

# Andre van der Horst, Exotimex Europe, the Netherlands: “Container prices from Asia are easily five times as expensive”

The Dutch importer, Exotimex Europe’s main products are plantains, cassava, garlic, ginger, coconuts, and sweet potato. They’ve been targeting the ethnic markets within Europe for years. Last year, the COVID-19 global pandemic significantly affected their products' supply and prices. But, the company can, generally, not complain, says Andre van der Horst.

“Many companies stopped entirely in March while we could ‘steadily’ continue importing. That worked in our favor. There was a vast difference in the various products’ sales. For example, garlic, ginger, and pumpkins sold particularly well. But products like limes and young coconuts were at the other end of the scale.”



Exotimex Europe has several top supply countries. They are China, Ecuador, Thailand, Costa Rica, Brazil, Ghana, and South Africa. “We sell all over Europe with Germany and France as important markets. We’ve discovered we’re not that dependent on the hospitality sector, after all. Products like coconuts and limes are very much related to that industry. But the other products have continued to sell well,” says Andre.

*Some of the products of Exotimex*

“We, of course, had to deal with limited freight capacity and the accompanying high costs. We could only pass these on to a certain extent. That applies to air freight, of course. But sea freight from various parts of the world is currently enormously expensive too. Prices for containers from Asia have increased five or six-fold.” “Transportation prices skyrocketed, especially in the run-up to Christmas. That made it a costly start to the new year. Things might become risky. You may have very expensive products on the way, and everyone knows that. Then, there might come a time when the market takes a turn for the worse. But then again, that’s the charm of working with fresh produce,” concludes Andre.



Andre van der Horst

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