

ExportNZ Trade News & Advocacy Update

October 2025

Trade & Export News Update

We wrote last month that policy had been reasonably stable on the US front. Of course, within 24 hours, new tariffs were announced on wood products and patented pharmaceuticals, and renewed threats were made about tariffs being imposed on foreign-made movies. No one can explain how the film tariff would be implemented.

This month the focus seems to have been more on Gaza and Ukraine and on securing a summit with Xi Jinping. But there have been threats and counter-threats made about rare earths and high-end computer chips.

For New Zealand, the focus has been on achieving the signature of the FTA with the Gulf Cooperation Council and on finalising the FTA outcome with India.

The GCC FTA signature could happen within the next few weeks, but a date has not been finalised.

New Zealand's chief negotiator Vangelis Vitalis was in India last week, and a new round of negotiations is scheduled for early November.

Trade Minister Todd McClay is pulling out all stops to have a conclusion to this important negotiation this year.

Meanwhile, at PM level, the focus will be on ASEAN and APEC. These meetings are increasingly more important for side bilateral meetings than they are about the meetings themselves.

Trade & Export Advocacy Update

Government sets methane targets for 2050 (12 Oct)

The Government announced that the country's methane targets for 2050 would be set at a range of 14-24 per cent below 2017 levels by 2050, and that there would be no tax on agricultural emissions. Stating that doing so would risk "*closing down farms and sending jobs and production overseas.*"

ExportNZ supports the announcement. In 2022, we provided a strong submission to the Ministry for the Environment on the pricing of agricultural emissions, stating that including agricultural emissions in New Zealand's 2050 targets would risk emissions leakage, tens of thousands of jobs in regional New Zealand that rely on agricultural production, and a reduction in food production in New Zealand.

Minister's Statement – [Click Here](#)
ExportNZ's 2022 Submission – [Click Here](#)

NZ and Singapore Level Up Relationship (10 Oct)

With Singapore's Prime Minister, Lawrence Wong, visiting New Zealand earlier this month, New Zealand and Singapore announced a new Strategic Food Partnership has been launched, and an Agreement on Trade in Essential Supplies (AOTES) concluded.

Under the Strategic Food Partnership:

- The framework will facilitate increased agrifood trade, speeding the movement of New Zealand's high-quality, safe food across borders.
- It sets up a structured work programme between New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries and Singapore's Singapore Food Agency and Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, along with industry and researchers, to collaborate annually to set priorities and remove trade barriers.
- The AOTES commits both countries to keep essential goods — such as food and fuel — flowing during times of crisis, by agreeing to refrain from export curbs when supply chains are under pressure.

Minister for Agriculture, Trade & Investment Todd McClay said the partnership and agreement will "strengthen supply-chain resilience, support exporters, and keep essential goods moving."

Gene Technology Bill Report back from Select Committee (10 Oct)

The Select Committee Report on the Gene Technology Bill has finally been released after several delays. The Bill is intended to modernise New Zealand's gene technology regulations and ensure the safe use of gene technologies in New Zealand. However several sectors and parts of New Zealand society have raised concerns with the Bill and the lack of safeguards to protect New Zealand's GE-free reputation, people's health and safety, and the natural environment.

ExportNZ wrote a submission on the Bill in support of relaxing New Zealand strict gene technology rules, however we also raised our own concerns. Among other suggestions, ExportNZ recommended that;

- The Bill established an Industry Advisory Committee,
- Include "market access and trade" as an additional "relevant risk" in Clause 11.
- Undertake comprehensive market analysis to assess the likely impact that introducing gene technologies would have on export markets.

While no amendments were made to alleviate our concerns, the New Zealand First Party did raise their own concerns about “*a consumer preference decision, and to what extent New Zealand might trade away a market advantage.*” New Zealand First has confirmed that they will not support the Bill without further major changes. Which means the Bill in its current form would not pass second reading (Labour, Greens, and Te Pāti Māori also oppose the Bill).

ExportNZ will continue to engage with our industry colleagues on the best approach forward to ensure we do not lose momentum on reviewing gene technology regulations, but that we do so in a way that maintains market access and reputation.

Gene Technology Bill Select Committee Report - [Click Here](#)
ExportNZ & NZIBF Submission – [Click Here](#)

Increased Government Investment in NZ Bioeconomy Sector (4 Oct)

The Minister for Science, Innovation, and Technology, Hon. Dr Shane Reti, recently announced the Government would be investing \$42 million across seven years to establish a Biodiversity Platform, designed to accelerate the development of high-growth industries producing natural pharmaceuticals and other bio-based products. The platform will be managed by the newly established Bioeconomy Science Institute.

The global market for bio-based products is expected to exceed USD \$300 billion by 2027, with natural pharmaceuticals among the fastest-growing segments. This initiative enables New Zealand to capture a share of that growth by commercialising products rooted in our unique flora and fauna.

The Bioeconomy Science Institute will unite researchers, Māori enterprises and industry to drive commercially focused innovation. It will also support market analysis, de-risk private sector investment, and help fast-track new product pipelines.

For updates, check the Bioeconomy Science Institutes website:
<https://www.bioeconomyscience.co.nz/>