



COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 192

14th – 18th August 2006

ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

	ICCO daily price (SDRs/tonne)	ICCO daily price (US\$/tonne)	London futures (£/tonne)	New York futures (US\$/tonne)
14 th August	1085.43	1608.82	874.33	1561.00
15 th August	1108.58	1642.78	892.33	1590.67
16 th August	1122.37	1666.59	896.67	1625.67
17 th August	1108.24	1651.81	894.33	1606.00
18 th August	1095.17	1628.21	891.67	1575.67
Average	1,103.96	1,639.64	889.87	1,591.80

Up-coming Events

- 69th General Assembly and Council of Ministers meeting, 28th August – 2nd September 2006, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.
- 15th International Cocoa Research Conference, 9th – 14th October 2006, San José, Costa Rica

In the News:

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

Monday 14th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Sep 2006	866	850	-16	868	845	1,573
Dec 2006	894	878	-16	898	875	4,441
Mar 2007	907	895	-14	914	893	1,865
May 2007	921	907	-15	921	912S	19
Jul 2007	929	918	-15	929S	919S	51
Sep 2007	940	929	-15	940S	930	42
Dec. 2007	957	940	-16	957	957	2
Mar-08		950	-17			0
May-08	966	960	-15	966	966	6
Jul-08		969	-18			0
Totals		920				7,999

Tuesday 15th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2006	848	849	-1	855	840	2,211
Dec 2006	877	877	-1	881	867	3,010
Mar 2007	892	894	-1	897	886	1,271
May 2007	904	906	-1	904	898	119
Jul 2007		917	-1			0
Sep 2007	923	928	-1	923S	923S	100
Dec. 2007	930	939	-1	931S	930	7
Mar-08		952	2			0
May-08	958	960	0	958	958	3
Jul-08		968	-1			0
Totals		919				6,721

Wednesday 16th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2006	848	852	3	863	845	2,846
Dec 2006	873	882	5	893	873	4,333
Mar 2007	891	898	4	909	891	1,308
May 2007	906	910	4	906S	906S	150
Jul 2007	917	921	4	917S	917S	300
Sep 2007		932	4			0
Dec. 2007		943	4			0
Mar-08		956	4			0
May-08	966	964	4	966S	966S	150
Jul-08		972	4			0
Totals		923				9,087

Thursday 17th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
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Sep 2006	856	850	-2	856	848	1,488
Dec 2006	886	880	-2	887	878	2,838
Mar 2007	900	896	-2	902	895	828
May 2007	913	907	-3	913	906	652
Jul 2007	922	918	-3	922	922	35
Sep 2007		929	-3			8
Dec. 2007		941	-2			8
Mar-08		954	-2			0
May-08		962	-2			0
Jul-08	971	970	-2	971	971	5
Totals		921				5,862

18th August

Friday 2006 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2006	851	848	-2	854	841	1,085
Dec 2006	881	877	-3	884	868	1,761
Mar 2007	897	893	-3	898S	886	554
May 2007	907	905	-2	909	899	445
Jul 2007	914	917	-1	914	910	77
Sep 2007	929	928	-1	930	929	470
Dec. 2007		940	-1			0
Mar-08		953	-1			0
May-08	960	961	-1	960	955	77
Jul-08		969	-1			0
Totals		919				4,469

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

Monday 14th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
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Sep 2006	1550 1557	1520	-39	1557	1500	4890
Dec 2006	1575 1596	1564	-38	1596	1550	8195
Mar 2007	1615 0	1600	-37	1615	1596	667
May 2007	1633 ^B 1638 ^A	1621	-36	1633	1630	205
Jul 2007	1654 ^B 1660 ^A	1641	-37	0	0	50
Sep 2007	1670 ^B 1680 ^A	1660	-37	0	0	250
Dec 2007	1695 ^B 0	1684	-37	0	0	0
Mar 2008	0 0	1707	-37	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1300				14,257

Tuesday 15th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2006	1498 1500	1524	4	1533	1498	6540
Dec 2006	1542 1546	1571	7	1575	1542	7601
Mar 2007	1580 0	1607	7	1607	1580	1072
May 2007	1599 ^B 1605 ^A	1628	7	0	0	200
Jul 2007	0 0	1649	8	0	0	152
Sep 2007	0 0	1669	9	0	0	88
Dec 2007	0 0	1692	8	0	0	0
Mar 2008	0 0	1714	7	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1305				15,653

Wednesday 16th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2006	1517 1519	1541	17	1560	1513	3490
Dec 2006	1563 1567	1594	23	1610	1563	9092
Mar 2007	1605 0	1631	24	1647	1604	513
May 2007	1620 ^B 1625 ^A	1652	24	1658	1655	1056
Jul 2007	1640 ^B 1648 ^A	1673	24	1680	1669	139
Sep 2007	1660 ^B 1670 ^A	1693	24	0	0	50
Dec 2007	0 0	1716	24	0	0	24
Mar 2008	0 0	1738	24	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1324				14,364

Thursday 17th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2006	1540 0	1500	-41	1540	1498	5834
Dec 2006	1597 1600	1573	-21	1600	1572	8882
Mar 2007	1630 1632	1611	-20	1632	1610	1457
May 2007	1650 1651	1633	-19	1651	1634	1560
Jul 2007	1671 ^B 1673 ^A	1655	-18	1673	1666	199
Sep 2007	1690 ^B 1693 ^A	1673	-20	0	0	60

Dec 2007	1710 ^B 1716 ^A	1697	-19	0	0	0
Mar 2008	0 0	1722	-16	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1306				17,992

Friday 18th August 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Sep 2006	1485 1490	1481	-19	1500	1471	903
Dec 2006	1550 1562	1545	-28	1562	1533	7464
Mar 2007	1595 1598	1584	-27	1598	1573	2423
May 2007	1618 1621	1608	-25	1621	1598	548
Jul 2007	1630 ^B 1645 ^A	1630	-25	1620	1618	72
Sep 2007	1650 ^B 1663 ^A	1650	-23	0	0	65
Dec 2007	0 0	1673	-24	1670	1668	330
Mar 2008	0 0	1697	-25	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals		1287				11,805

Spot Prices (US \$ per tonne)

	14 th August	15 th August	16 th August	17 th August	18 th August
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	1882	1923	1946	1925	1897
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	1792	1833	1856	1835	1807
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	1768	1810	1841	1820	1792
Superior Arriba	1837	1879	1902	1881	1853
Sanchez f.a.q.	1747	1783	1806	1785	1757
Malaysian 110	1532	1586	1609	1588	1560
Sulawesi f.a.q.	1548	1604	1627	1606	1578
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	2533	2540	2577	2543	2498
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	4084	4163	4224	4168	4094
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	811	864	877	865	850

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association

News

Invasion of the Cocoa Pod Pest

By Lauren Foster, Financial Times

August 14, 2006

Mars Inc., one of the world's biggest candy companies, is waging war on a new and deadly competitor: a small moth that has a cocoa addiction. The maker of M&Ms and Snickers has sent a team to Papua New Guinea to combat an outbreak of the cocoa pod borer. The innocuous-sounding insect strikes fear into producers of chocolate, of which cocoa is the key ingredient. In 1998, it infected about a fifth of Indonesia's crop and caused an estimated \$20 million in damage. Past outbreaks also have hit cocoa production in the Philippines and Malaysia. The moth lays its eggs on the cocoa pods, and the larvae then feed off the pod. Any outbreak of the moth and subsequent disruption of global supply could affect the markets, where cocoa prices have recently suffered volatility. Cocoa futures prices are up about 9% since June 1.

Roger Dehnel, cocoa sustainability director for McLean, Va.-based Mars, told the Financial Times that the multinational saw the discovery of the cocoa pod borer in Papua New Guinea as a "real threat to overall production in Asia." Asia contributes about 17% of total cocoa production in the estimated \$5-billion global industry. The moths also could spell disaster for Papua New Guinea's economy and the livelihood of its small farmers. Cocoa is the country's second-largest agricultural export, after coffee. "This is potentially devastating for Papua New Guinea," Dehnel said. In April, the moth was discovered in East New Britain province, one of the country's leading cocoa producers. A "national response team" has been working to eradicate the pest and will soon shift its efforts to a neighboring province.

Mars is working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other partners to test a range of preventive measures. They include a "honey trap" strategy of luring male moths to adhesive traps baited with synthetic female sex secretions and chemicals emitted by living organisms to send messages to individuals of the same species. "Pheromones are how they find each other," Dehnel said. "They don't have Match.com." Dehnel said the traps now being supplied to Papua New Guinea were an "elegant solution" that was "non-impactful" on the environment. "The question we are grappling with is, is it enough moths to make a difference?"

Malaysia Targets Mexico, Venezuela & Peru For Cocoa Exports

KUALA LUMPUR,

Aug 15 2006 (Bernama) -- Mexico, Venezuela and Peru are among the Latin American countries offering a high potential for the export of Malaysia's cocoa products, a statement from the Ministry of Industries and Commodities said here Tuesday. "The usage of cocoa in the three countries is still low but it has the capacity to grow in tandem with the growing economy and lifestyle of the people in the countries," the statement said.

The amount of cocoa used per capita in Mexico and Venezuela in 2003/2004 has been projected at 587 kg and 459 kg respectively, which are lower than the world's average cocoa consumption, he said. In Peru, the consumption per capita is even lower at 201 kg. However, the imports of cocoa products especially cocoa powder and chocolate on the average have also shown an increase.

Deputy Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Datuk Anifah Aman had recently led a cocoa and timber promotional and technical mission to Mexico, Venezuela and Peru. The mission, from July 31 till Aug 18, was participated by senior officials from the ministry, representatives from agencies under the ministry such as the Malaysia Cocoa Board, Rubber Board of Malaysia, two exco members from Pahang state, Pahang's government secretary, Pahang Forest Department representative, and members of the private sector. "The mission has helped the private sector establish business network and also provided government officers the opportunity to gauge on the ways to facilitate easier trading with the countries, he said.

Gov't approves 100 per cent increase in cocoa

Wed Aug 16, 2006

The Agriculture Ministry has approved a 100 per cent increase in the price of cocoa. Effective October 1, the price paid to farmers for a box of cocoa will move from \$500 to \$1,000. Secretary Manager of the Cocoa Industry Board told the Jamaica Information Service that the Agriculture Ministry also intends to make a final payment of one hundred and forty dollars per box to cocoa farmers. However, he explained that if the crop exceeds expectations the final payment will be increased. The Cocoa Industry board is projecting that this year's crop will yield between 700 and 1,200 tonnes.

New mix of cocoa appears to help blood flow

By Nicholas Bakalar The New York Times

August 16, 2006

Drinking an unprocessed kind of cocoa that is not yet commercially available may help improve blood vessel function, according to a new report, and it appears to do so even more effectively for people over 50. The cocoa in question was made from the same beans as chocolate, but it was not processed into a confectionary product. Processing usually strips cocoa of the flavanols that are believed to be beneficial to arterial health. "There's a huge difference between cocoa and chocolate," said Dr. Naomi D.L. Fisher, the lead author of the study.

The researchers studied 34 healthy subjects, 19 of them over 50. None were taking any medications. Each consumed a quart of flavanol-rich sweetened cocoa every day for four to six days. All of the subjects had significantly improved readings on several tests of blood flow that often deteriorate with age. But the effect was much more prominent in the over-50 group than in the younger subjects. The scientists found that the cocoa flavanols work to widen arteries by the same mechanism as the heart drug nitroglycerin. "In theory, this should reduce the risk for heart disease," Fisher said. "But we need long-term, large-scale prospective trials to actually prove that."

Both Fisher and her co-author, Dr. Norman Hollenberg, receive grant support from Mars Inc., which also supplied the cocoa used in the experiments. The paper was published in the August issue of The Journal of Hypertension. Drinking an unprocessed kind of cocoa that is not yet commercially available may help improve blood vessel function, according to a new report, and it appears to do so even more effectively for people over 50. The cocoa in question was made from the same beans as chocolate, but it was not processed into a confectionary product. Processing usually strips cocoa of the flavanols that are believed to be beneficial to arterial health. "There's a huge difference between cocoa and chocolate," said Dr. Naomi D.L. Fisher, the lead author of the study.

Cargill Launches New Veliche Chocolate Line

16/08/06

Cargill Cocoa and Chocolate is offering chocolatiers and pastry chefs Veliche, an exquisite new line of 100 percent Belgian chocolate that is claimed to taste as divine as the saxophone sounds. Manufactured in Belgium, Veliche chocolate is made with vanilla and non-alkalized liquor, making it naturally flavored. The products have low viscosity and are highly workable – particularly desirable traits. The Veliche line comes in button form for easy handling and is packed in 10 kg. cartons. It is available to chocolatiers and pastry chefs in North America.

The Veliche product line is offered in three bittersweet chocolates, Chocolat Noir 72%, Chocolat Noir 62% and Chocolat Noir 58%; two milk chocolates, Chocolat Lait 34% and Chocolat Lait 31%; and a white chocolate, Chocolat Blanc. "Cargill's new Veliche line meets the growing demand of chocolatiers and pastry chefs for high quality, 100 percent Belgian chocolate that provides superior flavor and workability," said Frank Vollkommer, Certified Master Pastry Chef (CMPC), Cargill Cocoa and Chocolate. "With this chocolate product line, Cargill will collaborate with customers to help them develop indulgent, imported Belgian chocolate creations today's consumers crave. We're pleased and excited to offer our customers this high caliber line, which builds on Cargill's strong portfolio of chocolate products and provides even more opportunities to share ingredients, insights and knowledge that can help our customers succeed."

Food of the gods that became a global phenomenon

By ESTHER CHANDRAN

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August 16, 2006

CACAO beans – or cocoa beans, as they are more commonly known – which are used to make cocoa and chocolate, are derived from pods harvested from the cacao (*Theobroma cacao*) tree. History places the unassuming cacao tree in Mesoamerica (central Mexico to north-western Costa Rica), some 3,000 years ago and it is believed to have been discovered by the Olmec Indian civilisation around 1500-400BC. Beryl's Chocolate Kingdom sales and marketing manager Jasmine Chong Kwee Lian said Beryl's did a study on the history of chocolate and shared historical facts with tourists who visited its Jalan Utara outlet.

The cocoa fruit.

She said ancient Mayans, around 250 to 900AD, cultivated cacao and brought the plant out of the Mesoamerica rainforest, growing it in their backyards. They found a way to ferment, roast and grind the seeds into a paste which was mixed with water, chilli peppers, commmeal and other ingredients into a spicy chocolate drink called 'xocoatl', she explained.

The drink was only consumed occasionally, as cocoa beans were considered pricey. It is said that the beans were also used as currency in the pre-Mesoamerican age. History also documents the beverage was consumed at the court of the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II, who enjoyed his drink flavoured with vanilla and spices, served in a golden goblet. The Aztecs of Central Mexico were said to have obtained cacao beans through “tribute” or trade, the former being a form of taxation paid by districts conquered by the Aztecs. In the Aztec world, too, cacao beans were a luxury and only the nobility partook in enjoying its luxurious goodness. “The seeds were offered to the Gods, and the drink served during sacred ceremonies,” Chong elaborated.

In 1519, Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes arrived in Central Mexico and a few years later, the Aztec empire succumbed to Spanish rule. The Spanish took control of the supply of cacao and continued the “tribute” system that had been practised by the Aztecs. It is believed the beans were transported to Spain in 1528.

The Spaniards introduced new flavours to the drink by sweetening it and the new cocoa drink was born. From then on, cocoa beans began charting their way around Europe, and soon their pleasant taste and rich goodness caught on with people all over the world. When more countries got involved in the cocoa trade and more cocoa plantations were opened, the product became affordable and chocolate was then used in cakes, pastries and confections.

It was named Theobroma cacao (food of the gods) by Swedish natural scientist Carl von Linne in the 1700s. The cocoa press, which squeezed cocoa butter and made cocoa consistent and cheaper to produce, was created in 1828 by Dutch chemist Coenraad Van Houten, Chong said. “J.S. Fry in 1847 created the first solid eating chocolate by mixing cocoa powder, cocoa butter and sugar, which was moulded into a bar. “And from then on, chocolate became a worldwide phenomenon as it found fans in every part of the world, both young and old,” Chong said.

Cocoa Designs Introduces New Line of Premium Chocolate Caramels

San Francisco, CA (PRWEB)

August 17, 2006 -- Cocoa Designs today announced the launch of two new lines of hand made caramels, featuring Chocolate Caramels and Tea Caramels. A total of six new few flavors, including Thai, Earl Grey, and Jasmine Teas and Milk, Cinnamon, and Espresso Chocolates, each made with organic cream and natural infusions. Cocoa Designs’ hand made caramels take a classic American sweet, and introduce them to the gourmet snacks industry. Chocolate caramels have a richer and dense consistency due to the high quality Venezuelan cacao added to the recipe. Flavors are inspired by our Cocoa Nuts™ best sellers; Cocoa Nuts Lait (milk chocolate), Cocoa Nuts Azteque (cinnamon and chili) and Cocoa Nuts Café (espresso and cardamom).

Nicely complementing the Chocolate Caramels, Cocoa Designs’ new Tea Caramels are available in Thai and Vanilla, Earl Grey and Jasmine green tea. Each batch is hand made with organic cream, sugar, Normandy-style butter (83% butter fat) and natural tea infusions. 10 individually wrapped caramels come in a natural kraft box and are perfect for stocking stuffers or gift baskets. Cocoa Designs’ flagship product, Cocoa Nuts™ are hand made praline almonds and hazelnuts covered in Venezuelan chocolate and dusted in cocoa powder and spices. While there may be other chocolate covered almonds, only Cocoa Nuts are all natural, all hand made, and come in unique flavor combinations.

Signature almond flavors include Framboise (raspberry), Lait (milk chocolate), Noir (dark chocolate), Café (espresso), Epices (black pepper blended with allspice, nutmeg and cloves) and best selling Azteque (New Mexican chili and cinnamon). Hazelnut flavors include Extra Noir (very dark chocolate) and Orange (citrus marmalade). Cacao intensities range from 41% to 73% and ingredients, all hand-picked to match the flavor blends, include Valrhona, El Rey, Cocoa Barry, Scharffen Berger and Schokinag cocoa powder and chocolates.

All Cocoa Designs products, including Cocoa Nuts™ (chocolate covered praline almonds and hazelnuts), Cocoa Nuts™ Bars, and our new Caramels are available for purchase in gourmet, gift, and grocery stores throughout northern California and select locations nationwide. Online ordering and a complete list of retailers and flavors

are available at <http://www.cocoadesigns.com> [Cocoa Designs]. Email or call for additional information or to receive samples of our products.

About Cocoa Designs

Cocoa Designs opened its doors in February 2004 with a passion for simple, quality foods and premium high-end chocolate and confections. The company's vision is to bring these two worlds together with exceptional products. Our Pastry Chef and Chocolatier gained her experience in the culinary world cooking with Chefs Daniel Boulud and Jean Georges Vongrichen in New York City and Sebastien Gaudard in Paris. She has traveled the world sampling flavors and regional offerings, and incorporates a five-star background with her interest in creating luxurious treats, uncluttered by pretension or fuss. All Cocoa Designs products stand out from the rest by the combination of top quality ingredients with classic tradition and hand made process.

An international workshop on cocoa opens at Fumesua

Aug 17 2006

Fumesua (Ash), GNA - A three-day international workshop to brainstorm on the possibility to mix cocoa with other crops for forest restoration at forest degraded sites is underway at Fumesua near Kumasi. The workshop, organised by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in collaboration with the Forest Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG), is sponsored by Mars Incorporated in the United States of America (USA) among others, is themed, "Extending Cocoa for Biodiversity conservation". Participants from the USA, United Kingdom (UK), Belgium, Germany and Denmark will deliberate on how to surmount environmental challenges which include ageing trees, depleted soils, pests and diseases, environmental degradation, all resulting in low yields which go to affect the livelihood of some 20 million people depending on cocoa in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr J.R. Cobbinah, Director of FORIG, addressing the opening of the workshop, said Africa is now an epicentre of cocoa production and accounted for about 70 per cent of global production with Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria as the major production centres. However, he said, cocoa production face many social economic and environmental challenges which needed to be addressed to tackle the problem of dwindling yields affecting the economies of production centres where the crop is considered as the life blood. Dr Cobbinah therefore, urged participants of the workshop to focus attention on how biodiversity and diversity could be mainstreamed into the cocoa production landscape. This, he said, is because empirical evidence from recent research has proved that apart from the direct ecophysiological effect of shade on cocoa, mixed cropping and other trees in cocoa landscape suppress weeds and also slows down the spread of swollen shoot and black pod infections.

Turkish delight at maltitol potential in chocolate

By Stephen Daniells

18/08/2006 - The sugar alcohol maltitol is the most promising polyol sweetener to replace sucrose in chocolate, says new research from Turkey, a result that could lead to new types of sugar-free chocolate to the booming "diet" candy sector. "Our results can guide industry in selecting sucrose substitutes for chocolate, in developing alternative formulations, and optimisation of their processing methods," lead researcher Professor Gurbuz Gunes told FoodNavigator.com. Sales of so-called "diet candy" reached \$495m in 2004. And while that dwarfs in comparison to sales of regular chocolate and non-chocolate candies, the diet candy market's growth has far outpaced that of its full-calorie counterparts.

According to a recent report from market research firm Packaged Facts, between 2000 and 2004, diet candy had a 34 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR). By comparison, chocolate had a CAGR of 3.9 per cent, while non-chocolate candy actually suffered from a negative 2.5 per cent CAGR. The new research, published in the journal LWT - Food Science and Technology (Vol. 39, pp. 1053-1058), investigated the effects of substituting the polyols, maltitol, isomalt, and xylitol, for sucrose in molten chocolate.

Polyols provide the same bulk as sugar but are sugar free, do not promote tooth decay, and are used in a wide range of foods including chewing gum, candies, ice cream, baked goods, and fruit spreads. This is not the first time that people have looked at replacing sugar with polyols in chocolate. Indeed, chocolate bars for diabetics are already available sweetened with sorbitol, while others have released products sweetened with erythritol. But this is the first time, said Gunes, that the focus has been on the rheological properties of chocolate with these specific sweeteners and compared them to each other.

Rheology refers to the deformation and flow characteristics of the molten chocolate in terms of viscosity and friction. "Molten chocolate is a dense suspension consisting of non-fat particles (sucrose, cocoa, milk) dispersed in cocoa butter as a continuous phase," explained lead author Ahmet Sokmen from the Istanbul Technical University. "Determination of rheological properties of chocolate is important in manufacturing process for obtaining high-quality products with well-defined texture."

The researchers prepared molten chocolate samples by melting cocoa butter and then adding cocoa powder and the respective sweetener. Finally, lecithin and more cocoa butter were added. The following companies provided the ingredients: Pelit Chocolate & Pie GmbH (cocoa powder, cocoa butter, and lecithin); Elit Chocolate and Confectionary GmbH (sucrose); Dora Foreign Trade GmbH (maltitol and isomalt); and Perfetti Van Melle Food Industry GmbH (xylitol).

Samples of chocolate were prepared using a range of particle sizes, and the resulting chocolate evaluated by measuring particle size distribution, viscosity, yield stress and flow behaviour. Sokmen and Gunes report that the viscosity was dependent on both the type of polyol used and the initial particle size. "Maltitol resulted in similar rheological properties of chocolate to sucrose, and thus it may be recommended as a good alternative to sucrose in chocolate formulations," they report. "Chocolate with isomalt resulted in higher plastic viscosity while xylitol resulted in higher flow behaviour index."

Generally, larger particles were found to produce better rheological results from a manufacturing point of view, but these could possibly have adverse effects on the sensory properties of the chocolate, said the researchers. Chocolates made using xylitol and may be rejected by consumers, they said, because of xylitol's intense cooling effect in mouth. Indeed, rheological and sensory properties represent the two major challenges for such sugar-free chocolates, said Gunes, which are ultimately related to manufacturing cost and consumer acceptance. "Considering our results and information in literature the most promising sweetener seems to be maltitol," he told FoodNavigator.com.

French-based company, Roquette, producers of the Maltisorb crystalline maltitol, obtained by hydrogenation of maltose, is said to be the leading polyol in many countries for this specific market. Maltisorb is reported to be already used in some chocolate products.

Ivory Coast cocoa farmers' co-ops seek tax cuts

Fri Aug 18, 2006

By Ange Aboa

ABIDJAN (Reuters) - Cocoa-exporting farmers' cooperatives in No. 1 grower Ivory Coast have asked the government for a tax break to help them compete with more powerful foreign exporters, co-op leaders said this week. Ivory Coast will enter into the most productive stage of the year in around six weeks when the October-March main crop season begins, but cooperatives say they are increasingly sidelined by private companies which can pay farmers more for their cocoa. "We are in major difficulty and could disappear by the end of the next season if the government does not take our proposals into account," said Jacques Aboule, director general of Ucoopexci, a union of exporting coops.

Some cooperatives have worked hard to build a reputation for quality through improved controls and establishing long-term relationships with their members. Ucoopexci forwarded its proposals in writing to President Laurent Gbagbo several weeks ago. They included lowering export taxes for all exporters to 30-35 percent from 40 percent of the average CIF (cost-insurance-freight) price, on top of an additional tax break exclusively for cooperatives, worth 60 CFA francs per kg. Cocoa exports from Ivory Coast are subject to a range of different taxes, some fixed per kg, some variable depending on prices. "It's imperative that the government grants us these exonerations on export taxes and reduces the taxes if (exporting cooperatives) are to regain their competitiveness," said Ucoopexci's president, Fulgence N'Guessan.

The government said last month it was considering a 25 CFA franc reduction in levies farmers pay indirectly to fund structures managing the sector, which total 330 CFA per kg, after this was recommended by the IMF and World Bank. Annual cocoa production in the world's top cocoa producer has averaged around 1.3 million tonnes in the last few seasons but cooperatives say less and less of it is passing through their hands. "We handled barely 3 percent of exports this year and we're in a lot of debt with the banks," said Aboule. "After liberalisation (in 1999-2000), our market share was more than 20 percent because we had fiscal benefits for exports." A 64 CFA per kg export tax reduction for cooperatives was slashed to 10 CFA in 2004, he added. Aboule said foreign

shippers still benefited from a 94 CFA franc exemption. Ucoopexci also called on the government to help finance processing plants to enable Ivorians produce and export added value products -- an activity carried out almost exclusively by foreign companies, Aboule said. He said cooperatives had the capacity to handle up to 400,000 tonnes or about one third of the country's cocoa output.

Ghana: Cocoa And the Economy

Ghanaian Chronicle (Accra)

August 18, 2006

COCOA CONTRIBUTED 641,191 billion cedis to the country's economy as export duty while the export value of cocoa beans as the end of 2000/05 amounted to US\$837 million. This shows that cocoa, notwithstanding the present good price of gold on the world market, can still be considered the lifeblood of the economy. Coming from the horse's own mouth, the Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, Mr. Isaac Osei, confirmed that apart from being the country's leading revenue-earning commodity, cocoa had and continues to be the mainstay in the rural areas and this is rightly so. But for the country to maintain cocoa as the lifeblood of the economy, a lot has to be done.

Presently, some farmers are disillusioned about the behaviour of some of the Purchasing Clerks (PCs), who are actually misusing cocoa purchasing cash for their own diabolical ventures. The politicization of the cocoa spraying exercise needs to be looked into; the resourcing of both the seed gardens and the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) at Akyem-Tafo and the education of the farmers on the purple beans disease and the maintaining of Ghana cocoa's high quality on the world market, should not be joked with.

Sight must also not be lost on the tricks of some of the Local Buying Companies (LBCs) that have refused to accept the Akafo cheque system, thereby creating avenues for the purchasing clerks to starve the farmers when payments are due for purchases made. The cocoa industry is plagued with a myriad of problems not only from the conduct of some of the PCs of the LBCs but also from some of the staff of the Cocobod itself. For instance, the scholarships for farmers' children are manipulated by some of the staff with the names of their own children or their cronies rather than the children of these farmers. By conniving with a PC and a treasurer, these staff members or their cronies could become the beneficiaries of these scholarships after the PC and the treasurer have filled the forms and affirmed the existence of such names as farmers' wards in their zones or districts.

The warehousing scheme of the Board should also be sped up to ease the plight of the haulage drivers who cart the cocoa beans to the two ports of Takoradi and Tema from the hinterland. So the arrival of Diplomat Osei to steer the affairs of the Board should be encouraged to help him eradicate the problems affecting the cocoa industry. As an advice, Mr. Osei should not play with the bonuses of the farmers, and The Chronicle is glad that he had promised paying the farmers the due bonuses if the price of cocoa on the world market rises.

The case concerning the jute sacks should be one of the major problems that catch the immediate attention of the new Cocoa Capo, and with his good relationship with government, he could try to urge government to have a serious second look at the Kumasi Jute Factory to ease the country's huge expenditure on importing jute bags from Malaysia, India and other countries. We should all play our roles effectively to have our golden tree continue to be the pivot around which our economy revolves. The intrigues associated with doings and goings-on at the headquarters of Cocobod must cease for a harmonious atmosphere to reign for the new Chief Executive.

TIT BITS

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

US MIDDAY: cocoa settles up

NEW YORK (August 16, 2006): US cocoa futures edged up Tuesday, buoyed by currency-related activity and light speculative buying, traders said. New York Board of Trade's benchmark cocoa contract for December delivery rose \$7 to settle at \$1,571 a tonne after trading from a two-week low of \$1,542 to \$1,571.

US MIDDAY: cocoa firmer

NEW YORK (August 17, 2006): US cocoa futures ended on higher ground Wednesday, boosted by a combination of currency-related activity, speculative buying and limited producer selling, traders said.

Indonesia's 2007 cocoa beans output seen rising

JAKARTA (August 17, 2006): Indonesia's cocoa beans output is likely to rise as much as 6.6 percent to 480,000 tonnes in 2007 as better crop maintenance helps limit the spread of pod borer pests, a senior industry official said on Wednesday.

New York cocoa futures move up

NEW YORK (August 17, 2006): US cocoa futures edged up on Tuesday, buoyed by currency-related activity and light speculative buying, traders said. New York Board of Trade's benchmark cocoa contract for December delivery rose \$7 to settle at \$1,571 a tonne after trading from a two-week low of \$1,542 to \$1,571.

Brazil July cocoa exports fall

RIO DE JANEIRO (August 17, 2006): Brazilian cocoa bean and product exports totalled 9,525 tonnes in July, down 18 percent from 11,572 tonnes a year ago, Bahia Commercial Association said on Wednesday. Citing Brazilian Foreign Trade Ministry (SECEX) data, it said that July cocoa exports were worth \$19.4 million, down from \$25.3 million a year ago.

US MIDDAY: cocoa slips

NEW YORK (August 18, 2006): US cocoa futures slipped on Thursday, with contract switching and speculative selling weighing on the market a day before the first notice for September delivery, market sources said.

New York cocoa firmer

NEW YORK (August 18, 2006): US cocoa futures ended on higher ground on Wednesday, boosted by a combination of currency-related activity, speculative buying and limited producer selling, traders said.