COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 202 **23rd – 27th October 2006**

Cocoa Producers' Alliance

ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

	ICCO daily price (SDRs/tonne)	ICCO daily price (US$/tonne)	London futures (£/tonne)	New York futures (US$/tonne)
23rd October	1051.45	1545.65	852	1495.67
24th October	1043.26	1532.36	841	1486.67
25th October	1042.22	1534.27	842	1486.33
26th October	1059.85	1563.89	855.33	1511.67
27th October	1048.87	1550.11	844.33	1497.33
Average	**1,049.13**	**1,545.26**	**846.93**	**1,495.53**

Up-coming Events

- Meeting on Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD) for West and Central African Countries, 13th – 14th November 2006, Accra, Ghana

In the News:

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Have you* had *your cocoa today?

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International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (LIFFE)
London Futures Market – Summary of Trading Activities
(£ per tonne)

Monday 23rd October 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
December 06	814	836	20	836	813	5,309
March 07	834	854	20	854	831	2,638
May 07	844	866	19	865S	844	342
July 07	869	879	19	877	869S	65
September 07	870	891	19	877S	870	8
December 07	896	904	19	901	896	65
March 08		916	19			0
May 08		927	20			0
July 08		937	20			0
September 08		945	18			0
Totals		**896**				**8427**

Tuesday 24th October 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	836	825	-11	838	823	2,829
March 07	854	843	-11	856	841	2,502
May 07	868	855	-11	868	855	261
July 07	877	868	-11	879	867S	9
September 07	889	880	-11	889	889	6
December 07	899	893	-11	899S	899S	150
March 08		905	-11			0
May 08		914	-13			0
July 08	931	924	-13	931S	931S	150
September 08		932	-13			0
Totals		**879**				**5,907**

Wednesday 25th October 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	828	826	1	834	823	3,795
March 07	844	844	1	851	841	3,064
May 07	855	856	1	862S	855	309
July 07	874	869	1	875	868S	97
September 07	886	881	1	886	879S	160
December 07		894	1			0
March 08		907	2			0
May 08		916	2			0
July 08	929	928	4	935	928	47
September 08		932	0			0
Totals		**885**				**7,472**

Thursday 26th October 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	829	840	14	840	827	3,523
March 07	847	857	13	857	844	1,093
May 07	859	869	13	868	859	3
July 07	871	882	13	877	871	5
September 07	889	893	12	894S	889S	22
December 07	902	906	12	907S	902	32
March 08		919	12			0
May 08		928	12			0
July 08		940	12			0
September 08		944	12			0
Totals		**898**				**4,678**

Friday 27th October 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	840	829	-11	845	820	4,320
March 07	862	846	-11	862	841	2,258
May 07	874	858	-11	874	849	237
July 07	885	869	-13	885S	872	141
September 07	896	880	-13	896S	894	27
December 07	908	893	-13	908	887	141
March 08	916	906	-13	916	899	5
May 08		915	-13			0
July 08		927	-13			0
September 08		931	-13			0
Totals		**885**				**7,129**

Average for the week		**889**				**6723**
Total for the week						**33,613**

New York Board of Trade
(New York Futures Market – Summary of Trading Activities)
(US$ per tonne)

Monday 23rd October 2006

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Jul 2006	1445 1448	1464	30	1470	1445	7391
Sep 2006	1482 1484	1498	29	1501	1482	2118
Dec 2006	1508 0	1521	29	1523	1508	26
Mar 2007	1527^{B} 1531^{A}	1544	29	0	0	200
May 2007	1550^{B} 1555^{A}	1569	30	0	0	40
Jul 2007	1563^{B} 1580^{A}	1592	30	1590	1590	50
Sep 2007	0 0	1619	29	1605	1605	501
Dec. 2007	1625^{B} 1635^{A}	1640	29	0	0	0
Mar 2008	0 0	1661	29	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1682	30	0	0	0
Totals		**1579**				**10326**

Tuesday 24th October 2006

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	1464 1466	1458	-6	1466	1440	5206
March 07	1497 1498	1491	-7	1498	1476	2620
May 07	1518^{B} 1521^{A}	1514	-7	1515	1508	411
July 07	1541^{B} 1544^{A}	1537	-7	1532	1532	27
September 07	1565^{B} 1570^{A}	1562	-7	0	0	145
December 07	1592 0	1586	-6	1592	1584	23
March 08	1615^{B} 1624^{A}	1612	-7	0	0	0
May 08	1635^{B} 1645^{A}	1633	-7	0	0	0
July 08	0 1669^{A}	1654	-7	0	0	0
September 08	0 0	1674	-8	0	0	0
Totals		**1572**				**8432**

Wednesday 25th October 2006

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	1461 1463	1458	0	1474	1455	10766
March 07	1491 1493	1488	-3	1504	1486	8038
May 07	1516 0	1512	-2	1517	1513	587
July 07	1537 0	1534	-3	1540	1537	150
September 07	1560^{B} 1563^{A}	1558	-4	1572	1555	112
December 07	1585^{B} 1588^{A}	1583	-3	0	0	22
March 08	0 0	1609	-3	1605	1605	702
May 08	0 0	1630	-3	0	0	0
July 08	0 0	1651	-3	1658	1646	47
September 08	0 0	1671	-3	0	0	0
Totals		**1569**				**20424**

Thursday 26th October 2006

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	1467 1470	1489	31	1495	1467	17701
March 07	1493 1496	1514	26	1519	1493	13136
May 07	1518 1520	1538	26	1540	1518	741
July 07	1542[B] 1545[A]	1560	26	1550	1550	4
September 07	1567 0	1583	25	1567	1567	208
December 07	1590[B] 1598[A]	1607	24	0	0	735
March 08	1615[B] 0	1633	24	0	0	0
May 08	1635[B] 1645[A]	1654	24	0	0	0
July 08	0 0	1675	24	0	0	0
September 08	0 0	1696	25	0	0	0
Totals		**1595**				**32525**

Friday 27th October 2006

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
December 06	1489 1493	1470	-19	1493	1465	6136
March 07	1511 1513	1500	-14	1516	1496	3251
May 07	1536[B] 1538[A]	1523	-15	1537	1521	162
July 07	1557[B] 1561[A]	1545	-15	1550	1546	50
September 07	1580[B] 1585[A]	1569	-14	0	0	113
December 07	1603[B] 1610[A]	1594	-13	1596	1596	22
March 08	0 0	1619	-14	0	0	0
May 08	0 0	1640	-14	0	0	0
July 08	0 0	1661	-14	0	0	0
September 08	0 0	1682	-14	0	0	0
Totals		**1580**				**9734**

Average for the week		**1579**				**20360**
Total for the week						**81,441**

Spot Prices (US $ per tonne)

	23rd October	24th October	25th October	26th October	27th October
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	1872	1866	1853	1884	1865
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	1744	1738	1733	1764	1745
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	1726	1720	1711	1742	1723
Superior Arriba	1964	1958	1950	1981	1962
Sanchez f.a.q.	1709	1703	1706	1737	1718
Malaysian 110	1469	1463	1460	1491	1472
Sulawesi f.a.q.	1497	1491	1487	1518	1499
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	2474	2464	2464	2516	2484
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	3836	3820	3805	3886	3837
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	815	812	797	814	804

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association-

News

Think Global, Eat Local
Toye Olori, Inter Press Service (subscription), Italy - Oct 30, 2006
LAGOS, Oct 30 (IPS) - It's certainly a logical suggestion: in an effort to make cocoa-producing countries in Africa less dependent on consumers abroad, why not increase domestic consumption of cocoa products?

While Africa produces more than 75 per cent of the world's cocoa, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, the continent consumes only about two percent of this produce. The remainder goes to Europe and the United States which, some claim, have too big a say over cocoa prices as a result -- prices that are set without much consideration for production costs. A glut of cocoa has also played a part in forcing down prices fetched by the commodity on the international market. In addition, European cocoa buyers have tied lower prices to bad quality cocoa beans from Africa.

"The most pragmatic way for Africa to control what goes to the international market in order to influence the cocoa price, is to significantly increase local consumption within Africa," says Abiodun Falusi, professor of agricultural economics at the University of Ibadan in south-western Nigeria. "African countries, though the largest producers, cannot influence prices (of cocoa) due to bulk export of raw cocoa beans, low level of domestic consumption...and weak demand in the major consuming countries -- which calls for the development of a sustainable policy framework for African cocoa in the world market."

In fact, a resolution on increasing local consumption of cocoa was taken during a meeting of eight African cocoa producing nations during May this year, in Nigeria's capital -- Abuja. (The attending states comprised Cote d' Ivoire -- the world's largest cocoa producer -- and Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and Uganda.) The countries agreed that this should be achieved through development of cocoa consumption habits, raising awareness amongst citizens of the nutritional and health benefits of cocoa products -- and encouraging research, development and commercialisation of new cocoa products.

"We all agreed at the Abuja summit that we will encourage the local consumption of a higher proportion of cocoa...because when we consume a lot of it locally, we will be in a position to reduce what goes out to the international market, and by this we can control prices," Akinwale Ojo, executive secretary of the Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN), told IPS in an interview from Akure, in south-west Nigeria. CAN is an umbrella organisation for the country's cocoa farmers, processors, buyers and exporters. But implementing this resolution is likely to prove something of a challenge, said Angela Okisor, an agriculture analyst based in the Nigerian financial capital of Lagos.

"The level of poverty in the various countries makes the consumption of cocoa products a luxury. For example, how much can an average Nigerian set aside for cocoa beverages each month given the economic situation of the country?" she asks. According to the 2005 Human Development Report, produced by the United Nations Development Programme, about 70 percent of Nigerians live on less than a dollar a day.

Steps taken by Nigeria's government in recent years might show the way.
Authorities in this West African country have introduced cocoa as supplement for children, as part of an initiative to provide free lunches at schools. Under a pilot programme that got underway in April 2005, 2.5 million primary school pupils in 12 of the nation's 36 states are being given at least one meal daily, and a cup of cocoa. The initiative is aimed at increasing enrolment, so that Nigeria can attain universal primary education. Research by the Ministry of Education has shown that a substantial number of primary school pupils do not eat enough to ensure proper school attendance and performance, while almost half of the children between seven and 15 years are under-weight. In addition, "The introduction of cocoa drinks in primary schools as part of the school feeding programme of government, if successfully implemented, will inculcate the habit of cocoa beverage consumption in Nigerian youths and eventually adults," says a 2005 report by government's Universal Basic Education Committee.

Officials further plan to ensure that within the next few years, 50 percent of cocoa beans harvested in the country is locally processed to produce beverages for domestic consumption.

The Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria, based in Ibadan, south-western Nigeria, has also developed varieties of cocoa products -- including cocoa cream, liquor, cocoa bread, cakes and biscuits -- that could be put on the market.

However, the institute is finding it difficult to convince investors to buy the patent rights for most of these products, a critical step towards mass local production.

Warns Falusi, "Without a drastic increase in local processing of cocoa, the campaign for increased domestic consumption will continue to be a mirage." Some have speculated about creating a situation in which African producers would exercise the same degree of control over cocoa prices as the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has over oil.

But CAN's Ojo does not believe this is likely. "To say we will operate like OPEC is impossible, because cocoa is an agricultural product -- one can not predict if it will do well in any given year. Production is controlled by a lot of things, including weather and pests," he notes. "But, what the summit has put in place will lift the industry."

In a communique issued at the end of the Abuja meeting, cocoa producers also agreed to target countries that are not considered traditional consumers of cocoa, such as China and India, in "aggressive international campaigns" intended to spark greater consumption. Furthermore, they plan to promote intra-African trade in cocoa products through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and regional blocs.

The fate of millions could be affected by these initiatives.

"In Africa, cocoa provides employment for over two million farming households directly, with another five million indirect beneficiaries in the form of input provisions, marketing, warehousing and quality control. A larger figure is employed in other support services," said Adamu Bello, Nigeria's minister of agriculture and rural development, at the Abuja gathering.

"In all, well over 20 million Africans in the major producing countries rely on the cocoa economy as a source of livelihood." (END/2006)

Not All Cocoa Uses Child Labor
Mountain Mail / STPNS , October 30, 2006 LETTERS, By Susan Smith, World Cocoa Foundation
SOCORRO, New Mexico (STPNS) -- To the Editor:
I read with interest the letter to the editor "Boycott Candy Made by Children" in the October 23 edition of the Mountain Mail. Your readers may be interested to know that a sweeping, independent study – the only one of its kind – found that the vast majority of West African farmers grow cocoa responsibly.

These honest and law abiding farmers are simply trying to earn a living to support their families and boycotting chocolate candy does not have their best interest at heart. The World Cocoa Foundation and its many partners have a long-term commitment to the economic and social development and environmental conservation in the world's cocoa growing communities.

The programs the Foundation supports are working to raise farm family incomes, address important farm community issues – like access to quality, relevant education and are raising awareness of responsible labor practices and safe farming. For more information on efforts to strengthen cocoa farm families and their communities in West Africa.

Ghana Battles Cocoa Virus
By Efam Dovi , Voice of America - Oct 26, 2006, Accra
Cocoa trees in a plantation in Ghana
Ghana is battling with the spread of a cocoa virus that has been diminishing yields, according to agricultural experts. The West African nation is the second-largest exporter of cocoa - the main ingredient in chocolate. A new variety of cocoa plant, developed in Ghana, offers hope to reduce the ill effects of the virus.

The so-called swollen-shoot virus is a major problem affecting cocoa production in Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria and Ivory Coast. In Ghana, an estimated 200 million cocoa trees have been destroyed by the disease in the last 50 years. But a new cocoa plant breed, developed by Ghana's Cocoa Research Institute, is proving to be tolerant to the disease.

Kweku Abeka-Ewusi, the technical manager of the swollen-shoot virus control unit - a division of Ghana's cocoa industry regulatory body, Cocobod, says the new breed is welcomed by the farmers. "There are two major factors

which make the farmers like it - first is that it is early bearing. It takes a minimum of two years to come into fruition. It is also high yielding, with the old varieties, it will take between five to six years," he explained.

A recent survey by the Ghana Cocoa Research Institute revealed that between five to ten percent of the country's cocoa tree stock is infected with the disease. It has also spread to almost all the regions of the country, including the western region, where more than 50 percent of the country's cocoa is produced. Abeka-Ewusi says efforts to combat the disease have been difficult and costly. He says the use of agro-chemicals to treat the virus has not been successful. "The only effective method now is to uproot the infected tree with their contact trees," he said. "We suspect that those in contact may be harboring the disease, latent infections, we normally go over every six months to ensure that even if they harbor the disease and they are showing we retreat them, so the effort is to cut it and replant with the approved material."

Two major projects, undertaken in Ghana between 1995 and 2005, have helped to treat 64 percent of diseased farms, 82 percent of which have been rehabilitated with the new breed. Ghana's cocoa exports for the 2005/2006 season exceeded the projected figure of 550,000 metric tons by almost 40 percent. Experts now believe this solution could soon be applied in other West African cocoa producing countries.

Supply resumes as cocoa strike ends
By Catherine Boal, ConfectioneryNews.com, France - Oct 25, 2006
25/10/2006 - Disruption to cocoa supplies from the Cote d'Ivoire has ceased following suspension of strikes organised by the cacao growers' trade union Anaproci. The union, which represents 80 per cent of the Cote dIvoire's cocoa farmers, said on Friday it would suspend the strike to allow the government time to meet its demands.

According to Reuters, the organisation originally called for action at the beginning of last week to demand higher payments and greater financial support for growing co-operatives and began barricading roads to prevent cocoa shipments from reaching warehouses at the main ports of Abidjan and San Pedro where they are stored until being exported. Growers have warned the government that the strike will resume today if demands are not met. According to the Ivory Coast Cocoa Association, farmers are asking for $1.15 (€0.92) per kilo rather than the set harvest price of $0.80 (€0.64).

The recent unrest followed a warning that the swollen shoot virus has been decimating cocoa trees in the region, further lowering supplies. Earlier this year, the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO) held a conference in Italy to discuss sustainable production. The complex issue is evident from the ground up, with farmers receiving low prices which force them to turn to more profitable crops. African cocoa producing countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, account for around 80 per cent of the bean's global exports and the worldwide chocolate market is worth $75 billion (€58.5bn) annually. But the profitability of the market does not trickle down to producers at the initial stage of production who occupy a weak bargaining position due to their reliance on the commodity.

According to an ICCO report: "Ivory Coast's mostly illiterate farmers are ill equipped to negotiate with hard bargaining upcountry commodity buyers. Most of Ivory Coast's 3m small scale farmers, who produce most of the crop, are poorly organised."

Why Cocoa is a Dream, Whatever Your Viewpoint
Elliott Wave, GA - Oct 25, 2006, by David P. Moore
At about the same time NYBOT cocoa broke out of its 25% three-month slump, the Oct. 10 New York Post broke news of the billionaire who botched the biggest art deal ever. A closer look shows that coincidental timing isn't the only common ground these stories share.

If you've been trading long, you likely know first-hand that managing failure is critical to achieving success in markets. Maybe it's not it's not as firm a rule elsewhere, but it certainly helps explain Steve Wynn.

Shortly after elbowing a hole in the piece of canvas he'd just sold for $139 million, the billionaire casino magnate comforted himself by observing that the picture only took Picasso five hours to paint. No one replied that it would take 35,000 Chinese workers a year's work at the average wage to pay for the moment when Wynn earned his "$40 million elbow."

I'm being flip, but I'm also drawing out the parallel that makes it easy to see how cocoa got to be analyst Jeffrey Kennedy's feature for Tuesday night's (Oct. 26) Daily Futures Junctures. Look at La Reve as a just another half

day's work for Picasso, or see it as a "priceless" $140 million work of art: Both perspectives are equally absurd, but either way you're right.

It's very similar to seeing the last 10 sessions of Cocoa's price action on a weekly chart, then looking more closely at the same data on an intraday scale. What could be just another bounce on the first one is clearly a five-wave impulse on the second, where the move sprawls across the whole chart.

Yet, because of where that five-wave surge appears within Cocoa's larger Elliott Wave structure, the relative significance of its signal far outweighs its size. As Jeffrey details in the four-minute DFJ video that complements his Oct. 26 forecast, Cocoa prices just turned a critical corner in a huge "Contracting Triangle" pattern -- one that's been in force for years.

But here's where the parallel ends. Cocoa's case doesn't make the same demand as Wynn's errant elbow -- you don't have to practice changing perspectives.

Whether you're geared for intraday opportunities or watching for longer-term trends, what's happening now in Cocoa is equally exciting. When you can recognize a complete five-wave impulse early in the pattern, you have front row seats to watch the trend unfold. Within days -- if not hours -- we expect prices to tag one of two nearby targets before the next impulse puts a small correction to rest.

And when the current pattern comes to completion, it won't just end at a degree that interests intraday traders. As Prechter and Frost write in Elliott Wave Principle, "Post-triangle impulses in commodities [at this degree] are usually the longest wave in the sequence." For reference, the wave leading to this triangle moved Cocoa prices 50% -- and in far less time.

China to lift tariffs on Indonesian cocoa

By Dominique Patton, AP-foodtechnology.com, France - Oct 23, 2006

23/10/2006 - China will remove the import duty on Indonesian cocoa from 1 January next year, a move likely to increase demand for the beans from the world's third biggest producer. The removal of the import duty was agreed during a meeting of the Joint Commission on Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation between Indonesia and China in Bali on October 6. In turn, Indonesia will lift the duty levied on chili powder from China.

The news will be welcomed by China's growing chocolate industry. While China's chocolate consumption is still much lower than western markets, it is growing significantly. Euromonitor estimates that sales of chocolate confectionery reached $636.9 million in 2005, up 9 per cent on the prior year.

Laurent Pipitone, senior statistician at the International Cocoa Organisation, said demand for Indonesian beans is already high owing to lower transport costs compared with those shipped from West Africa, as well as a lower price. "Indonesian cocoa is already less expensive than African beans because it is of lower quality," he told AP-Foodtechnology.com.

A tonne of Indonesian cocoa beans costs about US$200 less than the same amount from the Cote d'Ivoire, the world's biggest producer. "And because China is not yet a big market for high quality beans, I expect the removal of tariffs to create strong demand for Indonesian beans," said Pipitone.

China was previously accused of discriminating against Indonesian cocoa products. It has already lifted its import duties on Malaysian cocoa products but Indonesia products continued to be subject to a 15 per cent import tariff. Under the new agreement, the tariff will be removed.

The value of Indonesian cocoa exports to China has nevertheless increased from US$10.9 million in 2004 to US$16 million in 2005, accounting for around a third of its total imports. China's total imports of cocoa beans and shells during 2004-05 amounted to 48,000 tonnes, up from only 30,000 tonnes four years earlier.

Chocolate Producers React Cautiously to Ivory Coast Cocoa Situation

Source: FLEXNEWS

23 October 2006 - Ivory Coast cocoa farmers suspended a 3-day strike on Wednesday 18 October to allow the government time to resolve the problem of the producer price. However, should the response be negative, the strike will resume without prior warning from Wednesday 25 October, a cocoa farmers' association spokesman told

journalists. The strike was initially carried out on Monday 16 October after authorities opened the harvesting season and announced a retail price of USD 80 cents per kilo. The Ivory Coast Cocoa Association, however, told the media that farmers are seeking USD 1.15 per kilo.

According to Ivory Coast government statistics, the country is the world's top grower of cocoa beans, producing 40% of global output. Nonetheless, analysts believe that if the strike resumes, it would have to stretch out for weeks before eventually impacting world supplies and prices. Numerous press reports, however, claim that the chocolate industry could be threatened.

'Forward-Thinking' Producers

Leading Swiss chocolate manufacturer, Barry Callebaut, is rather optimistic about the situation in the Ivory Coast. Gaby Tschofen, Vice-President of Corporate Communications at the firm informed FLEXNEWS that the Swiss chocolate manufacturer has cocoa bean stocks in its factories, and processing is going on normally.

"We believe that the current farmer protests will only have a short-term price effect. We don't expect a long-lasting price effect, given the level of cocoa bean stocks in consuming countries and given current forecasts that say supply will meet demand", added Tschofen.

Nestlé, another global leader in the chocolate industry, told FLEXNEWS that the company was monitoring the Ivory Coast situation very closely. "Nestlé purchases its cocoa from a number of countries, including the Ivory Coast. Thus we do not rely on any one country for our cocoa supplies", said Robin Tickle, of the firm's communication department.

Stratfor, a security consulting intelligence agency, believes that, if the strike resumes, it is not likely to last very long. The agency adds that cocoa farmers in the country are very poor and getting their short-lived cocoa crop to port, and then exported, is time-critical. They cannot afford to have their crop rot as a consequence of a long strike, the agency said.

The Rainforest Alliance Announces Project to Help Cocoa Farmers in Africa

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, Oct. 19 -/E-Wire/-- The Rainforest Alliance has launched an ambitious new project with Kraft Foods, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other partners that will help farmers in Cote d'Ivoire, the worlds largest producer of cocoa, meet the conservation organizations standards for eco-friendly and socially responsible cocoa farming.

The Rainforest Alliance and its partners will provide guidance and technical assistance to about 4,000 farmers in six cooperatives in Cote d'Ivoire over three years to encourage sustainable cocoa production. Farmers will work toward achieving Rainforest Alliance certification by meeting comprehensive environmental and social standards that include conserving natural resources, protecting the welfare of workers and putting into place more efficient management practices. The first deliveries of Rainforest Alliance Certified cocoa from Cote d'Ivoire are expected in 2007.

The challenges in the West African cocoa fields are considerable. said Tensie Whelan, executive director of the Rainforest Alliance. However, we have a strong and growing coalition of farmers and cocoa companies determined to make a positive difference.

The Rainforest Alliance is teaming up with USAID, Kraft Foods, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ, for its name in German) and a cocoa trader in Cote d'Ivoire called the Armajaro Group. The partners in the project coalition are investing nearly $2 million to benefit the cocoa farmers, guiding them toward self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Cote d'Ivoire produces about 40 percent of the worlds cocoa, more than any other country. The country is facing the aftermath of a civil war, with land disputes ongoing and foreign mediators overseeing a peace plan. Cocoa farmers face a host of additional constraints including poor soils, aging cocoa trees, inefficient management practices, low productivity and lack of marketing information.

The project aims to show cocoa farmers that sustainable practices can improve their productivity and their livelihoods while protecting the environment.

Rainforest Alliance certification on cocoa farms has already been successful in Ecuador. Since 1997, we have worked with farmers there on using sustainable practices, including growing cocoa within the rainforest to curb deforestation, using fewer agrochemicals, protecting wildlife, supporting community projects, improving cocoa quality, and producing small batches of a fine native cocoa variety instead of a hybrid variety in bulk. About 1,200 farmers in eight far-flung groups are benefiting from the program many have doubled their incomes while preserving the environment. The first line of certified chocolate was released in 2004.

Farmers in Cote d'Ivoire, while facing different challenges, have the potential to find similar success through certification. Kraft has worked for many years on encouraging the production of sustainable coffee and chocolate and has agreed to pay a sustainability premium for improved quality cocoa from certified farms.

Kraft has a keen interest in improving the social, economic and environmental conditions on cocoa farms in Cote d'Ivoire said Jonathan Atwood, director of commodity sustainability programs at Kraft. The project goals are ambitious, but we are confident we can help make a positive difference for cocoa farmers and their families.

The mission of the Rainforest Alliance is to protect ecosystems and the people and wildlife that depend on them by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior. Companies, cooperatives and landowners that participate in our programs meet rigorous standards that conserve biodiversity and provide sustainable livelihoods. Headquartered in New York City and with offices around the world, the Rainforest Alliance works hand-in-hand with land owners and businesses in the forestry, agricultural and tourism sectors to make their practices environmentally and socially responsible.

To learn more about the Rainforest Alliance and its programs, visit http://www.rainforest-alliance.org.

Take Heart, Enjoy a Chocolate

By Gaurang Shah Soflution Medical Ltd.. Volume: 22 (30/10/2006)

Chocolate is good for the heart… can this really be true? Could something that is full of calories, is highly enjoyable and sometimes even addictive be so good for the heart? If the results of several studies are to be believed then yes, chocolate is really good for health. In fact, chocolate has more health-promoting plant flavonoids than broccoli or Brussels sprouts. A recent study found dark chocolate has higher antioxidant levels that even green tea, red wine and blueberries – making it that much more attractive for the heart.

So what makes chocolate so special? Well, chocolate is manufactured from a plant – the cacao plant. This makes it full of flavonoids, natural chemicals found in fruits and vegetables that have great positive health effects. Flavonoids benefit everything from blood vessels, heart and brain to exercise – endurance and long life. Additionally plant flavonoids also help clear cholesterol from arteries and reduce inflammation.

There have been several studies on chocolate in the last decade wherein volunteers got to eat an ounce or more of dark chocolate each day. In a two-week study, researchers discovered dark chocolate, which is rich in flavonoids, improves the ability of blood vessels to expand when a greater flow of blood is required. The more easily blood vessels expand, the better they can supply blood to heart, brain and other organs.

Chocolate can keep your arteries and heart healthy

Two other studies of young and elderly women found chocolate actually increases blood flow to the brain. Even high cholesterol levels in older women could not reduce this beneficial effect of chocolate. A third study was conducted on male smokers. This study found eating 2 ounces of dark chocolate helped improve blood flow for eight hours. Not only that, it also reduced the blood clotting activity of platelets.

A recent Dutch study on the other hand followed nearly 500 men aged 65 and over for more than 15 years. It discovered chocolate can be a strong heart protector. The study found lower blood pressure in chocolate-loving volunteers. Men who did not really enjoy their cocoa were at twice the risk of dying from a heart attack than men who ate decent quantities of chocolate. Even when risk factors like smoking, obesity and lack of exercise were taken into consideration, the cocoa connection remained strong.

Last but not the least, a Harvard study found men who eat candy can enjoy an extra year of life in comparison to candy avoiders. This result was derived after studying more than 7,800 male grads and researchers believe the healthy effect might be due to chocolate.

Chocolate is not only good for our arteries, it also helps improve our mood. There are several chemicals in chocolate that are believed to raise mood. Just the smell of chocolate has been found to reduce theta-wave activity in the brain, inducing a sense of relaxation.

But most of the studies only looked at dark chocolate. What makes it so special as compared to milk chocolate? Simple, there is much more chocolate in dark chocolate. It contains up to 50% more cocoa than milk chocolate which means its flavonoid content is naturally higher.

However it is important to remember that chocolate is good for the heart, not candy. Often loaded with sugar and saturated fats, candy is not exactly the best prescription for health and eating high quantities of calorie-dense candy will only lead to unhealthy additional pounds.

When enjoyed in moderation, dark chocolate can easily serve as the dessert equivalent of an extra serving of vegetables. So chocolates lovers, enjoy your chocolates, but make them dark!

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Stephen's launches a new cocoa
By Tammy Walquist, Deseret Morning News
Indulgent Foods Inc. has launched a new product for its line of Stephen's Gourmet Hot Chocolate: Candycane Cocoa. Candycane Cocoa has little chunks of peppermint in it for anyone who likes to stir their hot chocolate with a peppermint stick. "It was something almost everyone in our company had tried," said Brent Strong, CEO of Indulgent Foods. "We wanted to give it a minty taste. Our main concern was to try and make sure to maintain the right ratio between milk chocolate and peppermint."

Candycane Cocoa will be sold in individual one-serve packets or in boxes of 28-32 packs at larger grocery chains. Strong says Candycane Cocoa will be available almost everywhere in Utah, including all Associated Foods stores, local Wal-Greens and Rite-Aids, Super Target, Shopko, Smith's, Wal-Mart and even some Kmart locations.

Development of the product started in July 2005, and it was shipped out in November 2005. In tests done last season, the product was very well received, Strong said. "People love it. Everywhere we've sampled it, and we've taken it into a lot of retail buyers and headquarters people, everyone has absolutely loved it," he said. The packaging of the Candycane Cocoa is slightly different than other Stephen's Gourmet products. Instead of the traditional maroon and black, Candycane Cocoa has more of a holiday look and feel to it with a bear on a blue background holding a mug of Stephen's hot chocolate. It looks similar to snow coming down on an iceberg, Strong said.

Test results have indicated the product will do well on the market, Strong said. "It's probably going to become, in terms of units sold, our number one item this year," he said. "That's what's exciting to us. We have a loyal consumer base who have tried Stephen's and have it in their cupboards."

Other flavors of Stephen's Gourmet Hot Chocolate include milk chocolate, mint truffle, french vanilla, chocolate raspberry and Belgian dark chocolate, among other flavors. For information about Stephen's Gourmet, visit www.stephensgourmet.com.

CPO prices to stay bullish
Malaysia Star, Malaysia - Oct 29, 2006
COCOA futures prices on the New York Board of Trade ended the week higher supported by short-covering activities. The absence of a fall in the market after establishing fresh decline lows early this month encouraged profit-taking from previously bearish traders.

The December 2006 cocoa futures prices rose from a week's low of US$1,440 to US$1,495 and settled moderately higher at US$1,489, up US$55 a tonne from the week before. The weekly candlestick chart ended bullish and signalled the recently developed upward leg would expand. Last week's large white candle indicates the immediate-term momentum is constructive.

Chart support for the December cocoa futures is adjusted higher to the US$1,475–US$1,465 levels. Chart resistance stands at US$1,500–US$1,520. The weekly oscillators closed mostly positive and indicated the upward technical rebound would continue.

The weekly stochastic triggered the buy signal on Oct 26 and signalled the immediate trend would remain buoyant. The weekly oscillators per cent K and D closed higher at 38.52% and 32.62% respectively. The 3- and 7-week exponentially smoothed moving-average price lines (ESA-lines) indicated an upward cycle had formed. The 3- and 7-week ESA-lines ended in positive convergence at 1,463 and 1,465 points respectively.

The weekly moving-average convergence/divergence (MACD) retained its sell signal at Thursday's close and gave a strong positive convergence to indicate an upward wave had started. The weekly MACD and the trigger-line finished higher at minus 15.60 and minus 15.02 points respectively.

The 9-week Relative Strength Index (RSI) trended higher last week and closed in the positive territory at 50.29 points. Analysis of the weekly RSI indicates the immediate-term underlying strength of the market is bullish.
The 9-week Relative Strength Index (RSI) ended higher in the overbought territory at 82.48 points. Analysis of the RSI shows the market is in an overbought position.

Chocolate cosmetics join tasty beauty trend
Peninsula On-line, Qatar - Oct 28, 2006
PARIS • Western manufacturers have rediscovered the cosmetic virtues of cocoa more than 3,000 years after the Maya people, tapping into the trend for "tasty" beauty treatments. "Chocolate in skin treatments follows on from a phenomenon that we called tasty treatments," said Gabriel Jacquet, of the company Zelda Gavizon which has registered several biochemical patents for its "Chocolatherapie" treatments. "There was a kind of effervescence at the beginning of the millennium which came from London and which consisted of mixing all sorts of fresh fruits and applying them to the face." Often such skin care smells so good, you want to eat it. Even if it is now rare to find a beautician who melts a real bar of chocolate to give her customer's complexion a moisturising glow, a Parisian institute plans to publicly show off its benefits this weekend.

The French capital is hosting its annual Salon du Chocolat for five days from yesterday, gathering nearly 130 French and foreign chocolate specialists, and stocking up with about six tonnes of chocolate, not least for the catwalk shows of dresses made out of chocolate.

However, using edible chocolate in beauty products is not advisable, warned Jacquet, who said it contained "industrial sugars which are notorious anti-healers" and soya lecithin which is harmful. Most manufacturers tend to use cocoa butter, which has moisturising and nourishing properties, but is easy and cheap to obtain, and also sometimes extracts of cocoa beans. But, said Jacquet, "cocoa has much more to give", adding that the cocoa pod contained "800 complex molecules", including 30 which are good for the skin.

The shell, and not the butter, contains polyphenols, or antioxidants which help delay the effects of ageing on skin, and fat-burning cocoa tannin, while molecules on the surface of the bean also have a psychologically stimulating effect. Under its "Chocolatherapie" brand, Zelda Gavizon has developed a series of beauty products and considers cocoa to be a true cosmetic asset and not just a gimmick, Jacquet said.

Salomon Melki, co-founder of the "Sensation Chocolat Paris" brand a year ago, acknowledged that they set out to chemically reproduce the colour and smell of chocolate in five flavours. But, he said, the products offered more than just an enticing smell and look. Cocoa butter is added to each product along with other ingredients. He said that there was a "real desire" to have tasty and fun products, which, at the same time, "remain true cosmetics".

Meanwhile, Vog Coiffure Beaute Paris has just launched "100% chocolat" products in its salons, including a hair treatment made of 80 per cent cocoa powder mixed with a creamy desert. "There is a placebo effect with a reminder of childhood" which is accentuated by the simultaneous serving of a cup of hot chocolate, said Christophe-Nicolas Biot, artistic director of Vog group's brands.

But hair is also left shiny and very supple, he said. The Salon du Chocolat, which has already spread its wings to take place in New York and Japan, is now also due in Moscow for the first time in December and is also expected to make its debut in Dubai in March next year as well as return for a second time to China in 2008.

No life in Africa without...
BBC News, UK - Oct 27, 2006
In the BBC competition for Africa, listeners and readers describe what they could not live without.
Here entrants cannot imagine life without cocoa butter's smoothing qualities, noisy trousers and a cool breeze.

Nii Ashirifi Gogo, Ghana
When you live a couple of miles away from the coast in 29 degree heat of Accra, Ghana, one thing you cannot do without is a daily dose of cocoa butter for the skin. Since adolescence - after I broke free of my mother's care - I realised the only way to prevent retiring at the end of the day without parched skin was to begin every day with a generous slather of cocoa butter. No more cracked lips, dry elbows or patchy knees. In the words of the rapper P Diddy, I've got the "silky smooth cocoa butter skin". Cocoa butter moisturises my situation and maintains my sexy looks.

No life without cocoa butter for me!

Pan Sino establishes Singapore's largest cocoa bean plant
By James Knowles, ConfectioneryNews.com, France - Sep 29, 2006
28/09/2006 - Cocoa bean producer Pan Sino International has announced plans to build Singapore's largest cocoa processing plant, increasing cocoa bean supply for manufacturers. The plant is being built at the Jurong Industrial Estate and the first processing line will have a capacity of 20,160 tons of cocoa butter and cocoa powder.
The beans will be processed into semi processed cocoa butter, cocoa powder and cocoa cake for export to international markets including Europe, the US and Asia.

"The establishment of the Singapore plant will enable the group to produce specific semi-finished cocoa products which are essential ingredients used in chocolate manufacturing. "This will allow the group to establish itself as one of the leading players in the Indonesian cocoa industry" said Mr Judianto.

As a first venture into manufacturing semi-finished products completion of the Singapore plant will both increase competition and supply in cocoa bean production and challenge traditionally strong producers Ivory Coast and Ghana. "The rationale behind our decision to establish the Singapore plant includes proximity of access to cocoa bean sources; world class connectivity, infrastructure and proximity to port; high food safety standards; good market access; access to research expertise and knowledge pools," said Rudi Zulifan CEO of Pan Sino.

Pan Sino is the latest in a line of multinationals attracted to Singapore for these reasons. Barry Callebaut the worlds leading manufacturer of cocoa and chocolate products has recently expanded its operations in Singapore with a white chocolate line, as have sweetener firm Tate and Lyle with a global sucralose manufacturing plant. The establishment of the Singapore plant represents Pan Sino Internationals first major investment outside of Indonesia.

Let your taste buds pay homage to chocolate
ic Wales, United Kingdom - Oct 24, 2006, Catherine Jones, Western Mail
WHILE others debate the merits of the Muslim veil, those who know what really counts in life embrace Chocolate Week. We're not talking Poppets - that recently relaunched, much-loved 1970s boxed snack - but real chocolate - as connoisseurs like to call it. High cocoa content, ethical origins, thick shiny wrappers, the kind of stuff doctors say you should have a piece of every day on account of its medicinal properties.

Billed as "the biggest, most indulgent, chocolate celebration the UK has ever enjoyed", the event included the World Chocolate Awards (who needs the Man Booker Prize?) as well as talks, tastings, demonstrations, new product launches, and sculptures and fountains made of chocolate.

It happens every year but this time round the UK seemed more ready than ever to spoil its taste buds on the nation's favourite treat. We now eat on average just under seven ounces of the stuff per person per week. The confectionery industry is worth more than £5bn in the UK alone - of which chocolate is £3.5bn.

While the first documented chocoholic, Madam de Sevigne of Louis XIV's court at Versailles, wrote often of (drinking) chocolate as a "friend", today it is regarded as a close member of the family. That well-known pleasure-

seeker the Marquis de Sade demanded that darkest chocolate cakes be delivered to him while he was in prison. These days, the revised edition of Green & Black's Chocolate Recipes - jacketed to look like their megabar of cook's chocolate (a 150g chunk that breaks into 30 5g pieces) - fills a hole.

For real extravagance, over and above a nice family-size slab of Dairy Milk, cook company La Cornue had a "grand maman" cooker in dark chocolate enamel with steel and chrome trim (the effect being a half-unfoiled bar) which would set back chocoholics around £9,000. Those who think such events are a lot of nonsense should listen to Sara Jayne-Stanes, food writer, author, and chair of the Academy of Chocolate. She reckons the World Chocolate Awards - last year's notables in the fillings section included a raspberry ganache, chilli truffle and a cherry truffle called "Wild Thing" - are essential to existence.

"It is so rewarding to see a growing number of highly creative and perceptive chocolate makers stretching the boundaries of talent and taste," she says, "and at the same time, paying significant attention to the highest quality, character and provenance of the chocolate - in harmony with the academy's ethos to 'look beyond the label'."

Chocolate Week caters for those who want to do more than stuff their face and is aimed at anyone keen to learn about chocolate - and how better to do that than by sampling it? A highlight was Thursday's La Soiree du Chocolat, described as a charity chocolate burlesque party, "an evening of decadence, indulgence and fun combining fine chocolate and burlesque cabaret" which included dinner, chocolate cocktails and a champagne reception for £75 at London club Volupt .

At London's Fortnum & Mason, shoppers could spend all day tasting Malagasy's fine chocolate range while visitors to the Contented Vine Bar Restaurant in Pimlico sampled chocolate and specially-made desserts or dipped fruit in chocolate mini-fountains - all free of charge.

A trip across the bridge to Bath was Claude Chabrol's thriller Merci pour la Chocolat starring Isabelle Hupert with a free bar of Divine chocolate - a mystery of murder and intrigue in a chocolate-making dynasty at the Little Theatre Cinema. After all who wouldn't kill for some chocolate?

At Out of This World stores in Nottingham, Newcastle and Leeds, chocolate sampling took place all week, while over the weekend the L'Artisan du Chocolat factory shop in Ashford, Kent, opened selling all their products and misshapes.

On Saturday chocolate lovers toured the best chocolate boutiques in the English capital - a "whole day of chocolate indulgence with breakfast, lunch and an early-evening tasting event" as well as discounts in the shops. Closer to home, the Welsh Chocolate Company in Swansea produced hand-made yummies, made from Belgian chocolate. Think champagne, rum and Cointreau truffles or caramel and hazelnut fillings in a milk chocolate triangle. They even do chocs that come in hand-made Welsh oak boxes.

In Carmarthenshire, the Pemberton family, inspired to make chocolate by an old family recipe book from Victorian times, opened a factory in an old hill farm in Llanboidy. The company has since won a string of awards for its 200-plus products, described as "at the top of the 'non-snob' market" and "a most memorable eating experience".

For something a little more flamboyant, there is the intriguing prospect of hiring from Llanelli-based Welsh Chocolate Fountains, "the ultimate chocolate fondue fountain experience for any occasion" including weddings and corporate events. Go to www.welshchocolatefountains.com for information - "an exquisite mouthwatering centrepiece of melted Belgian chocolate that you are able to dip skewers full of various fruits and other delights into, which will not fail to impress your guests".

And the delights don't end here. Chocolate Week with tastings and "chocolate massages" also makes an appearance, alongside gifts and gourmet food and wine, at upmarket consumer show Spirit of Christmas, in association with glossy magazine House & Garden. The event, which includes chocolatier exhibitions and samples from World Chocolate Awards winners, is at Kensington Olympia between November 1 and 5.

Chocolate - the facts

- Three to four thousand years ago, the Olmecs - the first known to use cacao which grew wild in Central America - started it all off, followed by other Central American (Mesoamerican) peoples like the Maya and then the Aztecs from the 10th century AD to the 1520s.

- At this time and for many years afterwards chocolate was purely a drink. It was not eaten until the middle of last century.
- And 1519 is probably the most crucial moment in the history of chocolate when Spanish explorer Hernan Cortes, one of Columbus's ambassadors, met Montezuma, the flamboyant Aztec emperor known for consuming vast amounts of "xoco latl" before visiting his harem, and was given cocoa.
- In 1615 chocolate crossed from the Spanish to French court and was spread across central and southern America and Europe by missionaries, arriving in Britain around 1650.
- During the 18th and 19th centuries, chocolate morphed from a gritty, fatty drink to the smooth slabs we know today. In 1824 Quaker John Cadbury opened his first shop in Birmingham.
- Various inventions later, the grandson of Joseph Fry invented in 1847 a way of mixing cocoa butter with cocoa paste to produce the world first chocolate bar.
- The three great Quakers of the time, George Cadbury, Joseph Rowntree and Joseph Storrs Fry proved their impeccable social generosity by improving the quality of chocolate and working conditions.
- Swiss Rodolphe Lindt got in on the act and Henri Nestl provided condensed milk to create the first milk chocolate. In 1905 Cadbury Dairy Milk was formed and the world never looked back.

The chocolatier

Spotting the Best by Sara Jayne-Stanes, director of the Academy of Culinary Arts, food writer and author of Chocolate, is published this month. Chocolatier and chocolate evangelist Sara says chocolate should be flawless, evenly coloured but not too black, which may indicate the beans have been over-roasted. Smell should be sweet but not overpowering. You could detect vanilla, berry, caramel, roasted nuts. It is bad to have no smell at all - if you can't smell you can't taste. Burnt, musty, chemically or mediciney is not good."

Like a wine connoisseur, she elucidates further: "It should feel silky and not sticky and should just begin to yield to the warmth of your finger. "Take a piece and break it - it should snap cleanly - if it splinters or crumbles that's not good."

Once in the mouth, it should start to melt straightaway. "It should be smooth and buttery, gently dissolving into a creamy liquid filling the mouth with its complexity of flavours. It must not be grainy or 'gluey'. If it's 'waxy' or 'clacky' it sometimes means the cocoa butter has been replaced with vegetable fat - and it is not real chocolate."

And what are you left with, besides the extra calories? "You want flavour to linger for several minutes - good chocolate can linger for up to 45 minutes - with a clean aftertaste and no residue, and certainly not be overpoweringly sweet."

Love chocolate? Better labels can lead to better choices

BY J.M. HIRSCH

Associated Press

Chocolate used to be straight-forward — dark or milk, sweet, semisweet and bittersweet.

But today, sorting out which bar belongs in your brownies can seem more like selecting a grade of gasoline than baking up a batch of Grandma's best. Will it be 47 percent cacao, 61 percent or 73 percent? How about ultrapure 99 percent?

And what the heck is cacao, anyway?

With little fanfare, American chocolate companies have begun labeling their bars according to cacao (pronounced KA-cow) content, that sinful blend of cocoa solids and cocoa butter that combine to make chocolate — and make it so irresistible. Already common in Europe, this system brings to the industry a uniformity praised by bakers and chocolate experts. But they also worry that too few people understand it and are being misled by marketers pushing bigger-is-better attitudes. "Too much emphasis is being placed on the number," says Robert Steinberg, co-founder of Berkeley, Calif.-based Scharffen Berger Chocolate Maker, one of the nation's leading premium chocolate companies and an early adopter of cacao labeling. "It's as if people are saying the higher the number, the better the chocolate. There are so many factors that go into quality in chocolate it's really misleading to just say, 'Oh, I have an 80 percent chocolate. That's better than a 70 percent chocolate.' "

So, here's a guide to what cacao labeling can and can't tell you, and what it means for the home cook. Most chocolate is a simple confection, a blend of cacao products and sugar (and dairy in the case of milk chocolate). The ratio of the blend affects taste, texture and how it reacts in baking. The new labeling indicates how much of that

ratio is cacao. But a higher percentage of cacao doesn't guarantee a more intense chocolate, says Jack Bishop, editorial director at Cook's Illustrated magazine, which has tested chocolates across a range of cacao levels.

That's because cacao percentages represent a tally of cocoa solids (from which chocolate gets its flavor) and cocoa butter (which imparts chocolate's lush mouth feel but no real flavor). So, while different chocolates may have the same percent of total cacao, they could contain different ratios of solids and butter, and that dramatically influences taste and texture, says Bishop.

Higher cacao percentages also don't necessarily indicate higher quality. Taste is influenced more by the origin, blend and roasting of the beans. Better beans can produce better chocolate, even with lower cacao ratios. So much so that Peter Greweling, a professor of baking and pastry at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., expects the next wave in chocolate marketing to focus on origin and variety of beans, much as coffee is now.

"Which would actually tell you more about the nuances of flavor than the percentage does," he says.

Despite these limitations, the new labels can provide savvy consumers with a better understanding of what they're buying than the more common designations of bittersweet and semisweet. Conventional wisdom says bittersweet chocolate has less sugar than semisweet, and therefore the two have different uses in baking. Trouble is, the bittersweet and semisweet labels can be a distinction without a difference.

Vague federal guidelines mean both can contain around 35 percent cacao, depending on the blend of any particular brand. Without cacao labeling, consumers have little way of knowing what they are buying. So what should you buy?

For eating, stick to less than 70 percent cacao. Because sugar tempers and enhances the flavor and texture of chocolate, bars with higher ratios can taste bitter and chalky.

For baking, chocolates be-tween 40 percent and 70 percent will work best in most conventional recipes. Chocolates above 70 percent may have textural problems in some recipes, such as a chocolate mousse cake.

If you can't resist high cacao chocolate, use recipes specially formulated for it. Scharffen Berger, for example, has recipes on its Web site developed for its bars, including double chocolate cookies that use the company's 99 percent cacao chocolate.

Don't want to think about numbers? Stick within the 40 percent to 50 percent range for a good all-purpose chocolate. Of course, it ultimately all comes down to taste. "No label can ever tell anybody whether a chocolate is good or not, or whether they will like it or not," says Greweling.

TIT BITS

*(**Source**: Business Recorder – www.brecorder.com)*

West Ivorian main crop harvest
GONATE (October 28, 2006): Main crop cocoa production in the west and southwest of the world's top grower is off to a strong start, with good output expected for most of the October-March season, farmers and buyers said on Thursday.

US MIDDAY: cocoa down
NEW YORK (October 28, 2006): US cocoa closed down 1.3 percent on Friday, as technical selling emerged after a rally to one-month highs the previous day. Volume in cocoa futures dealt on the New York Board also fell, to an estimated 9,734 lots from Thursday's official tally of 32,525.

New York cocoa ends near one-month high
NEW YORK (October 28, 2006): US cocoa closed at a near 1-month high on Thursday, gaining more than 2 percent as those with short positions raced to exit a market poised to breach $1,500 a tonne.

Rains ease, weather hot in Ivorian cocoa zones
ABIDJAN (October 25, 2006): Rains eased in the past week in Ivory Coast's main cocoa regions and farmers welcomed lengthy sunny spells that were useful for drying beans as the harvesting of the October-March main crop intensifies.

New York cocoa firm
NEW YORK (October 25, 2006): US cocoa futures closed with strong gains on Monday, but traders said the rise was mostly due to technical factors and made on small volume. "I think it was just a technical rally and the market was due higher this morning. Then, we broke through a the previous week's high, which led to technical short covering.