



COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 209

11th – 15th December 2006

ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

	ICCO daily price (US\$/tonne)	London futures (£/tonne)	New York Futures (US\$/tonne)
11 th December	1723.72	906.00	1674.00
12 th December	1720.06	898.33	1674.00
13 th December	1740.03	911.67	1687.00
14 th December	1750.87	919.00	1696.00
15 th December	1727.92	913.33	1671.33
Average	1,732.52	909.67	1,680.47

*The Secretariat of the Cocoa Producers' Alliance
wishes you and your family a happy holiday season.*

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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 **11th**
December **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Dec 2006	845	853	10	853	839	11,039
Mar 2007	884	896	10	897	882	12,956
May 2007	896	906	10	906	892	2,532
Jul 2007	904	916	10	915	902	301
Sep 2007	911	926	11	929S	911S	210
Dec. 2007	923	935	12	935	923	441
Mar-08	932	945	13	932	932	2
May-08		954	13			0
Jul-08		963	14			0
Sep-08		970	14			0
Totals		926				27,481

Tuesday **12th**
December **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	856	874	21	870	856	5,125
Mar 2007	900	890	-6	911	883	12,907
May 2007	909	898	-8	920	893	2,763
Jul 2007	920	907	-9	927	906S	1,242
Sep 2007	930	917	-9	937	911	300
Dec. 2007	938	927	-8	946	921S	605
Mar-08	953	937	-8	957	939	144
May-08		946	-8			0
Jul-08		955	-8			0
Sep-08		962	-8			0
Totals		921				23,086

Wednesday **13th**
December **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mar 2007	894	904	14	905	885	7,505
May 2007	899	911	13	913	895	1,407
Jul 2007	907	920	13	920	906S	460
Sep 2007	922	930	13	928	918S	312
Dec. 2007	933	940	13	941	925	425
Mar-08	940	951	14	950	940	237
May-08		960	14			0
Jul-08		969	14			0
Sep-08		976	14			0
Dec. 08		976				0
Totals		944				10,346

Thursday 14th
December 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mar 2007	906	913	9	915	901	

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

Monday **11th**
December **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	0 0	1605	8	1595	1595	2
Mar 2007	1630 1638	1652	14	1655	1628	10071
May 2007	1649 1650	1671	13	1672	1648	1027
Jul 2007	1670 0	1693	15	1695	1669	434
Sep 2007	1688 ^B 1693 ^A	1713	15	1710	1695	110
Dec 2007	1717 0	1734	15	1731	1710	300
Mar 2008	0 0	1763	17	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1783	17	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1803	17	0	0	0
Sep. 2008	0 0	1825	16	0	0	0

Totals

**14th
Thursday
December 2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar 2007	1675 1678	1680	11	1683	1657	6855
May 2007	1696 1697	1700	11	1702	1679	898
Jul 2007	1705 ^B 1720 ^A	1720	10	1720	1714	142
Sep 2007	1734 0	1740	11	1740	1728	220
Dec 2007	1750 ^B 1755 ^A	1760	9	1760	1748	1021
Mar 2008	0 0					

News

Shedding light on dark chocolate

By Catherine Boal

11/12/2006 - The US based Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA) has released a guide to cacao content labels in order to demystify confused chocolate consumers. The luxurious image of dark chocolate combined with increased publicity about its purported health benefits has made it a popular chocolate choice – leading many manufacturers to incorporate product labels proclaiming percentage cocoa content. However, this is frequently easily misunderstood by consumers who fail to understand the exact nature of the cacao composition and can make inaccurate assumptions about the health benefits or taste of the product.

CMA president Lynn Bragg said: “We wanted to provide consumers with useful information for a greater appreciation of this trend, as cacao terminology becomes increasingly more important.” The CMA consumer guide defines cacao percentages as “the total percentage of ingredients (by weight) which come from the cacao bean”. These ingredients can include chocolate liquor, cocoa butter and cocoa powder. Three main points are emphasized in the document, which explains how this percentage relates to flavour, sweetness and health. While dark chocolate has been praised by health experts for its high content of flavanol antioxidants, consumers should be wary of automatically assuming that the higher the cacao percentage, the more flavanols the chocolate contains.

According to the CMA, “While these compounds are associated with the non-fat cocoa solids, actual levels of flavanol content may fluctuate widely depending upon recipe, cocoa bean selection, subsequent processing practices and storage and handling conditions. Therefore, ‘% cacao’ may not necessarily indicate the flavanol content of chocolates.” However, a higher cacao percentage does mean a more intense chocolate flavour due its greater chocolate liquor content – except in the case of white chocolate where the cacao content is solely derived from cocoa butter. Similarly, the greater the cacao content, the more bitter the chocolate as less sugar has been added to sweeten the product. Educated consumers could further drive up sales of dark chocolate which, according to analysts Leatherhead International now makes up 19 per cent of the global chocolate market and is well-positioned for future growth.

Indonesia to become world's largest cocoa producer and exporter

December 12, 2006

Jakarta (ANTARA News) - Indonesia is ready to become the world’s largest cocoa producer and exporter, Agriculture Minister Anton Apriyantono said here Tuesday. "We are determined to make Indonesia the world’s largest cocoa producer and exporter as the country has an abundance of the commodity," he said in a speech opening a cocoa and chocolate exhibition.

In 2005, Indonesia was the world’s third largest cocoa producer after Ivory Coast and Ghana as well as the world’s second largest cocoa exporter after Ghana. At the time, Indonesia had cocoa plantations on a total land area of 992,546 ha and was producing 652,350 tons of cocoa. Export of the commodity contributed US\$668 million to the state coffers annually. Cocoa was the country’s third largest agricultural commodity after oil palm and rubber.

The minister said national cocoa exports grew by 12 percent in 1997-2002 while world cocoa exports grew by 3.51 percent. Until 2005, Indonesian cocoa exports reached 3.3 percent while world cocoa exports were recorded at only 1.7 percent. The agriculture ministry was conducting a cocoa development revitalization program to increase Indonesia’s cocoa plantations area to 1.4 million ha by 2020 and the productivity of cocoa plantations to 1,750 kg per hectare a year, he said. (*)

Bulgaria Joins World Coffee and Cocoa Agreements

On EU Doorstep: 14 December 2006, Thursday.

Bulgaria will join the international coffee and cocoa agreements in view of its January EU accession. The government has put forward in parliament the suggestion the country ratifies the international 2001 coffee and cocoa agreements. The 25 EU states and the European community are sides on them. The International Coffee Organisation (ICO) seated in London was established in 1963 and has 75 current member states. 45 of them export and 30 import coffee. The International Cocoa Agreement (ICCA) was established in 1973 in London. It has 40 members, 13 of them export and 27 of them import cocoa.

How Michelin put the bounce back into its rubber farms

Simon Caulkin, Sunday December 17, 2006, The Observer

Sustainability, like social responsibility, is a much-abused term, often more about public relations than substance. But Michelin's Brazilian Ouro Verde ('green gold') project shows that that doesn't have to be the case.

In 1999, the French tyre company's rubber plantation near Salvador in the state of Bahia seemed to be in unstoppable decline. The price of rubber was falling. So was the yield of the 9,000 hectare estate as its 2.5 million trees reached the end of their productive lives. Worse, the plantation was affected by a leaf blight, *Microcyclus ulei*, which devastates seedlings, making regeneration, already uneconomic, even more problematic. The obvious thing was to sell the estate to someone who could use it better. And this was what the company did - but not in the way you might expect. Most sales of this kind are about exit from responsibility. Ouro Verde was the reverse. When Michelin was considering its options, says Lionel Barre, the ebullient Frenchman in charge, the company found itself looking at a puzzle with a number of oddly shaped pieces.

First, although Brazil provides only a fraction of its requirements, Michelin needed more rubber. Natural rubber is an essential ingredient in tyres of all kinds. They consume 70 per cent of the world's output (one large tyre for an earthmover uses the annual production of five rubber trees), and demand, largely fuelled by growth in China, is steadily growing.

Although *microcyclus* is currently confined to South America, where the rubber tree originated, it will almost certainly one day spread to Asia, where 90 per cent of today's crop is grown. Apart from the tyre manufacturers, 30 million people depend on rubber, many of them growing it in small family-owned plantations. Developing blight-resistant strains of *Hevea brasiliensis*, the rubber tree, was crucial for the industry's future. And that, after 10 years' painstaking work, was what Michelin's Bahia labs, alone in the world, were on the brink of achieving.

Then there was the forest. Everyone knows about the Amazon rainforest, but the situation of Brazil's Atlantic rainforest, running sporadically down the coast from Salvador to Rio, is even more dire. Just 5 per cent of the original coverage is left, and 3,000 hectares of that, 3 per cent of the total, belonged to Michelin. But this was enough to provide a home for several endangered animal and bird species as well as a comprehensive repository of the habitat's fabulous plant diversity.

Finally, there were the people. Many of the plantation's 250 workers had been with the company for many years. Just 25 per cent of adults in this part of Brazil have formal jobs, and even a few jobs, says Barre, would be too many to lose.

Rearranging the pieces wasn't easy. But they finally locked together in a model public-private partnership. Michelin retained responsibility for the infrastructure, including an upgraded processing plant, labs and nursery, and sold the bulk of the plantation operations - not as a block, but in 400-hectare parcels - to 12 of its Brazilian managers.

To attract low-interest development financing for the purchase, it devised long-term business plans for the new enterprises based on replanting with resistant seedlings raised in the nurseries - combined, crucially, with rows of cocoa trees to provide financial and ecological diversity and quicker initial returns. 'I haven't bought the farm - I've bought the project,' says a new owner. As part of the project, a new village, with medical centre and school, is being built to house the tappers and their families, financed by a federal loan organisation and managed by Michelin and the municipal council. The Michelin research unit is also providing resistant seedlings and technical assistance for replanting small neighbouring farms.

So far, after just two years, Ouro Verde's results are beating all expectations. The new owners have created 250 secure jobs (tapping is year-round manual work that can't be mechanised) in an area of poverty and high unemployment. The financial results of the co-operative that unites the 12 growers are ahead of schedule, and it is drawing up plans to build a processing plant for the burgeoning cocoa crop, keeping more added value in the production area. The rainforest is being protected and actively developed into a network of corridors connecting existing forest areas.

Michelin gets more rubber (although producers are also free to sell to others). Natural rubber, of course, is a sustainable resource, unlike oil-based synthetic varieties. The trees absorb carbon, shelter wildlife and play a useful role in the forest environment. Michelin also gains in legitimacy, and satisfaction, by proving it can benefit all stakeholders - customers, workers, suppliers and society - as it benefits itself: a living reproof to the

impersonal numbers-driven transactions of today's finance capitalism. Michelin's Brazil operations are, says Barre, a profit centre like any other but, by taking a broader view, 'we grow, and the community grows with us'.

Ivory Coast calm as leaders talk peace

By Loucoumane Coulibaly in Yamoussoukro December 17, 2006

WAR-TORN Ivory Coast's Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny said overnight that he and President Laurent Gbagbo wished to put aside their public differences and forge ahead with the peace process.

The two leaders engaged in a power struggle last month over the reinstatement of three senior civil servants who Mr Banny had suspended after an inquiry concluded their negligence enabled deadly toxic waste to be dumped in main city Abidjan.

"Yes, you have seen there have been some hesitations between the head of state and myself. There is goodwill to bring things into a better situation," he said in an interview at his home in the country's capital Yamoussoukro.

The dispute arose after Mr Gbagbo unilaterally reinstated the civil servants. It showed the struggle faced by Mr Banny to exercise powers given to him under a UN-backed roadmap. The plan tasks him with leading a disarmament and reunification process and organising long-delayed presidential polls by end-October next year. Rebels have held the north of the country since a brief 2002-03 civil war. Around 11,000 UN and French peacekeepers police the buffer zone that roughly cuts the world's top cocoa producer in half.

Mr Banny has faced strong opposition from Mr Gbagbo and his followers, who are hostile to foreign efforts to restore peace. Mr Gbagbo's constitutional five-year mandate expired in October 2005 but he has been kept in power as part of the UN plan. However, he has said he will not apply aspects of it which conflict with the country's constitution.

War-induced hardship was exacerbated for Abidjan's inhabitants when tonnes of toxic oil slops were unloaded from a Dutch-chartered tanker in August and dumped at 17 mostly open-air sites, killing 10 and making thousands ill.

Crop diseases still pose threat to food supply

By Anthony Fletcher

15/12/2006 - The British Society for Plant Pathology (BSPP) is using the Christmas period to highlight the risks plant diseases create in the food chain. And not to put too much of a dampener on festivities, the BSPP has warned that such diseases have the potential to affect celebrations.

"The 12,000 tonnes or so of potatoes eaten have to be protected against the devastating potato blight, likewise Brussels sprouts from ring spot and white blister, carrots from cavity spot," said the society.

"Even the stuffing is under threat with blight of chestnut trees. Less obvious accompaniments include the wine (grape mildew), beer (barley mildew), coffee (coffee rust), and if there is any room left after the meal, the chocolates are from cocoa bushes that survived or were protected from the well-named witches broom or black pod diseases."

Indeed, plant diseases are still a major threat even in developed economies. 'Take all' for example, a disease estimated to affect half the UK's wheat crops, costs the agricultural industry up to £60 million per year. The BSPP, which plans to celebrate its 25th anniversary next Tuesday, hopes to raise awareness of how significant a problem plant disease can be.

"These 'basics' are all taken for granted but are only there by controlling a whole range of diseases," said the society. "Also our homes really wouldn't be complete at Christmas without the 'trimmings' of 7.5 million conifer trees, potentially susceptible to Dothistroma needle blight." The issue of plant and crop disease is of course applicable worldwide. Many cultures are heavily dependent on rice for example, which succumbs to Magnaporthe rice blast, arguably of equivalent importance in those producing countries to potato blight.

Indeed, currently 400 million tonnes of rice is consumed in the world each year, making it a staple food commodity for half the world's population. These sums mean that even the smallest alterations to the production of crops could have a major impact on the world's leading food commodity. "Most damage is still caused in developing countries where plant pathologists can help to eradicate extreme hunger through improved food security and famine," said the BSPP.

"Major epidemics are still threatening the livelihoods and food supply of many communities with swollen shoot of cocoa in West Africa, cassava mosaic virus and coffee wilt in East Africa and banana bacterial wilt in Central Africa; all have major impacts on national economies and in turn the livelihoods of those in most need."

The British Society for Plant Pathology (BSPP) was founded in 1981 for the study and advancement of plant pathology. The society plans to hold a meeting on Tuesday to discuss issues such as the global impact of plant diseases, current and future disease threats, use of genes for resistance, the agrochemical perspective, and public perception of plant diseases.

Research, A Critical Tool

(12/14/2006) Graphic Communications Group Limited

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Education, Winneba, Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, is reported to have commended the government for allocating an initial ₵5 billion towards research into science and technology. Research activities are critical to national development and that is why any country which wants to quicken its development must put premium on research. It is known that elsewhere, especially in Canada, notwithstanding their advancement in science and technology, they devote great attention to research.

Why? Research activities in science and technology are important tools to enhance progress. Consequently, Canada makes a lot of money available, under its annual budget, for research and it is working marvellously for that country.

It is clear that if an advanced country such as Canada makes huge sums of money available for research activities, then a developing country like Ghana should do more. We need to apply science and technology in all that we do so that we are not marginalised in the scheme of things.

Sometimes ignorance takes the better part of our people, to the extent that they are unable to move themselves away from superstition, which works against progress.

Equally, though science and technology would reduce the drudgery that our farmers go through before they increase their yields, they do not have access to scientific and technological answers.

Indeed, it is against this backdrop that when the Cocoa Research Institute came out with a new variety of cocoa which increases output by three-fold and reduces the maturity period, it was hailed beyond compare. We know that there are many areas where, with diligent research, we will provide answers to the problems which confront our people in their effort to improve upon their incomes and living standards.

Evidently, research into various aspects of our daily endeavour should be able to let us do things better and with efficiency. There is a technology which our farmers should be able to use to nurse plantain suckers on their own farms and not convey the suckers from long distances to the farms.

Certainly, this came out of research. It is unfortunate that not many farmers have been exposed to that technology. While we applaud the effort to make research an indispensable tool for development, we also appreciate the fact that research findings become invaluable only when they are applied to achieve results.

After all, what is the use if findings are allowed to gather dust on shelves? As a people, we have resolved to make progress through modern methods of doing things and we cannot do that without research.

Therefore, we cannot but share the joy of the Vice-Chancellor of the UEW and those who think like him.

Ferrero hanging on court decision for Chinese expansion

By Dominique Patton

14/12/2006 - Italian chocolate maker Ferrero's ongoing battle with copycat products in China is hindering its growth in the booming market, and continues to erode the brand's value, says the company.

Kathie Choi, legal counsel for Ferrero Asia, says the company could have doubled its sales in the market that is seeing rising demand for luxury products. But fears of further counterfeiting have blocked sales expansion to new cities and limited it to a 'conservative' marketing strategy.

“We don't want to go for a big expansion because we're afraid of attracting lots more copycats,” Choi told AP-Foodtechnology.com. “Chinese companies are too good at following trendy products and are very speedy at putting imitation products on the market.”

The Chinese chocolate market is currently seeing double-digit growth, and importantly for foreign brands, a shift to higher quality products. New regulations requiring manufacturers to label cocoa substitute content will support this trend. But Ferrero, which sold its first chocolates in China in 1984, says it cannot tap the potential in this market without better protection of its brand. Several of its products including Raffaello and Kinder Bueno have been copied in China but problems with its Ferrero Rocher brand reached such proportions that the Italian firm took court action in 2004.

After losing in the first instance, Ferrero won a widely reported second court case against Chinese company Montresor in January this year. The Tianjin court found that Montresor had ‘adversely affected’ Ferrero's sales by unfair competition with its almost identical product. But the findings were quickly appealed and while the Italian company waits for the case to be heard by the Supreme Court of China, Montresor's Tresor Dore chocolates – presented in the same shape box and in

The tree produces cacao pods that are filled with cocoa beans. Anywhere from 20 to 50 beans are scooped from a typical pod. Dried beans from an average pod weigh less than two ounces, and approximately 400 beans are required to make one pound of chocolate. Over 1 million tons of cocoa beans are harvested every year.

Cacao trees grow in regions close to the equator, where it is warm year-round. Two-thirds of the world's production of cocoa comes from Africa, and most of the remaining third comes from South America. The astute reader will at once recognize that the cacao tree is therefore in jeopardy, given the rapid depletion of the rain forests that is taking place.

If this depletion continues, it will have a devastating impact on the quality of life of Western civilization, threatening our very existence.

Who would want to live in a world where there was a shortage of chocolate? Why, the pharmaceutical companies couldn't produce enough anti-depressants to replace the calming, leveling and therapeutic effects of the cacao bean's nectar! Can you imagine the dead of winter without this sweet confectionery? How would any of us get through tax season, finals or a round of golf without a box of Junior Mints or a Snickers bar? And I haven't even given a thought to what it would do to our physical health, chocolate being high in nutritional value.

You can rap the environmentalists all you want, but with an annual per capita consumption of chocolate in the U.S. of 11.3 pounds, we'd better take heed! I can only pray that we will awaken from this madness of depleting the rain forests before it is too late.

When God gave humankind dominion over "the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air – and every tree with seed in its fruit," it was a sacred trust – a little like leaving an open box of DeBrand's chocolates sitting on the counter unattended. With a little prudence, restraint and care, the good things of creation should last a long time.

Here's hoping chocolate will hold out until Christ's second coming.

Greg Enstrom is senior pastor of First Wayne Street United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne.

Chocolate Manufacturers Association Releases Online Definitions To Help Consumers Understand Chocolate

As consumers face a large and expanding selection of premium/specialty chocolates and many new choices the Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA) has put together an online consumers' guide, "Making Sense of % Cacao." The information is designed to help chocolate lovers better understand the cacao or cocoa percentage labels that appear on a growing number of chocolate and cocoa products.

The term "% cacao" refers to the total percentage of ingredients (by weight) which come from the cacao bean (or cocoa bean) such as chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, and cocoa powder found in a chocolate product. The term is being increasingly used in connection with premium chocolates -- including dark chocolate.

"The '% cacao' number is a key part of what consumers should consider when searching for specific flavor intensity, whether eating a bar of chocolate or consuming it in other forms such as baking and drinking," said Dr. Leah Porter, vice president of the American Cocoa Research Institute (ACRI), the research arm of the CMA, in a prepared statement. "In general, the '% cacao' number can guide you towards milder or deeper chocolate flavor intensity, depending on your taste preferences or the needs of your recipe."

The higher the cacao percentage, the greater the flavor intensity: In general, a higher "% cacao" means a more intense chocolate flavor. For example, the U.S. cacao standards require a milk chocolate to contain at least 10 percent chocolate liquor. Semisweet or bittersweet chocolate must contain at least 35 percent chocolate liquor, resulting in a higher "% cacao" and a more intense chocolate flavor. White chocolate has a very different flavor profile because its entire '% cacao' comes from only cocoa butter.

A higher "% cacao" also means less added sugar. For example, a 72 percent cacao dark chocolate has less sugar than a 60 percent cacao dark chocolate. Unsweetened baking chocolate is a 100 percent cacao product with no added sugar, and is very bitter.

Cacao percentage and flavanol content are not always related. Much of the recent positive news from the health research community is linked to the presence of certain flavanol compounds in chocolate and cocoa products. While these compounds are associated with the non-fat cocoa solids, actual levels of flavanol content may fluctuate widely, depending upon recipe, cocoa bean selection, subsequent processing practices, and storage and handling conditions. Therefore, "% cacao" may not necessarily indicate the flavanol content of chocolates.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has established standards of identity (food standards that ensure consumers get what they expect when purchasing products) to designate the names of the cacao products and the percentage of key ingredients that must be present.

In response to consumer interest, many chocolate manufacturers are now referencing these terms on their products' labels. Key terms include:

- Cacao -- Refers to the bean, which is the source of the cacao components of chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, and cocoa powder.
- Chocolate Liquor -- Produced by grinding the cacao bean nib (or center) to a smooth, liquid state. In the U.S., chocolate liquor is also called chocolate, unsweetened chocolate, baking chocolate, or bitter chocolate. In Canada and Europe, other names include cocoa (cacao) mass and cocoa liquor.
- Cocoa Butter -- The fat naturally present in cacao beans that melts at body temperature and gives chocolate its unique mouth feel. The amount of cocoa butter in cacao beans typically ranges from 50 to 60 percent.
- Cocoa or Cocoa Powder -- The product made by removing part of the fat (i.e., cocoa butter) from the cocoa bean and grinding the remaining material to a powder. Under U.S. regulations, "cocoa" and "cocoa powder" can be used synonymously.

Some products in the U.S. use the term "% cacao" interchangeably with "% cocoa." The "% cacao" on these products really is intended to refer to the total content of ingredients from cacao, not just the amount of cocoa powder. This use of the term "% cacao" may create some confusion for consumers.

Divine Chocolate Desserts Deliver Holiday Cheer to Ghanaian Cocoa Farmers

(CSRwire) WASHINGTON DC - December 12, 2006 - Divine Chocolate today offered a classic holiday recipe with a unique twist - an opportunity to educate friends, family, co-workers and others about the benefits of Fair Trade.

"We hope holiday party-givers, students and parents looking for unique teacher gifts - anyone looking to delight their taste buds - will consider baking with Divine Chocolate this holiday season and in the process, learn about the benefits of using Fair Trade products," said Erin Gorman, CEO, Divine Chocolate.

Divine is the world's first farmer-owned Fair Trade Chocolate brand, made from cocoa produced by farmers of the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative in Ghana. Kuapa Kokoo farmers share in Divine's profits, have a say in the direction of the company, and receive a Fair Trade price for their cocoa, which enables them to invest in education, healthcare and other social programs.

DIVINE PEPPERMINT BARK

- Three 3.5 oz. bars Divine Milk Chocolate, chopped
- Three 3.5 oz. bars Divine White Chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup candy canes or peppermints, crushed

PREPARATION:

Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil. Place milk chocolate and the white chocolate in separate microwave safe bowls. Microwave each bowl of chocolate separately in at medium power for one minute. Remove and stir thoroughly (about one minute). Microwave again at medium power for additional shorter intervals. Stir thoroughly after each interval until chocolate is melted.

Pour the melted milk or dark chocolate in a thin stream onto the aluminum foil, avoiding the edges of the pan. Note - the mixture will not cover the entire pan. Repeat the pouring with the melted white chocolate, and use a toothpick to marble the milk and white chocolate. Be careful not to dig in to the aluminum foil with the toothpick or to over-blend. Sprinkle the crushed candy canes or peppermints over the layer of melted chocolate, as evenly

as possible. Tear off a single sheet of foil to cover the baking sheet. Place it directly on top of the mixture. Gently press down on the foil sheet to firmly mix the crushed candy canes in to the chocolate layer.

Refrigerate for 45 minutes. Remove from the refrigerator and break the bark into small pieces. Store in an airtight container.

More recipes, and information about Kuapa Kokoo and Divine Chocolate can be found at www.divinechocolateusa.com.

Divine Chocolate is the world's first farmer-owned Fair Trade Chocolate brand. Divine Chocolate is owned in part by the farmers of Kuapa Kokoo, a cocoa cooperative in Ghana. Divine Chocolate's mission is to improve the livelihood of smallholder cocoa producers in West Africa by establishing their own dynamic branded proposition in the UK and US chocolate markets

Cameroon: CFA 8 billion for Cameroon's Agriculture

Cameroon Tribune (Yaoundé), December 11, 2006, Lukong Pius Nyuylime

The money was paid into Cameroon's account last Thursday, 07 December by the European Union.

The European Union has disbursed CFA 8 billion to the State of Cameroon within the framework of debt relief initiative. According to a communiqué published last Thursday, 07 December, by the head of the European Commission delegation to Cameroon, Javier Puyol, the amount has been paid in, in appreciation of Cameroon's effort which has yielded fruit through its admission into the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. "Following the effort deployed by the Cameroonian population to enable Cameroon attain the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, we are today happy to get ourselves involved, particularly as concerns the rural world which is presently undergoing profound stress", Ambassador Puyol said.

The money, which is paid from the STABEX fund, will be used to cover cost in the production of cocoa and coffee, particularly reforms of cocoa enterprises and organizations. Part of the money will equally be used in financing investments in agricultural diversification, social infrastructure, civil engineering, water supply, construction and maintenance of roads.

TIT BITS

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

Agriculture-commodities to grow in 2007

PARIS (December 15, 2006): Record interest in Europe's agricultural commodity futures is set to grow even further in 2007 as low global stocks and the biofuels revolution attract more investors to the sector, analysts said on Wednesday.

New York cocoa higher

NEW YORK (December 15, 2006): cocoa futures settled higher Wednesday, in a technically driven market strengthened by steady fund buying and underpinned by a report of an attempted coup in top cocoa producer Ivory Coast, NYBOT traders said.

New York cocoa rises again

NEW YORK (December 16, 2006): US cocoa futures rose on Thursday, closing firm on speculative buying as the market continued an upward trend that started last month, traders said. "It was a very speculative session. There was very little commercial interest in the market today," one trader said.