungi-derived beta-glucan which has been formulated by the company itself. Beta-glucan is known for its benefits for the immune system. The ingredient comes in powder form, allowing it to be used in a variety of formats such as in sachets and beverages. The chocolate ball product containing the functional food will be manufactured in New Zealand, whilst the mushrooms are organically grown with the ingredient premix being manufactured in China.

[Brazilian agribusiness exports grow 17.5% in sales](#) [05 May, Explica] The Brazilian agricultural sector has had an increase in exports of 17.5% in the months of January and April this year compared to the same period in 2019. They had an increase in shipments to Asia, especially China. Their sales of soy increased by 29.9

percent, and raw cotton rose 69.5 percent. The figures show that China purchased from Brazil three times the amount imported by the United States and twice as much demanded by the European Union.

Organisations referenced in this week's Field Notes include

Waikato Regional Council
WorkSafe
Yield10 Bioscience

5+ A Day
AgFirst
Alliance Group
Anchor
Avida Hea
Balance
Beef + Lamb NZ
Bloem's Pig and Poultry Farm
Brighton Gold Free Range Owner
Carrfields
Celebration Box
Clarkes
Dairy Women's Network
DairyNZ
Dairyworks
Eat My Lunch
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Lewis Road Creamery
LIC
Lincoln University
Mars, Inc.
Meat Industry Association
Ministry for Primary Industries
National Council of New Zealand Wool Interests
New Zealand Farm Environment Trust
Ohinau Aquaculture Limited
Paddock to Pantry
Pamu
PGG Wrightson
Rabobank New Zealand
Rural Women
Safer Farms
Silver Fern Farms
The Damson Collection
the Rural Support Trust
Trade Me
United Fresh

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Field Notes presents a summary of some of the media comment on the Agribusiness sector in the last week. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of KPMG but are summaries of the articles published.

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