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By Mike Knowles

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Fruitbox: The power of premium produce



Capespan MD Tonie Fuchs explains why the group is focusing on offering the best to a limited number of customers

Tonie Fuchs is a firm believer in the power of premium. As managing director of South Africa's Capespan Group, he says a commitment to top-quality products and the best levels of service is the right way forward as the company attempts to sustain growth in fruit markets all across the world.

For a supplier that is focused primarily on a traditional basket of core products – apples, pears, citrus, grapes and stonefruit – the importance of drawing greater value from a selected customer base appears at the centre of its business model.

"We want to be important to a few customers and not just go and dump volumes of produce in those markets, because we've also seen how quickly those markets can turn against you when an industry and a certain supply region

just goes and dumps a load of product into those markets," Fuchs comments in the episode of Fruitbox, Fruitnet's series of conversations with fresh produce industry leaders.

"For us it's [about] very selective, premium customers with whom we can build a long-term relationship from multiple supply regions in a wider basket of fruit."

With a portfolio of well-known and respected brands continuing to do well in Asia, North America and the Middle East, Fuchs says the group's standing as a branded supplier is also enjoying something of a comeback in Europe, historically its oldest market.

Key to that, he suggests, is a reputation as a highly dependable supplier. As such, Capespan is managing to expand its business despite focusing on products where growth is not as pronounced, like avocados or kiwifruit, for example.

"We believe that the basket of fruit that we specialise in forms a large portion of most consumers' purchase baskets," he says. "And we believe if you are able to supply these products from multiple supply regions for longer and longer periods of time, if you excel within your service levels to both your market customers and your supply partners, that there is growth in these product categories."

Hosted by Chris White in London, Fruitbox now attracts a big audience across the global fruit and vegetable business that tunes in twice a week to hear exclusive interviews and expert analysis.

Produced by Fruitnet Media International, the show is essential listening for everyone in the fresh produce industry.

To find out how you can tell your story on Fruitbox, email chris@fruitnet.com.

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