



# Plastics in the Table Grape Industry Challenges and Opportunities

Eduardo Maldonado, Daniel Silva – INFRUTA S.A



**Introduction:** The Table Grape Industry has enjoyed decades of success thanks to a number of modern developments in transportation, storage, and particularly packaging, which includes boxes, plastic liners, plastic bags, SO<sub>2</sub> plastic pads, plastic clamshells and punnets, all readily available worldwide and very cost effective. Unfortunately, these advances have also become part of a larger, worldwide issue: plastic waste.

**The Challenge is Plastic Waste:** Plastic production has doubled in the last 20 years, producing hundreds of millions of tons of plastic each year, of which less than 20% gets recycled. The Table Grape Industry is no exception to this growth, and even though the use of plastics in this industry is relatively small when compared to the global numbers, the more than 400 million boxes moved around the globe mean that we can no longer turn a blind eye to the critical issue of plastic waste management.



**The Customers:** Consumers, especially younger ones with Millennials, now representing one of the largest living generations in the developed world are demanding a cleaner delivery of products while embracing companies which are less harmful to the environment. In this context, we have seen a surge in organizations working against the use of plastics, ranging from small, local activist groups to large international organizations, such as The UK Plastics PACT, Clear Blue Sea, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, World Wild Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, Friends of the Earth and many more. These coordinated efforts have had a huge impact at all levels, with diverse industries and governments taking notice and responding to consumer demands. Change is coming, whether we choose to acknowledge it or not.



## The Opportunities:

*We believe there are three key elements of equal importance to tackle this issue:*

- Recover, Reuse and Recycling of our plastic materials. Zero waste management is a concept that is quickly gaining ground, and the circular economy model aims to make it a reality.
- Innovation must be a focal point in our efforts as an industry, particularly in new material technologies.
- A global approach to our environmental challenges. The Table Grape Industry has many players along its value chain, both big and small, and we must all work together to face these issues.



## The time to act is now!

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