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Cross-Government Agency Briefing on Covid19 Update, 26th March 2020 (hosted by MPI, so a food and beverage focus).

ExportNZ attended the meeting and the following comments were made by the various government agencies. Chatham House rule – we won't attribute.

- There are positive signs that indicate Chinese industry and consumer demand is picking up and even food service is bouncing back. This sentiment was echoed by several food and forestry industry representatives.
- There are some concerns that a second wave of re-infection in China could cause further disruption, so they are being vigilant regarding their borders when it comes to people movement.
- India is currently in lockdown for 21 days. There are reports that while the ports are 'open' they are not very operational.
- For sea freight, most routes remain open
- Most of the New Zealand Embassies and High Commissions around the world are still open and while their initial workload was around consular issues, they will be increasingly able to support exporters with any trade issues. Some are operating with a 'skeleton' staff.
- Canada, Australia, Chile, Brunei, and Myanmar have joined forces with New Zealand and Singapore by issuing a joint statement committing to keep supply chains open and remove any existing trade-restrictive measures on essential goods, especially medical supplies.
- There have been no changes to market access or added regulatory burdens internationally.
- Earlier this month, Queensland banned all commercial ships from entering ports in Queensland if the ship, or any person on board, has been in any country outside of Australia within the last 14-days. As far as we are aware, this ban has since been lifted.
- New Zealand ports could become strained if goods are coming in, but not being moved due to the goods not being classed as an essential service. Also, how do you fill a ship NZ bound if non-essential product can not be moved on arrival? The government is working on a plan to avoid this becoming an issue.

- MPI is currently working through a process to look at ways auditing and verification of food and beverage products can be done with as little risk to the business as possible. Watch his space in the coming days for updates.
- There are reports that airfreight prices have increased by 30-60% internationally.
- At this stage, up to \$330 million of the Governments aviation support package will be allocated to ensuring air freight capacity is available on key routes for at least the next six months and dealing with immediate risks and opportunities as they arise in the aviation sector. More info can be found here: <https://covid19.nzte.govt.nz/page/useful-tools> and here <https://www.transport.govt.nz/news/air/government-support-for-the-aviation-sector/>. Exporters, importers or freight forwarders interested in using this capacity should contact myfreight@nzte.govt.nz setting out the type of goods, quantity, New Zealand shipping port, overseas destination port, and frequency. A case should also be made as to why these goods should be freighted – what will happen if they are not.
- Industry expressed real need to have a fair warning as to when businesses would be able to re-open to ensure that businesses can plan accordingly.
- Some businesses are still unsure if they classify as an essential service. If you are still unsure please email essential@mbie.govt.nz or call 0508 377 388.
- Exports of food and beverage will be able to continue as usual.
- Chambers of Commerce that issue certs have been classified an essential service and remain open to do this job and support businesses.
- The BusinessNZ webpage has FAQ's and a number of good articles that may be helpful. <https://www.businessnz.org.nz/>. There is also links to the Chambers of commerce, who provide Certs of Origin.
- Most food industries reported that demand remains high for New Zealand food.
- Civil defence and emergency teams are being set up in rural communities to aid with Covid 19 and the drought.
- Ministry of Health webpage is being constantly updated. <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
- Treasury is leading the work on some of the longer-term impacts on the NZ economy and NZIER has reported on economy-wide impacts. <https://nzier.org.nz/publication/>
- We also found this useful website which is tracking stat's on the disease spread etc. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-cases/#daily-cases>
- Also, keep checking the NZTE site <https://www.nzte.govt.nz/coronavirus>

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