



By Mike Knowles

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## ***Fruitbox 51 • Toño Pons, Importaco***

No longer just a festive favourite, dried fruit and nuts are in far greater demand as consumers seek out healthy options

**T**o say that Christmas means a great deal for dried fruit and nut suppliers is like saying chocolate companies quite enjoy Easter.

In fact, for Europe's largest dried fruit and nut company, Importaco, the festive period usually contributes around 40 per cent of its total annual sales.

But as the group's chief executive Toño Pons explains in the latest edition of Fruitnet's conversation series Fruitbox, the Covid-19 pandemic seems to have sparked even greater demand for these products.

"During the last lockdown, we had some examples of sales increasing 50 per cent, and what we discovered was that customers are much more health-conscious," he notes. "In 2021, there is an expectation for growth of around 5 per cent in the market for nuts worldwide."

The fact that nuts and dried fruit are now seen as good alternatives to other less healthy snacks is a very positive thing for Importaco and companies like it.

"Consumers now recognise that nuts are a source of minerals, vitamins, proteins and healthy fats," Pons adds. "They're starting to think more and more that nuts are an essential part of a healthy diet. Equally, dried fruit are a very popular choice among kids and sports people."

Hosted by Chris White in London, Fruitbox now attracts a big audience across the global fruit and vegetable business that tunes in every 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.

**All previous episodes of Fruitbox can**



Toño Pons, Importaco

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