

Bumper crop of festive treats hit the market this Christmas –

The Christmas decorations are down, but before we pack them away for another year, we take a look at some of the key launches for 2016's festive period. As New Year's resolutions turn to health and wellness, we examine how the confectionery industry is responding. Emma Gubisch, marketing insights manager at Leatherhead Food Research, reports.

This is the season to be characterised by multiple product launches. Christmas 2016 was no exception. We saw manufacturers serving up limited edition products, and bringing back old favourites – absence really does make the heart grow fonder. You could get your hands on Wrigley's limited edition Skittles Darkside in Germany in a 174g pack – they include flavours such as 'wicked pomegranate', 'midnight lime' and 'blood orange'. In Israel from December, consumers were able to purchase Mars' Twix White – the novelty obviously being that the bars are coated in white rather than milk chocolate.



It goes without saying that consumers' purchasing habits are different at Christmas time than at any other time of the year. They have multiple needs – they want the chocolate boxes for sharing, the special presents for friends and family, the little,



novelty buys and the indulgence factor.

There is the nostalgic side of Christmas too – we like to re-create the magic of Christmases past with seasonal flavours, and the confectionery we used to enjoy as children.

Pralibel Moments Privés dark chocolate tablet decorated with pistachios and cranberries captures the flavours of Christmas; it retailed in France and is made with Belgian chocolate that contains a minimum of 70% of cocoa. SugarSin's Fizzy Prosecco Gummies, sold in the UK, served up the sparkle of Christmas



with sweets infused with prosecco, and sprinkled with fizzy sugar crystals. This Wedgewood assortment of soft, honey nougat made and retailing in South Africa uses a favourite Christmas format (the cracker) to give their handmade products a seasonal twist.

All the goodness of the ingredients

After the excesses of Christmas, thoughts naturally turn to dieting and detoxing. Smaller manufacturers are interpreting this broader consumer

trend for health and wellness by focussing on ingredients; they are, for example, creating products that contain organic, ethically sourced ingredients, or ingredients that have functional benefits.

Soaring Free Superfoods' Raw Chocolate from South Africa encapsulates a number of these trends – it is free from dairy, gluten and GMOs and contains no added sugar. It is marketed as 'returning chocolate to its traditional purpose of

food as medicine' and includes '20 superfoods and organic tonic herbs'.

Cocoa Libre, sold in supermarkets in the UK, is marketed as a dairy-free alternative to orange, milk chocolate based on rice powder that is suitable for



vegans and coeliacs. The sustainability of ingredients is a growing consideration among manufacturers. Nestlé's Quality Street Assortment retailed in France over Christmas in a partly recyclable 900g pack that bears the Nestlé Cocoa Plan logo.