

COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance



Issue No. 310

17th – 21st November 2008

Cocoa Producers' Alliance



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Do your health a favour, drink Cocoa everyday
'It's nature's miracle food'

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ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

	ICCO daily price (SDR/tonne)	ICCO daily price (\$US/tonne)	London futures (£/tonne)	New York futures (\$US/tonne)
17 th November	1366.77	2017.01	1361.00	1990.00
18 th November	1403.55	2072.09	1397.00	2045.67
19 th November	1426.61	2105.54	1415.00	2076.33
20 th November	1385.50	2039.46	1399.67	2010.00
21 st November	1395.93	2061.59	1407.67	2036.67
Average	1396.00	2059.00	1396.00	2032.00

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

Monday 17th November 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Dec 2008	1376	1440	75	1448	1376	6,426
Mar 2009	1371	1360	-1	1388	1360	7,144
May 2009	1378	1360	-5	1391	1360S	805
Jul 2009	1389	1363	-9	1393S	1363	382
Sep 2009	1370	1368	-7	1370	1370	11
Dec 2009		1373	-7			0
Mar 2010		1381	-7			0
May 2010		1386	-7			0
Jul 2010		1386	-7			0
Sep 2010		1386	-7			0
Average/Totals		1380				14,768

Tuesday 18th November 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	1448	1468	28	1471	1437	3,121
Mar 2009	1365	1399	39	1409	1365	5,357
May 2009	1380	1394	34	1402	1368S	1,085
Jul 2009	1387	1398	35	1402	1379S	200
Sep 2009	1380	1400	32	1407	1379	136
Dec 2009	1380	1399	26	1408	1380	318
Mar 2010	1401	1405	24	1401S	1401S	20
May 2010		1410	24			0
Jul 2010		1410	24			0
Sep 2010		1410	24			0
Average/Totals		1409				10,237

Wednesday 19th November 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	1469	1487	19	1490	1450	1,585
Mar 2009	1400	1416	17	1424	1392	5,155
May 2009	1399	1413	19	1420S	1391S	1,358
Jul 2009	1416	1416	18	1418	1399	299
Sep 2009	1416	1416	16	1420	1416S	275
Dec 2009	1414	1415	16	1415S	1412S	258
Mar 2010	1417	1421	16	1417S	1417S	14
May 2010		1427	17			0
Jul 2010		1427	17			0
Sep 2010		1427	17			0
Average/Totals		1427				8,944

Thursday 20th November 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	1485	1470	-17	1486	1448	2,890
Mar 2009	1410	1402	-14	1423	1378	5,562
May 2009	1409	1397	-16	1419S	1381S	1,167
Jul 2009	1413	1400	-16	1423S	1387S	185
Sep 2009	1415	1400	-16	1416S	1393S	6
Dec 2009	1413	1399	-16	1413	1383	15
Mar 2010		1402	-19			0
May 2010		1409	-18			0
Jul 2010		1409	-18			0
Sep 2010		1409	-18			0
Average/Totals		1410				9,825

Friday 21st November 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	1465	1510	40	1522	1464	22,408
Mar 2009	1395	1418	16	1433	1395	8,378
May 2009	1394	1404	7	1420	1390	5,561
Jul 2009	1394	1401	1	1412	1394S	12,829
Sep 2009	1406	1399	-1	1416	1403S	125
Dec 2009	1405	1394	-5	1411	1404	78
Mar 2010		1394	-8			0
May 2010		1401	-8			0
Jul 2010		1401	-8			0
Sep 2010		1401	-8			0
Average/Totals		1412				49379

Average for the week	1412				18631
					93,153

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

Monday 17th November 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	2083	2117	77	2034	2041	997
Mar 2009	1986	1977	11	2015	1965	4,294
May 2009	2008	1985	11	2010	1979	469
Jul 2009	1996	1993	8	2013	1993	143
Sep 2009	2020	2000	6	2020	2000	93
Dec 2009	2030	2012	5	2030	2010	38
Mar 2010		2016	1	2016	2016	
May 2010		2020	unch	2020	2020	
Jul 2010		2020	unch	2020	2020	
Sep 2010		2020	unch	2020	2020	
Average/Totals		2005				6034

Tuesday 18th November 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	2104	2192	75	2220	2101	313
Mar 2009	1991	2046	69	2056	1984	3349
May 2009	2007	2048	63	2054	2007	392
Jul 2009	2020	2049	56	2059	2017	17
Sep 2009	2027	2051	51	2063	2024	7
Dec 2009	2034	2054	42	2067	2030	5
Mar 2010		2058	42	2058	2058	
May 2010		2062	42	2062	2062	
Jul 2010		2062	42	2062	2062	
Sep 2010		2062	42	2062	2062	
Average/Totals		2068				4083

Wednesday 19th November 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	2240	2183	-9	2275	2154	232
Mar 2009	2050	2072	26	2108	2025	4,755
May 2009	2061	2071	23	2104	2049	818
Jul 2009	2050	2069	20	2092	2047	263
Sep 2009	2057	2066	15	2096	2057	315
Dec 2009		2063	9	2063	2063	361
Mar 2010		2065	7	2065	2065	16
May 2010		2081	19	2081	2081	
Jul 2010		2068	6	2068	2068	
Sep 2010		2068	6	2068	2068	
Average/Totals		2081				6760

Thursday 20th November 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	2151	2179	-4	2186	2150	57
Mar 2009	2050	2009	-63	2056	1991	6,815
May 2009	2045	2007	-64	2050	1993	937
Jul 2009	2048	2007	-62	2050	1995	386
Sep 2009	2000	2006	-60	2006	1998	153
Dec 2009	2000	2005	-58	2020	2000	200
Mar 2010		2006	-59	2006	2006	
May 2010		2006	-75	2006	2006	
Jul 2010		2006	-62	2006	2006	
Sep 2010		2006	-62	2006	2006	
Average/Totals		2006				8548

Friday 21st November 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2008	2200	2170	-9	2200	2156	60
Mar 2009	2009	2045	36	2073	2007	6,169
May 2009	2049	2032	25	2069	2032	413
Jul 2009	2041	2031	24	2062	2029	82
Sep 2009	2059	2028	22	2065	2028	180
Dec 2009	2061	2028	23	2061	2028	223
Mar 2010	2045	2026	20	2045	2026	
May 2010		2025	19	2025	2025	
Jul 2010		2025	19	2025	2025	
Sep 2010		2025	19	2025	2025	
Average/Totals		2044				7127

Average for the week	2044				8138
2020					32,552

Spot Prices (US \$ per tonne)

	17th November	18th November	19th November	20th November	21st November
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	2485	2554	2580	2517	2553
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	2335	2404	2430	2367	2403
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	2327	2396	2422	2359	2395
Superior Arriba	2314	2383	2409	2346	2382
Sanchez f.a.q	2355	2424	2450	2387	2423
Malaysian 110	1990	2059	2085	2022	2058
Sulawesi f.a.q	2184	2253	2279	2216	2252
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	3288	3403	3446	3342	3402
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	5463	5654	5726	5552	5651
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	1101	1139	1153	1118	1138

Source: Cocoa Merchant Association



Health and Nutrition

Dark, decadent and delicious: could chocolate really be good for us?

News of the North.Net, Wisconsin

Paula Wagler, Wagler@news of the north.net...

20/11/2008

Could eating healthy be as easy as taking candy from a baby? Maybe if that candy was a piece of dark chocolate! But you might be thinking—what's the catch? Read on for the pros and cons of chocolate indulgence. Many of us don't like hearing that we should eat more Brussels sprouts or that we should eat less dessert, so when health professionals tell us that something as scrumptious as chocolate is good for us, it tends to grab our attention. Who could be unhappy about being given the go-ahead to eat chocolate?

I'm thinking, it's a tough job, but someone's got to do it. And I'm willing to take on that challenge. At least I was, until I read that if you eat more than about 1/16th of a bar of dark chocolate every day, the benefits are like magic—they disappear! It's true: you can't have your cake and eat it too (at least not more than one bite). The bad news for me is that I will need to eat less chocolate to gain health benefits—not the results I was hoping for.

What makes chocolate healthy?

The flavanols in chocolate are responsible for its health benefits. Flavanols are a subclass of plant nutrients known as polyphenols, which are recognized for their anti-inflammatory properties. Chocolate contains both cocoa solids (such as cocoa powder) where the flavanols are found, and cocoa butter.

Cocoa butter contains fatty acids that do not raise "bad" LDL-cholesterol as much as other saturated fats, but cocoa butter is still high in calories and contains no flavanols. The more cocoa solids in chocolate, and the darker the chocolate, the more concentrated it is in flavanols.

But the amount of cocoa solids isn't always clearly found on labels, so we can't be sure how much of the chocolate is cocoa solids, or how much is cocoa butter. And there may be other saturated or trans fats added to chocolate as well, so it's a good idea to be a label reader. Also, scientists don't know what quantity of flavanols we need for good health.

Is all chocolate created equally?

Milk chocolate has fewer cocoa solids and fewer flavanols than darker varieties, while white chocolate contains none of the flavanols that are responsible for the potentially health promoting effects of dark chocolate.

What are the benefits of eating dark chocolate for heart health?

One study showed that elderly men eating approximately 30 calories of dark chocolate a day showed a small but significant reduction in blood pressure, and a lower risk of death from heart attacks.

Another small study of overweight middle-aged men reported that those who received dark chocolate had lower blood pressure and improved blood flow in arteries.

A recent study of more than 2,000 people found that eating a small amount of dark chocolate daily (up to 6.7 grams a day, or just over 1½ ounces per week) was good for their heart by lowering inflammation. A substantial amount of research indicates an association between chronic inflammation and higher risk of heart disease and other chronic diseases.

I'm hopeful that there is a study that will determine that women need to eat twice as much chocolate as men to receive the same benefits without experiencing weight gain, but I'm not holding my breath.

Is chocolate helpful for other health conditions?

This may be true for individuals with diabetes, who often experience chronic heart disease. One small, short-term study showed improvement in insulin sensitivity in subjects without diabetes. Of course, moderation is important because of the high sugar and fat content of chocolate.

Some researchers propose that dark chocolate may improve blood flow to the brain, which could help improve alertness and fatigue. However, the high concentrations of flavanols used in this particular study are not available at supermarkets, and much more research would be needed to confirm this theory.

Is there a downside to eating dark chocolate?

Aside from the high content of fat, sugar, and calories found in chocolate and the potential to overindulge and gain weight, there are other considerations for taking the chocolate research with a grain of salt.

Some health professionals have questioned the quality of various chocolate studies for the following reasons:

- * a small number of participants were studied;
- * the studies were short-term;
- * the researchers knew who was receiving the chocolate, which could create unintentional bias for a positive outcome;
- * the information about chocolate intake was reported by the participants, and may have been less than or more than their actual intake.

One study found that elderly women who ate chocolate every day (3½ ounces or more) had lower bone density and lower strength. Again, more than one study would be needed to support this finding. It would be important to know, for instance, if the women were substituting chocolate for more healthy calcium-rich food in their diet.

What is the best way to add chocolate to my diet?

It is probably not helpful to add extra calories if you aren't already eating chocolate. But if you do eat chocolate frequently, balance smaller portions of high-fat dark chocolate with lower-fat foods such as dipped pretzels, raisins or berries. Or, eat one individually-wrapped chocolate candy a few times a week to limit portion sizes. However, if your idea of eating vegetables is having a bag of potato chips and you lead the life of a couch potato, dark chocolate isn't likely to improve your health.

Some good news—a recent study shows that 15 minutes of brisk walking can reduce chocolate cravings, and we already know that exercise is good for the heart. In the case of chocolate, the jury is still out—but for now, the verdict seems to be that less is more.

Production & Quality

Nigeria cocoa prices sag 10 pct on financial crunch

Reuters South Africa, South Africa

By Tume Ahemba

19 Nov 2008

LAGOS (Reuters) - Nigerian cocoa prices fell 10 percent on average in cautious trading in the last month as the market struggled to cope with the worst global financial crisis in 80 years, exporters and buyers said on Wednesday. The upcountry price of graded cocoa -- beans certified fit for export by government produce inspectors -- sagged 11 percent to 205,000 naira per tonne in spite of a supply squeeze in the world's number four grower.

Farmers hoarded beans in the hope that recent price gains in the international market will be sustained and help boost local prices, while buyers treaded cautiously to avoid heavy losses. "There was minimal activity in the market, people are being very cautious. Farmers are still hoarding, while buyers are keenly watching the international market," one exporter said.

International cocoa prices rose to the highest levels in almost six weeks on Wednesday, boosted by concern over short-term supply tightness. The benchmark March cocoa stood 7 pounds firmer at 1,406 pounds a tonne at 1240 GMT after touching 1,424 pounds, the highest level for the contract since October 9. March cocoa on ICE

climbed \$9 to \$2,055. "We were all excited at the start of the season when the local price rose to 300,000 naira, the highest we ever had in years, before the sharp drop," Sayina Riman, a dealer in the southeastern cocoa hub of Cross River state, said.

Farm gate prices fell 10 percent to 180,000 naira on average per tonne in the southwest and southeast cocoa growing regions, with disillusioned farmers withholding beans and hoping the tide would soon turn, Licensed Buying Agents (LBAs) said. Analysts said sagging Nigerian cocoa prices could encourage smuggling of beans across the border to Cameroon by farmers and buyers looking for much better prices.

SMUGGLING

"Many people have lost a lot of money and they are trying to recover whatever they can now. If Cameroon offers better prices, people in the border states may try to take their beans there," commodity consultant Robo Adhuze said from Akure, capital of the top southwestern cocoa growing state of Ondo.

Cameroon, Nigeria's eastern neighbour, is the world's number five grower. Analysts say the high cost of transporting beans to the distant port cities of Lagos and Calabar, due mainly to bad roads, has already forced some Nigerian growers and traders to sell in the central African nation at even lower prices. "The roads are impassable in the dry season and impossible during the rainy season," Adhuze said.

The price of beans in Nigeria's main export route, Lagos, sagged 9 percent to 227,500 naira a tonne from 250,000 a month ago. The price in the southeastern port of Calabar fell about 5 percent to 210,000 naira a tonne, buyers and exporters said.

The quality of cocoa in the market was good, with bean weight up at 340-350 grams per 300 beans compared to 330 grams the previous month thanks to a good mix of sun and rain. Some exporters said because of the low prices, many farmers were now adding sawdust to their beans to increase the weight.

Nigerian cocoa crop looking good despite harmattan

Reuters Nigeria, Nigeria

By Tume Ahemba

19 Nov 2008

LAGOS, Nov 19 (Reuters) - The start of the harmattan season when dry wind blows over to Nigeria's cocoa growing regions will not immediately affect the main crop because good rains in the last month provided enough soil moisture to sustain young pods to ripen for harvest, farmers and traders said on Wednesday. "So far, the weather has been good. The harmattan is here, but there is no cause for alarm because we had good rains last month and it still drizzles once in a while. This will provide enough moisture for developing pods," Sayina Riman, national publicity secretary of the Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN), told Reuters.

Harmattan is a desert wind that carries dust and sand from the Sahara north of Nigeria southwards. Its drought-like conditions reduce soil moisture and damage young pods if rainfall in the months just before harvest is not heavy enough. "The rains were heavy in most cocoa producing areas so there is enough soil moisture to support crop development. This means enhanced productivity," one Lagos-based exporter said.

Analysts say Nigeria's October-March main crop is expected to come in at least 15 percent higher than the previous season if weather conditions remain good because more plantations have matured and farmers have embraced more advanced technologies.

The CAN, a group of farmers, buyers, exporters and grinders, had estimated Nigeria's annual output in the just-ended 2007/08 season at 300,000 tonnes compared to the 450,000-500,000 tonnes quoted by government officials. The group is yet to make any forecast for the current season.

DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION

Nigeria, the world's number four cocoa grower, has recorded a steady increase in annual output after the government launched a revival programme three years ago to raise production and boost domestic consumption. The programme provided subsidised agro-chemicals and free high-yield seedlings to farmers. The trees now flower within 18-20 months instead of the traditional 3-5 years.

The break in rainfall and the high day-time temperature that come with the harmattan also make it easier for growers to ferment and dry their beans for better quality.

Exporters said mould levels were down to about 5 percent, the maximum level accepted for shipment to Western markets. The beans are used for making ice cream, chocolate, cake, beverages, liquor and cosmetics.

An outbreak of the fungal black pod disease on some farms in the southwest was contained by massive spraying of trees, though a number of farmers used substandard pesticides.

Farmers, who saw the robust prices in the last season as an incentive to work harder this year, said they were disillusioned by the sharp decline in domestic prices triggered by the biting global financial crisis.

Nigerian cocoa prices fell by 10 percent on average in the last month, with the farmgate price down 180,000 naira (\$1,527) per tonne compared to 200,000 naira the previous month.

INTERVIEW-Ivorian cocoa crop seen down at 1 million T

Reuters Ghana, Ghana

By Loucoumane Coulibaly

19 Nov 2008

YAMOOUSSOUKRO, Nov 19 (Reuters) - Black pod disease, excess rain and administrative problems will slash top cocoa grower Ivory Coast's 2008/09 crop to 1 million tonnes, from 1.36 million tonnes last season, the sector chief said on Wednesday. "We think we will have around 1 million tonnes. Perhaps it will be a little more, but we are hoping for at least 1 million tonnes," Gilbert Ano N'Guessan, who heads the country's cocoa sector management committee, told Reuters in an interview.

The management committee was created in late September to run Ivory Coast's cocoa industry after senior officials from a number of administrative bodies were arrested in a clamp-down on graft ordered by President Laurent Gbagbo.

Administrative chaos delayed preparations for the 2008/09 season starting on Oct. 1, meaning cocoa has taken longer than usual to arrive at the country's two ports in large volumes. "Production will be lower," N'Guessan said. "Looking at the level of registrations for export, there is a lag. But we have some hope because the quantities being registered are increasing now, which indicates that exports will increase too." He said the management committee had funded projects to find better ways to combat the ravages of black pod, a fungal disease which exporters said in September would reduce the 2008/09 October-March main crop by 6-8 percent. Measures would include education for farmers in the near term and increased research in the medium term, he said.

N'Guessan said he would leave the capital Yamoussoukro later on Wednesday on a tour of cocoa producing areas, to impress on farmers the need to produce high quality cocoa and to discuss the operations of cooperatives and sector funding with them. N'Guessan has made quality a priority in Ivory Coast, whose cocoa tends to sell at a discount to beans from neighbouring Ghana, the world's No. 2 producer.

N'Guessan has promoted a high guideline price of 700 CFA francs (\$1.35) per kg -- 40 percent up on the previous price of 500 CFA/kg, but he told farmers at the launch of the season that they must produce quality cocoa to get that price.

Farmers in some areas withheld cocoa from sale, demanding they be paid the full guideline price. But many exporters and traders said the price was unrealistic, especially given that world cocoa prices have fallen more than a third from a 28-year high of \$3,290 reached in early July. Benchmark New York cocoa futures <CCc2> were up 1.47 percent at \$2,076 at 1622 GMT on Wednesday. "Whatever we do, without quality the farmer will not get a good price," N'Guessan said. (Reporting by Loucoumane Coulibaly; writing by Alistair Thomson; Editing by Pascal Fletcher and Anthony Barker)

Nigerian Oct cocoa arrivals soar 46 pct yr-on-yr

Reuters Nigeria, Nigeria

20 Nov 2008

LAGOS, Nov 20 (Reuters) - Cocoa arrivals in the port city of Lagos, Nigeria's main export route, soared 46 percent to 20,000 tonnes in October from the same month of last year, an average of estimates by some major exporters showed on Thursday. The rise in arrivals in the first month of the season is a sign Nigeria's 2008/09 cocoa crop would be much higher than that of the previous year, exporters and analysts said.

Nigerian cocoa exports fall 12 pct in Oct yr-on-yr

21 Nov 2008



LAGOS (Reuters) - Nigeria's cocoa exports fell by 12 percent to 9,786 tonnes in October from the same period last year, data from the Federal Produce Inspection Service (FPIS) showed on Friday.

The FPIS is the government agency that certifies cocoa and other farm produce as fit for export mainly to Western markets, where the beans are used for making such things as chocolate, ice cream, cakes, liquor, cosmetics and beverages.

October is the first month of the main crop in Nigeria, the world's No.4 cocoa grower, where output has seen a steady increase in the last three years.

Industry experts have said the actual exports could be much higher than the official figures because some exporters do not make full disclosure of their cargoes at the ports. Exporters have estimated some 20,000 tonnes of cocoa arrived at Lagos in October but much of that volume has not been shipped because of declining international prices.

The global economic crisis has subdued commodity prices, while a surging U.S. dollar has slashed profit margins for Nigerian exporters, a number of whom did not ship any beans last month. "The global cash crunch affected the market, the price was very unstable and some people actually lost money due to the minimal increase in futures trading," Robo Adnuze, a commodity analyst told Reuters.

A sizeable amount of beans is smuggled across Nigerian borders by exporters trying to take advantage of lower port charges in neighbouring countries.

Maintain Ghana's premium quality cocoa – farmers urged

Joy Online, Ghana

Source: GNA

21 November 2008

Mr Samuel Amponsah, Ashanti Regional Manager of the Quality Control Division of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in Kumasi, has urged farmers to produce quality cocoa to enable Ghana retain its image as the best producer of premium quality cocoa globally. He noted that cocoa is the "life-wire" and backbone of the economy and that it was incumbent on them to help improve the foreign exchange earnings of the country.

Mr Amponsah was addressing farmers on quality control operations organised by COCOBOD for farmers at Kunsu, near Mankranso in the Ahafo-Ano-South District of the Ashanti region on Wednesday. It is aimed at educating them on the need to produce quality cocoa and also adopt modern methods of farming to improve their yield. He emphasised the need for them to ferment their cocoa beans for at least six days and dry them well before offering them for sale.

Mr Agyemang advised them to ensure bad cocoa beans were removed and the good ones kept in clean sacks to avoid being infested with insects and rodents. He asked them to use the recommended insecticides in spraying their cocoa farms at all times against black pod disease and Capsid, adding, the only way to control swollen shoot disease was to cut off the cocoa trees for re-planting.

Mr A. Asumadu, Assistant Director at the Ahafo-Ano South Directorate of Food and Agriculture appealed to farmers to diversify their productions so as to improve their incomes. He said extension agents of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) were prepared to educate them on modern methods of farming.

Cocoa industry gets boost in Cagayan Valley

Business Mirror, Philippines

By Rosenda B. Alluad / Correspondent

23 November 2008

CAUAYAN CITY—Cacao growing is expected to flourish again in the region, as at least 5,000 grafted cocoa seedlings were distributed to cocoa farmers in Jones town in Isabela province.

Rogie Simbulan, CocoaPhil area coordinator for Luzon, said at least 200 farm holders were given at least 5,000 seedlings after they completed the required 12-session farmer field-school training in cocoa-farming technology. The CocoaPhil and Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance have been implementing the Sustainable Cocoa Enterprise Solution for Smallholders Alliance 2 (Philippines Success) program in coordination with national and local government agencies in six regions in the country, Simbulan added. It has a foreign funding from the US Department of Agriculture, the CocoaPhil official said.

Postharvest facilities and marketing networks for North Luzon farmers, including Isabela, have been established to ensure the sale of the produced cocoa, he added. Simbulan said even coconut lands are suitable for intercropping with cacao plants. The program aims to train at least 15,000 cocoa farmers and 150 training facilitators and to distribute 1.2 million grafted cocoa seedlings to farmers, he added. A big local demand for cacao beans has been known, as cacao-industry leaders reported that domestic cacao grinders require at least 30,000 tons of dried fermented cacao beans every year, Simbulan said.

A ready market is waiting to be tapped in Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and China, as these countries need at least 100,000 metric tons of dried beans annually, he said. Cacao growing has been flourishing in the Philippines since the 17th century, when Spanish mariner Pedro Bravo de Lagunas planted the crop in San Jose, Batangas, with established commercial cacao farms and cocoa beans production in the 1950s to '60s, stakeholders said.

However, the cacao-industry growth had ceased when the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program took effect in 1988, they added. Cacao beans have been processed into cocoa products such as butter, powder, paste, liquor and chocolate confectionery, Mayor Florante Rasgado of Jones said, citing book researches.

Cocoa powder and cocoa butter are widely used in food products; cocoa butter is also used as a base for moisturizers, cosmetics and suppositories, while its seed and cocoa seed coat are used to treat intestinal conditions, diarrhea, liver, bladder and renal disease, diabetes and others, researches said.

Cocoa promoters have vowed to address concerns such as the current low volume of cocoa beans produced in the country, the presence of cocoa pod borer, high cost of inputs such as fertilizers and chemical pesticides, lack of government support, low availability of quality planting materials, lack of training on organic farming, old unproductive cacao trees, and lack of information dissemination on the value of cocoa to the Philippine agriculture sector.

The Market

SOFTS-Tight short-term supplies bump cocoa higher

Forbes, NY

By Marcy Nicholson and Nigel Hunt

18.11.08

NEW YORK/LONDON, Nov 18 (Reuters) - Cocoa prices rose on Tuesday, boosted by concern about short-term supply tightness while raw sugar tracked losses in some other commodities linked to the gloomy economic outlook, dealers said.

Most of the soft commodities -- coffee, sugar and cocoa -- continued to trade in light volume, however. "The whole global situation's got everyone on pins and needles, so folks are cautious. They're not taking as big positions," said Sterling Smith, vice president with FuturesOne in Chicago. Markets continued to cope amid the worst financial crisis in 80 years.

The slow pace of cocoa arrivals at ports in top producer Ivory Coast, combined with technical buy signals and some options-related buying on the London market, had triggered a sharp rise in the nearby premium this week and created a more bullish mood in the market. "I'm beginning to see some signs of health here. The market seems to be firming up, we're getting a bit of back support, at least on a technical basis," Smith said, about the cocoa markets.

Benchmark March cocoa closed 39 pounds higher at 1,399 pounds a tonne while March cocoa on ICE finished \$69 higher at \$2,046 a tonne. December's premium to March in London was trading around 60 pounds. It was

around \$150 on the ICE platform. "People got a bit spooked (by the rising premium)," one dealer said, adding concern about nearby tightness had prompted short covering by both London and New York.

Raw sugar eased with the worsening economic outlook keeping the market on the defensive although early losses had been trimmed. A lack of new fundamental news kept it moving in light volume, dealers said. ICE March raw sugar finished down 0.13 cent at 11.61 cents, while March whites ended \$2.30 higher at \$325.20 a tonne, in exceptionally light trade. Dealers said sugar may consolidate in the short term between \$310 and \$320, basis March whites, but the grim economic outlook may eventually drive prices down.

Coffee futures ended the day little changed, consolidating on short-covering after Monday's sharp intraday slide. March arabica futures on ICE finished down 0.10 cent at \$1.1460 per lb, in thin dealings. January robustas in London closed \$6 lower at \$1,819 a tonne in heavy volume. Dealers noted a large 25,000 lot trade on January which may have been linked to removing coffee from the 5-tonne contract with positions possibly to be reestablished in the 10-tonne market. January is the last traded month on a 5-tonne basis.

Meanwhile in the world's second biggest coffee grower, Vietnam coffee shipments should rise nine percent to 1.2 million tonnes in 2009, a report from the country's Industry and Trade Ministry said. (Editing by Marguerita Choy)

Ivory Coast cocoa prices firm, quality good

Reuters Ghana, Ghana

19 Nov 2008

ABIDJAN, Nov 19 (Reuters) - Farm-gate prices in Ivory Coast's main cocoa growing regions were firm last week on strong competition amongst shippers for tonnage, farmers and buyers said on Wednesday. Arrivals at port of beans ready for shipment are still around one-half of last year's level, though the pace of deliveries is picking up after a farmers' blockade ended in early November, and as sunny weather has allowed beans to dry, improving the quality. "We don't have the quantities we want. We hope the season will be longer to allow us to have maximum volume," said the purchases manager for a European exporter.

In the western region of Soubre, at the heart of the cocoa belt, the average price increased by 15 CFA francs to 550 CFA francs (\$1.06) per kg. Farmers said the rise was due to the good quality of beans and the buyers' concerns about the availability of supply towards the end of the year. "The fear of exporters that they won't have enough beans until the end of the year is helping a lot in pushing prices higher," said planter Koffi Kouame, whose farm is near Soubre.

Prices on world markets rose to their highest level in six weeks on Wednesday, as traders worried that cocoa was still emerging from the bush much more slowly than last year and there may not be enough to meet demand.

The London contract <LCCH9> traded up to 1,424 pounds (\$2,146) per tonne, its highest level since Oct. 9.

In the centre-western Ivorian region of Daloa, which produces one-quarter of the country's national output, the average price rose slightly by 5 CFA francs per kg to 530 francs supported mainly by competition to collect more beans. "Buyers want cocoa, but above all else they are interested in quantity. If you have quantity, you can negotiate a higher price," farmer Magloire Gnankan said.

Below are average farmgate prices in CFA francs per kg for the week of Nov 10-16, as quoted by private buyers, cooperatives and shippers, and published by the Coffee and Cocoa Bourse (BCC).

Included are prices paid on delivery at San Pedro and Abidjan ports.

	<u>Nov 10-16</u>	<u>Nov 3-9</u>		<u>Nov 10-16</u>	<u>Nov 3-9</u>
Abengourou	n/a	525	Aboisso	495	500
Adzope	525	n/a	Agboville	n/a	n/a
Bongouanou	515	515	Daloa	530	525
Divo	525	545	Gagnoa	n/a	n/a
San Pedro	545	n/a	Sassandra	n/a	n/a
Soubre	550	535	Abidjan (port)	n/a	n/a

UPDATE 3-SOFTS-Cocoa ends near 6-week peak, supplies tight

Forex Pros, British Virgin Islands

By Marcy Nicholson and Nigel Hunt

2008-11-19

NEW YORK/LONDON, Nov 19 (Reuters) - Cocoa prices finished at their highest levels in almost six weeks on Wednesday, buoyed by concern about short-term supply tightness as top producer Ivory Coast's arrivals move slowly, dealers said.

Coffee and sugar also rallied with a boost by widespread gains in other commodity markets linked to a weaker dollar. With the exception of raw sugar, however, the markets turned negative after the greenback reversed.

The markets moved in choppy dealings, falling earlier on pressure from world stocks and oil, as U.S. car makers begged for a bailout from Washington as the credit crisis deepened. "I think it (cocoa) is being helped by the current port arrivals, issues concerning quality and emerging concern that supplies might not be enough despite a perceived drop in demand," Standard Chartered analyst Abah Ofon said.

The firm sterling against the dollar, combined with chart-based buy signals, also gave the U.S. cocoa market a boost, dealers said.

March cocoa in London closed 17 pounds higher at 1,416 pounds a tonne, the highest settlement since Oct. 9. "I think there is a feeling that the market had slumped too far down and maybe that is not supported by the fundamentals at the moment," Ofon said.

March cocoa on ICE closed \$26 higher at \$2,072 a tonne.

Cocoa arrivals at Ivory Coast's port of San Pedro reached 68,551 tonnes from Oct. 1 to Nov. 9, sharply below the 139,478 tonnes during the same period of the 2007/08 season, Coffee and Cocoa Bourse data showed.

Sugar futures finished well below session peaks after a flurry of automatic buy orders were triggered.

Larry Young, senior analyst for brokers Infinity Futures in Chicago, said that once the March raw sugar contract raced past 11.75 cents it took off and automatic buy-order stops kicked in over 12 cents. He said investors then "took profits" and the inability to generate follow-through interest at the top of the range led others to dump the market late. A "breakout to the upside," according to Young, would happen when sugar prices get over 13 cents. A close in March over 12.18 cents should also power sugar higher, he added.

March raws on ICE SBH9> rose 0.06 cent to finish at 11.67 cents a lb, after soaring 6.4 percent to the intraday peak 12.35 cents. March whites in London closed down 20 cents at \$325 a tonne, after jumping 4.2 percent to \$339 earlier. "The market wants to take sugar higher and there is good reason to take sugar higher," Standard Chartered's Ofon said, citing falling output in India and heavy use of sugar cane to produce ethanol in Brazil.

Indian sugar output in the 2008/09 season is forecast at 20 million-22 million tonnes, against 26.3 million tonnes in 2007/08, S.L. Jain, director-general of the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), said on Wednesday.

Coffee futures finished well below their peaks in negative territory. January robusta coffee in London fell \$13 to finish at \$1,806 a tonne while March arabica futures on ICE finished down 0.55 cent at \$1.1405 per lb. (Additional reporting by Phakamisa Ndzamela and Rene Pastor)

Cameroon farm-gate cocoa prices ease in November

Reuters Nigeria, Nigeria

By Tansa Musa

21 Nov 2008

YAOUNDE, Nov 21 (Reuters) - Farm-gate cocoa prices in Cameroon eased slightly in the month to mid-November as large volumes of beans came onto the market and world prices continued to lose ground, farmers said this week.

Cameroon is the world's fifth biggest cocoa grower and produced 187,355 tonnes in the 2007/08 season, which ended on July 31, up from 179,239 metric tonnes the previous season. "We have entered the peak harvesting and marketing period with a lot of produce on the market now, selling at 860-900 CFA francs (\$1.64-\$1.72) per kg, down from 970-1,000 a month ago " said Joseph Nde, of the Cameroon Marketing Commodities (CAMACO).

CAMACO is the top buyer in the main cocoa trading centre of Kumba in Southwest province, which grows half Cameroon's cocoa. Cameroon's peak main-crop harvest season usually runs from November to January, while the smaller mid-crop harvest is from May to July or early August.

Benchmark cocoa prices in New York <CCc2>, already more than one-third down on a 28-year high reached in July, fell by 8 percent in the month to Nov. 17, when they closed at \$1,977 per tonne.

Speaking to Reuters from Konye, about 30 km (20 miles) north of Kumba, the president of Konye Area Farmers Cooperative Union (KONAFSCOOP) Bau Ndedi Makia said the price of cocoa beans had fallen to 830 CFA francs/kg from 950 CFA last month.

The price was still relatively high given the increasing supplies of cocoa as the harvest picked up, he said. He said there were large numbers of both licensed and unlicensed buyers coming into the area from Kumba and Douala, but some were bypassing cooperatives like KONAFSCOOP and going door-to-door to buy direct from farmers and sometimes cheating them by using false scales to weigh the beans.

Cameroon's cocoa authorities complain frequently about unlicensed buyers. A system of regular markets to encourage open competition between purchasers in cocoa-growing villages and towns has failed to get off the ground.

Prices in Mamfe, some 170 km (105 miles) from Kumba, fell to 900 CFA francs/kg from 950-970 in October, farmers said.

PRICES MORE THAN 10 PERCENT DOWN

The fall was greater -- more than 10 percent -- in Centre province, which grows around 35 percent of Cameroon's cocoa.

Prices fell to 880-900 CFA francs/kg, down from 980-1,000 last month in the town of Emana, and to 900-950 CFA/kg from 1025-1075 CFA francs in Bafia, where prices are often highest. "Over the years, farmers in Bafia have been earning the highest prices in the country at any time of the year because over 90 percent of them are members of the local cooperative society where marketing rules are well respected," said Emmanuel Nguile, a farmer and cooperative leader in Bafia. "We don't wait only on Yaounde to tell us what to do to ensure our produce sell well, we have also established links with some major buyers on the world market who keep us abreast with developments worldwide, how we can handle and process our produce to obtain good prices," he said.

Prices in parts of South province, which produces 10-15 percent of Cameroon's cocoa, bucked the downward trend to bounce back from relatively low prices last month, farmers said.

Beans in Sangmelima sold for 880-900 CFA francs/kg, up from 700-800 a month ago, farmer Moise Edou said. The arrival of large numbers of merchants from the capital Yaounde and main port Douala had helped push prices higher, he said. (Editing by Alistair Thomson and Karen Foster)

Business & Economy

Theo Chocolate hopes to start cocoa revolution

Seattle Post Intelligencer

By TOM PAULSON

November 18, 2008

Housed in the same old brick Fremont streetcar barn that in the 1980s headquartered Redhook's leading role in the consumer revolution that led to the explosion in microbrewed beer, Theo Chocolate is trying to launch a revolution in chocolate. "We're trying to change the way this business is being done," said Joe Whinney, the company's founder. Whinney, who for years tried to persuade big chocolate manufacturers in the U.S. and Europe to invest in organic and fair-trade cocoa production, finally decided he might have better luck on his own.

Three years ago, he moved to Seattle from Boston to launch Theo because this area seemed a likely community to support his market-based but socially motivated business proposition. "People everywhere else said to me, 'You think you're going to be able to compete with Hershey's and Mars?' " Whinney said. "In Seattle, they said, 'Of course you can!' This place has the most amazing entrepreneurial spirit I've ever seen, and it's combined with a serious food culture."

Whinney's entrepreneurial idea was born 20 years ago when he worked for a conservation program in Belize and was asked to help Mayan cocoa farmers harvest their crops. His knowledge of chocolate back then, he admits, was "pretty much limited to a Snickers bar."

Working with the cocoa farmers, he gained an understanding of the diverse dietary, cultural and historical significance of chocolate -- as well as of the terrible social, environmental and economic problems afflicting many of those working at the very bottom of this particular food chain. Whinney decided to become part of the solution.

In 1994, working with Costa Rican farmers, he was the first to begin regularly importing organic cocoa beans into the U.S. for the few specialty chocolate makers who would pay the higher prices. In 2006, Whinney started Theo because he thought it was the only way to create a factory entirely devoted to making organic and fair-trade chocolate. "We're more expensive because our product reflects the real cost of doing this right," he said. The farmers need to be guaranteed an ongoing buyer committed to buying these more expensive beans, Whinney said, or else they just go back to using pesticides and other chemical additives in order to do it as cheaply as possible. "The average cocoa farmer today makes about a dollar a day," he said. "It's a terrible situation, but there is a business solution to this if consumers are willing to pay a little more for higher quality chocolate that's grown organically and done in a way that also benefits the farmers."

Last year, Theo was only able to confirm that 80 percent of its chocolate was organic and fairly traded. This year, working closely with farmers in Latin America and parts of Africa, they hope to make it 95 percent.

Rising Ivorian Cocoa Prices Dampen Ghana Trade

Source: Reuters

19/11/2008

APROMPRON, Ivory Coast, Nov 18 - Unlicensed shipments of Ivorian cocoa to neighbouring Ghana have fallen as merchants within Ivory Coast are paying more for beans, buyers and transporters said on Tuesday. When prices within the world's biggest grower Ivory Coast are low, some sellers take beans into Ghana, where they are paid 600 CFA francs (\$1.16) per kg, but rising internal prices are discouraging cross-border trade. "We're coming to buy right now because the price in the bush is more than 550 CFA francs. That's stopped beans going over the border," said a cocoa buyer in the eastern town of Abengourou. "The price in Abidjan is good and we can pay more because the quality is good, but if the price in Abidjan falls and the difference between the price in Ghana and Ivory Coast goes beyond 75 francs, people will prefer to sell in Ghana," he said.

Beans are changing hands for around 610 CFA francs per kg in Abidjan, merchants said, while the most recent data from government marketing body the Coffee and Cocoa Bourse (BCC) put the price in San Pedro port at 590 francs, up from the previous week. Benchmark world prices as set in New York <CCH9> have also ticked up in the past week, from \$1,954 per tonne at the close on Nov. 11 to \$1,993 by 1149 GMT on Tuesday. "Everything depends on the price in Abidjan because if there's at least 75 or 100 francs difference between the two, cocoa goes sometimes to Ghana, sometimes to Ivory Coast, that's how it works here," said Firmin Kouaho, who works in the cocoa transport business in Aprompron, a village close to the Ghanaian border. "The price is the most important thing."

Some sacks of beans made their way over the border in the days after the cocoa farmers' blockade on material leaving the bush ended earlier this month, but rising prices have put a stop to that, he said. "Bit by bit cocoa started going there (Ghana) since it started coming out, but it's not like that any more. It's not going there in great volumes like it did in 2003, 2004 and 2006," Kouaho said.

Ivory Coast must cut cocoa tax for debt help: W Bank

By Ange Aboa

Fri 21 Nov 2008

ABIDJAN (Reuters) - The World Bank is pressing Ivory Coast to cut taxes on its chief export cocoa by around half by 2010 in order to qualify for debt relief. The West African country is the world's biggest cocoa producer,

but a 2002-2003 war divided the nation and ruined an economy which was once the region's strongest, leaving it with debts that now stand at \$14 billion.

Ivory Coast could clear debts of more than \$3 billion by mid-2009 if it signs up to the World Bank's criteria for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) scheme. "A certain degree of tax is necessary and indeed desirable, but equally this tax must not penalise the farmer," World Bank country director for Ivory Coast Madani Tall told Reuters in an interview late on Wednesday. "We are in discussions but we think a tax rate capped around 22-25 percent would be reasonable, and along the same lines as other countries comparable to Ivory Coast, rather than 46 percent as it is today," Tall said. This is Ivory Coast's third attempt at HIPC debt relief.

A government-appointed committee was put in place to manage the cocoa sector earlier this year after an ongoing corruption probe had brought operations to standstill. One of its first moves was to lower levies used to fund industry administration by 60 percent. But Tall said that with state taxes still in place, farmers receive much less than their product commands on world markets. "In Ivory Coast, the farmer receives between 35 and 40 percent of the international cocoa price, in contrast to farmers in Ghana, Indonesia and Nigeria, who get 65, 70, and 90 percent in Indonesia's case," he said. "There is more work to do to get more money into the pockets of Ivorian farmers."

Cocoa, which accounts for around 20 percent of Ivorian gross domestic product, traded at \$2,003 a tonne in early business on the benchmark New York futures market on Thursday, down sharply from a long-term high of more than \$3,000 hit in July.

CUT OUT CORRUPTION

As well as lowering taxes, corruption in the cocoa sector must be tackled, Tall said. "It's a sector in which there have been a lot of problems of governance, of corruption, of intransparency, and of inefficiency of management, and it is important that the government takes corrective measures," he said.

While Africa has so far not been affected by the world financial crisis to the same degree as other, richer regions, nor is it immune to the economic fallout, he said. He revised down the World Bank's 2008 growth forecast for Ivory Coast to 1.8 percent from a previous estimate of 3 percent as a result of the financial crisis, and said growth in 2009 would be 2 percent.

The World Bank is negotiating an allocation of \$100-150 million in budgetary aid to Ivory Coast's government, which should be finalised in January, Tall said. As well as helping struggling banks, the funds are intended to finance cocoa and energy sector reforms and improve management of public finances, he said.

Four or five banks were particularly in need of help, he said, without naming them. "In general, the banking system is holding up well, but there are some banks which are in difficulties and we must work with them to reinforce internal governance, recapitalise some of them," he said. "The world banking system is in difficulty, and Ivory Coast is not isolated from that," he said.

Labour Issues

Ghana: Eliminating Worst Forms of Child Labour in Cocoa Areas

AllAfrica.com, Washington

Frederick Asiamah

21 November 2008

Ghana will not miss the 2011 deadline for the elimination of worst forms of child labour in cocoa, according to the National Programme for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Cocoa (NPECLC). This is because the nation is making steady progress in the quest to discourage the use of child labour in cocoa, Mrs. Rita Owusu-Amankwah, National Programme Manager of the NPECLC, has told the Public Agenda.

She spoke to this paper during the "6th Partners' Meeting to discuss Coordination of Worst Forms of Child Labour Interventions in Ghana's Cocoa Sector." The meeting was also in response to some recommendations made at the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) conference organised in the United Kingdom earlier in the year. Of immediate interest were some recommendations made at the ICI conference as well as some emerging issues, especially the need to investigate how child trafficking was related to the cocoa sector.

Among others, the ICI conference recommended the following urgent actions to be tackled at the government level: "Disseminate widely National Action Plans and ensure a regular national coordination mechanism that allows all partners to contribute to these plans, share information and build on lessons learned"; and "Extend the regular cocoa sector studies to drive effective policy, remediation and corrective action."

Mrs. Owusu-Amankwah noted that the NPECLC was already doing all of these, as well as many other things. She said the programme had already completed two studies: a pilot study that covered six cocoa-growing districts and a scale-up study which covered 15 cocoa-growing districts.

And, based on the findings, the programme was doing remediation activities in various cocoa districts. The remediation activities included support to over 1,300 children in cocoa-growing communities in 14 districts to access formal education and employable skills. Besides, "Child Rights Clubs" have been formed in about 15 communities. Elsewhere, 13 District Child Protection Committees (DCPC) and 110 Community Child Protection Committees in the cocoa-growing districts have been formed.

Presently, there are 61 cocoa-growing districts. But the programme works in only 11 and hopes to add 36 more by the end of 2008. The National Programme Officer says the NPECLC should be working in all the 61 districts by the end of 2009; and this should boost efforts to get rid of Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) in cocoa.

WFCL embraces practices like slavery, compulsory labour, bondage, prostitution, and pornography. Also included in WFCL is work that is hazardous or harmful or interferes with a child's education. The NPECLC contends that opinions differ on what actually constitutes hazardous work. In response, the programme has developed a Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework (HAF). The HAF categorises activities such as spraying insecticides; applying fungicides and herbicides; working on farm for too long; peg cutting; lining and pegging; felling and chopping trees; and using cutlass for weeding as hazardous.

In the scale-up cocoa survey conducted in 2007/2008 cocoa season, the NPECLC reported that about 46% of children had participated in at least one hazardous cocoa activity during the previous cocoa farming season in relation to the HAF. This study, according to the researchers, covered areas that together produced 60% of the total cocoa output in Ghana in the 2004/2005 cocoa season, and included all the six cocoa-growing regions in Ghana.

In September 2008, two journalists who toured some cocoa-growing communities in the Brong Ahafo and Western Regions majority (about 60%) of children in these communities, aged between 10 and 15 years, undertook one or more activity classified as hazardous under the HAF. However, the team found no cases of forced child labour or bondage, which has been one of the issues raised by the western media.

In fact, the NPECLC was created in 2006 in response to negative international press that Ghana had received in respect to the existence of WFCL within the cocoa production chain. The goal of the programme is to eliminate WFCL in the cocoa sector by 2011 and contribute towards the elimination of WFCL in all sectors by 2015.

One of the key things the NPECLC has done is the development of the Community-Based Child Labour Monitoring (CCLM) system which carries out community surveillance, data collection, analysis, reporting and remediation. Another is the institution of the "Partners' Forum" at which organizations implementing projects and programmes to eliminate WFCL in cocoa discuss activities and plans, and share best practices.

At the partners' meeting, there were suggestions that remediation activities should not only take place at the community level; but remediation should reflect in policy approaches at the national level.

Research & Development

Hot Ingredient: Cocoa Beans

SkinInc.com, IL

From www.CosmeticsandToiletries.com

November 19, 2008

Mibelle Biochemistry has sourced cocoa beans for their relaxation effects. According to the company, cocoa beans contain several "feel-good" chemicals including anandamide, a lipophilic substance that is also naturally

produced in the brain. With this information, it launched NanoCacao, a lipophilic fraction of cocoa beans encapsulated in a nano-emulsion.

The liposoluble fraction of cocoa bean contains anandamide, which is also naturally produced in the brain. Anandamide is a neurotransmitter that activates the same target as marijuana and thus stimulates mood. Cocoa beans contain several “feel-good” chemicals including anandamide, a lipophilic substance that is also naturally produced in the brain. This neurotransmitter induces euphoria, regulates appetite and relaxes muscles. Anandamide binds to the cannabinoid receptors that are also present on certain skin cells.

The company reported the nano-emulsion to improve the smoothness of the skin’s micro-relief in vivo. Therefore, it can relax and smooth the skin leading to an improvement of the complexion. The product is available as NanoCacao (INCI: Theobroma cacao extract/Theobroma cacao (cocoa) extract (and) glycerin (and) lecithin (and) tocopherol (and) caprylic/capric triglyceride (and) phenoxyethanol (and) water (aqua)), a water-soluble cocoa bean lipophilic fraction encapsulated in a nano-emulsion, and NanoCacao O (INCI: Theobroma cacao extract /theobroma cacao (cocoa) extract (and) tocopherol (and) caprylic /capric triglyceride), an oil-soluble cocoa bean lipophilic fraction.

Preparation of the two versions of cacao are prepared from the “Criollo” variety of cacao beans. This type, found in South America, is used only for high quality chocolate because of its extremely rich aroma and flavor. Cocoa fruit is opened and the beans start to ferment naturally, thus developing first aroma. After drying and cleaning, the fermented cocoa beans are roasted until they start to crack and develop their full aroma. Then the husk is removed and the cocoa beans are crushed into nibs. Cocoa nibs are then extracted in an inert oil to obtain NanoCacao O. The oil is then encapsulated in a nano-emulsion to obtain NanoCacao.

Chocolate history dates back to the ancient Mayan people of Central America. They made a thick rich liquid by roasting and grinding cocoa beans and mixing them in water with maize meal, vanilla and chili. Since the 19th century, Switzerland has become one of the world's leading chocolate manufacturers due to its breakthrough technique of chocolate processing and due to the stringent selection of raw materials.

Many people are addicted to chocolate more than to any other food. As a reputed aphrodisiac, chocolate has also been credited with various other feel-good properties and is often regarded as a “comforter” and an anti-depressive. Several studies have been performed on the craving for chocolate and results showed that different factors were involved in this phenomenon, especially the feel-good chemicals of the cocoa beans, hormonal influences and chocolate’s sensory qualities.

Chocolate is made of cocoa beans, the seeds of the tree Theobroma cacao meaning “food of the gods”. Consisting of almost 50% of cocoa butter rich in unsaturated fatty acids, cocoa beans also contain different compounds having “feel-good” effects. The hydrosoluble ones are stimulant alkaloids including theobromine and phenylethylamine.

The smoothing effect of NanoCacao was evaluated in a study with 20 volunteers aged from 36 to 61. An emulsion containing 3% of NanoCacao was applied twice daily for 28 days to the crow’s-feet. The cutaneous micro-relief was analyzed by means of phase-shifting rapid in vivo measurement of skin (PRIMOS). Results showed a smoothing effect of the skin’s micro-relief in 95% of the subjects. In a second placebo-controlled study, an emulsion containing 3% NanoCacao was applied once daily for 28 days to the crow’s-feet area. As a control, the placebo cream was applied on the other side of the face. After 28 days, the number of micro furrows was reduced by 8% compared to the placebo treatment.

In an in-vitro study, the effect of NanoCacao on the contraction of innervated muscles was analyzed. Human muscle fibers were cultivated with spinal cord nerve cells in a co-culture until the muscle developed many mature neuromuscular junctions and started to contract. Cultures were observed with an inverted microscope with video camera. Then, the test products (NanoCacao and carisoprodol as a myo-relaxant reference) were added. Muscle contractions were counted for 30 sec just before the product application and also 1 min, 2 hours and 24 hours afterwards. Also, cell viability was evaluated in parallel by the MTT assay. Then, the test products were removed from the culture and 24 hours later, contractions were counted again for 30 sec. Results showed that NanoCacao slowed down the frequency of muscle fiber contraction after 24 hours of incubation. The complete reversibility of this effect was demonstrated. The company finds the products to de-stress and relax the skin in addition to reducing skin tension and smoothing micro-relief. They are recommended for anti-stress formulations, color cosmetics and wellness products.

Others

The Chocolate Story'

Geneva Sun, IL

By MIKE DANAHEY Staff Writer

November 19, 2008

Rick Moser wrote his first book, *The Chocolate Story*, on his MacBook in front of the fireplace at Graham's 318 in Geneva. "I was drinking a lot of cocoa there," he said. So it's only fitting that Moser returned to the scene of his muse to read from his children's fable Saturday morning. The book already is on sale at Graham's 318 at Graham's Fine Chocolates & Ice Cream, 302 South Third St.

The *Chocolate Story* sprang from a tale Moser improvised for his children when they were younger. "I just made it up when taking walks with them in local forest preserves," he said. "I always loved fables, and I always loved chocolate. Then the story came to mind, one that has lessons like Aesop."

The story is reminiscent of Grimm's fairy tale, *Hansel and Gretel*, because it involves two young children who wander off into the woods, where they happen to find a house made of sweets -- in this case chocolate. But instead of encountering a cannibal witch, the brother and sister learn a lesson or two about making choices from the kindly Chocolate Man. The boy and girl in Moser's sweet yarn are named after two of his three children, Emily, 16, and Nick, 12. Nick was at Saturday's reading to sign books with his dad.

Moser had about 20 friends, some of them teachers, look over the book, which is geared toward pupils in kindergarten through fourth grade, he said. Moser, who lives with his family in St. Charles, runs his own graphic design business, WideSpark Inc., in downtown Elgin. *The Chocolate Story* is illustrated by Geneva artist Rex Bohn, whose office is in St. Charles.

Moser intended for Bohn to make the comic book-like panels look as if they were carved out of chocolate. "We started there, then I went more to my normal style, which is scratchboard," Bohn said. "That's where you have an all-black sheet with white underneath and you use a knife instead of a pen to scratch out the illustration."

Moser is donating \$1 from every book sold to the Geneva, Switzerland-based International Cocoa Initiative, a partnership working to combat child and forced labor in cocoa-growing parts of West Africa, which accounts for about 70 percent of the world's crop. The group intends to put the money toward building a school in Ghana. "Most of those children have never even had a chocolate bar," said Moser.

As for his own tastes in chocolate, "I prefer dark because it's more healthy," said Moser, who bakes chocolate chip cookies made from his mother's recipe. "She's not related to the Chocolate Man," Moser said, "and she's an excellent baker."

Cocoa butter integral part of chocolate, candies

Palm Beach Post, United States

By Gholam Rahman

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Question: What is cocoa butter? I saw a doctor talking about it on TV and it seemed as if it comes from a plant. He said it has heart benefits. - Doris, Palm Beach Gardens

Answer: Despite its "butter" handle, cocoa butter is purely of plant origin. Also called theobroma oil, the light yellow butterlike fat is pressure-extracted from cacao beans, which also are where chocolate comes from. Cocoa butter, of course, is an integral part of chocolate, especially milk chocolate, and this is what gives these delectables their smooth, melting mouth-feel.

The chemical properties of cocoa butter make it a very stable fat, with shelf life well over a year. In addition to chocolates and candies, it is widely used in cosmetics, soaps and a variety of healing lotions and creams. Research does indicate that cocoa butter has health benefits not only in treating skin diseases but that it may play some role in improving the cholesterol profile for a healthier heart.

But by itself, cocoa butter has no real use in home kitchens and is not widely available in grocery stores. Guess you'll just have to settle for eating some chocolate for your health. The dark chocolate varieties are best.

Q. I have promised an Indian friend of mine that I will ask this question for her. What do you call tulsi in English, and would you happen to know where it can be found? - Nighat Siddiqui, via e-mail

A. *Ocimum sanctum* or *tenuiflorum* in scientific Latin, or just holy basil in English, tulsi is a member of the basil family. It is native to India and is regarded there as a sacred herb, dedicated variously to the Hindu godheads Krishna, Vishnu, Lakshmi or Rama.

It is an erect, leafy plant that grows to 2 to 3 feet tall and has either green or purplish leaves, depending on the two types. Tulsi plants have a very special niche in the yards of many devout Hindu families in India, even abroad. The aromatic, somewhat coarse leaves of the tulsi plant are, however, rarely used for culinary purposes there, although they have some limited use in Thai cuisine. Neither does the sweet basil have a place in the vast culinary repertoire of India. The veneration for the tulsi plant probably grew out of its exceptional medicinal properties, which has earned it an important place in the ancient Ayurvedic system of medicine.

In many ancient cultures, the assignment of sacred status to a thing was originally designed to ensure its preservation - take, for instance, the cow, central to the agrarian economy of ancient India.

As for its availability, I couldn't find a local source. None of the nurseries I tried had the tulsi variety and had no idea where to get it. But long live the Internet! A Google search turned up a host of links - for tulsi-based health products as well as for live plants and seeds. One promising site is neemtreefarms.com in Brandon (phone: 813-661-8873). If any of our readers know of a local source, please let me know.

Bittersweet cacao

Food of the gods wrapped in exploitation and unfairness

Edmonton Sun, Canada

By VIVIAN SONG, NATIONAL BUREAU

23/11/2008

SAN JOSE VILLAGE, Belize -- Eladio Pop drinks a tonic of cacao, sugar, black pepper and hot water about four times a day. It's the food of gods, the cacao farmer says, as he takes a big gulp of the elixir from a metal canteen, filling every cavity of his mouth, rolling it around like a fine wine before swallowing and taking another swig.

It's also, apparently, a potent aphrodisiac. Pop is a virile man at the age of 49 with 15 children between the ages of nine months and 29 years. "This is what I've been doing all my life," he says proudly, in his bare-bones, thatch-roofed home. "I've become a big family ... it is a powerful drink."

Once upon a time, cocoa was deified and mystified, its beans traded as currency in pre-Columbian commerce before being transformed into a cheapened vessel for sugar, nuts and nougat. Its botanical name, *Theobroma*, translates to "food of the gods," and in Mayan culture was incarnated as Ek Chua, an intimidating god of cocoa with a large hook nose and rimmed eyes. But Ek Chua also represented the god of conflict, which could explain why the cacao industry has been plagued by forces far darker and more sinister than any small confectionary pleasure should carry.

Unfair trading practices by "Big Chocolate" companies reduce destitute cacao farmers in Africa, for instance, into using child slaves. Up until this year, when a certification program on cocoa labour practices was put in place, tens of thousands of children trafficked from Mali into the Ivory Coast were beaten, starved and locked in tiny dark huts to prevent them from fleeing, according to a 2001 BBC report. Most have never tasted the end product for which they toil and angrily charge that the West eats their flesh whenever we blithely bite into a \$1.25 bar.

French-Canadian reporter Guy-Andre Kieffer has been missing since 2004 and is presumed dead after he was kidnapped in the Ivory Coast, where he had been asking too many questions about murky machinations in the country's powerful cocoa industry. CBC journalist Carol Off picked up on Kieffer's work in her book *Bitter Chocolate: Investigating the Dark Side of the World's Most Seductive Sweet*, and was also warned not to probe too deeply.

But in southern Belize, organic cacao farmers have empowered themselves with the formation of the Toledo Cacao Growers Association, a group of about 200 producers who are sustained by one sole buyer and one powerful mark -- Fairtrade.

Green & Black's, an organic chocolate brand based in the U.K., became the first in Britain to launch a Fairtrade product with its Maya Gold chocolate bar in 1994. Farmers are paid more than three times their African counterparts at \$2.30 a pound, thanks to an organic and Fairtrade premium. The cocoa grown in southern Belize is among the world's best. It is, after all, where cocoa was first domesticated.

To drink cocoa like the farmers, with a hint of allspice or pepper, is to drink cocoa at its purest. It's a rich, heady broth of authentic cocoa, its intensity evocative of a strong brew of coffee and coats the tongue in dark liquid chocolate. Young pods are either green or red and ripen to yellow or orange respectively. Children will suck on the pulp of the seeds like candy that tastes faintly like melon, or it will ferment in a huge vat before dried to become cacao beans. Not only has it helped sustain Pop's brood of a family, but cacao also saved him from an old evil. "My father was an alcoholic," he says.

The healing and spiritual properties of cacao are used to celebrate weddings and fiestas today for the same reasons ancient Mayan kings drank the elixir thousands of years ago. "Cocoa really raises the heart and mind," Pop says in reverence. "It's so powerful, that's my belief."

TIT BITS

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

London cocoa up, coffee and sugar down

LONDON (November 18, 2008): cocoa futures rose on Monday as the slow pace of arrivals at Ivory Coast ports sparked a sharp widening in the front month's premium, dealers said. Coffee and sugar prices were lower, however, as traders began to focus more closely on the gloomy economic outlook. Both markets had held up comparatively well as other commodity markets fell steeply in recent weeks.

US MIDDAY: coffee sinks; cocoa jumps

NEW YORK (November 18, 2008): Arabica coffee tumbled more than 4 percent in early trade on Monday, as spillover pressure from other commodities triggered sell-stops, while US cocoa continued its move higher, traders said.

Ivory Coast cocoa arrivals down

ABIDJAN (November 18, 2008): cocoa arrivals at ports in No 1 grower Ivory Coast totalled 158,000 tonnes from October 1 to November 16, sharply down from the 340,982 tonnes received in the same period last season, exporters estimated on Monday. According to the rough weekly estimate, 40,000 tonnes of beans arrived at the ports of Abidjan and San Pedro between November 10 and November 16, down from 57,871 tonnes in the same week of the 2007/08 season.

US MIDDAY: coffee and cocoa up

NEW YORK (November 19, 2008): Arabica coffee bounced higher in early trade Tuesday ahead of the spot-month contract's first notice day Wednesday, while US cocoa continued to climb on follow-through support, traders said. Arabica coffee for March delivery was up 0.45 cent at \$1.1515 per lb by 9:15 am EST (1415 GMT). Session range from \$1.1370 and \$1.1585.

London cocoa rises

LONDON (November 19, 2008): cocoa prices rose on Tuesday, boosted by concern about short-term supply tightness while raw sugar eased, tracking losses in some other commodities linked to the gloomy economic outlook, dealers said. Dealers said the slow pace of arrivals at ports in top cocoa producer Ivory Coast, combined with some options-related buying, had triggered a sharp rise in the nearby premium this week and created a more bullish mood in the market.

Rising Ivorian cocoa prices dampen Ghana trade

APROMPRON (November 19, 2008): Unlicensed shipments of Ivorian cocoa to neighbouring Ghana have fallen as merchants within Ivory Coast are paying more for beans, buyers and transporters said on Tuesday. When prices within the world's biggest grower Ivory Coast are low, some sellers take beans into Ghana, where they are paid 600 CFA francs (\$1.16) per kg, but rising internal prices are discouraging cross-border trade.

London cocoa, coffee and sugar rise

LONDON (November 20, 2008): cocoa prices rose to their highest levels in almost six weeks on Wednesday, buoyed by supply tightness heightened by the slow pace of arrivals at ports in top producer Ivory Coast, dealers said. Coffee and sugar also rose, boosted by widespread gains in other commodity markets linked to a weaker dollar.

US MIDDAY: coffee down, cocoa flat

NEW YORK (November 20, 2008): Arabica coffee futures turned lower in early trade on Wednesday, while US cocoa was flat but far below its session highs, on pressure from the weak commodity complex and global stocks amid the ongoing credit crisis, traders said.

London sugar, coffee and cocoa fall

LONDON (November 21, 2008): Sugar, arabica coffee and cocoa futures fell on Thursday, tracking losses in oil and other commodity and equity markets, as global economic gloom deepened. World stocks hit 5-1/2 year lows and oil hit 22-month troughs on Thursday on worries over bank giant Citigroup and US automakers, though they trimmed losses on an increased Saudi stake in Citi and a Swiss rate cut.