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To: secretariat@british-food-importers-distributors.org
Subject: Defra Agri-Food weekly bulletin - 29 July

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Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

This week's bulletin includes the results of the review into [automation in horticulture](#), information on how to apply for the [sustainable farm-based protein competition](#), and a webinar to learn more about funding for the [UK Seafood Fund's Infrastructure Scheme](#).

[Agri-Food guidance and updates](#)

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Items by theme:

We aim to share news and updates which help recipients build a **productive, sustainable and resilient** food and drink sector. Please use the links to below to jump to stories relevant to your interests.

Resilience

- [Environment Agency acts on recent dry weather](#)
- [New farming policies and payments in England](#)
- [Sanctions introduced on Russian white fish imports](#)

Productivity

- [Government publishes review into automation in horticulture](#)

- [Help to Grow: Digital - apply to take part in the one-to-one advice pilot](#)
- [UK-New Zealand FTA: report under Section 42 of Agriculture Act 2020](#)
- [UK Seafood Fund's Infrastructure Scheme Webinar](#)
- [Sustainable farm-based protein competition opens](#)
- [T-Levels Webinar: 24 August](#)

Sustainability

- [Plastic Packaging Tax first returns and payments due by 29 July 2022](#)

Agri-Food guidance and updates

Government publishes review into automation in horticulture

Defra has [published the results](#) of a review exploring how the horticulture sector can make use of innovative technologies such as packhouse automation, Artificial Intelligence enabled robotics and autonomous guided vehicles to help with tasks like the picking, packing and transporting of fruit, vegetables and flowers.

Environment Agency acts on recent dry weather

The Environment Agency (EA) convened the [National Drought Group](#), made up of senior decision makers from the EA, government, water companies, Water UK, NFU and environmental protection groups, to discuss the recent period of hot and dry weather and agree actions to protect water resources and the environment in the weeks ahead.

New farming policies and payments in England

Defra have created a [new information booklet](#) about changes happening to farming. This includes phasing out direct payments and the payments available now and in the future.

Sanctions introduced on Russian white fish imports

The UK, working with its allies and partners, is imposing the most punishing sanctions ever on Russia following its unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine. As part of that, we are increasing tariffs on certain products to help starve Putin's regime of the funds that enable it to carry out its invasion. The Government has [added all seafood, including white fish](#), to the list of goods from Russia and Belarus that are now subject to an import tariff of 35 per cent from 20 July 2022. An extensive list of goods imported from Russia across several sectors are subject to tariffs. The fishing and aquaculture sector is not being penalised or singled out. We recognise the challenges facing UK businesses and are engaging closely with representatives across the seafood sector to monitor the impacts of these tariffs and support them to seek viable alternatives. More broadly, we are supporting the seafood industry with a £100m UK Seafood Fund. We are investing in industry across the sector, including investing in skills and training as part of our commitment to level up coastal communities.

Plastic Packaging Tax first returns and payments due by 29 July 2022

If you were liable to register for Plastic Packaging Tax between 1 April and 30 June 2022 you must submit your [Plastic Packaging Tax return](#) and pay any tax due by 29 July 2022.

For a reminder of the steps to take and all return and payment dates for 2022-23, download the [PPT flyer](#). The 'Introduction to Plastic Packaging Tax' [webinar](#) includes new content setting out the returns, payments and relief process.

Help to Grow: Digital – apply to take part in the one-to-one advice pilot

[Help to Grow: Digital](#) is a UK-wide scheme to help small and medium size businesses (SMEs) adopt digital technologies that are proven to increase their productivity. The scheme offers SMEs free and impartial advice on how technology can help their business.

UK-New Zealand FTA: report under Section 42 of Agriculture Act 2020

[This report](#) explains whether the UK-New Zealand FTA is consistent with the maintenance of UK levels of statutory protection in relation to: human, animal or

plant life or health; animal welfare; and the environment.

UK Seafood Fund's Infrastructure Scheme Webinar

Defra are hosting an online event where you can learn more about the funding opportunities for Round 2. Round 2 will fund projects that build capability across the UK seafood sector supply chain through investment in:

- improved capability at ports, harbours, processing, and aquaculture facilities
- the social and economic welfare of coastal communities
- training hubs and facilities

To join the event on Wednesday 3 August 2022, 10:30 - 12:00, please click on the MS Teams link which can be found on the [Infrastructure Scheme homepage](#).

Sustainable farm-based protein competition opens

We are inviting farmers, growers, foresters, businesses and researchers to apply with projects to help increase domestic production of [healthy and sustainable protein](#). This competition is split into '[Feasibility](#)' projects (up to 2 years), and '[Industrial Research](#)' (up to 5 years for breeding projects). Projects must have a value of £200k-£500k and £500k-£1m respectively. Both competitions close on 21 September.

T-Levels Webinar: 24 August

The Strategic Development Network, supported by the Department for Education, are hosting a webinar to guide you through what's involved in recruiting students, how to create a job description and the planning process before the placement starts.

[Industry placement hosting: writing job descriptions, designing projects and setting objectives](#), 24 August 2022 10:00 - 11:00.

Events and Opportunities

- **Application** - [Chair the new Animal Sentience Committee](#) (closes 31 July 12:00)

- **Application** - [Industry Co-Chair of the Food and Drink Export Council](#) (closes 10 August)
 - **Fund** - [Hydrogen Business Model \(HBM\) / Net Zero Hydrogen Fund \(NZHF\) electrolytic allocation round 2022](#) (Expression of Interest deadline 7 September)
 - **Webinars** - [Small Business Sustainability Basics Programme](#) (6 weekly sessions from 6 September to 11 October)
 - **Competition** - Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF) [Phase 2: Summer 2022](#) (closes 9 September 15:00)
 - **Workshops** - Import Controls Regime Design ([register interest](#))
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Open Consultations

- T-Levels survey: [Supporting employers with industry placements](#) (closes 5 August)
 - [Choice on units of measurement: markings and sales](#) (closes 26 August)
 - [Public sector food and catering policy](#) (closes 4 September)
 - [Improved food waste reporting by large food businesses in England](#) (closes 5 September)
 - [The UK Single Trade Window](#) (closes 15 September)
 - [Contractual Practice in the UK Pig Sector](#) (closes 7 October)
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Support and Guidance

- [How to contact Defra](#)
- [Help and support for UK transition](#)
- [Moving goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland](#)
- [Exporting goods from Great Britain to the European Union](#)
- [Help to Grow Schemes – Boost Your Business’s Performance and Growth](#)
- [Funding to help your business become greener](#)
- [Way to Work campaign](#)
- [Blog post on managing fertiliser use](#)
- Support for Upskilling
 - [Get the Jump](#) (14-19 year olds)
 - [Skills for Life](#) (skills and training opportunities for adults)

- [Join the Skills Revolution](#) (Government training and employment schemes)
 - [Share Your Skills](#) (Further Education teacher recruitment)
 - How-to guides for SMEs
 - [Direct to Consumer sales](#)
 - [Exporting](#)
 - [Regional and Local Food and Drink Promotion](#)
 - [Public Sector Food and Catering](#)
 - Ukraine
 - The [Export Support Service](#) expanded to answer Ukraine/Russia questions.
 - The [National Cyber Security Centre](#) has [guidance on steps to take when the cyber threat is heightened](#). [Subscribe](#) to receive updates including threat reports and advisories.
 - [Here is how you can help](#). #StandWithUkraine.
 - Food Authenticity Network [information resource base](#)
 - Agri-Food weekly ebulletin. New subscribers can sign up at <http://eepurl.com/hgLqAf>.
 - If you would like to receive Defra updates and information tailored to your relevant areas, please [sign up to our email alerts](#).
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