**GLOBAL FARMERS WATCHING US:** Global farmers will be closely watching for trade diversions following President Trump’s new $US16 billion package to insulate US farmers from the US-China trade war. It includes direct farmer payments, surplus commodity purchases and funding for new export markets.

**AUSTRALIAN TRADE FOCUS ON FTA RATIFICATIONS:** The election-winning government of Prime Minister Morrison can be expected to focus on the ratification of key free trade agreements with Indonesia, Peru and Hong Kong. The ratification processes are unlikely to be completed before the fourth quarter of 2019.

**INDIAN CALL FOR RCEP CAUTION:** India’s Trade Promotion Council is wary of India’s participation in the RCEP (ASEAN + 6) trade negotiations saying a deal could hurt its trade competitiveness by leading to a flood of imports and little export gain. A 26th round of RCEP negotiations will be held in Australia in June.

**AUSTRALIAN MINISTER EXPECTED TO RETURN:** Stability and portfolio knowledge will likely see Trade Minister Birmingham continue in the trade portfolio following the re-election of the Morrison Coalition Government in Australia’s weekend election. Birmingham was appointed to the portfolio in August 2018.

**FROM SUMO & GOLF TO TRADE:** After a weekend of sumo and golf, President Trump will talk trade and investment when he meets Prime Minister Abe in Tokyo today. The visit to Japan follows the recent start of bilateral trade talks between the US and Japan. Farm and auto tariffs are expected to be sticking points.

**BRAZIL ENDS CHINA ACTION:** Brazil has dropped a WTO complaint against China’s sugar tariffs after a deal where China has agreed not to continue safeguard duties of 40%. The complaint, filed in October, was among many WTO actions involving the global sugar trade, including Australia’s action against India.

**NEW ZEALAND BRIEFS WTO:** While a recent meeting of the WTO’s Committee on Trade & Environment focussed its discussion on the sustainability of palm oil trade, New Zealand also briefed the meeting on its work to craft a new trade strategy that worked alongside sustainability and economic inclusiveness.

**APEC MINISTERS CALL FOR GREEN TARIFF CUTS:** Trade Ministers from APEC economies want an early reduction in tariffs on environmental goods. The ministers, meeting in Chile, said in a joint statement they strongly urged economies to reduce tariffs on an APEC list of environmental goods as soon as possible.

**TAIWAN TOUGHER TRADE LAWS:** Cabinet has approved tougher trade laws to stop goods imported from China being relabelled as “Made in Taiwan” before onward shipment. Premier Su said criminal and administrative fines would be hiked as Taiwan sought to stay out of the US-China trade conflict.

**US CONCLUDES DEAL WITH CANADA & MEXICO:** The US has concluded a deal with Canada and Mexico to lift import tariffs on steel and aluminium from its neighbouring economies. Canada and Mexico will also lift retaliatory tariffs and terminate WTO litigation launched following the imposition of the US tariffs.