

COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance



Issue No. 352

7th – 11th September 2009

Cocoa Producers' Alliance



UP-COMING EVENTS

- ❖ 2009 COPAL Cocoa Day. Theme: 'CONSUME MORE COCOA FOR BETTER HEALTH AND A BETTER GHANA', 1st October, 2009, Ghana.
- ❖ 16th International Cocoa Research Conference, Hyatt Hotel, Nusa Dua, Denpasar, Bali – Indonesia, 16 – 21 November, 2009.

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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)
7 th September	1917.36	3003.26	1860.00	2962.17
8 th September	1931.80	3041.66	1883.67	2973.00
9 th September	1982.04	3119.98	1928.33	3048.00
10 th September	2010.15	3170.15	1947.00	3099.33
11 th September	2000.50	3168.81	1948.33	3086.33
Average	1968.00	3101.00	1913.00	3034.00

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

Monday 7th September 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Sep 2009	1860	1831	-29	1862	1828	1,705
Dec 2009	1887	1860	-27	1890	1856	2,549
Mar 2010	1889	1860	-27	1889	1855	695
May 2010	1889	1860	-27	1889	1860S	575
Jul 2010	1877	1852	-27	1877S	1877S	250
Sep 2010		1848	-27	0		0
Dec 2010		1841	-27			0
Mar 2011	1865	1836	-29	1865	1864	147
May 2011		1830	-29			0
Jul 2011		1830	-29			0
Average/Totals		1845				5,921

Tuesday 8th September 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	1835	1857	26	1865	1835	4,591
Dec 2009	1862	1885	25	1897	1862S	6,971
Mar 2010	1862	1883	23	1895	1862S	602
May 2010	1879	1883	23	1895	1872S	453
Jul 2010	1866	1874	22	1866	1866	5
Sep 2010	1864	1869	21	1864S	1864S	3
Dec 2010		1862	21			0
Mar 2011		1857	21			0
May 2011		1851	21			0
Jul 2011		1851	21			0
Average/Totals		1866				12,625

Wednesday 9th September 2009

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	1862	1899	42	1904S	1862	1,694
Dec 2009	1895	1927	42	1931	1891	5,510
Mar 2010	1893	1928	45	1933S	1892	1,603
May 2010	1900	1930	47	1935S	1898	4,905
Jul 2010	1892	1916	42	1917	1885S	1,404
Sep 2010	1890	1913	44	1915S	1886	99
Dec 2010	1890	1909	47	1890	1890	10
Mar 2011	1893	1904	47	1893	1893	150
May 2011		1898	47			0
Jul 2011		1898	47			0
Average/Totals		1912				15,375

**10th
Thursday September 2009**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	1899	1917	18	1926S	1894S	14,498
Dec 2009	1929	1944	17	1955	1913	17,700
Mar 2010	1912	1946	18	1955	1912	2,264
May 2010	1932	1951	21	1959	1920	2,734
Jul 2010	1906	1934	18	1940	1906	612
Sep 2010	1901	1928	15	1913	1901	82
Dec 2010	1896	1922	13	1903S	1896S	27
Mar 2011	1887	1917	13	1887	1887	275
May 2011		1911	13			0
Jul 2011		1911	13			0
Average/Totals		1928				38,192

**11th
Friday September 2009**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	1922	1918	1	1936	1900S	5,109
Dec 2009	1944	1946	2	1963	1920	7,882
Mar 2010	1945	1947	1	1962	1922S	2,269
May 2010	1948	1952	1	1963	1927	3,600
Jul 2010	1940	1935	1	1943	1914	166
Sep 2010	1933	1928	0	1933	1933	5
Dec 2010		1923	1			0
Mar 2011		1918	1			190
May 2011		1912	1			0
Jul 2011		1912	1			0
Average/Totals		1929				19,221

Average for the week	1929				18267
					91,334

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

Monday 7th September 2009

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009						
Dec 2009						
Mar 2010						
May 2010						
Jul 2010						
Sep 2010						
Dec 2010						
Mar 2011						
May 2011						
Jul 2009						
Average/Totals		#DIV/0!				0

Tuesday 8th September 2009

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	2971	2940	44	2971	2939	9
Dec 2009	2932	2953	17	2985	2896	4,763
Mar 2010	2947	2974	17	3003	2921	527
May 2010	2967	2984	17	3006	2967	76
Jul 2010	0	2991	17	0	0	19
Sep 2010	0	2993	17	0	0	2
Dec 2010	0	3002	17	0	0	0
Mar 2011	0	2998	17	0	0	0
May 2011	0	3013	17	0	0	0
Jul 2009	0	3020	17	0	0	0
Average/Totals		#DIV/0!				5396

Wednesday 9th September 2009

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	3014	3016	76	3015	3014	11
Dec 2009	2955	3033	80	3046	2954	9,695
Mar 2010	3000	3055	81	3064	2993	1,289
May 2010	3008	3067	83	3070	3002	463
Jul 2010	3006	3070	79	3070	3006	355
Sep 2010	3009	3068	75	3034	3008	19
Dec 2010	3033	3077	75	3033	3033	10
Mar 2011	0	3072	74	0	0	0
May 2011	0	3088	75	0	0	0
Jul 2009	0	3095	75	0	0	0
Average/Totals		3064				11842

**10th
Thursday September 2009**

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	3015	3045	29	3066	2998	12
Dec 2009	3024	3067	34	3085	3005	6,214
Mar 2010	3045	3090	35	3105	3029	1,082
May 2010	3056	3102	35	3115	3041	280
Jul 2010	3045	3103	33	3106	3045	167
Sep 2010	3046	3102	34	3073	3045	238
Dec 2010	3057	3111	34	3057	3057	1
Mar 2011	0	3106	34	0	0	0
May 2011	0	3122	34	0	0	0
Jul 2009	3100	3122	27	3100	3100	1
Average/Totals		3097				7995

**11th
Friday September 2009**

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2009	3075	3055	10	3075	3069	8
Dec 2009	3072	3075	8	3110	3046	6,993
Mar 2010	3090	3098	8	3125	3077	921
May 2010	3104	3108	6	3130	3086	686
Jul 2010	3121	3111	8	3121	3083	302
Sep 2010	3130	3111	9	3130	3097	87
Dec 2010	0	3120	9	0	0	0
Mar 2011	0	3115	9	0	0	0
May 2011	0	3132	10	0	0	0
Jul 2011	0	3130	8	0	0	0
Average/Totals		3106				8997

Average for the week	3111				1636
					1636

Sport Prices (US \$ per tone)

	31 st August	1 st Sept.	2 nd Sept.	3 rd Sept.	4 th Sept.
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1					
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1					
Main Crop Nigeria, Grade 1					
Ecuador ASE					
Sanchez F.A.Q.					
Indonesian F.A.Q. 115/100					
P.P.P. African Type Carton Cocoa Butter					

Source: Cocoa Merchant Association

Dark Chocolate is Good for Your Heart

Zikkir World (blog) - Sep 11, 2009

Surprised that chocolate is good for your heart? Chocolate is rich in flavonoids, just like apples, cranberries, apples, peanuts, onions, tea and red wine. It should not surprise you that chocolate is good for your heart. It holds its own with the big boys!

Dr. Carl Keen's research at the University of California Davis says that the best way to get benefits from the heart enhancing effects of chocolate are to consume cocoa powder of a moderate amount of dark chocolate. Dark chocolate gives the highest amount of chocolate solids in a bar and possesses the lowest percentage of both fat and sugar. Dark chocolate is a natural heart protector. It is inexpensive, pleasurable to eat and a natural food source.

In comparing dark chocolate with red wine, both full of rich phenols for your heart, Dr. Andrew Waterhouse found that one and half ounces of dark chocolate has the same amount of phenols found in a glass of red wine. If cocoa is your choice, you can get similar results as cocoa powder has about 75 percent the amount of phenols found in red wine. Waterhouse and his team of researchers found that the phenols in chocolate and red wine are very similar. They both protect the development of heart disease oxidizing LDLs (bad cholesterol) which in turn protects them from damaging artery walls and help reduce the chance of heart disease.

Dr. Joe Vinson, a chemistry professor at the University of Scranton says that one cup of black tea has the equivalent of antioxidants to one dark chocolate bar. Vinson and his colleagues conducted a series of four experiments to distinguish the antioxidant content of dark chocolate, milk chocolate, chocolate milk made with two different kinds of chocolate syrup and dry hot cocoa mixes containing milk powders. The research concluded that dark chocolate contains approximately 951 phenols. Milk chocolate contained only 394, the chocolate milks came in third and the hot cocoa mixes came in with very little phenols present.

The next study was to measure how chocolate products affected the blood of human beings. The first study was conducted with a 58-year old man and the next one with two men and two women. The subjects consumed dark chocolate muffins and pieces of dark chocolate with their regular meals. The subjects' blood was drawn before eating, right after eating, in two hours, in four hours and finally in 24 hours. The dark chocolate bound together with the LDL (bad cholesterol) and prevented oxidation which is linked to heart disease. The result is eating dark chocolate lessens the chance of developing heart disease.

A further study was conducted at Pennsylvania State's nutrition department by Dr. Penny Kris-Etherton showing that even after elimination of other foods rich in flavonoids such as tea, coffee, onions, apples, wine, beans, soy, and apple and grape juices, both cocoa powder and dark chocolate had a significant effect on the levels of LDL (bad cholesterol) in the blood. Kris-Etherton states that a well-balanced diet consists of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, reduced fat dairy products, fatty fish and lean meats, but a variety of foods in crucial in the diet, so make sure to incorporate a little dark chocolate or cocoa into your diet.

These previous studies are further supported by another study that was conducted by The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in Bilthoven, Amsterdam. The research studied how cocoa affected the mortality of 1,000 elderly Dutch male subjects. The men who consumed the highest amount of cocoa had a 50 percent less chance risk of cardiovascular diseases than those consuming less cocoa.

Don't forget about the cocoa when you incorporate this incredible food into your diet. Remember that a dark chocolate bar is made up of cocoa solids. Researchers at Cornell University, being led by Dr. Chang Yong Lee, have studied the effects of hot chocolate and found that hot chocolate may be a better choice than red when or tea. Researchers tested these three different beverages side by side. They used one cup of hot water with two tablespoons of pure cocoa, one cup of water with a green tea bag, one cup of water with a black tea bag and one glass of red wine. For an average serving, the highest antioxidant levels were in the hot chocolate. It was almost two times stronger than the red wine, two to three times stronger than green tea, and four to five times stronger

than black tea. Dr. Lee suggests avoiding the extra sugar and calories found in hot chocolate by using skim or soy milk for regular milk and using an artificial sweetener. Another option is to use water and flavorings such as cloves, vanilla and a spot of honey the way the ancients liked to drink theirs. Cocoa can be consumed either hot or cold, but hot chocolate releases more antioxidants than cold chocolate.

So even though chocolate does indeed have a high fat content being composed of over 50 percent of its calories coming from fat, and most of that fat coming from saturated fat, chocolate is still good for your heart. It doesn't raise cholesterol levels, actually helps decrease bad cholesterol and keeps those arteries running clear by thinning the blood. Cocoa and chocolate have the same life saving properties as an aspirin a day. The usual dosage of flavonols per day to enhance health benefit is 200 to 500 mg per day. Dark chocolate, over 70 percent, usually contains between 500-2000 mg of flavonols per 100 grams which is about 3.5 ounces. To keep your diet balanced, the University of Michigan Integrative Medicine Department recommends up to seven ounces of dark chocolate per week averaging one ounce per day and get the remaining portion of your flavonols from a variety of other plant sources. Don't forget, you can also get your servings from pure, unsweetened cocoa powder.

Stimulant drugs such as Ritalin can be amplified with the consumption of chocolate. If you are taking MAO inhibitors or any drugs to prevent heart arrhythmias, or to treat insomnia, heartburn, ulcers or anxiety, check with your doctor as chocolate may interfere with their action.

If that isn't enough to get your heart excited about chocolate, chocolate reduces blood pressure too! Dr. Dirk Taubert and his colleagues of the University Hospital of Cologne in Germany conducted a research study to determine the amount of chocolate needed to lower blood pressure. The study spanned from January 2005 and December 2006 and among the participants were forty-four adults ranging in age from 56-73. Twenty-four of the participants were women and twenty were men who had untreated upper range hypertension of 130/85 – 139/89 or stage one hypertension of 140/90 – 160/100. The participants in the study were either given 6.3 grams or 30 calories worth of dark chocolate or the same amount of white chocolate for 18 weeks. The researches found that dark chocolate consumption reduced the average systolic blood pressure by -2.9 and diastolic blood pressure by -1.9. There were no changes in the participants' body weight, plasma levels or glucose. Hypertension declined from 86 percent to 68 percent. The participants in the white chocolate group had no changes in either the systolic or diastolic reading. The dark chocolate showed the appearance of phenols in the dark chocolate participants' blood and the white chocolate showed none. The conclusion of this study shows that eating about 30 calories a day of dark chocolate can lower blood pressure without any side effects. How fantastic is that? Dark chocolate and cocoa can lessen your chance of cardiovascular disease through lower LDLs, bad cholesterol, bring more flavanols into your diet and lower your blood pressure.

- By Annmarie Kostyk | AC

Chocolate is today's chicken soup

Charleston Post Courier

Thursday, September 10, 2009

Excuse us, please, as we unwrap this lovely piece of dark chocolate. It's all about health, of course. Heart health.

Let us take a nibble. Ah. There. Now we can tell you what a recent study in Sweden has indicated. Chocolate can help heart attack survivors.

Just another bite. Mmmm.

U.S. News & World Report recently cited a study of 1,169 Swedish men and women, ages 45 to 70, from the time they were hospitalized with their first heart attacks in the early 1990s.

Those who ate chocolate two or more times a week were about three times less likely to die from heart disease than those who never ate chocolate, according to the the study, which appears in the September Journal of Internal Medicine.

One of the study's authors suggests the reason is cocoa's antioxidants.

We wonder if you can taste antioxidants. Wait a minute. One more bite will tell us.

It's difficult to say, given the complex amalgam of sweet and bitter, rich and smooth.

But this much is clear — the scientists who conducted this study have a warm place in our hopefully healthier heart.

Brain food

Saga Health News - Sep 10, 2009

Can't remember what you went shopping for? Put some berries in your shopping trolley and give your brain some food for thought

Are you getting enough flavonoids? They're not the latest fad; in fact, flavonoids have been around for a very long time, and they're something you really do need to know about. For a start, they're important to your physical health and new research has shown that they could help keep your brain in good working order too.

Flavonoids are a type of phytochemical, useful substances that we get from different foods. For a while now flavonoids have been associated with a reduced risk of heart disease but now a new study presented at the British Science Festival by Dr Jeremy Spencer reports on how they improve memory and cognitive performance in both young and older people.

"Our data indicate that a group of dietary plant-based compounds have the potential to improve human memory, learning and cognitive performance," says Dr Spencer, of Reading University. "Although these findings have most relevance to those at greatest risk of cognitive decline, notably older adults, our findings are relevant for all people through the promotion of healthy brain ageing."

Dementia costs to the UK have been estimated to be £17billion a year. If there was a treatment that would reduce severe cognitive impairment in older people by just 1% a year, it would cancel out all estimated increases in the long-term care costs due to our ageing population, according to the Alzheimer's Research Trust.

There are two ways in which flavonoids could deploy their health-giving properties. "They may work as antioxidants, and mop up the free radicals in our bodies that cause widespread damage to health and cells," says Dr Spencer. "Alternatively, they could work by enhancing blood flow to the brain." Further studies need to be carried out.

So where do you find these five star health boosters? Dr Spencer's team carried out their studies with blueberries, giving their subjects around 150 grammes of blueberries in the morning, and measuring their cognitive abilities later in the day. "We are also doing a similar study using cocoa, and citrus juices," explains Dr Spencer.

"You'll find flavonoids in berries – strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blackcurrants. They're also in apples and to a lesser degree chocolate. The compounds are coloured – they're what give the berries their flavour. And frozen fruit would be just as good as fresh. There could even be flavonoids in jams and preserves.

"We will all suffer from a loss of cognitive performance as we age," says Dr Spencer. "Anything that we could eat on a daily basis, that could prevent damage to our cognitive powers, has got to be beneficial."

Chocolate medicine

Saga Health News - Sep 10, 2009

Chocoholics can now nibble on their favourite treat without feeling guilty because it could actually have health-giving properties

The secret is revealed to be naturally occurring substances in chocolate that may offer some degree of protection against heart disease and related circulatory disorders.

Many studies have shown that food rich in flavonals, found in plant-based foods such as apples, onions, peanuts and cranberries as well as in red wine and chocolate, can help to maintain cardiovascular health.

Now evidence is accumulating that chocolate is particularly rich in larger flavonoid molecules, the complex oligomers. It also appears to have a higher anti-oxidant activity than red wine - a study at King's College London found that 50g of dark chocolate contains as many flavonoids as six apples, two glasses of wine or seven onions.

An ancient medicine

Recognition of cocoa's health properties is nothing new. As far back as the 16th-century Spanish priests were aware of the nutritional properties of the highly prized Mayan cocoa drink and sanctioned its use as a food substitute during periods of fasting.

According to American scientists speaking at the National Academy of Sciences in 2004, cocoa seems to keep down the blood pressure levels of the Kuna Indians off the coast of Panama who eat lots of locally grown cocoa that is high in flavonoids.

However, when city-dwelling Kuna change to processed cocoa products the benefit is lessened, leading researchers to introduce chocolate that retains more of the health-boosting chemicals that help your heart.

So until nutraceutical versions of flavonoid-enhanced chocolate are on the market your healthiest option is dark chocolate with at least 70 per cent cocoa.

Slowing blood clotting

In a study by the University of California, volunteers ate either 25 g of semi-sweet chocolate, manufactured by Mars, while a control group had bread.

Blood samples were taken from both groups before they ate and again two and six hours afterwards and their platelet function was measured. Platelets are tiny cells in the blood, which help it clot if there is an injury. In this study, researchers looked at how long it took platelets to fully close an opening and found it took significantly longer in people who had eaten chocolate.

Professor Carl Keen, of the University of California, Davis, told the British Association for the Advancement of Science last year that eating small amounts of chocolate could have the same anti-clotting effect as taking an aspirin and so might reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis when flying.

Cutting 'bad' cholesterol

Another study, at Penn State University, compared a diet low in flavonoids with one high in chocolate and found that people who ate lots of chocolate had higher anti-oxidant levels in their blood and lower levels of LDL-cholesterol - the type that is implicated in hardening of the arteries. Further research also found that a diet supplemented with chocolate reduced LDL levels.

Finally, scientists in Switzerland found that volunteers who ate chocolate laced with calcium absorbed 13 per cent less chocolate-derived fat and nine per cent fewer calories than those who ate chocolate on its own.

Boosting antibodies

You don't even have to eat chocolate to benefit from it. At the University of Westminster, Dr Angela Clow found that just sniffing chocolate can give the immune system a boost.

In the study volunteers sniffed chocolate, rotting meat and water. When chocolate was sniffed their antibody levels increased.

Further proof that some of the enjoyable things in life can keep us healthy, while stressful or depressing situations can make us more open to infection.

Artery aid

A study reported in New York to the American Society of Hypertension meeting showed that volunteers had less arterial stiffness after consuming 100g of good quality, plain chocolate. While Dr Naomi Fisher, of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, USA, believes that the flavonoids in cocoa act on an enzyme in the body called nitric oxide synthase, which helps the cocoa to dilate blood vessels, improve kidney function and lower blood pressure.

In addition, Greek scientists reporting at the European Society of Cardiology conference in Berlin in 2004 said that in their study of 17 healthy young volunteers functioning of endothelial cells, which control the degree of stiffness in the blood vessels, was improved for three hours after eating dark chocolate.

Chocolate cough cure

Research from Imperial College London says that theobromine, a key ingredient in chocolate, is a third more effective than codeine when it comes to clearing up a cough.

According to the online FASEB Journal, the team induced coughing in 10 healthy volunteers with capsaicin from chilli peppers, and then measured how much was needed to produce a cough after they had been dosed with theobromine, codeine or a placebo.

In comparison with the placebo, when the volunteers had taken theobromine they needed around a third more capsaicin to produce a cough, whereas they needed only marginally higher levels of capsaicin after taking codeine.

Theobromine works by suppressing the activity of the vagus nerve, which causes coughing and, best of all, it doesn't produce any adverse effects on the cardiovascular or central nervous systems.

Professor Maria Belvisi, one of the study's authors commented: "Normally the effectiveness of any treatment is limited by the dosage you can give someone. With theobromine having no demonstrated side effects in this study it may be possible to give far bigger doses, further increasing its effectiveness.

"At the same time, theobromine may not have any of the side effects such as drowsiness. This means there will be no restrictions on when it can be taken. For example, people using heavy machinery or who are driving should not take codeine, but they could take theobromine."

So although it's not possible to clear a cough with chocolate, there may be a role one day for a medicine based on a chocolate extract.

For the love of chocolate

Romances are often sealed with a box of choes and there may be a good reason for this. Chocolate contains the natural love drug tryptophan.

The brain uses this to make a neurotransmitter called serotonin and usually the more serotonin you have, the happier you feel.

In addition, chocolate contains small quantities of phenylethylamine, another neurotransmitter that creates feelings of giddiness, attraction and excitement in the brain's pleasure centre - levels peak during orgasm.

Go easy

Of course, eating too much chocolate can pile on the pounds - a small bar contains about a quarter of the recommended daily calorie intake for women. What's more, chocolate contains saturated fats, the ones closely associated with heart disease.

If you're watching your weight, it's worth knowing that a survey of people's dieting habits for Marks and Spencer revealed that chocolate derailed the best intentions of 48 per cent of female dieters and 32 per cent of male dieters.

To indulge your chocolate habit without regrets, choose dark varieties containing at least 70 per cent cocoa solids and check that they contain low levels of cocoa butter.

And try to make a little go a long way: the researchers who've studied the subject say you get maximum benefit with fewer ill effects from just one or two squares a day.

Production & Quality

Bitter outlook for ICoast cocoa sector

AFP

By Christoffe Koffi (AFP) –

Sep 7, 2009

ABIDJAN — Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa producer, is facing a bitter 20 percent drop in production this season as its aging plantations, poor quality and the failure to undertake reforms take a toll. "We are expecting a

drop in production of more than 300,000 tonnes during this season," which ends in October, the president of the government committee that manages the sector, Gilbert N'Guessan, told AFP.

Production, more than 90 percent of which is bound for export, should come in at around one million tonnes, as opposed to the 1.4 million tonnes originally expected and 1.3 million tonnes last season, according to the most optimistic forecasts.

The main players in the sector make the same diagnosis. "The quality of the cocoa is falling year by year. And the production volume will only fall as the plantations are very old," said Ali Lakiff, director of SAF-Cocoa, which is based in San Pedro, the southwestern port where 80 percent of the country's cocoa crop is exported.

Within three years "if nothing is done we could descend below a million tonnes," he warned.

Each year the country loses more than 150 billion CFA francs (230 million euros, 330 million dollars) due to poor quality of a part of its cocoa crop, which then cannot be exported, according to official figures.

Poor rains also hurt production this year, as have transportation problems in growing areas in the north of the country still controlled by former rebels.

Neighboring countries Burkina Faso and Guinea have been quick to fill the gap left by Ivory Coast, say specialists.

Meanwhile the management of the sector in Ivory Coast has been in disarray after nearly all senior regulators were arrested and jailed in June 2008 for suspected embezzlement of funds. In its place the government-installed temporary management committee has been established until reforms to the sector are undertaken.

Inspiration could come from neighboring Ghana, the world's number two cocoa producer, and which is proving an increasing threat to Ivory Coast.

One of the committee's officials, Geraldine Odehoury, spoke positively of Ghana's cocoa agency, which is also responsible for sales. "This makes one think of a return to the former CAISTAB," said cocoa specialist Huberson Digbeu.

During the decades where cocoa was driving the country's growth the CAISTAB, or Stabilisation and Price Support Fund, bought cocoa directly from farmers and sold it to exporters. It was disbanded at the end of the 1990s following pressure from investors who viewed it as a cash cookie jar for the regime.

Specialists are looking for the reform of the sector to improve the earnings of farmers. Government taxes are viewed as excessively high by international institutions. The World Bank's representative to Ivory Coast, said Monday that he hoped the upcoming reform would amount to more than just "changes at the margins" after meeting with President Laurent Gbagbo.

Madani Tall called for a reform "which puts Ivorian farmers first, that protects their interests, that at the end ensures the money from cocoa goes first into the pockets of farmers, then the government and other intermediaries." He also called for reform to encourage processing cocoa in the country, which would create additional jobs and keep more of the value added chain in Ivory Coast. There is little time to waste: with cocoa not bringing a good return, numerous farmers have been abandoning it for other crops such as rubber and palm oil, which are seen as being more profitable.

Ghana to Miss 1 Million-Ton Cocoa Target, Board Says (Update1)

Bloomberg

By Emily Bowers

Sept. 8, 2009

(Bloomberg) -- Ghana, the world's second-largest cocoa producer, will miss its target of producing 1 million metric tons a year by the 2010-11 season, according to Tony Fofie, chief executive officer of the Ghana Cocoa Board.

The state-run board, which oversees the industry, now expects the West African country to produce 1 million tons a year by the 2012-13 season, Fofie said in an interview at the Cocoa Producers Alliance conference in Lome, Togo, late yesterday. "It's more realistic," he said.

While insufficient investment has been made to reach the earlier target, the board is now planting new trees, expanding cultivation, boosting fertilizer subsidies and is also considering social welfare programs, which may include paying farmers public health insurance fees, to encourage production, Fofie said.

Output this season, which ends this month, is likely to reach at least 680,000 tons, about 30,000 tons more than earlier forecast, Fofie said. A strong light, or mid, crop has bolstered hopes for the end of the season and Ghana may now harvest "a little bit more" than 50,000 tons, he said. The light crop produces smaller beans which are sold to local processors.

The board is still to set a target for the 2009-10 harvest, although it may be similar to this season, Fofie said. Ghana is also likely to increase the price it pays to farmers, which is typically set before the start of the main crop.

The Ivory Coast is the world's largest cocoa producer. *To contact the reporter on this story: Emily Bowers in Accra at ebowers1@bloomberg.net*

Cameroon 2009-10 Cocoa Output May Rise 7% Above Official Target

Bloomberg

By Emily Bowers

Sept. 9, 2009

(Bloomberg) -- Cocoa production in Cameroon, the world's fifth-largest producer of the beans, may rise to as much as 225,000 metric tons in the 2009-10 season, or 7 percent above the official forecast, the National Cocoa and Coffee Board said. "We're supposed to get 210,000 tons by 2010," Michael Ndoping, general manager of the board, said in an interview yesterday in Lome, Togo, where the conference of the Cocoa Producers' Alliance is being held. "We may even produce more than 225,000 tons."

Cameroon's cocoa production in the 2008-09 season, which ended on July 15, jumped 9.4 percent to 205,000 tons from a year earlier, the board said on Sept. 3. "That was quite a surprise," Ndoping said yesterday.

Ndoping attributes the higher output to improved farming methods and the efforts of the central African countries Cocoa Development Fund to boost yields and improve the quality of the beans. The government has contributed 485 million CFA francs (\$1.1 million) to the fund since 2007, he said.

Earlier this year, a main road through the southwestern province to the port city of Douala was tarred, cutting transport times from the main cocoa-growing sector, he said. Feeder roads are still in bad condition, which can make getting the harvest out of the bush difficult, he added.

Cameroon wants "farmers to realize they are in cocoa to make money, and not as a way of life," Ndoping said. The country has slipped back to fifth position behind Nigeria on the list of the world's biggest cocoa producers. Ivory Coast, Ghana and Indonesia are the three biggest producers.

Cocoa futures for December delivery rose \$8, or 0.27 percent, to \$2,961 a metric ton on ICE Futures U.S. in New York at 4:31 a.m. *To contact the reporter on this story: Pius Lukong in Yaounde via Johannesburg on amonteiro4@bloomberg.net*

Ugandan Cocoa output may have climbed 15% Last Season (Update1)

Bloomberg

By Emily Bowers

Sept. 10, 2009

(Bloomberg) -- Cocoa production in Uganda, the East African nation known better for its coffee exports, may have increased 15 percent during the 2008-09 harvest, the Ministry of Agriculture said.

Output of the chocolate ingredient may have climbed to 15,000 metric tons from 13,000 tons a year earlier, according to John Muwanga Musisi, co-coordinator of the Agriculture Ministry's Cocoa Development Program.

The final harvest size will be known by the end of the month, he said in an interview yesterday on the sidelines of a conference in Lome, the capital of Togo.

Production may fall this season, although no official outlook has yet been given, Musisi said. "This year the weather hasn't been in our favor, we've had less and intermittent rain," he said.

Uganda plans to increase production to 50,000 tons a year by 2015 and is aiming to attract cocoa processors to set up a factory in the country. "We are trying to advise farmers to diversify," Musisi said. Grown at a higher altitude, Ugandan cocoa is less susceptible to pests and diseases that can plague West Africa, where most of the continent's crop is grown, he said. "They are not a major problem" here, he said.

About 19,000 hectares (46,950 acres) of land is currently under cocoa cultivation, Musisi said. Uganda has two cocoa harvests, a main crop which runs from November to January and a minor crop which is harvested between April and May.

Cocoa futures rallied to a 14-month high yesterday as a weaker dollar and higher equities increased the appeal of commodities. Cocoa for December delivery yesterday reached \$3,046, the highest for a most-active contract since July 7, 2008. Cocoa has rallied 16 percent this year. *To contact the reporter on this story: Emily Bowers in Accra at ebowers1@bloomberg.net*

The Market

SOFTS-Cocoa, sugar extend rally, aided by weak dollar

Reuters India

By David Brough and Nigel Hunt

Sep 11, 2009

LONDON, Sept 11 (Reuters) - Cocoa and sugar futures extended a rally and coffee rose on Friday, aided by a weak dollar, and dealers said cocoa risked a near-term sell-off before probing 29-1/2 year highs on an improving fundamental outlook.

"New York cocoa looks good technically. It has broken through \$3,000 (resistance). A lot of people now feel the market is over-bought," a London-based cocoa dealer said. The trader said benchmark ICE second-month cocoa CCc2 could sell off before resuming its upwards march and potentially break above \$3,290 per tonne to 29-1/2 year highs.

An improving demand outlook bolstered by economic recovery prospects, a recent scaled-back Ghana output forecast by independent analyst Hans Kilian, concerns over the quality of the Ivorian main crop, and worries over the impact of the El Nino weather pattern, have combined to underpin the market.

"We should go to those levels (\$3,290) and test that," the trader said.

"If we go through there, you can't look at technicals way back (30 years ago). It will be new territory."

ICE December cocoa CCZ9 was up \$15 or 0.5 percent to \$3,082 per tonne at 1219 GMT, while Liffe December cocoa LCCZ9 was up 4 pounds to 1,948 pounds per tonne, having early touched a 14-month peak basis second-month of 1,963 pounds a tonne.

Sugar futures, which had fallen after hitting a 28 1/2-year high of 24.85 cents a lb on September 1, rose after a strong close on Thursday, bolstered by the soft dollar and strong fundamentals, notably expectations of buoyant Indian demand. "Renewed interest in physicals at these lower prices has eventually encouraged the speculative community to step up to the market once again, and consider last week's sharp drop as an aberration," Sucden said in a daily sugar market report.

"Yesterday's price action in both markets (raws and whites) was very positive and the recent low in October SBV9 at 20.50 (cents a lb) was a distant memory."

Sucden added, "This morning the market continued where it left off with October SBV9 so far posting a high of 22.38 cents a lb."

INDIA'S SUGAR APPETITE

ICE October raw sugar futures were up 0.28 cent to 22.07 cents a lb at 1217 GMT, while Liffe October white sugar LSUV9 was up \$10.80 or 2 percent to \$550.00 per tonne.

A strong Indian appetite for sugar has triggered a doubling of raw sugar values this year, after the world's No.1 consumer had a dismal domestic harvest, with this year's poor monsoon auguring for low output again next year.

Arabica and robusta coffee futures edged up, boosted partly by the weaker dollar.

November robustas LRCX9 stood \$18 higher at \$1,496 a tonne at 1231 GMT, while December arabicas KCZ9 rose 2.4 cent to \$1.2705 per lb. "We've had a bit of spec buying but it will probably fizzle out this afternoon," one dealer said. "The dollar weakness should be helping us."

Dealers said the robusta market was encountering stiff resistance whenever it climbed above \$1,500. Prices rose to a one-month peak of \$1,520 earlier this week before origin selling helped to stall the advance.

The prospect of a large crop in top robusta producer Vietnam has also helped to keep a lid on the market. Early harvesting is under way although bean supply is not expected to pick up until November, traders said this week. [ID:nHAN506874] "Just under 20 million bags seems to be the par figure so there is going to be no shortage of coffee coming out of Vietnam," one dealer said.

Dealers noted November robustas could potentially dip down to fill a chart gap between \$1,449 and \$1,455, and then rebound. (Reporting by David Brough and Nigel Hunt; editing by Karen Foster)

COMMODITIES-Weak dollar boosts cocoa and sugar as metals fade

09.09.09

By Barani Krishnan

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Cocoa hit 14-month highs Wednesday and sugar also rallied as the tumbling U.S. dollar lifted prices of soft commodities, while gold and copper finished lower on profit taking after a two-day rally.

Crude oil settled slightly higher, retreating in late trade after setting a new milestone for September, crossing \$72 a barrel in New York. The 19-commodity Reuters-Jefferies CRB index, strongly influenced by oil prices, rose a marginal 0.2 percent.

Gold futures ended lower, retreating from Tuesday's peak above \$1,000 an ounce. But traders said expectations for further deterioration in the dollar should bolster gold's near-term appeal as a currency hedge.

The dollar traded near one-year lows against other major currencies as growing evidence of a global recovery spurred investors to take on more risk.

Copper prices fell as players worried the market had risen higher than justified by fundamentals.

In cocoa, New York's benchmark December contract soared \$80, or by 2.7 percent, to conclude at \$3,033 per tonne, the highest finish since July 2008.

Sugar mirrored the pattern it set in the previous session when it traded in the 20-cents area and then popped back over 21 cents in the New York raw sugar market. Prices of the sweetener had neared 30-year highs last week.

"A lot of this has to do with the continued weakness of the dollar," said Sterling Smith, a senior analyst for Country Hedging Inc. in Minnesota, about the run-up in cocoa and sugar.

Cocoa prices were also supported by a report from independent analyst Hans Killian, which reduced the main cocoa crop in No. 2 producer Ghana by 25,000 to 28,000 tonnes, trade sources said.

Oil prices rose above \$72 a barrel for the first time this month, marking a second day of strong gains as OPEC members gathered in Vienna to review official output policy, with several representatives of the cartel indicating no likely change in production curbs.

U.S. crude for October delivery rose as much as \$1.42 to a session high of \$72.52 before settling at \$71.31 -- up just 21 cents.

Processing & Manufacturing

Thorntons' sales double as chocolate trade returns

Times Online, September 9, 2009

Chocolates for sale at a Thorntons shop in London
Dan Sabbagh



A rapid rediscovery of the national sweet tooth in the first half of 2009 helped Thorntons, the upmarket chocolate retailer and wholesaler, to limit its fall in pre-tax profits last year to £400,000.

Thorntons, reporting results for the year to June 27, said that pre-tax income was £8.1 million for the year as the second half of as it doubled sales of its luxury bars under the new Chocolate Block brand.

The company had been hit hard by the collapse of Woolworths and the decline in companies by chocolates as gifts in 2008, but in the second half recovered, cutting its traditional operating loss in the period to £600,000 from £2.8 million.

Mike Davies, chief executive, said that "performance in the second half improved substantially" after what he said was a "difficult pre-Christmas trading period" where a cash-strapped Britain cut back on chocolate buying and other discretionary spending.

However, the 2009 results were boosted by an expected £1.8 million pension credit, arising from a decision to change the company's pension scheme to a lifetime average salary model. With that stripped out, pre-exceptional profits were down 25.8 per cent to £6.3 million — but ahead of the £5 million promised by Mr Davies in April.

Thorntons was also helped by the late timing of Easter, which gave consumers an extra three weeks to prepare for their egg buying — and strong sales through third-party retailers, which grew 14.9 per cent during the whole year to £56.8 million.

That helped overcome weakness in its own stores, where like-for-like sales in its wholly owned outlets fell 2 per cent, and overall sales, taking into account new store openings and stores owned by franchisees, fell back 0.5 per cent to £157.9 million.

Franchise sales, though, were dented by the collapse of Birthday stores in May, which owned 94 out of the 254 Thorntons franchise stores around the UK. Of those, 37 have been bought by Clintons Cards and re-opened, and Thorntons said that it was trying "swiftly to appoint new franchisees in the remaining locations".

The final dividend is unchanged at 4.85p.

Business and Economy

Cocoa producing countries discuss charter revision in Lome

Xinhua

By [Lin Zhi](#)

Sept. 9, 2009

LOME, (Xinhua) -- Members of the Alliance of Cocoa Producing Countries (COPAL) are meeting in the Togolese capital Lome to discuss the revision of their statutory documents and the problems in the international market.

The 72nd general assembly will last five days after its opening on Monday ahead of a ministerial meeting of COPAL on Friday. COPAL comprises Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Ghana, the Dominican Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Malaysia and Togo.

The current meeting centers on the revision of the Abidjan Charter before further discussions are held later in London on a new international accord on Cocoa. The statutory documents of the alliance were formulated in 1962.

According to the secretary general of COPAL, Soda Ebai, the current prices of between 2,007 U.S. dollars and 2,009 dollars per tonne on the New York market could be improved. "We must at this level, improve the quality instead of developing new plantations which, after three or four years, will increase global production leading to a drop in prices," the official said.

In Togo, the cocoa industry is confronted by many difficulties among them the menace of the swollen shoot disease and the reduction in production from 20,000 tonnes to 8,000 tonnes. In June, the Federation of Unions of Cocoa and Coffee producers in Togo (FUPROCAT), together with those of cotton, received an aid of 1.8 billion francs cfa (3.6 million dollars) from the European Union.

Anselme Bouthon, the head of the Coordinating Committee for Togo's Coffee and Cocoa Industry (CCFCC) told the meeting that his country will ensure quality cocoa. "We have adopted new technologies which our farmers have been trained on in order to have quality products," Bouthon said. "What we are looking for in Togo is to improve productivity," he added.

Tufton seeks cocoa investors

Go Jamaica

Source: Gleaner/Power 106 New
2009-09-11

The agriculture minister Dr. Christopher Tufton is now in Washington DC in the United States meeting with representatives of the World Cocoa Foundation. The minister is trying to find potential investors in the Jamaican cocoa industry.

The agriculture ministry, with help from the United States Agency for International Development is currently restructuring the operations in the cocoa sub-sector to reduce its regulatory and commercial functions. Against this background, Dr Tufton is seeking business opportunities for moving cocoa up the value-chain with potential investors. He's also trying to get investors to provide technical support for cocoa farmers and the wider industry.

During his visit, the agriculture minister will be hosting an agri-investment Seminar at the Jamaican Embassy in Washington to outline the current prospects for investing in Jamaica's agricultural sector.

Labour Issues

U.S. lists countries exploiting child labour

CBC.ca

September 11, 2009

Children around the world are producing numerous goods being sold globally, says a report released by the U.S. Department of Labour. The report released Thursday found that 218 million children work worldwide, and that 126 million of them perform dangerous jobs.

The U.S. Labour Department has identified 122 goods from 58 countries it believes to be produced by forced labour, child labour or a combination of the two. Children commonly work to produce products or crops such as:

"Three of the ones I would single out are cocoa, cotton and rubber," Tim Newman, the campaign director for the workers' advocacy group, the International Labour Rights Forum in Washington, D.C., told CBC Radio's As It Happens. He said Cameroon, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Ghana were the worst offenders when it came to

using children to produce cocoa, while 15 countries were listed as using child labour to pick and process cotton. Newman said Liberia was singled out for child labour abuses in the rubber industry.

"It is my strong hope that consumers, firms, governments, labour unions and other stakeholders will use this information to translate their economic power into a force for good that ultimately will eliminate abusive child labour and forced labour," said U.S. Secretary of Labour Hilda Solis, in a release.

The aim of the research is to identify which countries are the biggest offenders, says Newman. "This list can help consumers to support products companies that use certification programs that have strong labour standards. But he admits "there are no real teeth behind this."

Newman wants more companies to certify on their products that they abide by labour laws and produce goods without employing children. He cites Cadbury PLC, which recently announced that its Dairy Milk bars would be fair trade-certified in the U.K. The company has announced that its fair trade chocolate bars will be available in Canada at the beginning of 2010.

The reports were based on data gleaned from foreign embassies and governments, international and non-governmental organizations, field projects, academic reports and media coverage. Child labour is defined as work done by children under the age of 15.

"No Child Labour In Cocoa Sector"- Veep

Peace fm Online

Source: Bernard Quanson/Peacefmonline and GNA

09-Sep-2009



The Vice President has lashed out at some critics in the United States who claim that Ghana employs child labour on its cocoa farms. "I wish to state that Ghana is a signatory to the various conventions on Child and Forced Labour and would never allow any infractions especially in a prime sector such as cocoa."

Vice President Mahama assured the international community that Ghana was not indulging in acts that infringe on the rights of children. He pledged the country's co-operation in assisting organisations still harbouring doubts to inspect the cocoa facilities to clear the erroneous position. He explained that it was a mistake for people to assume that

minors accompanying their parents to farm were being forced into hard labour.

"Rural farm families own small cocoa farms usually planted on family lands or rented through traditional land tenure systems...Minors accompany their parents to farm as part of their social acculturation," he said.

Vice President Mahama was responding to the allegations by some US based child welfare groups during the launch of cocoa products manufactured by Cargill Ghana Limited (CGL) at Tema on Wednesday.

Cargill is one of the world's leading brands in cocoa confectionary and the launch of the company's cocoa powder and butter christened 'Good Taste of Ghana' is to stamp the country's supremacy in the cocoa beverage sector by using the products for dairy, bakery, ice creams, compound coatings, desserts and as fillings in food preparations.

The products are also meant to market processed Ghanaian cocoa products as global health artefacts.

Touching on the operations of Cargill, in the Ghanaian Free Zones enclave, Vice President Mahama said the 100 million-dollar factory was an endorsement of the attractiveness of Ghana as an investment destination.

The Vice President also affirmed government's decision to provide incentives to companies engaged in tertiary processing of cocoa geared towards boosting earnings from exported cocoa products, ensure technology transfer and augment employment generation. He said the inducement package was meant to facilitate the processing of about 60 per cent of cocoa beans locally, as announced by President John Evans Atta Mills in his first Sessional address.

Mr. Leo Winters, Managing Director of CGL, said the Management was committed to working with the Government to support the growth of the cocoa sector through initiatives with farmers and local businesses to spur job creation, increase export revenues and also help grow the local economy. He said this partnership was already bearing fruits in the Ashanti Region where the company had teamed up with CARE, a child related organisation, to improve educational opportunities in the communities where they operate, which had helped to increase school attendance by 17.5 per cent

Child, forced labor behind many products: study

Thu Sep 10, 2009

By Marcy Nicholson

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Children and forced laborers are mining gold, sewing clothing and harvesting cocoa around the world, and India is the source for the biggest number of products made by these workers, a U.S. government report said on Thursday.

The Department of Labor for the first time released a list of goods produced by child or forced labor in foreign countries after Congress told it to compile one. The department looked at 122 products in 58 countries.

Under international labor standards, child labor is defined as work performed by someone under the age of 15, or under 18 where specific forms of work are deemed harmful, the report said. Forced labor is involuntary or done under threat.

In the new U.S. report, India was linked to the highest number of products made with child labor or forced labor including soccer balls and clothing, according to report.

Myanmar was noted the most often for forced labor for other products like rice, sugar cane and rubber.

"The purpose for doing this is to shine a spotlight so more activities can take place that target these problems," said Sandra Polaski, deputy undersecretary for International Affairs in the U.S. Department of Labor.

"In our country we think of these at 19th century problems but these are 21st century problems," Polaski said.

Child labor laws vary widely and the practice is banned in many countries. An international convention ratified by 154 countries requires them to set a minimum working age and to work toward eradicating child labor.

According to the U.S. report, Brazil, Bangladesh, China and the Philippines were also in the top six countries linked to individual products that use child or forced labor.

The International Labor Organization has found that 69 percent of child labor worldwide is in agriculture, the report said.

The most common agricultural goods produced by child or forced labor are cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, coffee, rice and cocoa. Both forms of labor for cotton production were found in countries including China, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. In India, this was the case for cottonseed.

The listing of specific goods and countries, however, does not mean that total production of specific products involve forced or child labor. Instead, the report said it indicates a "significant incidence" of these types of labor.

For cocoa, the key ingredient in chocolate, countries found using both forms of labor include the world's biggest producer Ivory Coast, as well as Nigeria, the report showed.

The most common mined goods included gold, where Peru and Burkina Faso use both child and forced labor, according to the report.

"Elimination of exploitive child labor or forced labor from a sector or a country requires intensive, sustained commitment by governments, employers, workers, and civil society organizations," the report said.

Environmental Issues

Tips for eating sustainably

Written by Peg Champion

Wednesday, 09 September 2009

Los Altos Town Crier

There's a great deal of talk these days about sustainability, sustainable energy communities and design. But what, exactly, is sustainable food? And why is it important to you and your family?

Sustainability is commonly defined as meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Your family will be better off without hormones in your milk or antibiotics in your meat. The planet will be in better shape if we don't use petroleum to produce unnecessary chemical pesticides and fertilizers. We shouldn't use fuel to process and then ship meat, fruits and vegetables thousands of miles to our neighborhood grocery store. According to a 2006 United Nations report, feeding, processing and shipping livestock accounts for 18 percent of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions.

For the health of your family – and of our small planet – following are 10 tips to help you eat sustainably.

1. Buy local.

By supporting locally grown agriculture at farmers' markets, you are saving thousands of "food miles" – the distance food travels from farm to table – reducing air and water pollution, traffic congestion and energy use.

2. Know where your food comes from.

Buying directly from farmers, you eliminate the middleman. A local food supply is a good way to avoid the bacteria and food-borne illnesses that can spread through huge processing plants and sicken your family.

3. Eat seasonal foods.

Buying food in season guarantees your food is fresh and delicious and that it's grown locally.

4. Avoid foods grown or raised with chemicals.

Go organic. Even if food is not certified organic, it may be grown without the use of harmful chemicals – ask your farmers how their food is grown. Avoid unhealthful factory-farmed meat and poultry that contain hormones and antibiotics.

5. Prepare your own food.

You'll save money and eat better, too. Share good food, made at home, around the table with your family and friends.

6. Support sustainable seafood.

Fish stocks are dwindling due to overfishing and poor fisheries management. In general, locally caught or raised fish and shellfish are more sustainable than fish from a different country or continent. Look for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label and ask your fishmonger or restaurant if the fish they provide is sustainable.

7. Go meatless.

Reduce calories and carbon emissions. For one day a week, eat no meat. If every American observed this rule, then it would be the equivalent, in carbon saved, of taking 20 million cars off the road for a year.

8. Be fair.

Look for Fairtrade certification for imported products, such as coffee and cocoa. Fair or ethical trade means purchasing with minimal harm to or exploitation of humans, animals and the environment.

9. Get smart.

Educate yourself about the industrial food system. Read books – Michael Pollan’s “In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto” (Penguin Two, 2009), Morgan Spurlock’s “Don’t Eat This Book: Fast Food and the Supersizing of America” (Berkeley Trade, 2006), Eric Schlosser’s “Fast Food Nation” (Harper Perennial, 2005) and David Kessler’s “The End of Overeating: Taking Control of the Insatiable American Appetite” (Rodale, 2009). Watch movies – “Food, Inc.” (Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2009), “The End of the Line” (Educational Video Network, 2004) and “King Corn” (DOCURAMA, 2008). Calculate the carbon in your diet at eatlowcarbon.org.

10. Grow your own.

Start a garden. The shortest farm-to-fork route is the one from your backyard to your kitchen.

Research & Development

Why Chocolate Studies Are a Headache

New Study Highlights Score Of Information Surrounding Chocolate

By RADHA CHITALE

ABC News Medical Unit

Sept. 10, 2009



The [lore surrounding chocolate](#) -- from its use as an aphrodisiac among the Aztecs to its mood elevating properties -- can seem as complex and variable as the confection itself. Scientific [studies](#), however, may provide a prudent excuse to indulge in the sweet treat.



The medical lore surrounding chocolate can seem as complex and variable as the confection itself.

(Getty Images)

Decades of research have shown that chocolate has several beneficial physiological effects, most notably on [heart health](#).

A new study presented today at the International Headache Congress meeting in Philadelphia suggested that cocoa powder has a healing effect on inflamed cells related to [migraine headaches](#) in rats.

But many of the studies on chocolate are inconclusive, showing neither significant health advantages nor disadvantages. And the results of today's IHC study on cocoa powder contradicts previous theories that chocolate triggers migraines in some people.

While research continues, so does chocolate consumption. Parsing chocolate fact from fiction could be the key to guilt-free snacking.

"It's reasonable for a natural food, reasonably unrefined, to have some good qualities to it," said Keith-Thomas Ayoob, director of the nutrition clinic at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City. "Most people are probably already realizing these benefits."

Some Studies Show Significant Benefits From Cocoa

Dark chocolate, which should be at least 60 percent cocoa by weight, is one of the richest sources of the [bioflavonoid antioxidants](#) that counteract cell damage.

Dr. David Katz, director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale University, said part of the reason why so many people love chocolate is because eating it stimulates the brain's pleasure centers. The xanthine compounds in chocolate -- a group of chemicals that includes caffeine -- aid that reaction.

"It's absolutely magic food," Katz said. "Because it's so good, it almost feels a little naughty."

Milk chocolate, which contains a much lower percentage of cocoa, confers less than half of the benefits of dark chocolate and white chocolate has no such health benefits because it lacks cocoa.

And there has been compelling evidence that eating dark chocolate has positive cardiovascular effects. Studies have found that chocolate can lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of blood clots and improve blood flow through veins and arteries in humans.

Chocolate a Subject of Conflicting Research

A study in the September issue of the Journal of Internal Medicine showed that heart attack survivors can reduce their risk of a second heart attack by eating chocolate several times per week.

But experts caution that if chocolate is eaten in large amounts, its fat and calorie content could negate the positive effects of its antioxidants and other chemicals.

"If we're going to make this a 'food as medicine' [issue], the public does need guidance," Katz said. "Some is good for you, more is bad for you ... there is a sweet spot in a certain range, like alcohol."

But some may continue to avoid chocolate due to its reputation for triggering migraines in some people who may be sensitive to the chemicals.

As yet there is no solid evidence of what chocolate's relation is to [headache](#), including today's study from the IHS, an animal study that may not translate to humans and only postulates that the anti-inflammatory properties of cocoa could have an indirect effect on migraine headaches, which is an inflammatory disease.

New Theories Oust Old Migraine Conventions

But new theories about what causes migraines could do something to relieve the notoriety chocolate has gained in the field.

"If we go back and look at what we assume would trigger a migraine, a lot of those things were not triggers at all but were, in the case of food, cravings that occurred as part of the migraine but were misinterpreted as the cause," said Dr. Joel Saper, director of the Michigan Headache and Neurological Institute..

In other words, eating chocolate an hour before an imminent migraine might lead a person to believe that the chocolate caused the migraine.

"The human body might crave things because we know it will alleviate [pain]," said Paul Durham, director of the Center for Biomedical and Life Sciences at Missouri State University and author of the study on cocoa powder preventing cellular inflammation in rats. "When we tried to stimulate the [pain] nerves, compounds or chemicals in cocoa might block that pain."

Cancer, Food Combinations Part Of Further Research

Doctors aren't prescribing chocolate bars to heart patients or migraine sufferers yet, but Katz said he can envision a recommendation to habitually eat dark chocolate.

"It's not just giving people a license to do what they're already doing," Katz said. Americans already eat about 12 pounds of chocolate per year, most of which is the less beneficial milk chocolate. "But if they need a nudge to switch over to the dark side, this is a place science provides us to go."

No guidelines have yet been determined about how to consume dark chocolate to maximize the health benefits. It is not clear how often and how much chocolate people should eat before the excess calories, sugar and subsequent weight gain becomes a problem, and this is one area where research could move forward.

Other areas for further research include expanding on some preliminary studies on how the antioxidants in chocolate could be harnessed to fight chronic diseases and cancer, as well as how food combinations -- like chocolate eaten with fruits and nuts -- might affect health.

"This is tougher because there are no surrogate markers [of improvement] like there are with heart studies," Katz said. "In general, foods that are good for us are really just foods that are good for us and you can't take care of just one organ at a time. If you're cultivating health, you are reducing the risk of all the bad stuff."

Promotion & Consumption

Vice President launches New Cocoa Products

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation -

Sep 10, 2009

Vice President Mahama on Wednesday launched cocoa products manufactured by Cargill Ghana Limited (CGL) at Tema.



John Dramani Mahama,
Vice President of Ghana unveils new products

Cargill is one of the world's leading brands in cocoa confectionary and the launch of the company's cocoa powder and butter christened 'Good Taste of Ghana' is to stamp the country's supremacy in the cocoa beverage sector by using the products for dairy, bakery, ice creams, compound coatings, desserts and as fillings in food preparations.

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Vice President Mahama assured the international community that Ghana was not indulging in acts that infringe on the rights of children.

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Vice President Mahama explained that it was a mistake for people to assume that minors accompanying their parents to farm were being forced into hard labour.

"Rural farm families own small cocoa farms usually planted on family lands or rented through traditional land tenure systems...Minors accompany their parents to farm as part of their social acculturation," he said.

Touching on the operations of Cargill in the Ghanaian Free Zones enclave, Vice President Mahama said the 100 million-dollar factory was an endorsement of the attractiveness of Ghana as an investment destination.

"Government is impressed and happy at Cargill's capacity to transform Ghana's cocoa into a wide range of products that are sold on the global market and thereby providing the country with the highest level of value addition to date."

He said Cargill had reinforced Ghana's pre-eminence in the global market place.

The Vice President also affirmed government's decision to provide incentives to companies engaged in tertiary processing of cocoa geared towards boosting earnings from exported cocoa products, ensure technology transfer and augment employment generation.

He said the inducement package was meant to facilitate the processing of about 60 per cent of cocoa beans locally, as announced by President John Evans Atta Mills in his first Sessional address.

Mr. Leo Winters, Managing Director of CGL, said the Management was committed to working with the Government to support the growth of the cocoa sector through initiatives with farmers and local businesses to spur job creation, increase export revenues and also help grow the local economy.

He said this partnership was already bearing fruits in the Ashanti Region where the company had teamed up with CARE, a child related organisation, to improve educational opportunities in the communities where they operate, which had helped to increase school attendance by 17.5 per cent

Mr. Winters was of the opinion that Cargill's huge investment in the Ghanaian economy would pave the way for other leading manufacturing giants to also acquire a foothold in the growth of Ghana.

The Director of Cocoa Powder Sales of Cargill International, Mr Piet van Amelrooij, was upbeat that marketing of Ghana using cocoa would reap immense rewards from the global food supply chain for the country.

Celebrate chocolate!

iAfrica.com - Sep 9, 2009

The Chocolate Club is calling for everyone to pay tribute to International Chocolate Day, on 13th September, by indulging in everything chocolaty without the guilt normally associated with indulging in this decadent treat.

There has been a demand for luxury chocolates for centuries, "from the foamy drink of the Aztecs to the rich confections of Europe, chocolate has long been celebrated as an indulgence fit for Kings," says Tim Hartzenberg, director of User Experience, at The Chocolate Club, an online club, which supplies locally handmade luxury chocolates using Belgium chocolate and original recipes fresh from their Chef Chocolatier's kitchen.

"We feel that other than celebrating the wondrous cocoa plant, International Chocolate Day brings the opportunity to celebrate everything chocolaty," he says.

A great indulgence?

"A little bit of decadence never hurt anyone, so we are encouraging people to celebrate this day by joining in the merriment by gorging themselves silly on the dreamy stuff without needing an excuse."

While chocolate has long been considered a great indulgence, recent studies have also shown that there may be reasons to feel a little less guilty about eating chocolate and it can actually be beneficial to your health.

"Researchers have found that certain chocolates and cocoa contain flavonoids, or anti-oxidants that may help reduce the risk of heart disease," he says.

"Chocolate also contains potassium, magnesium and calcium, and recent studies have shown that chocolate contains a substance called catechins that could help prevent cancer and heart disease."

In addition, with its reputed aphrodisiac qualities, chocolate with a high cocoa content has for centuries been associated with the simple sensual pleasure of its consumption.

Hartzenberg says that the good news for chocolate lovers is that by offering an online platform, The Chocolate Club is available to the whole of SA.

"It shouldn't matter where one lives, by being online everyone can become a member and share in a tasting journey with us."

Delivered to your door

He points out that The Chocolate Club's focus is to produce and deliver fine handmade chocolates to its members, beautifully presented and delivered direct to their doors on a monthly basis.

"One of the core functions of our business is to keep the innovation wheel turning by introducing new, unique and exotic chocolates to our members each month," he adds. "Being a member is about being part of an indulgent, decadent tasting adventure."

He says his team scours the globe for interesting tastes and flavours and then returns with an array of ideas and concepts.

"Our tasting menu helps members navigate their way through their monthly collection to create a self-indulgent taste experience every month."

Having travelled the world, and become aware of some of the finer things in life, chocolate was a genre that stood out for us when deciding to launch the company.

"We felt there had to be an opportunity in South Africa to introduce the market to a new and premium chocolate offering, something which South African's traditionally only got to experience overseas," he says.

In closing, Hartzenberg says that those interested can become members of The Chocolate Club for R169 per month, with the first box a new member receives costing R129.95.

"We invite all chocolate lovers to log on and become chocolate connoisseurs as they navigate their way through a sumptuous world of new chocolate tastes and flavours and experiences."

For more information on International Chocolate Day and The Chocolate Club and in fact everything chocolate visit: www.thechocolateclub.

Others

Chocolate-powered car's first race

By Steve Connor, Science Editor

Independent - Steve Connor - Sep 7, 2009

The world's greenest racing car, which has a steering wheel made from recycled carrots and can run on waste chocolate and wine, is expected to take part in its first competitive race next month at Brands Hatch.

The Formula 3 car, which was designed and developed by scientists at the University of Warwick, has a top speed of 135mph and can accelerate from 0 to 60 in less than 2.5 seconds. It is hoped that it will reach 150mph when it competes at the Kent circuit on 17 October.

Much of the car's body is made of recycled carbon fibres, and its steering wheel is made from a resin composed of waste fibres from the carrot juice industry. Its engine can run on bio-diesel made from chocolate fat and dregs from the wine trade.

"You can't make a racing car that is ultimately sustainable, but this is a step in the right direction. We believe, for its class certainly, it's the greenest racing car," said Kerry Kirwan of the Warwick Manufacturing Group.

About half of the car's bodywork is made of material that would have otherwise ended up in a landfill site, Dr Kirwan added. "We recognise that some people will want to drive fast cars so we have tried to help rather than throw our hands up in despair," he told the Science Festival.

The car can travel for between 30 and 35 miles on one gallon of fuel, and is powered by a converted two-litre BMW engine that has been adapted to drive on biodiesel.

Nestle Inaugurates Chocolate Centre

THISDAY - Sep 12, 2009

Lagos Nestle Nigeria Plc has added another feather to its bid to remain a force to be reckoned with in the industry, as it inaugurated recently, Chocolate Centre of Excellence in Broc, Switzerland. The occasion, which had eminent personalities such as Doris Leuthard Switzerland's Minister of Economic Affairs, Beat Vonlanthen, Minister of Canton Fribourg, Stephane Sudan, Mayor Broc, as well as Nest...

TIT-BITS

(Business Recorder – www.brecorder.com)

London sugar and cocoa jump; coffee falls

LONDON (September 11, 2009): October white sugar at Liffe ended \$19.70 higher at \$539.20 per tonne. Market supported disruptions to harvesting in top producer Brazil and the prospect of strong demand from India. December cocoa ended up 17 pounds at 1,944 pounds per tonne, having earlier set a new contract high of 1,955 pounds. Market supported by a bullish technical outlook after its recent strong performance.

US MIDDAY: cocoa at 14-month high

NEW YORK (September 11, 2009): Summaries of the ICE Futures US cocoa, coffee and sugar markets. December arabica coffee contract eased 1.15 cents to \$1.2405 per lb at 11:06 am EDT (1506 GMT). Session range from \$1.2320 to \$1.2620. Arabica futures slipped in thin dealings, pressured by the quiet physical market, technical weakness and a lack of new fundamentals, said brokers.

US MIDDAY: cocoa climbs; coffee and sugar up

NEW YORK (September 10, 2009): Summaries of the ICE Futures US cocoa, coffee and sugar markets early on Wednesday. December arabica coffee contract rose 0.90 cent to \$1.2550 per lb at 11:14 am EDT (1514 GMT). Session range from \$1.2430 to \$1.2610. Arabica futures inched higher in thin dealings amid a lack of selling interest, while light investor buying on the weak dollar helped push the market upward, said brokers.

London cocoa ends below five-month peak

LONDON (September 10, 2009): October white sugar at Liffe finished steady after volatile trading, standing at \$519.50 per tonne on Wednesday, down 50 cents. The market is supported by expectations of strong Indian demand for sugar. December cocoa ended up 42 pounds at 1,927 pounds per tonne, having earlier touched a five-month high basis second month of 1,931 pounds, possibly buoyed by a report by independent analyst Hans Kilian which traders said cut Ghana's main crop output forecast.

London sugar pares losses, cocoa up

LONDON (September 09, 2009): October white sugar at Liffe pared early losses to end just 60 cents lower at \$520.00 per tonne on Tuesday, as a wave of investor selling subsided and the market looked poised to resume its advance underpinned by bullish fundamentals. December cocoa ended 25 pounds higher at 1,885 pounds a tonne, buoyed by gains in other commodities.

US MIDDAY: coffee, cocoa climb; sugar slips

NEW YORK (September 09, 2009): Summaries of the ICE Futures US cocoa, coffee and sugar markets early on Tuesday. December arabica coffee contract up 0.45 cent to \$1.2455 per lb at 11:07 am EDT (1507 GMT). Session range from \$1.2370 to \$1.2660. Arabica futures were firm but pared earlier gains, on follow-through support from Friday's rally and robusta's run-up Monday during the US Labour Day holiday.

White sugar futures plummet

LONDON (September 08, 2009): White sugar futures fell sharply on Monday, weighed by a slowdown in demand following last week's climb to a record peak, while robusta coffee hit a four-week high, building on Friday's strong finish, dealers said. cocoa futures drifted lower in thin volume with US markets shut for Labour Day. Dealers said sugar was also depressed by improving crop prospects in top consumer India following recent heavy rains.

Ivorian patchy rain, sun boost cocoa main crop

ABIDJAN (September 08, 2009): Patchy rains and spells of sunshine in Ivory Coast's main cocoa-growing regions last week bode well for the 2009/10 main crop starting in October, farmers said on Monday. Several weeks of cloudy weather in the world's top cocoa producer have raised concerns over the quality of the beans.

