

From apples to mangoes to bananas, a wide range of mainstream fruits have found a place in the popular healthy dried snack market, which not only harnesses trends around convenience but also helps reduce food waste and improve returns for growers.



The story needn't be any different for more exotic fruits, such as those produced by Novacampo, a Colombian grower based in Funza, Cundinamarca.

The group has historically shipped golden berries (physalis), dragon fruit, feijoas and baby bananas to markets including Germany, the Netherlands, Canada and the U.S., but volumes have not reached very high levels as many consumers are not familiar with the products.

During a buyer mission this year organized by the Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SIPPO) and promotion agency ProColombia, we caught up with Novacampo manager Andrés Riaño.

He said the company started trials with dried fruit last year, sending small shipments to the U.S. in both bulk and 10kg (22lbs) formats.

After the trials went well, the group has decided to launch its own brand 'Ola' for export markets.

"The company hopes to start next year developing these snacks, starting with golden berries, pitahaya (dragon fruit) and later we'll continue with pineapples, baby bananas, feijoas and tamarillos," he said.

"Once these products are ready, the snacks will be traded under Novacampo's brand 'Ola'."

"It is a mix of fast and healthy food, or in other words it can be transported and consumed easily. This is the concept we want to achieve."

Riaño added that due to climate-related adversity, it was getting harder every day to reach overseas markets with fresh fruit. This reinforces the benefits of opting for dried fruit exports.

"It has caught our attention because weather conditions are getting more difficult, so the demands on the fruit are increasing," he said, adding the volume destined for export has fallen from 65% to half because of this factor.

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