

COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance



Issue No. 322

9th - 13th February 2009

Cocoa Producers' Alliance



UP-COMING EVENTS

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- TIT BITS

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

In the News (from Newspapers worldwide)

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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) |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 9 th February | 1903.44 | 2852.34 | 1945.00 | 2804.00 |
| 10 th February | 1834.94 | 2750.74 | 1900.00 | 2729.67 |
| 11 th February | 1825.67 | 2732.30 | 1916.33 | 2714.00 |
| 12 th February | 1799.75 | 2682.12 | 1909.33 | 2642.67 |
| 13 th February | 1825.98 | 2723.06 | 1910.33 | 2692.00 |
| Average | 1838.00 | 2748.00 | 1916.00 | 2716.00 |

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

Monday 9th February 2009

| Month | Opening Trans | Settle | Change | Daily High | Daily Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Mar 2009 | 1999 | 1963 | -37 | 2022 | 1960 | 2,797 |
| May 2009 | 1966 | 1939 | -32 | 1996 | 1935 | 5,927 |
| Jul 2009 | 1953 | 1933 | -30 | 1989 | 1930S | 1,728 |
| Sep 2009 | 1953 | 1926 | -29 | 1980 | 1924S | 962 |
| Dec 2009 | 1925 | 1905 | -22 | 1953 | 1905S | 657 |
| Mar 2010 | 1904 | 1884 | -20 | 1926 | 1885 | 276 |
| May 2010 | | 1891 | -21 | | | 0 |
| Jul 2010 | | 1899 | -20 | | | 0 |
| Sep 2010 | | 1909 | -20 | | | 0 |
| Dec 2010 | | 1909 | -20 | | | 0 |
| Average/Totals | | 1916 | | | | 12,347 |

Tuesday 10th February 2009

| Month | Opening Trans | Settle | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------|------|-------|---------------|
| Mar 2009 | 1932 | 1920 | -43 | 1973 | 1901 | 4,813 |
| May 2009 | 1910 | 1892 | -47 | 1950 | 1871 | 10,696 |
| Jul 2009 | 1910 | 1888 | -45 | 1943 | 1868 | 2,150 |
| Sep 2009 | 1916 | 1880 | -46 | 1937 | 1860 | 608 |
| Dec 2009 | 1877 | 1859 | -46 | 1913 | 1842S | 630 |
| Mar 2010 | 1861 | 1835 | -49 | 1889 | 1818S | 655 |
| May 2010 | | 1842 | -49 | | | 0 |
| Jul 2010 | | 1850 | -49 | | | 0 |
| Sep 2010 | | 1860 | -49 | | | 0 |
| Dec 2010 | | 1860 | -49 | | | 0 |
| Average/Totals | | 1869 | | | | 19,552 |

Wednesday 11th February 2009

| Month | Opening Trans | Settle | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Mar 2009 | 1932 | 1932 | 12 | 1938S | 1909 | 2,526 |
| May 2009 | 1905 | 1911 | 19 | 1918 | 1881 | 4,850 |
| Jul 2009 | 1902 | 1906 | 18 | 1906 | 1880 | 1,417 |
| Sep 2009 | 1878 | 1898 | 18 | 1897S | 1874S | 502 |
| Dec 2009 | 1873 | 1877 | 18 | 1881 | 1850 | 1,197 |
| Mar 2010 | 1849 | 1855 | 20 | 1855 | 1828S | 947 |
| May 2010 | | 1862 | 20 | | | 0 |
| Jul 2010 | | 1870 | 20 | | | 0 |
| Sep 2010 | | 1880 | 20 | | | 0 |
| Dec 2010 | | 1880 | 20 | | | 0 |
| Average/Totals | | 1887 | | | | 11,439 |

Thursday 12th February 2009

| Month | Opening Trans | Settle | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|--------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Mar 2009 | 1940 | 1926 | -6 | 1952 | 1903 | 2,465 |
| May 2009 | 1914 | 1904 | -7 | 1932 | 1880 | 3,413 |
| Jul 2009 | 1916 | 1898 | -8 | 1920 | 1876S | 2,295 |
| Sep 2009 | 1907 | 1890 | -8 | 1907 | 1867 | 319 |
| Dec 2009 | 1886 | 1869 | -8 | 1888S | 1871 | 61 |
| Mar 2010 | 1863 | 1846 | -9 | 1864S | 1827 | 759 |
| May 2010 | | 1852 | -10 | | | 0 |
| Jul 2010 | | 1860 | -10 | | | 0 |
| Sep 2010 | | 1868 | -12 | | | 0 |
| Dec 2010 | | 1868 | -12 | | | 0 |
| Average/Totals | | 1878 | | | | 9,312 |

Friday 13th February 2009

| Month | Opening Trans | Settle | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|----------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Mar 2009 | 1916 | 1928 | 2 | 1932 | 1914S | 1,400 |
| May 2009 | 1894 | 1905 | 1 | 1909 | 1893 | 2,975 |
| Jul 2009 | 1893 | 1898 | 0 | 1900S | 1890 | 1,110 |
| Sep 2009 | 1885 | 1890 | 0 | 1895 | 1880 | 105 |
| Dec 2009 | 1863 | 1869 | 0 | 1868 | 1860S | 21 |
| Mar 2010 | 1842 | 1845 | -1 | 1845 | 1834 | 178 |
| May 2010 | 1844 | 1851 | -1 | 1844S | 1844S | 3 |
| Jul 2010 | | 1859 | -1 | | | 0 |
| Sep 2010 | | 1867 | -1 | | | 0 |
| Dec 2010 | | 1867 | -1 | | | 0 |
| Average/Totals | | 1878 | 0 | | | 5792 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------|--|--|--|---------------|
| Average for the week | | 1878 | | | | 11688 |
| | | | | | | 58,442 |

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

Monday 9th February 2009

| Month | Open | Price | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|------|-------------|--------|------|------|--------------|
| Mar 2009 | 2814 | 2832 | 4 | 2919 | 2779 | 11,669 |
| May 2009 | 2830 | 2827 | -6 | 2917 | 2773 | 10609 |
| Jul 2009 | 2842 | 2825 | -7 | 2912 | 2770 | 2185 |
| Sep 2009 | 2865 | 2815 | -8 | 2899 | 2758 | 281 |
| Dec 2009 | 2835 | 2803 | -3 | 2878 | 2751 | 856 |
| Mar 2010 | 2815 | 2798 | 6 | 2857 | 2773 | 1036 |
| May 2010 | 2801 | 2793 | 7 | 2801 | 2769 | 18 |
| Jul 2010 | | 2795 | 9 | 2795 | 2795 | |
| Sep 2010 | | 2852 | -22 | 2852 | 2852 | |
| Dec 2010 | | 2855 | -22 | 2855 | 2855 | |
| Average/Totals | | 2820 | | | | 26654 |

Tuesday 10th February 2009

| Month | Open | Price | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|------|-------------|--------|------|------|--------------|
| Mar 2009 | 2809 | 2718 | -114 | 2828 | 2700 | 13,505 |
| May 2009 | 2800 | 2707 | -120 | 2820 | 2685 | 13,598 |
| Jul 2009 | 2775 | 2700 | -125 | 2808 | 2692 | 914 |
| Sep 2009 | 2758 | 2685 | -130 | 2797 | 2679 | 242 |
| Dec 2009 | 2750 | 2668 | -135 | 2782 | 2650 | 461 |
| Mar 2010 | 2735 | 2653 | -145 | 2763 | 2628 | 446 |
| May 2010 | | 2648 | -145 | 2648 | 2648 | 94 |
| Jul 2010 | | 2653 | -142 | 2653 | 2653 | 1 |
| Sep 2010 | | 2721 | -131 | 2721 | 2721 | |
| Dec 2010 | 2774 | 2668 | -187 | 2776 | 2668 | |
| Average/Totals | | 2682 | | | | 29261 |

Wednesday 11th February 2009

| Month | Open | Price | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|------|-------------|--------|------|------|--------------|
| Mar 2009 | 2710 | 2714 | -4 | 2735 | 2677 | 10181 |
| May 2009 | 2707 | 2693 | -14 | 2719 | 2639 | 13908 |
| Jul 2009 | 2701 | 2683 | -17 | 2714 | 2650 | 504 |
| Sep 2009 | 2687 | 2668 | -17 | 2688 | 2639 | 249 |
| Dec 2009 | 2650 | 2653 | -15 | 2664 | 2625 | 342 |
| Mar 2010 | 2605 | 2637 | -16 | 2650 | 2605 | 286 |
| May 2010 | 2650 | 2632 | -16 | 2650 | 2632 | 2 |
| Jul 2010 | | 2636 | -17 | 2636 | 2636 | |
| Sep 2010 | 2650 | 2668 | -53 | 2670 | 2646 | |
| Dec 2010 | 2650 | 2668 | unch | 2668 | 2650 | 82 |
| Average/Totals | | 2665 | | | | 25554 |

Thursday 12th February 2009

| Month | Open | Price | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|------|-------------|--------|------|------|--------------|
| Mar 2009 | 2716 | 2644 | -70 | 2716 | 2599 | 5,991 |
| May 2009 | 2693 | 2649 | -44 | 2693 | 2599 | 11,160 |
| Jul 2009 | 2652 | 2648 | -35 | 2667 | 2598 | 709 |
| Sep 2009 | 2632 | 2641 | -27 | 2648 | 2591 | 175 |
| Dec 2009 | 2576 | 2628 | -25 | 2634 | 2575 | 148 |
| Mar 2010 | 2560 | 2624 | -13 | 2624 | 2560 | 29 |
| May 2010 | 2561 | 2622 | -10 | 2622 | 2561 | 3 |
| Jul 2010 | 2564 | 2631 | -5 | 2631 | 2564 | |
| Sep 2010 | 2632 | 2646 | -22 | 2646 | 2591 | 50 |
| Dec 2010 | 2640 | 2671 | 3 | 2671 | 2640 | 11 |
| Average/Totals | | 2640 | | | | 18276 |

Friday 13th February 2009

| Month | Open | Price | Change | High | Low | Volume |
|-----------------------|------|-------------|--------|------|------|--------------|
| Mar 2009 | 2666 | 2752 | 108 | 2778 | 2666 | 5,066 |
| May 2009 | 2659 | 2672 | 23 | 2692 | 2651 | 11,642 |
| Jul 2009 | 2685 | 2669 | 21 | 2685 | 2654 | 1,162 |
| Sep 2009 | 2670 | 2656 | 15 | 2670 | 2645 | 371 |
| Dec 2009 | 2647 | 2642 | 14 | 2653 | 2634 | 197 |
| Mar 2010 | 2655 | 2632 | 8 | 2655 | 2632 | 99 |
| May 2010 | | 2632 | 10 | 2632 | 2632 | 6 |
| Jul 2010 | | 2641 | 10 | 2641 | 2641 | 2 |
| Sep 2010 | 2654 | 2656 | 10 | 2661 | 2645 | 8 |
| Dec 2010 | | 2646 | -25 | 2646 | 2646 | 2 |
| Average/Totals | | 2660 | | | | 18555 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--|--|--|----------------|
| Average for the week | 2646 | | | | 29575 |
| 2020 | | | | | 118,300 |

Spot Prices (US \$ per tonne)

| | 9 th February | 10 th February | 11 th February | 12 th February | 13 th February |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1 | 3349 | 3235 | 3229 | 3159 | 3267 |
| Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1 | 3200 | 3086 | 3081 | 3009 | 3117 |
| Main Crop Nigerian, 1 | 3177 | 3063 | 3054 | 2984 | 3092 |
| Superior Arriba | 3162 | 3048 | 3024 | 2956 | 3064 |
| Sanchez f.a.q | 3182 | 3068 | 3041 | 2971 | 3079 |
| Malaysian 110 | 2855 | 2741 | 2727 | 2662 | 2770 |
| Sulawesi f.a.q | 3005 | 2891 | 2871 | 2802 | 2910 |
| Ecuador Cocoa Liquor | 4390 | 4213 | 4288 | 3984 | 4146 |
| Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter | 7618 | 7311 | 6875 | 6963 | 7247 |
| 10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake | 1246 | 1196 | 1212 | 1137 | 1183 |

Source: Cocoa Merchant Association

Health and Nutrition

Cocoa and Chocolate Mmmm

UKMedix Health News, UK

By Rupert Kircz

10 February 2009



There are certain foods which are traditionally associated with sexual performance and one of them is dark chocolate. Dark chocolate has very high levels of cocoa in it which has been thought to improve male sexual function for hundreds of years in Europe since it was "discovered" by the Spanish Conquistadors when they overran the Mexican Aztec Empire. The Aztec Emperor, Montezuma was known to drink large quantities of cocoa to enable him to make love to all of the women in his court.

Cocoa And Chocolate Mmmm

There is some scientific evidence to support the hypothesis that chocolate can improve erectile function but it is varied and not 100 percent conclusive. For example the cocoa in chocolate is known to be full of flavanols which can have a significant effect on the process of vascular nitric oxide synthase activation. This sounds very complicated but it is an essential part of good sexual function in men.

High concentrations of cocoa in chocolate have also been linked to a decrease in high blood pressure levels. High blood pressure in itself can be a direct cause of erectile dysfunction. More evidence that cocoa and chocolate gets you in the mood for loving is that it contains a chemical called phenethylamine which can elevate your mood and is also known as a "feel good" chemical as it is produced when you are in love.

You should also not underestimate the placebo effect of eating chocolate to get both men and women turned on. Women love it when men buy them chocolate and it is always a winner for a romantic occasion.

A word of warning however is that the more chocolate that you eat does not necessarily mean the better your erectile or sexual function. You should always eat chocolate in moderation and make sure that you go for those dark chocolates which have a 60%+ concentration of cocoa. Eating too much chocolate will cause obesity which is probably the number one cause of erectile dysfunction.

Intake of pure cocoa, source of healthy living

Accra, Feb. 14, GNA - Professor Fredrick Addai, Head of the Anatomy Department, University of Ghana Medical School on Saturday said regular intake of pure cocoa or chocolate was a must for healthy living. "Daily intake of cocoa is necessary to realise its optimum benefits for growth and development of the body as well as disease prevention," he added.

Professor Addai said this at the end of a three-day lecture on cocoa and its benefits organized by Centuries International Organisation, an NGO which is promoting cocoa consumption in Ghana. He said drinking pure cocoa powder drink at least three times daily could reduced the rate of diabetes and hypertension, "I advice that persons with these kind of diseases would stick to pure cocoa". Professor Addai however, noted that it was not really good for people with very low blood pressure or gastroesophageal reflux disease but could reduce the risks of getting stroke and aneurysm. On chocolate, he urged the youth to eat the dark bar chocolate regularly in addition to drinking pure cocoa adding, "benefits require lifetime commitment to cocoa consumption".

He said research had shown that pure natural cocoa has incomparable promotive, preventive, and curative health benefits, "most valuable nutrients are stored in the cocoa bean." Mr Ekow Otoo, Commercial Manager, Cocoa Research Institute, Tafo said it was working and researching into various aspect of the pod to churn out more products.

"We now have the cocoa fertilizer, soaps, wine, pomade, salts and others from the pod which is even a by-product", he added. Mr Stephen Dzilah, President of the Ghana Chefs Association called for improved technologies in cocoa production that would promote cocoa and chocolate in the country, adding "as chefs, we assure the public of nutritional menu from the product".

Source: GNA

Eating chocolate protects the teeth - Prof.

Accra, Feb. 13, GNA - Professor Frederick Addai, Head of the Anatomy Department at the University of Ghana Medical School, on Friday dismissed the misconception that eating too much chocolate could damage one's teeth and said it rather protects the teeth against tooth decay. "Eating chocolate after every meal is comparatively better than brushing your teeth," he said at a forum organized by Centuries International, a non-governmental organization that aims at creating awareness about the usefulness and health benefits of chocolate. The forum, which would formally end on Saturday, celebrated globally as St. Valentine's Day, and in Ghana as National Chocolate Day, is a prelude to a chocolate festival to be held in the country in September.

Prof. Addai said he discovered that chocolate actually protected the teeth when he conducted an experiment with the Golden Tree chocolate produced in Ghana where three volunteers were made to eat chocolate. After some minutes when their saliva was taken for test it was realized that the alkaline level was high while the acidity level was low which meant that there was something in the chocolate that actually protected the teeth. He recommended that cocoa producing companies in the country started producing smaller sizes of chocolate that could be eaten after meals as snacks or desserts since chocolate also helped in digestion.

Prof. Addai, however, said cocoa in its raw form was healthier than the processed form where sugar and milk had been added since sugar had very serious health effects that reduced the nutritional benefits of cocoa. "When you want to take chocolate take it in moderation, since sugar has damaging effects on health." Prof. Addai, who said he was convinced about the health benefits of cocoa in its raw form and could give a lot of testimony about how it had helped a lot of people regain their health, said cocoa was the largest natural source of magnesium and was very helpful to diabetic patients, explaining that people with diabetes had low magnesium.

Heart disease, stroke, malaria, cough and common cold, asthma, high blood pressure, arthritis and eye problems resulting from cataracts were some diseases that taking raw cocoa powder could help cure or reduce, he said. "This is not hearsay or guess work. It is a scientific fact," Prof. Addai pointed out and added that cocoa also improved stamina. Mr Stephen Dzilah, President of the Ghana Chefs Association, who is also an executive member of Centuries International, said the organization together with chefs in Ghana would soon introduce various recipes made with cocoa. "We will have chocolate coated peanuts, plantain chips, chocolate wedding cakes," he said, and noted that the Chefs Association was liaising with hotels in the country to help introduce more cocoa-based foods in their restaurants.

Mr Emmanuel Hagan, a Director at the Ministry of Tourism, said the ministry introduced the National Chocolate Day to coincide with St. Valentine's Day to help promote made in Ghana chocolate and also make people aware of the enormous health benefits of cocoa. He said the ministry had been involved in many projects aimed at popularizing Ghana's cocoa and chocolate since chocolate in its best form can be found in Ghana.

The Sweet Truth: Chocolate Can Be Healthy

LiveScience.com andrea Thompson

livescience.com – Fri Feb 13

A bar of chocolate for your Valentine isn't just a sweet treat, it can also be a boon to the body. The ways in which the compounds in chocolate interact with our bodies' systems, from the stomach to the heart, have been an active area of research in recent years. Several studies have found that in small amounts, dark chocolate in particular can help prevent the blood from clumping up, keep the heart healthy and even provide some anti-cancer benefits.

Scientists caution that chocolate is far from being a cure-all, of course. But what could be better than knowing such an indulgence might be good for you?

What chocolate is

Chocolate is produced from the seeds of the cacao tree, which is native to parts of South America. The nibs at the hearts of the seeds are ground and liquefied into the pure chocolate form, chocolate liquor. The liquor can be separated into its two components, cocoa solids (the nonfatty component) and cocoa butter (the fatty part).

As any chocolate lover knows, chocolate comes in many forms. The form depends on the relative amounts of cocoa solids and butter, as well as how much sugar and milk are added:

Unsweetened, or baking chocolate is pure chocolate liquor; dark chocolate has a little fat and sugar added in; milk chocolate, as the name suggests, has milk added in on top of the fat and sugar; white chocolate has only the cocoa butter, and sometimes not even that, with vegetable oils added instead, in which case it isn't really chocolate.

The less sugar and milk in the chocolate, the more bitter it tastes. But with that bitter taste (which varies depending on what percentage of the chocolate is pure cocoa), comes some possible health benefits.

The darker, the better

Studies have shown that dark chocolate contains certain antioxidants called polyphenols that could help fight chronic inflammation of tissues in the circulatory system, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. One study of Italians showed that people who ate a moderate amount of dark chocolate daily (about 6.7 grams, or about the same amount of 1.5 Hershey kisses, though these are milk chocolate) had lower levels of a protein associated with inflammation. Other studies have shown that chocolate, like aspirin, makes blood platelets less likely to clump together into dangerous blood vessel-blocking clots by reducing their stickiness.

Recent research has also suggested that these same antioxidants could help reduce the chances of developing cancer because they combat the cell damage that can lead to tumor growth. "The great news this Valentine's Day is that in addition to being decadent and delicious, moderate amounts of dark chocolate may play a role in cancer prevention," said Sally Scroggs, M.S., R.D., L.D., health education manager at The University of Texas' Cancer Prevention Center.

Curb your enthusiasm

Dark chocolate is also more filling than milk chocolate, according to new research by scientists at the University of Copenhagen, suggesting it could reduce your cravings for other snacks or sweets. Participants in the study fasted for 12 hours, then ate either dark or milk chocolate and were then allowed to eat as much pizza as they wanted.

The dark chocolate eaters ate less pizza.

Of course, that doesn't mean you can eat that whole bar of chocolate in one go and expect health benefits. Moderation is key. And moderation can be hard. Some research suggests that certain people are "programmed" to like chocolate because of particular bacteria residing in their guts. However, true "chocoholics" don't exist, one researcher says. But if the cravings for chocolate are just too much, research suggests a brisk walk could curb the desire to eat that whole heart-shaped box of decadence.

Chocolate Helps Heart Stay Healthy

Dark chocolate: The popular confection is good for you, too!

By SARAH WEBSTER • STAFF WRITER • February 11, 2009

Asbury Park Press

Confectionery companies say not all chocolate is created equal, and research has shown sipping cocoa and eating dark chocolate in moderation can be beneficial to cardiovascular functions. Cocoa and dark chocolate are among the most concentrated sources of flavanol antioxidants, said Dr. David Katz, associate professor of public health at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., and director of the Prevention Research Center, in Derby, Conn.

Hershey funded a study at Yale University's Prevention Research Center measuring human subjects' blood pressure before and two hours after eating two servings (74 grams) of the company's extra dark chocolate.

Yale University used ultrasound technology and sophisticated measurements to assess the effects of eating high-cacao-content dark chocolate, Hershey's Extra Dark, on the arterial function of 45 moderately overweight adults. The findings in the study that came out in July 2008 demonstrated improvements in blood pressure, as well as the ability of blood vessels to dilate and increase flow, a key indicator of cardiovascular health, after eating dark chocolate, according to Hershey research. The research showed Hershey's Extra Dark chocolate had a positive impact on blood pressure and blood vessel function. "The dark chocolate tested in this trial improved blood

pressure and arterial function. This clearly suggests that dark chocolate isn't just good — it's good for you!" Katz said in a news release.

Most cocoa-containing products contain natural flavanol. Generally, the higher the concentration of cocoa, the more flavanol in a product, according to the Hershey Web site. Dark and baking chocolates tend to be much higher in flavanol content than milk chocolate, due to higher cocoa content in the product. "Our dark chocolate is formulated with 60 percent cacao," said Jody Cook, spokeswoman at Hershey Company. "There are a lot of studies out there and a lot more coming out that show there are health benefits to especially dark chocolate," Cook said.

Mars, Incorporated conducted a two-part study on the effects of cocoa flavanol in adults with type-2 diabetes, said Whitney Williams, spokeswoman for Mars. The company found that drinking a cocoa flavanol-rich beverage, made with the company's cocoapro cocoa, can have a positive impact on blood vessel dysfunction in adults with type-2 diabetes, she said.

The study was conducted on men and women between the ages of 50 and 80 years old with established and stably-treated type-2 diabetes, according to research provided by Mars. "What research is showing us is that cocoa flavanol plays an interesting role in the body," said Emily Korns, communications manager and registered dietitian for Mars Health and Nutrition. "It actually helps to improve blood vessel function. It helps the blood vessel walls expand and lets blood flow through more freely," Korns said.

Cocoa flavanol has a lot of health benefits in terms of heart disease and high blood pressure, and even in diabetes, Korns said. "So whenever you include cocoa flavanol in your diet, it can have an improvement in blood vessel functions," she said.

Dove uses a patented process called Cocoapro on its dark chocolate, Korns said. The company starts the process by choosing beans that initially have a high cocoa flavanol content, she added. "We treat them (cocoa beans) very, very gently throughout the whole chocolate production process," she said. "We know the end product of our Dove dark chocolate retains those cocoa flavanols that are naturally occurring anyway."

Williams at Mars recommends trying the company's new Dove Promises Blackberry Caramel Silky Smooth Dark Chocolate, Dove Silky Smooth Dark Chocolate Almond Hearts or Silky Smooth Milk Chocolate Hearts. Visit www.dovechocolate.com for more information.

Ron Boyadjian, co-owner of Criterion Chocolates in Eatontown, says his shop sells an array of chocolate and milk chocolate gifts for Valentine's Day.

The shop sells all kinds of gifts including little dark chocolate hearts, heart pops, dark chocolate heart-shaped boxes and various other dark chocolate novelties. "In 2008 dark chocolate probably gained a lot more popularity," Boyadjian said. "It has been on the uprise for a while."

Criterion's dark chocolate sales have risen 35 to 40 percent in recent years, gaining most of its popularity in 2008, Boyadjian said. However, milk chocolate is still a favorite for customers buying Valentine's Day chocolates. "Years ago, people found dark chocolate to be more on the bitter side. Now it's more of the mainstream since people's tastes have changed," he said.

Production & Quality

Ivorian Cocoa Farmers to Stop Crop Reaching Ports (Update3)

Bloomberg

By Pauline Bax

Feb. 10, 2009

(Bloomberg) -- Cocoa farmers in Ivory Coast, the world's largest producer of the chocolate ingredient, will start preventing trucks from carrying the crops to ports today because they want funding and fertilizer from the government and the dismissal of the leadership of a state management committee. "We will stop all trucks carrying cocoa and 72 hours from now we will also stop trucks carrying other produce," said Christophe Gbe,

president of the Ivorian Federation of Coffee and Cocoa Producers, from the commercial capital of Abidjan, today.

The West African country accounts for about two-fifths of world cocoa production. Farmers in the country receive about 40 percent of the price of cocoa traded in London and New York, while growers in neighboring Ghana, the second-biggest producer, get a price that's equivalent to 70 percent, according to the World Bank. "We are taking the strike call seriously," said Etienne Aka, spokesman for the Committee of Elders, an advisory group of prominent cocoa growers that work in conjunction with the National Management Committee for Coffee and Cocoa. "We are in talks with the unions and we are asking them to suspend the strike."

While the strike is supported by four unions, such action has in the past taken several days to gather momentum. Cocoa growers in the central region of Divo said that while they support the union demands, they are not planning to hinder the movement of cocoa trucks.

'Won't Participate'

"We support the unions because we have not received funding for fertilizers," said Kagnitie Kone, a cocoa grower and labor union member. "But we will not participate."

Cocoa farmers in the eastern Abengourou region, near the border with Ghana, said they would begin to strike tomorrow. "We are still working today, but will follow suit tomorrow morning," said farmer Amon N'Dah by phone from the province.

Cocoa for May delivery fell 32 pounds, or 1.6 percent, to 1,931 pounds (\$2,830) a metric ton as of 4:15 p.m. on the Liffe exchange in London. To contact the reporter on this story: Pauline Bax in Abidjan via Johannesburg at asguazzin@bloomberg.net

World cocoa industry in danger: Ivory Coast minister

Africasia, UK

10/02/2009

ABIDJAN

Ivory Coast's Agriculture Minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly opened a cocoa forum on Tuesday with a warning of serious risks facing the industry in Africa which accounts for 70 percent of world output. Coulibaly told the Abidjan meeting on sustainable cocoa production that part of the problem lay in "the small part producers play in the stages of transformation" of cocoa beans into their end products. This means that they were not getting a fair share of the 'value-added' to their crop, he said.

Coulibaly said world cocoa production in the current 2008/09 crop year could fall by to 100,000 tonnes from 3.7 million tonnes in 2007/09. Countries were being hurt by "poor returns for African producers and a drop in quality on the international market" but production was also down because of damage to the environment and to cultivable land, he said.

On the continent, there are between five and six million cocoa farmers.

The meeting in Ivory Coast's economic capital is due to last until Thursday and delegates will draw up resolutions for another meeting to be hosted by Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean in March. The Abidjan meeting was organised by the Ivory Coast, the world's single largest producer, and is being attended by Jan Vingerhoets, executive director of the International Cocoa Organisation.

The Market

*** Tight cocoa bean supplies underpin cocoa**

guardian.co.uk, UK

By David Brough

Feb 12, 2009

LONDON, (Reuters) - Sugar, coffee and cocoa futures eased on light investor selling and routine rollover business on Thursday, pressured by a firm dollar, but tight supplies were expected to limit losses. "The dollar

has strengthened and this is having an effect, but much of the activity today has been in the March-May spread," a London sugar dealer said.

Sugar traders are closely watching a shortage of supplies of the sweetener in South Asia, notably in India, the world's largest sugar consumer, Pakistan and Bangladesh. India's MMTC Ltd plans to import 35,000 tonnes of raw sugar, its second such move in the crop year that started in October and one that could tighten global supplies and lift prices. The sugar trade is now focusing its attention on who will likely win a February 18 Pakistani 50,000-tonne white sugar buying tender, with the Al Khaleej Dubai refinery and Thai producers seen as front-runners. ICE March raw sugar futures were down 0.06 cent to 13.13 cents a lb at 1346 GMT, while London March white sugar was down \$4.1 or one percent to \$391.40 per tonne in light turnover of 1,647 lots.

The firmer dollar and routine investor dealings also weighed on arabicas and robustas. Dealers spoke of concerns over tightening supplies of arabicas. The dollar and yen strengthened on Thursday, boosted by their perceived safety in the eyes of investors worried about the potency of government policies to combat recession and bank-led weakness in global stock markets. ICE May arabica futures were down 1.85 cents to \$1.1595 per lb at 1357 GMT, while London May robustas fell \$19 to \$1,609 per tonne in slim turnover of 2,460 lots.

U.S. cocoa futures fell on investor selling and profit-taking, dragged lower by the firmer dollar, but sterling weakness prevented the London market from falling as sharply as U.S. futures. The Bank of England's quarterly inflation report on Wednesday -- where it said it is ready to take unconventional policy easing steps and indicated it may be comfortable with a weaker exchange rate -- kept sterling under selling pressure. Dealers said tight West African bean supplies were likely to limit falls in cocoa, as attention began to shift towards mid crops. ICE May cocoa was down \$40 to \$2,653 per tonne at 1358 GMT, while London May cocoa was down 8 pounds at 1,903 pounds per tonne in light volume of 1,628 lots.

The bitter truth about Chocolate

Forbes, NY

Miriam Marcus,

02.12.09

Earlier this week, as lovers everywhere were preparing their Valentine's offerings, cocoa futures hit their highest prices in decades at \$2,832 per ton on the New York Mercantile Exchange. That's an 18.7% jump from year-earlier prices, and 64.6% higher than two years ago.

Constrained supply has made cocoa one of the market's best-performing commodities. With the current economic crisis deepening, analysts aren't quite sure what to expect. According to the International Cocoa Organization's December 2008 report, 40% fewer tons of cocoa beans arrived to the ports in Africa's Cote d'Ivoire--the world's largest cocoa producer, shipping around 40% of the world's supply--than the year before. Above-average rainfall in West Africa's cocoa-growing regions in the summer increased the incidence of so-called black pod disease, which has reduced bean supplies. "Most analysts are expecting that this year's main crop in Cote d'Ivoire will be significantly lower than in the last season," the organization said. That could push prices higher going into next year. (See "Hot Cocoa.")

Producers will have to pass those prices on to consumers or else suffer weaker profit margins. Swiss posh chocolate maker Lindt & Spruengli (other-otc: LDSVF - news - people) said last month that its year-over-year sales had increased 5.8% to \$2.5 billion. "In good times they were growing in double digits," says Patrik Schwendimann, head of consumer goods research at Zurcher Kantonal bank in Zurich.

Retailers who sell the goods will also suffer. "There are consumers who are buying Lindt at Wal-Mart (nyse: WMT - news - people) stores, for example. But you also have Lindt stores in shopping centers where traffic is not that good, and then there is the suffering or even collapse of clients, such as Woolworths in the U.K.," Schwendimann told Forbes. (See "Brit Retailers Go To The Wall.")

Cocoa Rises as Stronger Pound May Reduce West African Supply

By Yi Tian

Feb. 13 (Bloomberg) -- Cocoa prices rose, trimming this week's losses, as the U.K. pound gained against the dollar, discouraging West African producers from exporting the beans. The pound, used to trade cocoa in Africa, rose as much as 2.4 percent against the dollar after a three-day slump of 4.2 percent. Cocoa gained 31 percent in 2008 and 6.3 percent this year through last week, mainly on forecasts of a reduced crop from Ivory Coast, the world's biggest producer. "A stronger pound is always a factor in cocoa trading," said Michael

Ragazzo, the president of MBL Commodities Ltd. in New York. The pound is also used to trade cocoa in London.

Cocoa futures for May delivery climbed \$23, or 0.9 percent, to \$2,672 a metric ton on ICE Futures U.S. in New York. The most-active contract fell 5.7 percent for the week, the first weekly drop since Jan. 16. Prices fell for four straight days before today on speculation that supply from Ghana, the biggest grower after Ivory Coast, may expand. Ragazzo said he remains "bullish" on cocoa because of the forecast for a third straight year of production deficits.

Asia Cocoa-No Valentine's Day cheer as ratios hit 5-yr lows

Alibaba News Channel, NEW YORK

Feb 13, 2009

SINGAPORE - Cocoa butter ratios, a key indicator of demand, have dropped to their weakest levels in five years in Asia as chocolate makers cut purchases, raising fears that global economic woes are starting to melt demand.

The first quarter of the year is normally a busy period when consumers stock up ahead of Easter celebrations, but dealers said even purchases before Valentine's Day in February were slow, with very little butter traded late last year. "The phone just doesn't ring anymore," said a grinder in Malaysia, the region's largest grinder. "I haven't sold a single kilo of butter since November. When the economy is bad, rice and bread are more important than chocolates. Can you imagine how it feels to come to the office with nothing to do?"

The world cocoa market will remain in deficit but lower-than-expected demand due to the weak economy and bigger crops will push prices below recent levels by year-end, a Reuters poll of analysts showed in January. [COC/POLL] Butter ratios were quoted at 2.10 times London futures, down from 2.40 offered in the last quarter of 2008. <COCOA/ASIA1> Butter prices are determined by multiplying the ratio with related contracts in London <0#LCC:>.

Grinders process beans to get butter and cake, which is later pressed into powder. Butter is the main ingredient of chocolates, while powder is used for coatings in chocolate-making, beverages and ice cream. "Ideally you need to sell powder at \$2,000 a tonne to offset losses but who's going to buy? I heard some desperate Indonesians sold powder at \$1,000 to \$1,200," said the grinder in Malaysia. "I am quoting powder around \$1,700 to \$1,800, although I think the level should be around \$1,600."

There are more than 20 grinders in Asia, with a combined capacity of 600,000 tonnes, accounting for about 16 percent of global output. Grinders across Asia have reported sales declines in recent months that forced factories to cut prices. Gains in London also put pressure on butter ratios because the bean and the product market usually move in opposite directions.

Chocolates fly off the shelves in the main consuming regions of Europe and North America during Valentine's Day, Easter in the spring, Christmas at year-end and other holidays. But this year the consumption picture could be bleaker. "The market is in tatters. Ratios have gone down to 2.1 but still nothing has been traded. This is just a desired ratio," said a dealer in Singapore. "It's difficult to sell both powder and butter, especially when London prices remain high," he said.

London's May cocoa contract <LCK9> fell 7 pounds to end at 1,904 pounds a tonne on Thursday on profit taking, but was within sight of a 24-year high of 2,023 pounds struck in January. Cocoa futures have rallied on fears over crop prospects in Ivory Coast and Ghana, the No. 1 and No. 2 producers.

Processing & Manufacturing

DJ Nigeria Cocoa Processing Plants Hit By Falling Orders-Official

MarketWatch (press release)

By Obafemi Oredein, contributing to Dow Jones Newswires; 234 2 7510489

Feb. 10, 2009

IBADAN, Nigeria, Feb 10, 2009 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- Cocoa grinders in Nigeria are complaining that their business is being hit by reduced overseas orders due to the worldwide financial crisis and

by inadequate support from their government, Abimbola Oladapo, chairman, Cocoa Processors' Association of Nigeria, or COPAN, has told Dow Jones Newswires.

The six to eight functional processing plants in the country are operating at 20% capacity, he said Monday.

Nigerian grinders produce cocoa butter, cake, powder and liquor at the plants and the products are exported mainly to Europe. However, they are having to pay import tariffs imposed on their products by the European Union because Nigeria has not signed the Economic Partnership Agreements, or EPAs, between the E.U. and the African Caribbean and Pacific Countries, he said.

Oladapo said the E.U. tariff was \$200 a metric ton on cocoa products such as cocoa butter and powder from Nigeria because Nigeria has not signed the EPAs. "The E.U. tariff, high cost of energy and the slow pace at which the Nigerian government pays export incentive grants to processors are affecting our business," he told Dow Jones.

The deadline for the successful conclusion of EPA negotiations with West Africa, which accounts for 70% of world's cocoa production, was Dec. 31, 2007.

Oladapo said some local grinders may relocate to neighboring countries such as Ghana for a better business environment. "This is a possibility. Some Nigerian firms are doing this," he added. The functional processing plants, grind a total of 100,000 metric tons of cocoa a year, Felix Oladunjoye, COPAN secretary-general, said. The balance of the 242,000 tons annual production is exported in raw form to buyers in Europe and the U.S.

Nigeria's cocoa industry may lose N32b to global crisis

The Guardian - Nigeria, Nigeria

By Roseline Okere

8 Feb 2009

COCOA Processors Association of Nigeria (COPAN) has warned that Nigeria could lose over N32 billion investments in the cocoa processing sector if urgent steps are not taken by government to stem the effects of the current global financial crisis on the economy. This amount represents investments in fixed and current assets of the six processing companies and two others warming up to join the league, excluding over 1500 direct employment, over 3,600 indirect employment, loss of foreign earnings, amongst others.

Speaking at a media briefing recently in Lagos, President of the association, Mr. Oladapo Abimbola said that the industry which is the most developed Nigeria's non-oil based industry was at the verge of collapse following the low pricing of its processed cocoa products amidst the gloomy global business cloud which has reduced business optimism worldwide.

According to Oladapo, the processors have been battling with low product demand, ridiculous pricing and skyrocketing local prices of raw cocoa bean used in processing the cocoa products. "We are facing serious challenges now with cost of processing moving in a geometric progression while price is nose diving. As I speak now, we have offer price of \$5,000 per tonne of cocoa butter while the local cost of processing a tonne of butter is \$7,000 per tonne. Now tell me how a processor could survive this situation given the fact that you already incur a net loss of \$2,000 per tonne. If government does not come, we sense disaster," he said. Oladapo stressed that if the government does not do anything to address the situation within the next two to six months, more cocoa processors would go underground.

Contributing to the issue at hand, Mr. Felix Oladunjoye, Executive Secretary, COPAN said that the reason why the situation appear uncontrollable was because about 98 per cent of the cocoa products including the raw beans were being exported to the overseas market, meaning very marginal local consumption. He said that where the local drive for consumption, which the government started was sustained to promote local consumption, by now the initiative would have been gathering some moss but it was shortly dropped and that is why the European Union (EU) would continue to dictate the future of the commodity.

Oladunjoye also bemoaned the delays in the ports orchestrated by the current port congestion, which has always made shipment another nightmare waiting to be tackled in the industry.

Business and Economy

Increase in cocoa production boosts PBC's financial performance

Financial Times Deutschland, Germany

Source: B&FT

Feb 12, 2009

The Produce Buying Company (PBC) has posted significant growth in its balance sheet during the 2007/2008 financial year, the company's financial results have shown.

PBC registered increases in cocoa purchased, total revenue and operating profit, which resulted in an increase of its profit before tax by 660.6 percent, from GH¢0.388 million to GH¢2.95 million during the year under review.

Mr. Anthony Osei Boakye, Managing Director of the Company, who disclosed this at the Ghana Stock Exchange's "Facts Behind the Figures" on the PBC's performance, attributed the growth to increase in volume of cocoa purchased, producer price and buyers take-over margins. "With a general increase in national cocoa production from 614,532 tonnes in 2006/2007 to 680,385 tonnes in 2007/08, the company's tonnage purchased, correspondingly increased by 12 percent from 186,051 tonnes to 208,482 tonnes. "This represents 31 percent of PBC's market share over 22 other Licenced Buying Companies involved in the internal marketing of cocoa."

The significant jump in its performance was achieved amidst intense competition in the internal cocoa market and numerous uncontrollable challenges in the cocoa industry, he mentioned. He indicated that the year 2007/2008 marked the beginning of the company's three-year medium-term corporate plan, ending in 2009/2010. All indicators point to a successful attainment of the corporate objectives set.

Boakye disclosed that 45 cargo trucks, 10 articulated trucks and 11 tractors have been purchased to replace the over-age vehicles. By this acquisition, which completes the revamping programme of the Haulage Department, the company can now haul 100 percent of its primary stocks and 35 percent of the secondary evacuation of cocoa purchased from the farm-gate to the depots and ports respectively. The company's turnover for haulage services increased from GH¢1.327 million to GH¢3.155 million, registering an increase of 138 percent. This was attributed to the quantity of cocoa hauled at the secondary level by the cargo trucks.

PBC's turnover for cocoa operations increased from GH¢191.856 million to GH¢242.324 million, an increase of 26 percent. The company recorded a gross profit of GH¢30.709 million as compared to last year's figure of GH¢22.118 million, an increase of 39 percent. "Management is determined to build upon the success story of the company in the ensuing years: the outlook is promising given the current financial result," he remarked.

The best cocoa in Noho

The Sophian, MA

Beth Cash

2/12/09 Section: Features

When it is cold outside, I find that one of the best things in the world is a steaming, frothy mug of hot cocoa. The drink, if done correctly, is chocolate at its best, with perhaps the exception of the bar itself. With Valentine's Day approaching, students will almost certainly be stuffing their faces with Hershey products ? or in my case, Ballotin; is it weird that I get chocolates on Valentine's Day from my mother?

Why not wash it down with the best cup of cocoa this town has to offer? After all, a study at Cornell University showed that a mug of hot chocolate has more antioxidants than a cup of tea or glass of red wine. So Smithies, let's fight those free radicals and enjoy!

I never considered myself a connoisseur of cocoa until this past week. Being the self-sacrificing foodie I am, I spent the week downtown drinking half my weight in chocolatey goodness, trying to find the perfect cup. Downing over eight cups of the stuff, I found myself becoming more and more of a hot chocolate snob. I learned quickly what constituted a hot chocolate, versus what made a hot chocolate worth paying for. What I found may not surprise you, but I thought it was a worthy endeavor, nonetheless.

First off, here are the places that you can avoid. I was quite disappointed with the Chocolate Emporium. While some of you may be making Valentine's Day purchases there, avoid their liquid renditions. I was excited to see

that they had a variety of flavors including chocolate supreme, chocolate mint, raspberry, caramel and white chocolate. However, while only \$1.50 for a small cup, it is made with water and a packet of powder, mixed just enough so that large clumps formed on the surface. If I wanted flavored Swiss Miss, I would have gone to the Campus Center.

You can also steer clear of Marketplace Café in Thornes. For \$2.10, you get a microwaved cup of combined milk and water and what almost tasted like maple syrup ? it was that sweet. Topped with oil-based whipped cream, every sip was like licking the grease off a slice of pizza, and I quickly threw my two bucks away.

When it comes to drinking the good stuff, it often depends on personal taste. If the picture on the Starbucks ad appeals to you, then try the aesthetically pleasing cocoa at Sylvester's Café. The one-size 16-ounce cup is \$2.63 with tax, and with a perfect mound of whipped cream topped with a cocoa snow, it tastes almost as good as it looks. They convinced me that Hershey's syrup could actually be good. Mixed with cocoa powder and meticulously added to steamed milk, it was on the borderline of being too sweet, but had a nice chocolate flavor. I preferred it to Woodstar Café's, which at \$2.35 is cheaper and is fine, but had too much of a milky flavor, that made it taste more like a steamer than anything else. I think that place is slightly overrated, by the way.

Preference of milk chocolate versus dark chocolate is also very important. If the former is your thing, Haymarket does a relatively noble job. While a small eight-ounce cup is \$2.68, it is far superior to the other hipster hotspot of Woodstar. The chocolate is steamed in the milk as opposed to being mixed in at the end, giving the drink a decent chocolate flavor throughout, not just when you reach the bottom of the cup.

If, like me, dark chocolate is your thing, then I will admit without shame that Starbucks' signature blend hot chocolate is pretty good. It is not too sweet, and has a deep and rich chocolate flavor that is almost worth the extra 60 cents that you have to pay for it. Call me a corporate junkie, but while hot chocolate is almost an afterthought to the espresso beverages at several cafes, Starbucks actually puts a lot of thought and research into creating their mass-produced drink, and you really can taste the difference.

I was slightly disappointed that I had not made a huge, life-altering discovery in my cocoa expedition. Every place essentially gave me what I expected, with the exception of Sylvester's picture-perfect cup. Then it dawned on me that I had forgotten about Elbow Room. Knocking myself on the head, I grabbed my coat and ran down the stairs and across Green Street to the tiny storefront that I have come to love this past year.

I should have known that a former Smithie would obviously know what great hot chocolate is. At \$2 for an eight-ounce cup, not only does Melissa Krueger sell one of the cheapest hot chocolates in town, she absolutely makes the best. It is delicious. Rich, dark, with the perfect amount of sweetness, it is up there with some of the best American hot chocolates I have ever had. Elbow Room is the place to enjoy your Valentine's Day cocoa, or perhaps in my case, my everyday cocoa.

Enough chocolate for valentine, CPC assures

Joy Online, Ghana

Source: GNA

12 February 2009



The management of Cocoa Processing Company (CPC) in Tema has assured the nation of more cocoa products especially, chocolate, on the market to enable the public celebrate the Valentine Day in a grand and enjoyable style. "CPC is putting as much as 250 metric tons of chocolates on the market this year, representing an increase of 90 percent, Mr Ekow Rhule, Public Relations Manager of CPC, told the GNA in an interview in Tema on Thursday. He expressed optimism that the quantity would be sufficient for the day and beyond, as many depots had been mounted at vantage places, which would receive higher allocations. He pointed out that since the inception of the CPC, in 1965, production had increased steadily with local demand getting higher from 2007, when the Valentine's Day was declared, "Cocoa Day".

The NPP Administration, in 2007, declared February 14 as 'Cocoa Day' to encourage Ghanaians to patronize the product towards making the 'Campaign for Made in Ghana Goods' a reality. According to him, it was

realised that more people expressed their love by giving out chocolates as gifts. As a result, he said, the CPC had introduced different types of the 'kingsbite' brand, in addition to special packages in the shapes of hexagon and a pyramid, with all packaged in red, to commemorate the Valentine colour.

Mr Rhule described the price as affordable. Reacting to the complaint that Ghanaians were unable to heavily patronize the chocolate because it is expensive, he explained that apart from the cocoa beans, which were purchased locally, all other raw materials such as sugar, milk, and others were imported. The production cost of the high quality product was huge, he said, explaining that the price of cocoa, being an international commodity, was based on the world market price.

The Public Relations Manager, however, assured the public that efforts were being made to explore the use of local materials in their production to reduce the price. Talking about its recent product, the "Royale", Mr Rhule said it promotes good health by serving as a food supplement; improves blood circulation; reduces high blood pressure and stress among others benefits.

Cocoa's by-products, the cocoa shells, which used to be discarded is now useful to the economy, as it is sold and used for the production for local soap "alatasamina" and manure by farmers. Pebbles, cocoa butter, cake/powder, and cocoa confectionery - Vitaco and Royale, are other products of CPC. The CPC has won several international awards due to the high quality of its products.

Swiss chocolate sales resilient at home and away in 2008

By Lindsey Partos, 10-Feb-2009

Related topics: Consumer Trends

Swiss chocolates proved resilient in 2008 with sales easing forward despite a challenging economic climate. The country's chocolate makers association reports that its 18 members sold 184,969 ton of chocolate worldwide last year, a two per cent increase on the previous year, said Chocosuisse in a statement released on Monday.

The hike in raw material prices for key chocolate ingredients contributed in part to growth in overall earnings that saw turnover rise by 9.3 per cent to CHF1.8 billion (€1.19bn) in 2008. As a tougher year for European economies lies ahead, chocolate makers in Europe will welcome these encouraging figures from Switzerland. At the beginning of this year, chocolate was deemed by some as 'recession-proof', although today a feeling of cautious optimism seems to be more dominant.

Germany still tops export market, despite slowdown

More than 60 per cent of all the Swiss chocolate produced found its way to export markets with international sales rising by nearly 11 per cent to CHF 924m (€613m). Exports to the EU, the confederation's biggest client, fell by 7.2 per cent, largely due to the 23.7 per cent fall in demand from Germany, Switzerland's number one European export country.

Germany etched up 14.8 per cent of all export turnover for the Swiss chocolate makers and Britain came a close second in the export rank, chalking up 13.3 per cent of the turnover.

Following behind as the third and fourth most significant export destinations were the French, that claimed 9.6 per cent of the Swiss export turnover, and the US, with 7.4 per cent.

As sales in Germany fell, those in chocolate-loving Belgium rose with Chocosuisse reporting value growth in excess of 50 per cent in Belgium.

The biggest growth among manufactured products was solid chocolate bars that grew 11 per cent and filled chocolate bars that rose by 10 per cent. Solid growth also occurred for coatings that rose by 8.1 per cent.

Outside the EU, the nation's chocolate association reported that the industry 'notched up' impressive sales increases in the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Turkey, Egypt, and India.

Chocoholic Swiss

Supporting growth for swiss chocolate are the swiss people themselves, each consuming on average a generous 12.4 kg of chocolate, a rise of 100g on the previous year. In the Confederation, known for brands like Lindt and Barry Callebaut, turnover in 2008 rose by a considerable 7.8 per cent to CHF894m (€594m).

Labour Issues

COCOBOD educates farmers on child labour

Joy Online, Ghana

13 February 2009

Officers of the Ghana Cocoa Board and the Quality Control Division have ended a one day forum for 800 cocoa farmers on the dangers of worst forms of child labour at Nkrankwanta in the Dormaa municipality. The farmers were educated on basic differences between child work and child labour and the main reasons why it was wrong for children under 18 years to be engaged in certain jobs on cocoa farms.

Mr. Benneth Quaicoo, a research officer of COCOBOD, said the board was not discouraging children from helping their parents on their cocoa farms but was only drawing attention to dangers that could befall them. "Apart from denying such children their right to education, they are also exposed to both instant and delayed effects of the hazardous experience," he said. Mr. Quaicoo said another serious effect of the practice was the dent caused by child labour on Ghana's images in the global cocoa industry, hence the need to halt it.

Mr. Okoh Mensah, Brong-Ahafo Regional Quality Control Manager, urged the farmers not to engage in acts that would tarnish the image they had worked tirelessly to carve for themselves and the nation. "The COCOBOD represents your interests and will not impose any unpopular regulations to discourage existing and prospective farmers," Mr. Mensah said. He appealed to both farm owners and care takers to ensure that their children accessed formal education, irrespective of distance from the nearest schools.

Mr. Mensah said best agricultural practices for modern farming were taught in schools and formal education would let them to become better farmers in terms of yield and cultural practices. The farmers assured the board of their readiness not only to comply with the call but also to spread the message to colleagues.

Children endure bad conditions in Africa for chocolate trade

The Desert Sun, CA

By Dr. Reese Halter • Special to The Desert Sun •

February 14, 2009

This Valentine's Day, consider for just one moment where that scrumptious chocolate came from, and you might be pleasantly surprised to know that it is a gift from the chocolate tree. The story of chocolate dates back at least 3,200 years to the time of the Olmec Peoples of Middle America - it is rich with history, intrigue and flavor.

In America alone we consume more than \$14 billion worth of chocolate products including drinks, candy and cosmetics. In fact, America consumes about 11 pounds per person per year, most of it between meals. The Swiss hold the world record at 22 pounds per person per year.

Chocolate comes from the tropical cacao tree's cantaloupe-sized bean pods. More specifically, it's the flavorsome seeds inside the pod. There are three species with over 90 percent of the pods coming from Forastero cacao. The most valuable chocolate with a fruity, spicy flavor comes from the Criollo cacao. Trinitario cacao is a cross between the other species and its seeds add extra flavor to the Forastero seeds.

The Mayans drank the bitter seed extract (and added chilies) with every meal and they traded it with the Aztecs, who lived in drier, cooler places where cacao trees could not grow. Ever since it was discovered, cacao has been in great demand.

Evidence of chocolate in America dates back to about 1000 A.D. in Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, N.M., some 1,000 miles away from the nearest cacao plantation. It was a prized item of trade between the Chaco Canyon residents and the Mayans in Central America. Chocolate not only tastes good but it alters our body's mood-affecting chemicals including serotonin, endorphins and phenyl ethylamine, which the body releases in response to romance.

Chocolate contains caffeine, antioxidants and also high levels of chemicals known as phenolic compounds, which in chocolate may help combat coronary disease. Phenolics are known to prevent fat-like substances in the

blood stream from oxidizing and clogging the arteries. Certain chocolate phenolic compounds known as flavonoids are being tested to combat heart disease.

The Kuma peoples of Panama drink up to 40 cups of unsweetened cocoa a week and their risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes is very low.

Chocolate does not promote acne. Acne is related to human hormones.

Dogs are extremely allergic to theobromine, a stimulant compound in cacao.

Chocolate is poisonous and depending upon the quantity it may be fatal for dogs.

Cacao trees naturally grow in the understory, and seedlings need shade. Tiny flowers, growing on tree trunks and lower branches, depend upon midges and other insects, which feed on the flower's nectar, to cross-pollinate the trees.

Inside each large pod is sweet pulp and between 25 and 50 seeds. It takes about five months for the pods to ripen.

In an attempt to increase yield some plantations remove the native overstory thereby casting 100 percent sunshine onto the cacao seedlings. Without the natural plants and animals in the tropical rainforest, the natural pest protection system as well as fertilization is lost. The cacao trees become very susceptible to disease, must be sprayed with toxic pesticides and the soil treated with petro-chemical fertilizers.

Moreover, West Africa produces about 40 percent of the world's cocoa and at least \$118 million per year of their gross \$1.4 billion in sales goes towards fueling conflicts and buying firearms. Worse still, according to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, an estimated 284,000 children are enslaved in hazardous conditions in the Ivory Coast and other African countries, where they work on cacao plantations, applying pesticides and using machetes.

Support Fair Trade Certified cocoa, chocolate bars and chocolate chips sold in over 2,000 retail locations across America, including Safeway, Whole Foods, Target and Wal-Mart.

Hershey's (www.hersheys.com) and M&M/Mars (www.mmmars.com) control two-thirds of the \$14 billion American chocolate market and they must scrutinize the cacao plantations - like Starbucks has done in coffee plantations - and protect children's rights. *Dr. Reese Halter lives in Rancho Mirage. He is a naturalist and founder of the international conservation institute Global Forest Science. Reach him by visiting www.DrReese.com.*

Environmental Issues

A World Without Chocolate?

Without Conservation Efforts, Cacao Could One Day Be in Short Supply

By LAMA HASAN

Feb. 14, 2008

ABC News - Feb 14 4:50 AM It's hard to imagine Valentine's Day without chocolate, but some scientists say that it's possible that chocolate could one day be in short supply. It's hard to imagine Valentine's Day without chocolate, but some scientists say that it's possible that chocolate could one day become extinct. What would the world be like without this decadent, delectable and divine dessert? Watch the story today on Planet Green's "Focus Earth" with Bob Woodruff.

Historians say the Aztecs discovered chocolate more than 3,100 years ago and it was revered to the point of worship. Cocoa beans were linked to the feathered serpent god of agriculture and creation called Quetzalcoatl. If you believe the myth, Quetzalcoatl descended from the heavens on the beam of a morning star, carrying a cocoa tree stolen from paradise.

In its early form, chocolate was consumed as a celebratory beer-like beverage described as foamy and reddish and flavored with chilli water, aromatic flowers, vanilla and wild bee honey. It was also food fit for an army. Legend has it that French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte carried chocolate morsels on his military campaigns in the 19th century, eating it to conserve energy.

Scientists say that now it is chocolate's sustainability that needs to be monitored. The Ghana-based Nature Conservation Research Center warns that chocolate may become as rare and expensive as caviar within 20 years. A number of factors, including climate change, are affecting the farming and production of cacao, or the cocoa plant.

Howard Shapiro, global director for plant science and external research for confectionery manufacturing Mars Inc. of McLean, Va., said measures must be taken soon to prevent shortages of chocolate. "If nothing was done, and the temperature was to rise, and the rainfalls were to change and drought became more prevalent ... without looking into new farming practices, then there should be a problem, and there might likely be a problem," he said.

Cacao grows in rainforest conditions with high biodiversity. David Croft, the British chocolate company Cadbury's conformance and sustainability director, said, "cocoa isn't a traditional farmed crop. If you go to West Africa, it's cocoa trees underneath forest canopy or underneath a canopy of shade trees. So it's important we help to maintain that natural eco-system if we want cocoa to thrive and to flourish."

Preserving 'the World's Favorite Treat'

Because there is a huge global demand for chocolate, farmers are now being forced to clear the forest and use hybrid seeds to produce higher output in a shorter amount of time. There are consequences to this kind of farming. One of them is soil erosion and a shorter lifespan for the cacao trees. When the trees die and the land is infertile, farmers move onto another patch, clearing forests and adding to the already existing problem of deforestation.

There's also the issue of disease. As with any other crop, pests are a problem. They can spoil and devastate entire cacao growing regions. Eventually, if all the aforementioned challenges are not met, they will lead to an overall shortage of cacao and, thus, chocolate, experts say.

But for all you chocoholics, before you go and hoard all those candy bars, top chocolate companies like Mars and Cadbury are doing something about it.

The companies are training farmers in sustainable cacao cultivation and working with scientists to map the genome of the cocoa bean, which could help battle crop disease and perhaps even improve flavor. "I am quite optimistic with the ongoing activities, the genome, farmer training, understanding the problems, that we believe the plants will survive and thrive in the future using the techniques that we know and we can bear on the production of this wonderful crop," Shapiro said.

Similar efforts are being employed at Cadbury.

"In the last two years, Cadburys has really upped the game, to create more sustainable chocolate, cocoa supply chains particularly," Croft said. "We're managing all the factors reasonably well at the moment and there's a lot of anticipatory work going on, looking at cocoa trees that are more temperature tolerant, looking at cocoa trees that are more saline tolerant so that as climate change begins to impact them, we have crops that will work through that change."

In 20 years, he said, chocolate "will still be the world's favorite treat."

Research & Development

Chocolate: It's just not that good for you

Globe and Mail, Canada -

CARLY WEEKS

From Thursday's Globe and Mail

February 12, 2009 at 9:16 AM EST

If an excuse is needed to consume chocolate, it comes on Valentine's Day. Heart-shaped boxes full of sweet treats lurk in just about every drug and department store, testing the wills of even the most ardent detractors of the lovers' holiday. But this year, some of that temptation is moving over to the health food aisle.

A new crop of companies are trying to sell consumers on the positive aspects of dark chocolate as part of a growing campaign to rebrand it as a health food. It marks a new era in chocolate marketing prompted by research that has shown dark chocolate contains antioxidants, which can help protect cells and potentially prevent disease. The findings are similar to studies that have pointed to the health benefits of red wine.

After the link between dark chocolate and antioxidants was made several years ago, well-known confectionery companies such as Hershey, Mars and Dove began launching new dark chocolate products as a way to appeal to consumers.

Now, new companies are going one step further by promoting their dark chocolate products not just as treats with a nutritional benefit, but as health foods. Some experts worry that the new tactic risks crossing the line of responsible marketing.

The new dark chocolate treats being pushed by companies such as Ecco Bella and Smart Confections often contain added vitamins, nutrients and probiotics. Labels on various products claim the chocolate can help lower cholesterol, improve bone strength or support heart health, among a range of other health benefits.

The companies often call them "functional foods," a term used for foods that fight disease. But are these claims as good as they appear?

Jeffrey Blumberg, a nutrition science and policy professor at Tufts University who was a pioneer of research into the health benefits of chocolate, said he is worried consumers are being misled. "I have some concerns about trying to turn confectionery products into health foods," Prof. Blumberg said. "I just worry that some companies and some people get carried away with all these [claims of] health benefits of eating lots of chocolate."

Research has shown that flavonoids, antioxidants found in cocoa beans, may help lower blood pressure and "bad" LDL cholesterol, as well as improve blood vessel function and provide other cardiovascular benefits. But the findings about dark chocolate aren't conclusive enough to warrant a dietary recommendation, and encouraging people to eat more chocolate based on these findings could have negative consequences, according to Bruce Holub, professor emeritus of nutritional sciences at the University of Guelph. "I think it's a very tricky and sometimes potentially dangerous minefield," Prof. Holub said.

Even if a chocolate bar's label says it contains nutrients, the levels may be too low to have a positive effect on health, Prof. Holub said. "It's playing on the ignorance of the public for the most part," Prof. Holub said.

Chocolate+Plus, a line of chocolate bars sold by Smart Confections that was launched in Canada last year and sold exclusively by Shoppers Drug Mart and Pharmaprix, is marketed as a natural health product infused with flavonoids, calcium, probiotics and multivitamins. It is "scientifically enhanced to deliver specific health benefits," said Morne Van Wyk, Shoppers Drug Mart's category strategy vice-president, in a release when the product was introduced.

There are eight kinds of bars containing different combinations of vitamins and nutrients that the company claims offer various health benefits. The label of the "Strong Bones" chocolate bar says it contains vitamin D3 and calcium for the maintenance of strong, healthy bones. Another claims it is loaded with probiotics to help digestion and immunity. Another, called "Sweet Dreams," contains the herbal remedy valerian and magnesium oxide to "encourage restful sleep."

Directions on the bars say to eat "one bar daily as part of a healthy lifestyle," adding that a balanced diet and exercise are important. The "Sweet Dreams" bar advises people to eat one when needed. The 50-gram bars contain 21 grams of fat and 294 calories, on average.

Although the company makes health claims about its chocolate bars, it hasn't yet received Health Canada approval. Health Canada reviews applications from companies that want to sell natural health products, to ensure they are safe, effective and of high quality.

Tim Donovan, CEO of Smart Confections, said in an e-mail that the applications have been submitted to Health Canada and the company is awaiting approval.

Another line of dark chocolate products being touted in Canada for its health benefits is Xocai, which is sold by a variety of distributors. One 12-gram chocolate nugget contains 70 calories and five grams of fat. Ben Stellino, a Toronto distributor of the products, says they offer people who love chocolate a way to enjoy it in a healthier way. "Everybody who loves chocolate can eat this safely and we've taken the guilt away from it," she said.

Health Canada spokesman Philippe Laroche said in an e-mail that no Xocai products have been licensed for sale in Canada.

The new dark chocolate products are usually pricier than traditional chocolate bars. For instance, 50-gram Chocolate+Plus bars sell for around \$2.50, compared with \$1 to \$1.50 for other chocolate bars.

The growing hype around dark chocolate is similar to the excitement about possible health benefits of red wine in recent years. Both are rich in flavonoids. Numerous fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains also contain vast amounts of flavonoids. The difference is that indulging too frequently in red wine or dark chocolate can negate any health benefits that might be derived from their ingredients, Prof. Blumberg said.

Although dark chocolate contains flavonoids that may help lower bad cholesterol, it's also loaded with fat and sugar. Treating it as anything more than an occasional indulgence, even if it's loaded with vitamins and high amounts of flavonoids, could aggravate or create health problems, Prof. Blumberg said. "I think, ultimately, consumers just have to understand it's the old axiom: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

Promotion

Producers of chocolate use about 70 percent of cocoa from Ghana

Joy Online, Ghana

13 02 09

Ghana's historic figure, Tetteh Quarshie, who introduced cocoa into the country, on Thursday, received a minute's silence in recognition of his contribution to the success of the cocoa industry. Professor Kofi Agyekum, Senior Lecturer of Linguistics at the University of Ghana, Legon, who chaired the launch of the first ever Cocoa-Chocolate International Festival in Accra on Thursday, prompted participants on the need to observe a minute of silence for the man who first brought cocoa to Ghana.

The festival, being organized by Centuries International Cocoa-Chocolate Festival Organization scheduled for September, this year, is to promote cocoa cultivation as well as the processing and consumption of cocoa products such as Brown Cocoa Powder, Chocolate, candies, soap, and body lotions.

Prof. Agyekum lauded the efforts of Tetteh Quarshie for ensuring the nurturing and mass cultivation of cocoa in Ghana and the ingenuity of Ghanaian researchers and private sector investors who have made it possible for Ghanaians to enjoy a wide range of cocoa products on the market. He therefore urged other Ghanaians to manage their time profitably, be creative and leave their footprints for the benefit of posterity.

Dr Yaw Owusu Ampomah, Director of the Cocoa Research Institute (CRI), Akim Tafo, gave a brief history of the advent of cocoa, initial problems with cocoa diseases such as capsid and swollen shoot and how the then West African Cocoa Research Institute and later the CRI had researched to contain them. He said the institute had now developed technologies to not only fight cocoa diseases but researched into high yielding and disease-resistant cocoa varieties that start bearing fruits after 18 months instead of the original variety that took six to seven years before bearing fruits. He also cautioned on the use of fertilizers and insecticides that could pose great danger to human health and the environment, adding that the environment should not be compromised.

Dr Ampomah praised Tetteh Quarshie for selecting the best cocoa bean variety that had made Ghana the producer of the best quality cocoa in the world, saying producers of chocolate today always made sure that some 70 per cent of the materials for chocolate came from Ghana's cocoa. He therefore advised farmers to produce cocoa in a more humane manner that can benefit the farmer and to ensure that technologies are used to improve production to enable Ghana to attain a production level of some one million tons per annum.

Dr Ampomah expressed worry that Ghana's cocoa was getting contaminated with some unwanted residues and expressed the need to support the CRI to address the problem and not simply pay lip service to the cocoa industry.

When this is done, he said, Ghana could move from the current production level of 650,000 to 700,000 to one million tons.

Cocoa 09' In Bangalore

Oneindia, India

10 Feb 2009

The city of Bangalore makes headlines with India's first chocolate exhibition, Cocoa 09'. The exhibition will showcase the various popular monuments of the world and other creative arts, all made of chocolate. The event is hosted by Nilgiri's Dairy of Bangalore commenced on February 6 as a part of the International Lifestyle Exhibition at the sprawling Palace Grounds. It is available for public viewing until February 15th.

Chocolate exhibition is similar to show modelling

The items showcased are wonders of the world like the Taj Mahal, Eiffel Tower, the Windsor Castle, a windmill of Holland and several items like a railway engine as well as flowers. The creative genius behind these wonders is a celebrated confectioner C. Ramachandran of Nilgiri's Dairy Farm. He is well known for his talent in cakes and chocolate preparations.

"Chocolate exhibition is similar to show modelling. We have to make patters of whatever models we have to make on cardboard and then we melt the chocolates and make them into sheets. Then cut the chocolate sheets into whatever size we want and then join them into respective shapes," said C Ramachandran.

The exhibition was a treat for the eyes for children, "I feel good about it because usually chocolates are in other shapes. But in this exhibition, we get to see the chocolate moulded in interesting shapes," said Karan, a child visitor. Other than providing a treat for the chocolate lovers, the creations will be auctioned off at the end of the exhibition for Samaritan cause. The funds raised will be granted to Orphanages. AGENCIES

Others

Chocolate with a heart

Christian Science Monitor, MA

By Jennifer Wolcott | Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

February 11, 2009

On Valentine's Day, traditionalists typically give roses and chocolate to their sweethearts. Choosing those roses is simple: a dozen, long-stemmed, red ones say it best. But the choice of chocolate is more complicated: Will it be Swiss or Belgian, milk or dark, conventional or artisanal, a bar or in a box? If that's not enough to make your head swirl, there's another choice that, for an increasing number of consumers, is the most important of all: the option to buy chocolate that has been Fair Trade Certified.

When a product such as coffee, tea, or chocolate bears the trademarked stamp Fair Trade Certified, it means that farmers were paid fair wages (often two to three times more than standard), working conditions were humane, sustainable agricultural practices were followed, and that all of these were closely monitored. "The result is transformative for small-scale, family farmers, allowing them to invest in their children, their homes, and their communities, often bringing in basics like running water and electricity," says Paul Rice, president and CEO of TransFair USA, which oversees certification of fair-trade products in the United States, including acting as middleman between more than 1.4 million small family farmers in 60 countries around the world and American retailers and suppliers.

The term "fair trade" is perhaps best known in relation to coffee. The poverty and plight of coffee growers in developing countries has been well publicized and today, consumers can easily find fair-trade coffee in their local supermarket.

Chocolate is not far behind. Companies such as Equal Exchange, Divine Chocolate, and Theo Chocolate, among others, are making Fair Trade Certified chocolate available and raising awareness about the ethical difference between buying a mass-produced brand of candy bar versus a bar of chocolate that is Fair Trade Certified.

Their efforts seem to be paying off. Despite its higher price when stacked up against conventional chocolate bars, Fair Trade Certified chocolate appears to be selling briskly in more than 1,600 retail locations around the US, including many natural foods stores and some major supermarkets.

Churches and schools have been among the biggest cheerleaders of Fairly Trade chocolate, where the message has resonated with younger consumers who embrace socially responsible choices.

Even the social networking website Facebook is buzzing with fan groups of fair-trade chocolate, some with members numbering into the thousands from countries all over the world.

Enthusiasm for chocolate with a heart may be growing, but it remains to be seen if demand for fairly traded sweets is having an impact on the \$13 billion a year that Americans spend on cocoa products.

There's still more to be done, says Debra Music, vice president of sales and marketing at Theo Chocolate in Seattle. "Fair Trade chocolate is getting onto people's radar screen," she says, "but so far, it's mostly in urban areas and in southern California, where the green movement is burgeoning."

To help spread the word, Theo Chocolate – the first factory to produce organic, Fair Trade chocolate in the US – offers tours seven days a week. Many of the people who take the tour, says Ms. Music, don't realize that their favorite treat comes from an actual agricultural crop, the cocoa bean, nor do they know where it comes from – cacao trees grown in Central and South America, West Africa, and the Dominican Republic. Even fewer consumers are aware that the cocoa harvest sometimes occurs under awful labor conditions for little or no pay.

Perhaps the most troubling practice in the chocolate industry is that of forced child labor, which is generally believed to be most prevalent in West Africa, the source of 70 percent of the world's cocoa, and particularly in the Ivory Coast. In the Fair Trade system, child labor and forced labor are strictly forbidden.

It's an issue that deeply concerns Rodney North, a spokesman from Equal Exchange, based in Massachusetts, which partners with cooperatives of cocoa farmers around the world, especially in the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Peru. "The child labor problem in West Africa was brought to light in 2002," says Mr. North, "Since then, there's been only glacial progress." But he is the first to admit that as disturbing as the working conditions can be around the production of cocoa, consumers remain reluctant to spend as much as \$5 more for a Fair Trade Certified chocolate bar than for a regular candy bar just for the purpose of improving human lives.

Bottom line: It also has to taste good.

Or as North puts it: "Everyone has their reason for buying Fair Trade Certified chocolate. Some people tell us they buy our Panama Bar [extra dark chocolate] just for its great taste. The product can carry a message, but it's hard for a message to carry the product." 3 cups strawberries, whole with stems

Some facts about solid chocolate, cocoa powder and nibs

The Canadian Press –

Source: Chocolate for Breakfast by Barbara Passino (Hoberman) and Lindt & Sprungli.

10 Feb 2009

Here are some facts about chocolate in its many forms:

- Quality chocolatiers will frequently list a percentage on the label. This indicates by weight the amount of ingredients derived from the cacao bean. For instance, Lindt & Sprungli (Canada) has a new 90 per cent cacao which falls between the 85 and 99 per cent cacao range. But it's less bitter than one might expect from cacao in this range, with a taste profile of between 70 and 85 per cent.
- Cocoa powder is made by pressing some of the cocoa butter out of roasted cacao beans. This is "natural" cocoa powder. The powder can then be "dutchified" or "alkalized," a process of washing the cocoa with an alkaline substance such as potassium carbonate to reduce harshness and acidity.
- Chocolate nibs: Chocolate or cacao nibs taste like chocolatey unsweetened nuts. They are the roasted and chopped nut of the cacao bean with the outer hull removed.

About 100 communities benefit from Cadbury

Joy Online, Ghana

Source: GNA
11 February 2009

Some one hundred Ghanaian communities have so far been hooked onto the multi-million pound worth Cadbury Cocoa Partnership launched in January 2008, according to Mr. Todd Stitzer, Chief Executive Officer of Cadbury Plc.



Cocoa growing communities, mostly in the Eastern, Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo, have been lined up for Cadbury's 10-year investment package designed to secure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of cocoa farmers and the communities in which they live and work.

In commemoration of the company's 100th year of cocoa trading in Ghana, Cadbury Plc, a global leader in confectioneries, in January last year, announced the 10-year-long Cadbury Cocoa Partnership (CCP) worth £30 million aimed at improving cocoa farmer incomes, introducing new sources of rural income for farmers, investing in community-led development and developing a grassroots partnerships for rural development.

The local management of the CCP investment is vested in a Ghana Board of stakeholders comprising government representatives, private sector representatives, farmers' representatives and some development specialists from the non-governmental sector. Company sources indicate that in the course of one year, the partnership has already realized the targeted construction of 365 fresh water wells for cocoa communities in the Western, Central, Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions, initiated biodiversity programmes and is promoting farmer education through an illustrative newspaper on best farm practices.

"This Partnership is in its early days but with the help of the President of Ghana, and non governmental organizations like CARE, VSO and World Vision, I'm confident that our work will help secure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of thousands of Ghanaian cocoa farmers," Mr. Stitzer told journalists after conferring with President John Evans Atta Mills at the Castle Osu.

"I am delighted to be here personally to witness at first hand, the progress made by the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership in its first year and it is particularly timely that we're also here 100 years after Cadbury bought its first cocoa harvest from Ghana," he said.

Cadbury purchased its very first consignment of cocoa beans from the Gold Coast 100 years ago, following contact with cocoa farmers in 1908.

Today, the company uses about 75% of Ghana's globally acclaimed premium beans for most of its frontline brands, but has become increasingly concerned about the future of the produce and the capacity of domestic industries to support cocoa farmers and remain sustainable and viable sectors of their local economies.

"Whiles Ghana's cocoa still enjoys premium status as a result of its consistently high quality, the cocoa industry is facing increasing challenges ranging from the threat of crop diseases to the problem of attracting the next generation of farmers", an official statement on the partnership circulated by Cadbury stated.

Among other objectives, Cadbury's Cocoa Partnership focuses on improving cocoa farmer incomes by helping farmers to increase farm yield and produce top quality beans, introducing new sources of rural income through microfinance and business support, investing in community-led living by supporting education, biodiversity projects, and access to basic amenities like clean potable water.

By 2018, Cadbury estimates that it would have made 'a demonstrable difference' to the lives of about half a million Ghanaian farmers using this innovative model of investing in self-driven sustainable growth.

TIT BITS

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

US MIDDAY: coffee up, cocoa down

NEW YORK (February 12, 2009): Arabica coffee was slightly higher in early trade Wednesday, correcting after closing down 4 percent Tuesday, while US cocoa continued lower on technical weakness, traders said. Arabica coffee for March delivery up 0.45 cent at \$1.1730 per lb by 8:56 am EST (1356 GMT).

US MIDDAY: coffee, cocoa and sugar sink

NEW YORK (February 13, 2009): Summaries of the ICE Futures US cocoa, coffee and sugar markets traded during the mid-session on Thursday. May arabica contract down 3.60 cents or 3.1 percent at \$1.1420 per lb at 11:08 am EST (1608 GMT). Trading range from \$1.1840 to \$1.1360, a low since January 6.

London sugar, coffee and cocoa ease

LONDON (February 13, 2009): Sugar, coffee and cocoa futures eased on light investor selling and routine rollover business on Thursday, pressured by a firm dollar, but tight supplies were expected to limit losses. "The dollar has strengthened and this is having an effect, but much of the activity today has been in the March-May spread," a London sugar dealer said.

US MIDDAY: coffee and cocoa rebound

NEW YORK (February 14, 2009): US cocoa futures rebounded in early trade Friday, the spot contract's first notice day, while arabica coffee futures likewise corrected up from Thursday's near six-week low, traders said. The market will be closed Monday for US Presidents Day, reopening for regular trade Tuesday. Arabica coffee for May delivery up 0.30 cent at \$1.1475 per lb by 9:23 am EST (1423 GMT).

Firm pound keeps lid on London cocoa

LONDON (February 14, 2009): US cocoa and raw sugar futures rose on investor dealings, but a stronger pound kept the lid on London cocoa on Friday, dealers said. Tight cocoa bean supplies were expected to provide support to cocoa, but traders said they were wary of the risks of a fund-driven sell-off to take profits. They talked of light industry buying of cocoa.

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