

COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance



Issue No. 314

15th – 19th December 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)
15th December	1,694.74	2,579.94	1,695.33	2,569.33
16th December	1,685.35	2,585.80	1,703.67	2,561.67
17th December	1,688.96	2,630.39	1,717.00	2,610.67
18th December	1,693.98	2,675.42	1,782.67	2,660.00
19th December	1,681.28	2,597.59	1,766.00	2,577.00
Average	1,687.39	2,622.30	1,742.34	2,602.34

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

Monday 15th December 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Mar-09	1642	1696	51	1698	1635	7,747
May-09	1641	1690	49	1691	1633	1,419
Jul-09	1645	1700	50	1701	1642S	1,166
Sep-09	1630	1678	40	1649S	1630	74
Dec-09	1622	1648	39	1622	1620S	60
Mar-10	1616	1644	40	1642	1616	111
May-10		1652	39			0
Jul-10		1652	39			0
Sep-10		1652	39			0
Dec-10		1652				0
Totals		1666				10,577

Tuesday 16th December 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar-09	1697	1707	11	1709	1675	6,439
May-09	1690	1699	9	1702	1673S	9,090
Jul-09	1700	1705	5	1704S	1679	2,999
Sep-09		1689	11			0
Dec-09	1643	1657	9	1649S	1642	195
Mar-10		1655	11			0
May-10		1663	11			0
Jul-10		1663	11			0
Sep-10		1663	11			0
Dec-10		1663	11			0
Totals		1678				18,723

Wednesday 17th December 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar-09	1729	1720	13	1765	1696	10,120
May-09	1722	1714	15	1751	1710	1,628
Jul-09	1721	1717	12	1748	1705	964
Sep-09	1729	1700	11	1729	1729	13
Dec-09	1698	1670	13	1706S	1670	1,101
Mar-10	1695	1669	14	1695	1679	38
May-10		1677	14			0
Jul-10		1677	14			0
Sep-10		1677	14			0
Dec-10		1677	14			0
Totals		1690				13,864

Thursday 18th December 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar-09	1718	1790	70	1806	1672	6,983
May-09	1701	1778	64	1779S	1660	1,551
Jul-09	1679	1780	63	1783	1661	421
Sep-09	1650	1760	60	1735	1650	36
Dec-09	1640	1740	70	1729S	1640	221
Mar-10	1658	1729	60	1720S	1658	25
May-10		1734	57			0
Jul-10		1734	57			0
Sep-10		1734	57			0
Dec-10		1734	57			0
Totals		1751				9,237

Friday 19th December 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar-09	1811	1774	-16	1822S	1752	5,124
May-09	1795	1762	-16	1805	1755	1,489
Jul-09	1794	1762	-18	1806S	1761	580
Sep-09	1770	1744	-16	1770	1770	10
Dec-09	1750	1714	-26	1762S	1735	650
Mar-10	1730	1702	-27	1738	1730	77
May-10		1712	-22			0
Jul-10		1712	-22			0
Sep-10		1712	-22			0
Dec-10		1712	-22			0
Totals		1731				7,930

Average for the week		1738				9951
Total for the week						49,754

Heal a Nutrition

Chocolates, man's weakness since forever

Merinews, India - 21 Dec 2008

Who can resist dark, sweet piece of chocolate. You would need a super human effort to stop at a small piece once you open a bar or box of chocolates! The earliest records of chocolate were over 1,500 years ago in the rain forests of Central America.

RIGHTFULLY DESCRIBED as the 'original sin', the feel of a melting chocolate in your mouth can only be described as blissful. The satiny appearance, smooth texture and the aroma of chocolate can make anyone forget everything and think of only placing it in the mouth.

Very few people can resist the temptation of a rich, sweet chocolate and those who can know how difficult that is. Chocolates have a heavenly, feel good factor about these and are aptly described as comfort food.

The earliest records of chocolate were over 1,500 years ago in the rain forests of Central America. The Cacao tree, from which chocolate is derived was worshipped by the Mayan civilisation, who inhabited Central America. Cacao is a Mayan word, which was corrupted to 'Cocoa' by early European explorers, meaning 'God Food'. The Mayans brewed a drink by fermenting a mixture of roasted and pounded cocoa beans, maize and capsicum. The drink was used in ceremonies and drunk by the wealthy and religious elite.

Chocolate made its appearance in Europe in the early 16th century when European explorers from the new world brought it to Spain. Chocolate, as we know it today, first appeared in 1847 when Fry & Sons, of England, mixed sugar with cocoa powder and cocoa butter to produce the first solid chocolate bar. Later, in 1875 a Swiss manufacturer, Daniel Peters, found a way to combine cocoa powder and cocoa butter with sugar and dried milk powder to produce the first milk chocolate. Rest is chocolate history.

It is true that there are few chemicals found in chocolate, especially dark chocolate that makes us feel good. It contains certain chemicals that act similar to pain killers and anti-depressants. It is believed to release chemicals, which simulate the feeling we get when in love and we also know that chocolate contains heart-healthy antioxidants. Chocolate certainly isn't a cure-all but one of nature's finest gifts to mankind! The downside is that as chocolate is high in both fat and calories and it's difficult to really balance out the benefits compared to the fat intake. The obvious solution is to just have a small amount but that is not as simple as it sounds. But hey! who wants to know the health benefits? With that heavenly taste, I am sure nobody even bothers. Do you want to test your will power? Keep a box of good, rich chocolate in front of you. The will power will simply vanish. Who wants to count calories and watch the weight then? Just indulge yourself and you can worry about a ruined diet later.

I am sure there have numerous occasions when you can't decide on a present and ended up buying chocolates. It is the safest and probably the best thing to buy. A box of chocolate as a gift is sure to bring a smile on most faces. What would Christmas or Valentine's Day be without chocolate?

Some things go together naturally and no one can give a logical explanation why. One of these popular pairings is chocolate with love and romance. I guess the fact that chocolate has traditionally, since the days of the Mayans and Aztecs, been considered to be an aphrodisiac could explain. And this theory has survived the ages. I am sure nobody wants this explanation. The smile on your beloved's face on seeing a big box of yummy, melt in the mouth, chocolates is reason enough.

After all this chocolate talk, there is only one thing left to do – open a box and get lost in chocolate paradise.

Production & Quality

Ghana cocoa purchases down by a third - industry

By Kwasi Kpodo

ACCRA, Dec 16 (Reuters) - Cocoa purchases declared by private buyers to Ghana's Cocobod industry regulator in the first 12 weeks of the 2008/09 season were down by a third at just over 300,000 tonnes, industry sources said on Tuesday.

The first 12 weeks of the 2007/08 season, which started slightly later in the year than the current season, saw buyers purchase some 480,000 tonnes of beans in Ghana, the world's second biggest cocoa producer after neighbouring Ivory Coast.

Optimism the earlier start to the season may contribute to a bumper harvest has given way to disappointment as purchases have failed to keep pace even with last season's average harvest.

However, one industry source said there were signs that rains falling ahead of the seasonal Harmattan wind would help crop development for a late harvest from February. "We are beginning to see the pattern we saw in 2005/06, where we did not have the expected high yield in the first three months until getting to end," the source said, adding that field analysis had indicated that this year's crop "will come later."

Ghana harvested a record 740,457 tonnes in 2005-06. "The slow output is not a problem for now because there are signs that we are not going to get a severe Harmattan, that means the season may be good at the end like we saw in 2005-06," the source added.

Rainfall data released by the Ghana Meteorological Agency this week showed rainfall in many cocoa growing areas was higher in the first 10 days of December than a year ago.

Cocobod has projected to buy about 650,000 tonnes of cocoa through the entire crop year, including 600,000 tonnes from the main crop, which usually starts in October and lasts 33 weeks.

This season's main crop is set to last longer than that because the government opened the season several weeks early to counter a surge in smuggling of Ghanaian beans across the border to Ivory Coast to take advantage of relatively high prices there.

Ghana has set an ambitious target of harvesting 1 million tonnes of cocoa by 2010 through increased use of fertilisers and improved farming practices.

"WHERE'S THE COCOA?"

The source said the 650,000-tonne target was attainable.

"We have been monitoring the yield and for now we have no basis to say that we are not going to achieve it."

But both buyers and farmers have told Reuters the season had been slow compared to last year.

"Nobody seems to know where the cocoa is. We had expected to be seeing the end of the bullish period at this time, which normally gives way to other diversionary activities such as the Christmas but that didn't happen this year," a top buyer said.

Atta Kyere, a 68-year-old cocoa farmer in the Western region, said his harvest had dropped by more than 10 percent.

"It's not only me ... Everbody is complaining the harvest is slow, except a few patches on the northern zone of the (Western) region which have recorded some levels," Kyere told Reuters.

But he said all was not lost yet, and he hoped yields would pick up in January.

"Sometimes it happens, we have gone through this before -- about three years ago -- so we're looking up to the period after the Harmattan," he said.

CORRECTED-UPDATE 2-Nigerian cocoa Nov arrivals rise 3 pct yr-yr

(Corrects paragraph 12 to show total arrivals since October rose 17 percent to 50,000 tonnes)

By Tume Ahemba

LAGOS, Dec 16 (Reuters) - Cocoa arrivals in the port city of Lagos, Nigeria's main export route, rose 3 percent to 30,000 tonnes in November compared with the same period last season, an average of estimates by some major exporters showed on Tuesday. The slight increase in Lagos arrivals is consistent with the trend since the start of the 2008/09 cocoa main crop in October, and a sign this season's output could be better than the previous year.

Despite the year-on-year rise in arrivals, exporters said the volume of beans was lower-than-expected mainly because the global financial crisis had encouraged widespread hoarding by farmers in protest over unattractive local prices.

"November arrivals would have been much higher than those of last year, but most farmers were reluctant to sell due to low local prices," one exporter told Reuters.

The farmgate price of Nigerian cocoa beans rose 16 percent to 210,000 naira (\$1,550) on average per tonne from the previous month, but was unchanged from a year ago.

The upcountry price for graded cocoa -- beans certified fit for export by government produce inspectors -- was up at 240,000 naira per tonne compared to 220,000 naira a year ago, but a weaker naira versus the U.S. dollar meant the current price was lower in value.

Nigeria's main cocoa regions are enjoying drier weather with long sunny spells after months of heavy downpours, making it conducive for growers to ferment and dry the beans used for making chocolate, liquor, ice cream, beverages and comestics.

NOT BUYING RUBBISH

Buyers and exporters said the bean quality improved over the last month with mould levels down to 5 percent on average, the maximum acceptable level for the international market.

"Due to low demand, any farmer bringing beans to the market must make sure the quality is high because nobody is willing to buy rubbish," Felix Oladunjoye, general secretary of the Cocoa Processors' Association of Nigeria, told Reuters.

About 20 percent of beans that come to Lagos is bought by local grinders, who have seen their capacity drop sharply since October thanks to the global credit crunch that has all but wiped out new export orders from Europe.

Nigeria's main crop traditionally runs from October to March, with November and December as peak months for harvest.

Total Lagos arrivals in the two months since October rose 17 percent to 50,000 tonnes above the same period of the 2007/08 season, the estimates showed.

An estimated 10-15 percent of Nigeria's cocoa output is shipped through the remote southeastern port city of Calabar, capital of Cross River state on the border with Cameroon. Following is an average of estimated Lagos cocoa arrivals:

	<u>2008/09</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
October	20,000	13,700
November	30,000	29,000

Ivorian cocoa prices rise further on supply fears

ABIDJAN, Dec 17 (Reuters) - Cocoa farmgate prices in most of Ivory Coast's growing regions kept their upward momentum last week as rates rose at ports and buyers anticipated a shortage of supply in the New Year, farmers and exporters said on Wednesday. Figures from the Coffee and Cocoa Bourse (BCC) showed average prices well above 600 CFA francs (\$1.23) per kg in most regions and more than 700 francs in one area. One buyer said prices at San Pedro port exceeded the 745 CFA franc official estimate.

Cocoa arrivals at ports in the world's top grower have improved in recent weeks and reached 356,000 tonnes from Oct. 1 to Dec. 14, exporters estimated on Monday. However, the accumulated total was still sharply down from 650,429 tonnes in the same period of the previous season.

Fears of a shortage of cocoa from Ivory Coast helped propel London cocoa futures to a 22-year high on Wednesday.

The May <LCKK9> contract rose 52 pounds, or more than 3 percent, to a peak of 1,751 pounds a tonne.

"Exporters bought cocoa at very high prices at Abidjan port to ensure they secured maximum volumes," said the purchasing manager of a European exporter based in the main city Abidjan.

"We hit 800 francs per kg at the port because they (the exporters) think the campaign will be short and there will be a deficit in volumes in January."

Ivory Coast had a troubled start to the season after many farmers went on strike complaining buyers were not paying the non-binding guideline price of 700 CFA francs set by sector administrators when the new season was launched in October.

But farmgate prices have steadily risen as concerns mounted over the 2008/09 harvest, which has been hit by poor weather and disease. Administrators have slashed the crop forecast to 1 million tonnes, down from around 1.3 million last year.

BCC figures from the centre-western region of Daloa, which produces one-quarter of the national output, showed a 5 CFA franc price rise to 625 per kg. But farmers said competition was driving prices higher.

"In the bush, farmers received, on average, 650 francs per kg and in town the exporters bought beans at 700 francs per kg because there are not many beans," said farmer Attoungbre Kouame, whose farm is on the outskirts of Daloa.

In Ivory Coast's western region of Soubre, the average price jumped by 20 francs to 650 CFA francs, as exporters, particularly grinders, still competed for beans.

"Farmgate prices have risen a lot. A lot of farmers sold for 675 francs per kg because the grinders are hunting for beans," said farmer Roger Tano whose farm is near Soubre.

The rise in world cocoa prices over the last few weeks was initially driven by concerns over crop prospects in Ivory Coast, but dealers said the recent spike was more due to fund and investor buying and the falling pound.

Below are average farmgate prices in CFA francs per kg for Dec. 8-14, as quoted by private buyers, cooperatives and shippers, and published by the (BCC).

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

	<u>Dec 8-14</u>	<u>Dec 1-7</u>		<u>Dec 8-14</u>	<u>Dec 1-7</u>
Abengourou	655	n/a	Aboisso	585	575
Adzope	680	n/a	Agboville	700	650
Bongouanou	625	615	Daloa	625	620
Divo	690	665	Gagnoa	630	n/a
San Pedro	625	585	Sassandra	n/a	n/a
Soubre	650	630			

Abidjan (port)	n/a	n/a	San Pedro (port)	745	705

(\$1=488.0 CFA Franc)

Cameroon cocoa prices near record highs - farmers

Thu 18 Dec 2008,

By Tansa Musa

YAOUNDE, Dec 18 (Reuters) - Farm-gate cocoa prices in Cameroon have bounced back strongly towards record high levels in the past month, farmers in the world's fifth-largest grower of the commodity said on Thursday.

World prices have surged in the past two months, fuelled by concerns over short supply from major origins like Ivory Coast. London cocoa futures <LCCc2> hit a 22-year high of 1,751 pounds during trade on both Wednesday and Thursday. Sterling's steep decline against the dollar since mid-2008 has exaggerated cocoa's gains on the benchmark London market.

Farmers in some parts of Cameroon said they had never seen buyers pay such high prices for their cocoa. "This is unprecedented here in Emana, we've never sold cocoa beans at this price here before," Emmanuel Nnogo Akolo told Reuters by phone from Emana, around 70 km (45 miles) north of the capital Yaounde, on Thursday.

Prices in the area shot up to 1,000-1,045 CFA francs (\$2.05-\$2.14) per kilogram from 880-900 CFA/kg in mid-November.

November saw a slight fall in most parts of Cameroon, but have rebounded across most of the cocoa-growing regions.

"It's a wonderful Christmas gift for us cocoa farmers. We only pray it continues like this till the end of the main crop," Akolo said. The main crop peaks between November and January.

Prices in Bafia, 135 km (85 miles) north of the capital, rose to 990-1,005 CFA/kg by mid-December from 900-950 CFA/kg a month ago, farmer and cooperative head Emmanuel Nguile said.

Nguile said his cooperative was able to negotiate a small premium over and above these prices, helped by competition amongst increasing numbers of buyers coming to the Centre Province from the main port Douala and Yaounde.

MARKET UPDATES

Buyers in Kumba, in the main South-West Province cocoa zone, paid 1,010-1,025 CFA/kg, up from 860-900 CFA/kg last month, Cameroon Marketing Commodities (CAMACO) manager Joseph Nde said.

He said the price rises were driven by demand from local buyers and high world prices, which were having more local impact since farmers were receiving more regular world market data via Cameroon's National Cocoa and Coffee Board (NCCB).

The NCCB system offers local currency comparisons for farmers, allowing them, for instance, to see that a kilogram of cocoa beans that sold for 1,089 CFA francs on the London market on Nov 17 was trading at 1,371 CFA francs on Dec 16.

"Farmers are kept abreast with developments on the world market and can no more be easily duped by middle buyers, except those in not easily accessible areas due to bad roads," he said.

At Konye, 30 km north of Kumba, cocoa prices jumped more than 10 percent to 950-980 CFA/kg, after easing to 830 CFA/kg in November, said Bau Ndedi Makia, president of Konye Area Farmers Cooperative Union (KONAFSCOOP).

Prices were unchanged at around 900 CFA/kg in Mamfe, 170 km (105 miles) north of Kumba.

"Our problem here is that most areas are inaccessible because of the poor state of roads, a situation which is judiciously exploited by middle buyers to impose their own prices," said farmers' cooperative member Dickson Ashu Tambe.

Prices jumped around Sangmelima in the third producing zone of the South Region, reaching 975 CFA/kg in December, from 880-900 CFA/kg a month earlier, farmer Moise Edou said.

The Market

Nigerian cocoa price climbs 17 pct on tight supply

By Tume Ahemba

LAGOS, Dec 16 (Reuters) - The upcountry price of graded Nigerian cocoa beans rose 17 percent to 240,000 naira (\$1,771) per tonne on average in the last month, lifted by tight supply and the depreciation of the local currency, buyers and exporters said on Tuesday.

Graded cocoa are beans certified fit for export by government produce inspectors.

Despite the first price increase since the start of the main crop in October, trading was cautious as the global financial crisis deepened, taking a big toll on the local market.

"The recent depreciation of the naira helped local prices to firm, but bean supply was tight," one buyer in the southwestern town of Akure, capital of Nigeria's top cocoa growing state of Ondo told Reuters.

The Nigerian naira <NGN=> has weakened by 16 percent against the U.S. dollar, tumbling to 135.50 from 117 in the last few weeks after trading stable for over a year.

"This time last year I had already done 3,000 tonnes, but this year I have not been able to buy 200 tonnes because there is no cocoa in the market," said the Licensed Buying Agent (LBA) who procures beans upcountry for Lagos-based exporters.

Farmers in the world's number 4 cocoa grower hoarded beans in the hope that the price would climb, while buyers shunned the market because of unattractive export prices, traders said.

London cocoa futures were expected to open steady on Tuesday after soaring to multi-months peaks on Monday on investor and fund buying.

London May contract <LCK9> rose 49 pounds or 3.0 percent to 1,690 pounds a tonne after touching 1,691 pounds, the highest level for the second month since early July.

"Very few people were active in the local market, those who bought are speculators hoping the international market price would rise," another LBA told Reuters.

Nigeria's main processors' group said on Monday there were barely any exports of cocoa-based products to Europe in the last two months due to the global financial crunch.

Farmgate prices rose 16 percent on average to 210,000 naira on average per tonne, farmers and buyers said.

The price in Nigeria's main export city of Lagos climbed 14 percent to 260,000 naira on average per tonne, exporters said.

Bean quality was high because there was enough sunshine for farmers to ferment and dry their beans. Bean weight was around 350-360 grammes per 300 beans compared to 340-350 the previous month, growers and buyers said.

"This is main crop so there is no issue with bean quality. There is plenty of sunshine for farmers to dry their beans properly," one exporters said.

Following is a table of average estimated cocoa prices in naira per tonne as quoted by farmers, buyers and exporters:

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>December 16</u>	<u>November 19</u>
Farmgate	210,000	180,000
Upcountry from LBAs	240,000	205,000
Ports by LBAs	260,000	227,500

London Cocoa Hits 22-Year Peak, Firm Dollar Weighs on Coffee

Source: Reuters

London, Dec 19 - London cocoa futures rose to a fresh 22-year peak on Friday on fund and investor buying driven by supply tightness, while sugar and coffee futures fell on investor selling, weighed by a firmer dollar.

London May cocoa surged to a new 22-year high of 1,800 pounds per tonne before easing back to stand at 1,788 pounds, up 10 pounds, in thin pre-holiday turnover of 657 lots at 1258 GMT. "The strength and volume on the way up (this week) has surprised a lot of people," one London cocoa dealer said.

London cocoa futures surged to successive 22-year peaks on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, driven by worries over a supply shortfall of beans from key West African producers Ivory Coast and Ghana.

The slide in the pound, which has fallen to record lows against the euro on sentiment that UK interest rates could fall towards zero, has stimulated arbitrage, pushing London futures prices sharply higher.

Dealers noted that the latest bean arrivals data from West Africa underscored the slow flow of new supplies.

Cocoa arrivals at ports in top grower Ivory Coast reached 109,238 tonnes by Nov. 2, down from 226,151 tonnes in the same period a year ago, according to aggregated data from exporters obtained by Reuters on Thursday.

ICE March cocoa was down \$12 to \$2,660 per tonne. Dealers said the cocoa market was looking overbought and risked a sell-off to take profits.

Coffee and sugar futures fell on investor selling in modest turnover, pressured by a firmer dollar and weaker oil prices.

Many traders were absent from their desks for the Christmas holidays, making the markets vulnerable to big price moves in low volumes. "Many traders have closed positions for the end of December," one robusta coffee dealer said.

The euro fell broadly on Friday, as traders locked in profits from the currency's rally to a 2 1/2-month high against the dollar and its strongest level ever against sterling this week.

Oil dipped below \$34 on Friday to its lowest level in almost five years as the global economic slowdown overshadowed OPEC's record supply cuts.

London March robustas were down \$35 or 2 percent to \$1,639 per tonne in thin volume of 506 lots at 1241 GMT. Dealers said the robustas market was likely to trade in a \$1,610-1,690 range in the near term. ICE March arabicas were down \$1.7 cent to \$1.1080 per lb.

In raw sugar, the market corrected lower after failing to break above 12 cents a lb. "After a few failed attempts to charge above 12.00, today could bring a test of the downside," UK broker Sucden said in a daily market comment. ICE March raw sugar was down 0.36 cent to 11.47 cents per lb at 1250 GMT, while London March white sugar was down \$5.8 to \$319.7 per tonne in low volume of 255 lots.

MARKET TALK: ICE Cocoa Slides On Post-Rally Profit-Taking.

Dec 18, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) --

ICE cocoa futures are trading off session lows in continued profit-taking following Wednesday's run up to 12-week highs, an analyst says. March cocoa is down \$59 at \$2,557 a metric ton, off the \$2,541 intraday low, and the May contract is also \$59 lower at \$2,550. March could dip to \$2,500 by the end of the session, though supply concerns about the delayed

Ivory Coast main crop underpins the market, says Jimmy Tintle, analyst at Transworld Futures in Tampa. Cocoa is showing no response to typically supportive U.S. dollar weakness as traders had built that factor into the market ahead of Tuesday's Fed rate cut announcement, Tintle says. Traders are concentrating on supply and demand, raising March's potential to charge back to the \$2,600-\$2,700 level by the end of next week, he says. Volume is estimated at 4,523 lots, ICE reports. ICE cocoa warehouse stocks increased by 128,293 145-pound bags Wednesday to total 2.015 million bags, according to exchange data. Liffe March cocoa is down GBP16 at GBP1,704 a ton.

Processing & Manufacturing

Cut cocoa-butter for beta-glucan hydrocolloid, suggests study

By Stephen Daniells, 12-Dec-2008

Flew-news.com

Beta-glucan-rich hydrocolloids may be able to replace cocoa-butter in chocolate products, according to new research from the US. Scientists from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) report that the beta-glucan-rich C-trim30 ingredient, a hydrocolloid made by steam jet-cooking and fractionating oat bran concentrates, could replace up to 10 per cent of cocoa-butter and give a lower energy chocolate.

“Cocoa butter, which is the continuous phase in chocolates, is responsible for providing chocolate with such important qualities as unique smooth feeling, glossy appearance, and snap. However, relatively high cost and vulnerability to climatic and political changes have necessitated replacing parts of cocoa-butter in chocolates,” explained the researchers in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture.

The C-trim ingredients were devised by ARS chemist George Inglett, who was involved with the new study. The results also indicated that incorporation of the C-trim ingredient could also lead to a lower calorie product, an important consideration given the current trend for lower-energy products.

“The use of C-trim30 as a replacement for cocoa butter presents the opportunity to formulate ‘healthy’ chocolates with reduced calories from fat and also with soluble dietary fibres,” said the researchers. “Sensory evaluation would, however, be necessary to investigate the consumer preferences on these low-calorie chocolates containing C-trim30.”

Study details

The researchers, led by Suyong Lee from the Department of Food Science and Technology at Sejong University in Korea, formulated chocolate products using the C-trim30 ingredient to replace 5, 10, and 15 per cent cocoa butter by weight. Incorporation of the ingredient led to an increase in the viscosity of molten chocolate. Additionally, a softer chocolate was produced when the ingredient was used.

Lee and co-workers explain that the hardness of chocolate is dependent on the crystallised lipid phase concentration, composed of cocoa butter and milk fat, in addition to as well as the solid dispersed phase, composed of cocoa solids, sugar crystals, and milk solids.

Addition of C-trim30 may have softened the chocolate by altering the tempering process of the chocolate, said the researchers. “Since the viscosity of chocolate dramatically increased with the addition of C-trim30, only a limited quantity could be used to replace the cocoa butter,” stated the researchers.

‘Healthy’ chocolate

“The chocolate prepared by replacing the cocoa butter with C-trim30 resulted in a product with a lower caloric value and increased health benefits from the oat beta-glucan,” they concluded.

Source: Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture

15 January 2009, Volume 89, Issue 1, Pages: 163-167

“Effect of cocoa butter replacement with a -glucan-rich hydrocolloid (C-trim30) on the rheological and tribological properties of chocolates”, Authors: S. Lee, G. Biresaw, M.P. Kinney, G.E. Inglett

World's Chocolate Supply In Danger

Sydney Morning Herald, Australia - 20 Dec 2008

Scientists say that as climate change increases, the world's chocolate supply could start to run low. Chocolate is made from the seeds of the cacao tree and in recent years demand has risen worldwide. But diseases destroy a third of the world's cacao crop every year, and it's getting worse.

Cacao is a rainforest tree with shallow roots that responds poorly to drought, and droughts have hit harvests hard in recent years. However, the biggest chocolate company in the world, Mars Inc., has begun an unprecedented study of the cacao tree.

Africa grows 70 percent of the world's cacao, mostly in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, where there has been only sporadic investment in improving the trees. The cultivated strains are prone to drought and diseases and few farmers can afford fertilizer. Pesticides are being used to boost yields and what efforts there have been to breed better trees have been discouraging. "The yield of cacao has been flat for 30 years," says Howard Shapiro, head of plant science at Mars.

Many peasant farmers who dominate cacao production are expanding the area of cacao through slashing and burning patches of rainforest, releasing nutrients on which the trees thrive for a time, after which the farmers move to a new patch. But this technique is contributing to deforestation.

Researchers agree that farmers need higher-yielding strains that produce big crops in response to fertilizer to make it worthwhile for farmers to buy fertilizer, allowing them to grow more cacaos on existing land. Experts hope a switch to more intensive farming methods would not only reduce pressure on the rainforests but also help small farmers to prosper.

Monocultures of cacao are also very vulnerable to disease. Brazil's cacao plantations were gutted in the 1980s when witch's broom fungus was deliberately released amid local political disputes. Another even nastier fungus, frosty pod, destroyed plantations in Colombia and Costa Rica.

And there are fears that those threats could make their way to African crops. "Those diseases will get out eventually," says Dennis Garrity, head of the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Without resistant trees, Africa's biggest export crop could be devastated in as little as three years.

Juan-Carlos Motamayor of Mars's cacao research program has analyzed more than 1200 cacao samples collected by other researchers over the years. They used a form of DNA fingerprinting to identify the samples and study the trees' genetic relationships. His team found that cacao samples could be divided into 10 genetically distinct groups, rather than three.

In June, Mars, along with the USDA and computing giant IBM, announced an unprecedented public-private partnership to sequence the cacao genome.

Meanwhile, the world's small but dedicated bands of cacao scientists have begun searching for cacao trees with high yield, drought tolerance or disease resistance. Once these are identified, researchers will look for stretches of DNA that reveal which plants have these traits, which will greatly speed up breeding. "If we can treble the yield of cacao, farmers can tear up two-thirds of their lowest-yielding trees and use the land to grow fruit and timber as well," said Shapiro.

Garrity said besides giving cacao the shade it likes, growing other tree crops alongside it will give farmers harvests year-round and, hopefully, enough prosperity to abandon slash-and-burn for good. The use of nitrogen-fixing plants could reduce the need for fertilizer, while the mix of plants will reduce susceptibility to disease.

However, it isn't just about saving the planet. "Breeders can also use DNA markers to create new chocolate flavors," says Kuhn.

Business & Economy

Global Crisis Hits Nigerian Cocoa Grinding

Source: Reuters

Lagos, Dec 16 - The global financial crisis has slashed cocoa grinding in Nigeria, and there have barely been any exports to Europe in the last two months, the Cocoa Processors' Association of Nigeria secretary general said. "The global crisis has crippled business, almost everything is at a standstill," COPAN Secretary General Felix Oladunjoye told Reuters in an interview.

About 95 percent of cocoa output from Nigeria, the world's fourth-largest grower, is shipped to chocolate makers in Europe. Nigeria has the capacity to process about 100,000 tonnes of cocoa per year, grinding roughly 25 percent of national output.

Most of Nigeria's eight functional plants were operating at around 60 percent of capacity due to poor infrastructure, high costs and multiple taxes, but analysts say the economic meltdown has further cut the grinders' capacity to less than 20 percent. "Most cocoa processors are not producing, the few that are processing are doing so epileptically because there is no demand for processed products in Europe," Oladunjoye said.

The few shipments from Nigeria of cocoa products -- butter, cake, liquor and powder -- were for contracts signed before the crisis but which were delayed for various reasons. "There have been no new contracts since October. Importers are not importing because they can't get credit from their banks and factories are closing down, nobody can say he is covered," Oladunjoye said.

The government launched an ambitious cocoa revival campaign in 2005 to increase production, local processing and domestic consumption of cocoa products, but incentives from the government are often delayed.

Oladunjoye said there had been no significant increase in domestic consumption in the last three years to make up for the lull in exports since October. "There is really nothing we here can do about the global crisis but wait until the various bailout programmes initiated by Western countries begin to manifest," Oladunjoye said.

Cocoa Vaults to Multi-Month Peaks Despite Gloom

Source: Reuters

New York, Dec 15 - Cocoa futures soared to multi-month peaks on Monday, on investor and fund buying, bucking the weak sentiment felt by many other commodities, dealers said. Coffee and raw sugar eased as crude oil and other commodity markets fell on deepening economic gloom.

Dealers said the background fundamentals for cocoa were supportive with slow port arrivals in top grower Ivory Coast leading to some tightness in supply but may not fully justify the sharp rally on the last few days.

In addition to chart-based buy signals, the firm pound against the dollar helped buoy U.S. cocoa more than 8 percent to its intraday high. "I am struggling to find the fundamental justification for the levels we see at the moment," said Jonathan Parkman, head of the agri-commodity brokerage at Fortis Commodity Derivatives.

"The market price seems to be discounting an enormous deficit for the current season and I am not sure that is absolutely what I would predict," he added.

May cocoa in London settled up 49 pounds or 3.0 percent at 1,690 pounds a tonne after touching 1,691 pounds, the highest level for the second month since early July. March cocoa on ICE rocketed \$164 or 6.8 percent to finish at \$2,560 a tonne, the strongest close since Sept. 30.

Cocoa arrivals at ports in No. 1 grower Ivory Coast reached 356,000 tonnes from Oct. 1 to Dec. 14, sharply down from 650,429 tonnes in the same period of the previous season, exporters estimated. "The weekly chart clearly shows that the new uptrend which began early to middle November is now firmly established," brokers Sucden UK Ltd said in a daily market report.

Raw sugar and coffee prices reversed early gains and turned lower, tracking a similar trend in crude oil.

Oil prices eased as deepening economic worries countered expectations that OPEC would agree to its biggest supply cut ever when the group meets in Algeria this week.

March raw sugar on ICE was off 0.12 cent to finish at 11.52 cents, well below the day's high of 12.01 cents. Dealers said producer selling around the 12.0 cent level had helped to keep a lid on the market and that when the earlier buying interest dried up, the market quietly turned negative amid a lack of support. "We had a little more steam going higher because of the dollar weakness," said Rodrigo Costa, vice-president Institutional Sales for Newedge USA in New York. March white sugar in London settled a marginal 30 cents higher at \$319.50 a tonne.

Dealers said coffee was heavily influenced by outside markets with equity markets and crude oil weakening, and eased as earlier fund buying interest fell away. Volume on coffee in both London and New York was boosted by rolling forward of positions out of March into May. London March robusta coffee settled down \$14 at \$1,662 a tonne, while March arabicas closed 1.60 cents lower at \$1.1055 per lb.

Ivory Coast Oct-Nov Cocoa Bean Exports Down 26% On Year.

ABIDJAN, Dec 18, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) --

Ivory Coast exported 102,854 metric tons of cocoa beans in October-November, the first two months of the 2008-09 season, down 36,829 tons, or 26.4%, on the 139,683 tons shipped in the preceding season, official port data showed Thursday.

Adverse weather has slowed maturation of the 2008-09 main crop (October-March), which is expected to be down at least 8% on last season.

The following table shows exports in November 2008, November 2007, the cumulative total for this season and last season. All figures are in metric tons.

Port	Nov 08	Nov 07	Cum 08-09	Cum 07-08
Abidjan	31,864	58,494	38,453	61,928
San Pedro	47,433	54,699	64,401	77,755
Totals 7	9,297	113,193	102,854	139,683

The port export data can differ from export declarations made by shippers and published by Dow Jones Newswires every 14 days because of errors or delays in registration by the different statistical departments.

Ivory Coast Bean Exports Down As Local Grindings Up.

ABIDJAN, Dec 18, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- (Updates with additional reason for falling bean exports).

Ivory Coast exported 102,854 metric tons of cocoa beans in October-November, the first two months of the 2008-09 season, down 36,829 tons, or 26%, on the 139,683 tons shipped in the preceding season, official port data showed Thursday.

Adverse weather has slowed maturation of the 2008-09 main crop (October-March), which is also expected to be down by at least 8% on last season. Bean exports have also fallen because local grinding capacity has been increased in the past year, resulting in a 43% jump in shipments of semi-manufactured cocoa products in the first two months of this season. The following table shows exports in November, 2008, November, 2007, the cumulative total for this season and last season. All figures are in metric tons.

Port	Nov 08	Nov 07	Cum 08-09	Cum 07-08
Abidjan	31,864	58,494	38,453	61,928
San Pedro	47,433	54,699	64,401	77,755
Totals	79,297	113,193	102,854	139,683

The port export data can differ from export declarations made by shippers and published by Dow Jones Newswires every 14 days because of errors or delays in registration by the different statistical departments.

Ivory Coast Oct-Nov Cocoa Product Exports Up 43% On Year.

ABIDJAN, Dec 18, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) --

Ivory Coast exported 68,021 metric tons of semi-manufactured cocoa products in October-November, the first two months of the 2008-09 season, up by 20,440 tons, or 43%, on the 47,581 tons shipped in the same period last season, official port data showed Thursday.

Local grinding is up on year as new cocoa processing plants became operational and Barry Callebaut doubled the capacity of its San Pedro plant to 100,000 tons a year.

The following table shows the net weight of shipments per port, all in metric tons.

Port	Nov 08	Nov 07	Cum 08-09	Cum 07-08
Abidjan	30,880	25,196	53,594	43,278
San Pedro	8,755	2,042	14,427	4,303
Totals	39,635	27,238	68,021	47,581

The following table is a breakdown per product of Abidjan shipments:

	Nov 08	Nov 07
liquor	13,459	10,547
butter	7,339	5,883
powder	2,743	4,310
cake	6,116	3,357
unspecified	1,223	1,099
Totals	30,880	25,196

Products shipped from San Pedro in November comprised 7,685 tons of liquor and 1,070 tons of chocolate, compared with 2,042 tons of liquor in November 2007. The export data as given by the ports may differ from export declarations made by shippers and published by Dow Jones Newswires every 14 days.

The port data show products which have left the port, while the export declarations include products which are being made ready for export.

ICE Cocoa Warehouse Stocks -19,416 At 1.981 Mln Bags.

OsterDowJones, (ALMF), 19 December 2008

In bags of approximately 145 pounds (Source: ICE).

	Today	Prev Day	Change.
New York	264,160	266,513	-2,353
Delaware River	1,541,916	1,558,979	-17,063
Hampton Roads	15,556	15,556	unch
Albany	0	0	unch
Baltimore	159,798	159,798	unch
Grand Total	1,981,430	2,000,846	-19,416

of lots passed to date for Dec 08 Contract: 625 625

of lots pending to date Dec 08 Contract: 0 0

ICE Cocoa Review: Skids As On Profit-Taking, US Dlr, Spillover.

NEW YORK, Dec 19, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) --

Profit-taking weighed on ICE Futures U.S. cocoa Friday as the stronger U.S. dollar and generally weaker commodities prices pressured the market. March cocoa settled down \$77 at \$2,595 a metric ton and the May contract settled \$80 lower at \$2,581. For the week, March gained \$200. Cocoa opened stronger but in early dealings fell as the rallying U.S. dollar pressured the market. Futures were overbought following Thursday's run up to three-month highs. Weaker prices in electronically traded commodities, including nearby crude oil and gold, encouraged spillover selling. The stronger greenback led to arbitrage with Liffe cocoa mid session, though futures on both sides of the Atlantic settled lower on the day.

Analysts expect cocoa to continue under profit taking pressure amid light holiday trading in coming weeks. Sustained strength in the U.S. dollar is also bearish for cocoa in the near term, said Jack Scoville, vice president of Price Futures Group in Chicago. However, if cocoa supplies from Ivory Coast, the world's leading producer, continue to be lackluster, March will hold above the \$2,400 level in the near term, said Dan Vaught, futures analyst at A.G. Edwards in St. Louis. Resistance is at \$2,700 basis March, Scoville said.

Liffe March cocoa futures settled down GBP16 at GBP1,774 a ton and May contract settled GBP16 lower at GBP1,762.

ICE cocoa open interest increased by 192 positions Thursday to total 113,290, the exchange reported. Volume was estimated at 8,731 contracts, according to exchange data. In options, approximately 727 calls and 1,840 puts traded.

	Close	Change	Range
Dec	\$2,595	-\$77	\$2,587-\$2,711
Mar	\$2,581	-\$80	\$2,581-\$2,688
May	\$2,535	-\$81	\$2,535-\$2,622

SW Nigerian Graded Cocoa Price Rises On Holidays, Naira.

IBADAN, Nigeria, Dec 19, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) --

The price of graded cocoa in southwestern Nigeria stood Friday at 260,000-265,000 naira (\$1,940-\$1,978) a metric ton, buyers said. Last week, graded cocoa, which has been inspected and certified fit for export, was bought by exporters at NGN250,000/ton. Yemi Omoyemi, a buyer in Ile-Ife, Osun state, said graded cocoa price rose because farmers want more money for their cocoa because of Christmas festivities and the depreciation of the naira against the dollar.

He said farmers are selling cocoa Friday at NGN240,000-NGN250,000 a ton up from last week's NGN230,000-NGN235,000/ton.

Another trader in Akure, Ondo state, said the naira has further depreciated against the dollar adding "cocoa prices rise in the local market when the naira depreciates." The naira which stood at 127.87 to the dollar a fortnight ago had depreciated further to NGN134.40/dollar Friday.

"The government said the depreciation of the naira is a deliberate policy, if the fall of the currency is not stopped cocoa prices will continue to rise. Graded prices could go to NGN300,000 a ton soon, " the trader said. He said farmers have threatened to hoard cocoa if LBAs don't pay NGN260,000 for a ton of cocoa after the Christmas holidays. He said "the volume of beans in the market will decrease as from the New Year and prices will likely rise further."

The southwest cocoa belt accounts for 70% of Nigeria's annual production of 242,000 tons.

Labour Issues

The dark side of chocolate

Sydney Morning Herald, Australia - 20 Dec 2008

Child slaves are often used to harvest cocoa - but a simple idea could help stop the practice, writes Christopher Pyne. AS CHRISTMAS nears, spare a thought for the hundreds of thousands of children in Ghana and on the Ivory Coast who are forced to work as slave labourers. They are kidnapped, taken from their families and their schools. They are sold as slaves.

Some are sent far away; some forced into prostitution. Some are forced to march as child soldiers in armies of mercenary thugs. Thousands upon thousands are forced to cut cocoa used in the production of chocolate.

Some of these children are as young as six. While three of my four children play junior football and their most painful challenge involves finishing homework before they can watch television, children the same age in Ghana are forced to work 80 to 100 hours a week, enduring beatings and malnutrition.

They must cut the cocoa plants with large machetes. Many lose fingers and grow up with brutalised hands. Many don't get the opportunity to grow up at all.

The Reverend Tim Costello and World Vision have been playing a role internationally in trying to highlight the appalling situation of child slave labour that is producing cocoa in countries such as the Ivory Coast and Ghana. They are running a campaign called Don't Trade Lives: What Is The Real Cost Of Chocolate?

This is a difficult issue to address. The extreme poverty of the regions means that simply boycotting all non-Fair Trade products would have dire consequences for farmers.

Confectionary manufacturers have been making some progress in eliminating the use of child slaves in production, and ensuring that cocoa farmers receive a fair price for their product, but there is more to be done. Any child forced to work as a slave is a tragedy.

I have been promoting a simple idea that could have a profound impact. I've written to the Prime Minister and premiers urging them to use the buying power of government departments to stock only chocolate that has been certified as having not been made by slaves. This would affect tens of thousands of vending machines, snack bars and cafes across a gamut of schools, hospitals, departmental buildings and enterprises.

Placing this chocolate in vending machines within government offices may seem like a small act, but it would raise awareness about the campaign, and it would send a message to manufacturers who purchase cocoa beans that they must work harder to reduce the use of child slavery in production.

It is also a practical policy direction that governments could achieve tomorrow if they wanted to, simply by announcing that from now on every new contract signed with suppliers would have these conditions.

To date the Rudd Government has shown no interest in pursuing this idea. However, it would seem that this flies in the face of the groundswell of public support that exists for the campaign.

In November in my Adelaide electorate of Sturt, I held a "Walk Against Child Slavery" arranged with the support of many concerned organisations. It was a tremendous success, attended by hundreds of residents, many of whom previously had no idea that something like chocolate, which we take for granted, could be harvested by children. I'd urge any concerned individual or parliamentarian to consider holding a similar event with their local community. Raising awareness of the issue will lead to changes in people's consumer behaviour, which will make manufacturers take notice.

As we batten down the hatches in preparation for the global financial storm that is beginning to sweep our country, it is human nature to focus on our own needs, rather than the needs of our brothers and sisters overseas.

In our appropriate concern for our family's wellbeing we must not lose perspective that there are children who aren't allowed to finish school, are ripped away from their families, and have their lives utterly destroyed.

I am in regular contact with members of the Rudd Government encouraging them to take the initiative and use the Government's buying power to support this cause.

You can do the same. Email, write to or phone your local member of Parliament and ask that they encourage the Prime Minister to address this issue, not after a review or summit, but by simply changing the chocolate in government vending machines.

Christopher Pyne is the federal Liberal member for the South Australian seat of Sturt and shadow minister for education, apprenticeships and training.

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Other

EU Funded STABEX Programme Bears First Promising Fruits For Cocoa/Coffee Farmers In Sierra Leone

By

Dec 16, 2008, 17:20 Email this article

Awareness Times, Sierra Leone - 16 Dec 2008

The European Union (EU) funded STABEX programme in support of cocoa and coffee growers in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone is starting to bear first promising fruits.

Three cocoa containers of good quality cocoa were exported through Millennium Cocoa Growers' Cooperative (MCGC) to Europe. A related statement was made by the buyer representative of the Dutch company, Theobroma B.V. (formerly EDF & Man), which is in fact the largest buyer of cocoa and coffee from Sierra Leone.

Accordingly, the quality of the cocoa exported by MCGC is the best that the company has received since the end of the war in 2001. The average defect percentage of beans was below 10%, whereas the country average of defects is about 25%. The moisture content was also according to international standard, which is about 7%.

Though there was still a discount from the world market price, the cooperative believes that through the efforts on improvement of quality, Sierra Leonean cocoa could become more valued in the next years. Another six containers are expected to be exported by MCGC within the present season.

MCGC is operating in Kono, Kailahun and Kenema Districts where it embraces more than 3000 farm households, predominantly smallholders. Twenty percent of farmers registered are female. According to the MCGC chairlady Miss. Elizabeth Macaulay, the benefit of the good quality is transferred to the small holders as the cooperative is able to pay 71% out of FOB price to the farmer. In the middle to long run, detrimental dependencies from other dealers in the market could be replaced, like the rice loans during the hunger gap period against cocoa delivery 3 months later. The town chief in Gorama Kono Chiefdom explained that farmers normally pay at minimum double the price when they exchange cocoa for rice.

MCGC is supported by the German NGO, Welthungerhilfe, which is implementing the EU funded project in the three Districts. Major activities include help to transport, materials like moisture meters, infrastructure (warehouses at chiefdom level) and an intensive training program for farmers. The latter is implemented together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Food Security (MAFFS) and through Farmer Field Schools (FFS). Besides MCGC, Welthungerhilfe supports two other cooperatives with similar approaches in Eastern Province.

Another additional benefit for farmers engaged in the cocoa sector will emerge from the certification for organic production. Through a partnership with Agro Eco – The Netherlands, which are presently in the country, preparations are made to get the first 400 farmers registered and their produce organically certified; i.e. the production of cocoa and coffee without pesticides and inorganic fertilizer. Presently two chiefdoms are targeted: Kissi Tongi in Kailahun District and Gorama Kono in Kono District. Gorama Mende chiefdom in Kenema District will follow suit.

Ivory Coast Dockers' Union Ends Main Cocoa Port Strike.

ABIDJAN, Dec 18, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) --

Ivory Coast's main dockers' union has ended a pay strike which slowed cocoa exports from the main port of Abidjan since Dec. 10, the CNDD Collectif National Des Dockers said in a press release Thursday.

The decision was taken after successful tripartite negotiations between the dockers union, the SEMPA employers' union and the Ministry of Transport earlier this week.

Daily cocoa shipments from the world's top grower currently are 4,000-8,000 metric tons per day, with Abidjan shipping 60% and San Pedro 40%.

TIT BITS

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

Europe cash cocoa hit by low supply

HAMBURG (December 21, 2008): A lack of supplies from top cocoa exporter Ivory Coast, coupled with surging London futures, cut business in Europe's cash cocoa market this week, traders said on Friday. "A lot of buyers were shocked by the outright price of bean purchases this week because of the dual impact of high differentials and high futures," one trader said.

US MIDDAY: cocoa down, coffee eases

NEW YORK (December 20, 2008): US cocoa turned lower in early trade Friday, as participants took profits from Thursday's late-day rally, while arabica coffee eased in thin dealings as the dollar firmed, traders said. Arabica coffee for March delivery down 1.65 cents at \$1.1085 per lb by 9:04 am EST (1404 GMT). Tight trading band from \$1.1025 to \$1.1235.

London cocoa rises to fresh 22-year peak

LONDON (December 20, 2008): London cocoa futures rose to a fresh 22-year peak on Friday on fund and investor buying driven by supply tightness and later erased gains on profit-taking, while sugar and coffee fell, weighed by a firmer dollar.

Sulawesi cocoa bean exports fall

JAKARTA (December 20, 2008): cocoa bean exports from Indonesian main producing island of Sulawesi in the first 11 months of 2008 dropped 12 percent from a year earlier on falling output while bean prices crept up to near historic levels. Fears of global supply tightness have helped cocoa prices bounce back to multi-month high this week, despite concerns that the global recession may crimp demand.

US MIDDAY: cocoa falls, coffee rises

NEW YORK (December 19, 2008): US cocoa corrected lower in early trade on Thursday following Wednesday's rally and as the sterling weakened, while arabica coffee moved higher with a boost from the weak dollar, traders said. Arabica coffee for March delivery was up 0.30 cents at \$1.1260 per lb by 9:15 am EST (1415 GMT). Tight trading band from \$1.1230 to \$1.1360.

Cocoa rises in London

LONDON (December 19, 2008): London cocoa futures rose on supply concerns on Thursday, lifting off earlier lows, a day after a sharp rally, while raw sugar and coffee futures edged up in thin trade. cocoa futures looked likely to consolidate, after London futures ran up to a 22-year high on Wednesday, driven mainly by supply tightness triggered by slow bean arrivals to ports in key West African producers.

US MIDDAY: cocoa, coffee firm

NEW YORK (December 18, 2008): US cocoa soared to a fresh 2-1/2-month high in early trade Wednesday, and arabica coffee likewise climbed as the dollar fell broadly

after the Federal Reserve slashed interest rates Tuesday, traders said. Arabica coffee for March delivery was up 2.20 cents or 2 percent at \$1.1330 per lb by 9:14 am EST (1414 GMT).

London cocoa surges to 22-year high

LONDON (December 18, 2008): London cocoa futures surged to a 22-year high on Wednesday on fund and investor buying and arbitrage driven by a falling pound and supply tightness, and later lost momentum on origin selling and profit taking. The fall in the dollar after Tuesday's deep US rate cut triggered fund and investor buying in coffee and sugar futures.

London cocoa and sugar little changed

LONDON (December 17, 2008): cocoa, sugar and coffee futures were little changed in two-way investor dealings on Tuesday, as attention focused on an expected cut in US interest rates. The US Federal Reserve looked set to halve rates on Tuesday and bring them closer to zero. Robusta coffee futures eased slightly although arabicas were marginally firmer, underpinned by a weaker dollar.

US MIDDAY: cocoa down, coffee up

NEW YORK (December 17, 2008): US cocoa corrected lower in early trade on Tuesday after soaring 7 percent Monday, while coffee was quietly higher in thin dealings, boosted mildly by a weaker dollar, traders said. Arabica coffee for March delivery was up 0.30 cent at \$1.1085 per lb by 9:28 am EST (1428 GMT).

London cocoa, sugar rise

LONDON (December 16, 2008): cocoa and sugar futures rose on investor buying and short-covering on Monday, supported by stronger oil prices and a weaker dollar. "A lot of people are looking for a year-end short-covering rally," said David Sutcliffe, a trader with UK-based commodities fund Ebulio Capital Management. "People are following through on crude oil and the dollar."

US MIDDAY: cocoa, coffee higher

NEW YORK (December 16, 2008): US cocoa held its upward momentum and climbed to a two-month high in early trade Monday on bullish fundamentals and a firmer pound against the dollar, while arabica coffee tapped higher, traders said. Arabica coffee for March delivery up 0.75 cent at \$1.1290 per lb by 9:11 am EST (1411 GMT). Trading range from \$1.1175 to \$1.14.

Global crisis hits Nigerian cocoa grinding

LAGOS (December 16, 2008): The global financial crisis has slashed cocoa grinding in Nigeria, and there have barely been any exports to Europe in the last two months, the cocoa Processors' Association of Nigeria secretary general said. "The global crisis has crippled business, almost everything is at a standstill," COPAN Secretary General Felix Oladunjoye told Reuters in an interview.