



COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 205

13th – 17th November 2006

ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

	ICCO daily price (SDRs/tonne)	ICCO daily price (US\$/tonne)	London futures (£/tonne)	New York futures (US\$/tonne)
13 th November	1064.95	1582.96	859.00	1531.33
14 th November	1052.35	1563.11	852.00	1511.00
15 th November	1081.22	1602.75	876.67	1549.00
16 th November	1056.99	1568.16	853.00	1522.67
17 th November	1062.27	1573.54	858.00	1521.33
Average	1,063.56	1,578.10	859.73	1,527.07

Up-coming Events

- Extra-ordinary Council of Ministers Meeting, 7th December 2006, London, UK.

In the News:

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Have you had your cocoa today?

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

**Monday
13th
November 2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Dec 2006	843	843	-1	846	837	3,283
Mar 2007	861	862	0	866	855	2,303
May 2007	868	872	1	876	865	776
Jul 2007	878	883	3	885	877S	44
Sep 2007	887	892	3	895	887	386
Dec. 2007	899	902	3	904	896	150
Mar-08	915	912	3	915S	914S	2
May-08	923	921	2	923S	923S	2
Jul-08		932	2			0
Sep-08		942	2			0
Totals		896				6,946

**Tuesday
14th
November 2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	845	836	-7	846	835	3,295
Mar 2007	861	855	-7	867	853	2,016
May 2007	872	865	-7	876	865	697
Jul 2007	883	876	-7	886	876	194
Sep 2007	895	886	-6	895S	887	106
Dec. 2007	896	896	-6	897	895	30
Mar-08		907	-5			0
May-08		916	-5			0
Jul-08		927	-5			0
Sep-08		937	-5			0
Totals		890				6,338

**Wednesday
15th
November 2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	839	845	9	846	833	5,304
Mar 2007	857	866	11	867S	853	2,102
May 2007	868	876	11	877S	864	1,296
Jul 2007	876	888	12	887S	875S	375
Sep 2007	890	898	12	897S	887	184
Dec. 2007	895	907	11	905	895	123
Mar-08		919	12			0
May-08		929	13			0
Jul-08	931	940	13	931	931	1
Sep-08		950	13			0
Totals		902				9,385

Thursday **16th**
November **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	847	820	-25	851	817	6,036
Mar 2007	867	842	-24	871	838	4,727
May 2007	879	853	-23	882	850	1,518
Jul 2007	888	864	-24	890	862	154
Sep 2007	898	875	-23	898	873S	149
Dec. 2007	894	886	-21	894	884	156
Mar-08	900	898	-21	900	900	20
May-08	922	906	-23	924S	922	30
Jul-08		917	-23			0
Sep-08		926	-24			0
Totals		879				12,790

Friday **17th**
November **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	821	823	3	835	818	5,311
Mar 2007	845	847	5	859	842	3,128
May 2007	859	858	5	870	854	535
Jul 2007	868	869	5	874	865S	2,556
Sep 2007	876	880	5	881	876	292
Dec. 2007	888	892	6	890	888	66
Mar-08	906	904	6	906	900	17
May-08	913	913	7	913S	913S	1
Jul-08		922	5			0
Sep-08		931	5			0
Totals		884				11,906

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

13th
Monday November 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	1495 1500	1500	-9	1508	1485	11582
Mar 2007	1540 1544	1535	-13	1547	1527	13299
May 2007	1562 ^B 1566 ^A	1556	-13	1565	1543	831
Jul 2007	1580 ^B 1588 ^A	1576	-13	1585	1575	224
Sep 2007	1600 ^B 1607 ^A	1596	-13	1598	1598	84
Dec 2007	1626 ^B 1634 ^A	1621	-13	1627	1621	240
Mar 2008	0 0	1649	-13	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1670	-13	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1691	-13	0	0	0
Sep. 2008	0 0	1709	-13	0	0	0
Totals		1610				26,260

14th
Tuesday November 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	1500 1501	1473	-27	1507	1469	15449
Mar 2007	1534 1537	1515	-20	1543	1512	19676
May 2007	1555 ^B 1558 ^A	1537	-19	1552	1536	816
Jul 2007	1575 ^B 1580 ^A	1557	-19	1582	1556	93
Sep 2007	1593 ^B 1598 ^A	1577	-19	1602	1575	798
Dec 2007	1619 ^B 0	1602	-19	1628	1615	274
Mar 2008	0 0	1630	-19	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1651	-19	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1672	-19	0	0	0
Sep. 2008	0 0	1690	-19	0	0	0
Totals		1590				37,106

15th
Wednesday November 2006

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	1468 1470	1513	40	1519	1468	1266
Mar 2007	1505 1509	1533	18	1534	1505	5691
May 2007	1533 0	1555	18	1556	1533	145
Jul 2007	1550 1552	1576	19	1562	1550	116
Sep 2007	1573 0	1597	20	1587	1573	87
Dec 2007	1596 ^B 1600 ^A	1622	20	1603	1603	39
Mar 2008	0 1630 ^A	1650	20	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1671	20	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1692	20	0	0	0
Sep. 2008	0 0	1710	20	0	0	0
Totals		1612				7,344

Thursday **16th**
November **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	1510 1540	1468	-45	1540	1480	1433
Mar 2007	1529 1533	1490	-43	1543	1485	9585
May 2007	1553 ^B 1557 ^A	1513	-42	1565	1512	2143
Jul 2007	1570 ^B 1580 ^A	1533	-43	1560	1560	6
Sep 2007	0 0	1554	-43	1565	1565	2364
Dec 2007	0 0	1579	-43	1625	1590	125
Mar 2008	0 0	1607	-43	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1628	-43	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1649	-43	0	0	0
Sep. 2008	0 0	1667	-43	0	0	0
Totals		1569				15,656

Friday **17th**
November **2006**

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2006	1456 ^B 1467 ^A	1470	2	1480	1425	238
Mar 2007	1493 1497	1500	10	1512	1490	4563
May 2007	1520 ^B 1521 ^A	1523	10	1535	1515	274
Jul 2007	1541 ^B 1542 ^A	1544	11	1553	1533	479
Sep 2007	1560 ^B 1562 ^A	1565	11	1572	1555	337
Dec 2007	1590 0	1590	11	1598	1587	71
Mar 2008	1610 ^B 1618 ^A	1618	11	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1639	11	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1660	11	0	0	0
Sep. 2008	0 0	1678	11	0	0	0
Totals		1579				5,962

Spot Prices (US \$ per tonne)

	13 th November	14 th November	15 th November	16 th November	17 th November
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	1882	1855	1905	1862	1872
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	1772	1745	1798	1755	1765
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	1758	1731	1771	1728	1738
Superior Arriba	2025	1998	2088	2045	2055
Sanchez f.a.q.	1743	1716	1771	1728	1738
Malaysian 110	1508	1481	1516	1473	1483
Sulawesi f.a.q.	1533	1506	1560	1517	1527
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	2735	2686	2831	2752	2770
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	3920	3849	3986	3874	3900
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	785	771	792	770	775

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association-

News

GRENADA COCOA ASSOCIATION DOWNSIZING

13th November, 2006

Several Workers at the Grenada Cocoa Association could receive their separation packages by this Christmas. The GCA has decided to give these separation packages because of what they called their inability to sustain the staff after suffering a major hurricane. Reports indicated that discussion will be held with the representing unions on the packages which are expected to run in the region of one million dollars. Dr Reginald Buckmire chairman of the Board said these steps must be taken to ensure the survival of the industry. He however hastened to add that this in no way indicates that the industry is dead.

Cocoa Field School to begin operation, Jan

Ben-Ose Ogbemudia , Monday, Nov 13, 2006

The Cocoa Farmers Field School (FFS) is to begin operation in Edo State in January 2007 as necessary machinery are being put in place in some selected Cocoa producing areas to ensure effective take off. The State deputy governor, Chief Mike Oghiadomhe disclosed this in Sabongidda-Ora, Owan-West Local Government Area, during the opening ceremony of a four-week training workshop for facilitators of Cocoa Farmers Field School in the state.

The workshop is organised by the National Cocoa Development Committee (NCDC) through its sub-committee on sensitisation, training and implementation support in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture's Sustainable Tree Crop Programme, (IITA/STCP) and Edo State Government. Prior to the workshop, the state government had trained two master trainers and four superiors who are to provide the lead for the facilitators that will be trained at the workshop.

In line with the FFS programme of the NCDC, Edo State, as one of the major Cocoa producing states in Nigeria, is sponsoring 20 participants made up of 10 extension officers and 10 selected Cocoa farmers to the workshop. The FFS is a field school and a new participatory training, focused on the improvement of the economic and social well-being of cocoa farmers through profitable and sustainable cocoa production practices.

Enriched cocoa snack bars cut cholesterol

Mon Nov 13, 2006 8:50 PM GMT

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - Snacking on cocoa-flavored bars enriched with phytosterols can significantly reduce cholesterol levels, a new study shows. Phytosterols are plant-derived compounds that are structurally similar to the cholesterol found in mammals. Foods containing phytosterols have been shown to help cut cholesterol, and the US Food and Drug Administration has endorsed these products "as part of a dietary strategy to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease," Dr. John A. Polarus of the University of California at Davis and colleagues write in the November issue of the Journal of the American Dietetic Association. But concerns have been raised, they add, that these foods could reduce levels of certain fat-soluble vitamins and antioxidants in the blood in addition to cutting cholesterol.

To examine the effect of a food enriched with phytosterols on blood levels of cholesterol and nutrients, the researchers randomly assigned 67 people with high cholesterol to eat two snack bars containing 1.5 grams of plant sterols each every day for six weeks or two bars that did not contain plant sterols. The enriched bar, Cocoa Via Crunch, was made by Hackett town, New Jersey-based Master foods, which helped fund the research. Study participants who ate the sterol-enriched bars had a 4.7- percent reduction in total cholesterol and a 6-percent reduction in LDL cholesterol after six weeks, and also showed an increase in the amount of HDL or "good" cholesterol in relation to total cholesterol.

While the sterol-enriched bars did not affect participants' blood levels of vitamins A or E, they did reduce beta-carotene levels. Making sure to get plenty of carotenoid-rich foods while using plant sterol-containing products could be enough to offset this reduction, the researchers suggest. They conclude: "In conjunction with a healthful diet and regular exercise, the inclusion of a novel food product, such as a chocolate product that contains plant sterols, can be a safe and effective means to lower both total and LDL cholesterol levels."

Côte d'Ivoire: Solving Conflict On a Smaller Scale

November 13, 2006, Nougoussi

As Cote d'Ivoire's political leaders struggle with the conflict that has divided their country for the past four years, Ivorians at the grass-roots level have managed to resolve festering, deadly battles over land rights. Authorities this

year completed a pilot programme to record rights to land after lengthy consultations with villagers, elders, chiefs and local officials. The consultations include reviewing existing territorial agreements between individuals, families and communities. Competition for land and the lack of official identity documents are partly behind the political impasse that has divided Cote d'Ivoire since a failed coup in September 2002 triggered a brief civil war. The conflict resulted in the exodus of millions of West Africans who for years had considered Cote d'Ivoire their home after they or their parents immigrated to work the country's fertile land.

The government effort has aimed to clarify land tenure and safeguard it through formal registration. The boundaries of 105 villages in the southwestern cocoa belt and the southeast were mapped out and at least 20 land disputes have been resolved since 2004, analysts said. "People were very happy. All the operations went well," said one analyst, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of land issues in Cote d'Ivoire. "Villagers and farmers are hungry for official documents and contracts. They need concrete and visible marks accepted by everyone because sometimes they simply don't know that this is not their parcel of land but the neighbour's one."

Door closes

Founding president Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who ruled Cote d'Ivoire for 33 years after independence from France, had decreed that "land belongs to the person who cultivates it" and encouraged West Africans from Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and other neighbouring countries to farm in the fertile west and southwest of Cote d'Ivoire to help develop the country's economy. As the population grew, swathes of virgin rainforest were slashed and burned to create more land to grow coffee, fruit and cocoa. The immigrants helped transform Cote d'Ivoire into the world's largest cocoa exporter and the most successful economy in West Africa.

But falling world prices for cocoa led to an economic downturn in the 1980s. Many Ivorian youths left the economic hub of Abidjan on the coast and returned to their villages only to find there was not enough farmland to go around. Politicians, including former president Henri Konan Bedie, began talking of "Ivoirite" or "Ivorianness" after Houphouet-Boigny's death in 1993. Then a 1998 law recognising customary land rights in Cote d'Ivoire effectively ended the country's open-door immigration policy by preventing migrants and their offspring from having land rights.

The introduction of nationalism, coupled with the country's economic problems and competition for land, triggered attacks on West African migrants. "The Ivorian political context favours the explosion of [land] conflicts, feeds them and prevents their resolution," one Abidjan-based analyst said.

Intense competition

Since civil war erupted in 2002 land ownership has become a hot-button issue and there have been several deadly clashes. A 54-year-old conflict in the area of Nougoussi, about 85 km east of Abidjan, between the Aboure and Gwa groups claimed its latest life in September when a group of Aboure attacked and killed a young Gwa man, bringing the death toll between the two communities to three this year. Dozens of people have been killed, many of them beheaded by machetes, in the five-decade-old conflict.

The rich agricultural region of 15,000 hectares is heavily planted with pineapples, cocoa and banana trees. "Tensions start because the land is more valuable" in one area compared with another, said one government official. "Now there are a lot of economic interests at stake and villagers just say: I have planted pineapples here, so here it's my land. But that's wrong." Last month, young Gwa demonstrated in the Nougoussi area against a peace agreement signed between local village chiefs and First Lady Simone Gbagbo, who belongs to the Aboure clan and was born in a village that became involved in the dispute.

The Ivorian Movement of Human Rights filed a complaint to the African Union's Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, saying the 1998 land law trampled on the rights of migrants. The law was amended a few years ago and now allows title-holders to land, regardless of their origin, to hold rights to it. The failure to fully implement the land law is partly to blame for the continuation of territorial conflicts such as the one in Nougoussi, said magistrate Leon Desire Zalo, director of the rural land and land registry department of the Agriculture Ministry.

Learning to keep children off cocoa farms in Ghana

Tue Nov 14, 2006 9:46am ET

ASANKRAGWA, Ghana (Reuters) - No matter how busy he gets, cocoa farmer Simon Afram never keeps his children home from school to work on his farm. "If you don't let a child go to school, it will spoil his future," Afram said. "I don't want them to become farmers and suffer like me." For Afram, education offers his children the chance

of an easier life and a more secure future, far away from the groves of yellowing cocoa pods where his family's livelihood is at the mercy of the weather, and a fluctuating world market price.

It's an attitude many would like to spread through the cocoa plantations of West Africa, which have come under scrutiny for the use of children labor in harvesting the cocoa pods which form the basis of the lucrative global chocolate industry. Afram has just finished a class with other farmers in the middle of a cocoa plantation. Sitting on rocks and pieces of wood and dressed in second-hand Western clothes, they describe the aches and pains they get from long hours working with machetes, chemicals and heavy bags of cocoa. "Now," asks teacher Charles Bartels, "what would it be like to be a child working in the field?"

The class, which also teaches crop maintenance and other techniques, is run by the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) a joint initiative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Cocoa Foundation, which groups national cocoa growers associations and big international firms. Household names such as U.S. candy makers Mars Inc and Hershey Co. and Swiss food giant Nestle have become deeply interested in the opinions of farmers like Afram on child labor -- it could affect their bottom lines

Dark Chocolate Lowers Blood Clot Risk

Nutrition / Diet News / Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine

15 Nov 2006 - 15:00pm (PST)

If you eat a little bit of dark chocolate each day you could be reducing your chances of developing a blood clot, say researchers from Johns Hopkins University, USA. They say dark chocolate helps thin the blood, in pretty much the same way as aspirin does. The research team had started studying aspirin's effect on platelets. Platelets are tiny particles in your blood that stick to each other, eventually forming clumps which make a clot. The patients being observed had to give up eating chocolate for the study to be effective. However, 139 of them couldn't do so - they continued eating chocolates.

The scientists decided to compare the blood of the chocoholics to those who had stopped eating chocolate. They found that the chocoholics' platelets clotted at 130 seconds (when taken out), compared to 123 seconds for the other people. In other words, the platelets of the chocoholics were taking longer to clot. They concluded that chemicals, perhaps flavonoids, in the cocoa bean have a biochemical effect similar to aspirin in reducing platelet clumping. Platelet clumping can block a blood vessel and cause heart attacks. The scientists say we could benefit from either having a bit of dark chocolate each day or a chocolate drink. It is important its sugar and butter content is minimal. The ideal amount would be about two tablespoons of dark chocolate each day. Many fruits and vegetables are rich in flavonoids.

Sweet words for lovers of chocolate

By Frank D. Roylance , Sun reporter , November 15 2006

Even small amounts of dark chocolate might help to prevent the sort of blood clots that cause heart attacks and strokes, a finding that researchers say could make the treat a routine part of a heart-healthy diet. The benefits of a class of chemicals called flavonols, derived from cacao beans, have been emerging from research for decades. But previous studies have been laboratory investigations involving large doses of flavonols -- equivalent to eating several pounds of chocolate a day.

Diane Becker, lead author of a study presented yesterday, said it is the first one to find a significant effect in people who ate chocolate in amounts that chocolate lovers more typically consume. "Some dark chocolate looks like it's healthy in small quantities," said Becker, who presented her findings at a scientific meeting of the American Heart Association in Chicago. "Halloween basket chocolate and vending machine chocolate are definitely not on this agenda." Becker is a professor of health policy and management at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is also a vegetarian and a self-described "chocoholic." "I'm not guilty about it," she said, "but I was before -- before I understood and knew a lot about it. ... In its pure form, it's really good for you."

Daily treat

Each day around 4 or 5 p.m., Becker, 63, takes the equivalent of half a Hershey bar -- but it's a dark, low-fat, low-sugar variety of chocolate. She dunks half of it in a skim, decaf latte, then chases the coffee with the other half. "The reason I do it is because I'm so proscriptive about everything else in my diet. ... I look forward to that all day," she said.

Her understanding of chocolate cravings led to the findings presented yesterday. They grew out of a much broader study of how genes influence the way aspirin delays clotting time by slowing the activity of blood platelets. Platelets are a key component of the blood's clotting mechanism. Their abundance and "stickiness" determine how easily they form the clots needed to stop blood loss after injury. But in patients with blood vessels narrowed by cardiovascular disease, easy clotting can cause serious, even fatal complications, including heart attacks and strokes.

Becker's study, called GeneSTAR (for Genetic Study of Aspirin Responsiveness) was designed to find genetically based patterns in blood clotting mechanisms and to identify which of 1,200 participants responded best to aspirin therapy. All had a "slightly" elevated risk of heart disease. To help isolate the effect of the aspirin, Becker's team instructed participants to avoid flavonol-rich foods for up to two weeks before the tests -- foods such as chocolate, coffee, red wine, strawberries and pineapples. But Becker knew some would cheat. In fact, many confessed they would probably be unable to give up their daily chocolate fix. So, Becker and her team decided to use their subjects' craving to examine the impact of normal chocolate consumption on platelet activity.

They were not disappointed: 139 of the 1,200 participants cheated. They repeatedly confessed to the investigators and also kept food diaries. From both, Becker's team estimated the contraband's cocoa content and processed the data to isolate and quantify the effect of the chocolate on the participants' platelet activity. Their measure of the clotting time for the "chocolate offenders," as Becker called them, showed it was significantly slower than for those who abstained. The difference averaged just seven seconds, but it was evidence that normal chocolate consumption has a positive impact. More importantly, even after controlling for everything else these people ate, a urine test for the waste products of platelet metabolism showed a real platelet suppression effect from flavonol ingestion.

There was a "major difference between those who ate chocolate and those who didn't," she said. The more they ate, the greater the slowdown in platelet activity. That should translate into a significant lowering of the risk of dying from a heart attack. A large study in the Netherlands, reported earlier this year, found a 50 percent reduction in heart disease mortality among older Dutch men who ate the most dark Dutch chocolate.

That benefit doesn't come solely from the flavonols' effect on platelets, Becker said. Researchers know that flavonols also lower blood glucose and "bad" cholesterol and enhance the function of the epithelial cells that line blood vessels. That helps the vessels expand and contract to control blood pressure and nourish tissues, including the heart. "Increasing the time it takes for clots to form in diseased vessels is highly effective in reducing myocardial infarction [heart attacks] and cardiac death," Becker said.

More to learn

Maybe. But science still hasn't fully resolved the issues, according to Eric Ding. He is a doctoral candidate in the department of epidemiology at the Harvard University School of Public Health. He wasn't involved in Becker's study, but he did publish a recent review of 136 previous chocolate studies. Although all the observational data and short-term clinical trials like Becker's seem to point in the right direction, he said, there have not yet been any large, extended, randomized trials to measure how flavonols affect heart disease outcomes.

"We need long-term trials," Ding said.

Becker's findings are not a green light to make a steady diet of chocolate doughnuts or candy bars, the researchers say. Most of those are loaded with unhealthy amounts of sugar and fat and doubtful quantities of cocoa. Nor is chocolate candy a substitute for doses of aspirin or other drugs that doctors often prescribe for high-risk cardiac patients to ward off dangerous clotting. At the very least, Becker said, the findings suggest that a taste of low-fat, low-sugar dark chocolate could be a beneficial part of a healthy diet. "People should not feel that everything they like is proscribed," she said.

Dark chocolate acts as aspirin, study

By Catherine Boal

15/11/2006 - Cocoa can function in the same way as aspirin in preventing heart attacks, according to a new study investigating its effect on blood platelets. The research will lend further weight to the various health claims now attached to the traditional indulgence. Dark chocolate has recently been making inroads into the health market as its beneficial antioxidant and flavanoid content becomes more widely publicised and consumers switch from milk or white chocolate to keep up with the trend.

Scientists at the John Hopkins University School of Medicine say that a few squares of chocolate a day can reduce the risk of a heart attack by almost 50 per cent in some cases. The discovery came after volunteers for a trial on the effects of aspirin were disqualified for eating chocolate, despite being warned that this would interfere with results from the study. Despite being barred from participating in the drug study, the chocolate-eaters blood was examined and compared with others who hadn't indulged in order to determine what effect cocoa has on platelets. Platelets from those who had eaten chocolate clotted more slowly than those who had not – taking an average of 130 seconds to clump together compared to 123.

Professor Diane Becker said: “What these chocolate ‘offenders’ taught us is that the chemical in cocoa beans has a biochemical effect similar to aspirin in reducing platelet clumping, which can be fatal if a clot forms and blocks a blood vessel, causing a heart attack.” She continued: “Eating a little bit of chocolate or having a drink of hot cocoa as part of a regular diet is probably good for personal health, so long as people don't eat too much of it, and too much of the kind with lots of butter and sugar.” The full results of the study were presented to the American Heart Association's annual Scientific Sessions in Chicago yesterday.

High cocoa production demonstrates government's support

Nov 16 2006

Source GNA

Finance Minister, Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu said the consistently high production of cocoa achieved since 2002/03 was the result of government's continuous support to the cocoa sector. He said measures such as increased producer prices, bonus payments, effective diseases and pests control programmes, improved agronomic practices and the promotion of new and innovative methods of cocoa farming have resulted in tremendous successes leading to yet another record output in the history of Ghana.

The country achieved a production record of 740,458 metric tonnes during the 2005/2006 Crop Season, representing an increase of 23.0 per cent over the 601,922 metric tonnes achieved in the 2004/05 crop season. Similarly, Mr Baah-Wiredu said, producer prices had been increased consistently, reaching an amount of nine million cedis per tonne during the 2005/06 season. The producer price represented 72.86 per cent of the net Free on Board (FOB) price, 2.86 per cent more than the previously agreed. He said in view of government's resolve to ensure the welfare of cocoa farmers, a total amount of approximately ₵178.2 billion cedis would be used to pay bonuses.

Each farmer will be paid a bonus of ₵17,140 per bag and will cover a tonnage of 645,985 metric tonnes purchased during the Main Crop Season. This brings to 608.9 billion cedis the amount of bonus payments made to farmers since 2001. Mr Baah-Wiredu said 358.5 kilometres of feeder roads were being rehabilitated at a total contract sum of ₵92.7 billion in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central and Western regions. Works on the roads are expected to be completed in February, 2007.

On the cocoa diseases and pests control programme, the Minister said about ₵564.9 billion cedis had so far been spent since its inception six years ago. In all, 742,213 cocoa farms and 514,361 cocoa farmers had their farms sprayed with either fungicides or insecticides against the black pod disease and capsid respectively. The programme employed 50,765 youths from local communities within the six cocoa growing regions for the spraying exercise. The total area covered was 1,948,101 hectares made up of 800,000 hectares under the black pod control and 1,148,101 hectares under the capsid control, Mr Baah-Wiredu said.

The Minister said ₵15.0 billion was paid into the Cocoa Farmers Scholarship Trust Fund in the 2005/06 Season to finance fresh scholarship awards of 2,500 wards of cocoa farmers in second cycle institutions. The Trust Fund was established by government to finance scholarship awards to wards of cocoa farmers attending second-cycle institutions (Senior Secondary and Technical Schools). On local processing of cocoa, Mr Baah-Wiredu said in line with government's medium term policy to process 50 per cent of cocoa produced in the country, COCOBOD had signed cocoa beans supply agreement with a number of foreign and local cocoa processing companies, which are setting up cocoa processing plants in Ghana.

China's chocolate market looks sweet for Barry Callebaut

By Dominique Patton

Food Industry & Consumer TRENDS News Headlines, Decision News Media

07/11/2006 - Swiss chocolate maker Barry Callebaut is gearing up for the chocolate market of the future, with the final go-ahead for its first production plant in China. The company, which uses 15 per cent of the world's cocoa

supply, makes almost 90 per cent of its sales in Europe and North America but it has embarked on a new regional focus to raise earnings in fast-growth emerging markets.

Maurizio Decio, new vice president for Asia, told AP-Foodtechnology.com that he plans to focus on the triangle between Tokyo, Seoul and Shanghai to generate higher sales in this region. Japan, with its traditionally high quality standards, is already a strong market for the leading chocolate producer.

But China, with its enormous consumer base, is clearly the more exciting. China's demand for chocolate grows by between 10-15 per cent each year and many in the industry say demand will soon outpace the speed at which new chocolate factories can be built. "The Chinese market is already the second biggest in the region [after Japan] and it is growing at incredible speed," says Decio. "With the growth in income, especially on the east coast, consumption of impulse food is going to become much more accessible for a larger population."

Barry Callebaut opened a new sales office in Shanghai last month and is hoping to gain its construction permit for a production plant in the Suzhou area in the coming weeks. The plant will initially have capacity for 25,000 tonnes but is likely to be increased if market growth continues as expected. The site of the production plant is significant. While the average annual chocolate consumption in China is only 100-150g, Shanghai's population is already eating about 1kg per head, according to Decio. And if Shanghai residents and the 400 million people living in neighbouring cities on this affluent coastline reach the Japanese average of 2.2-2.3kg each, this gives Callebaut a potential market of some 800,000 metric tons of chocolate.

"We hope that this [new] plant will be mainly for the Shanghai area. Of course it is a good hub and we will be able to export to Korea and Japan but given current demand from both the gourmet and industrial segments, we hope sales will be mainly local."

Production in China, expected to start some time in 2008, means Callebaut can supply its Chinese clients with products like liquid chocolate which cannot be delivered the long distance from Singapore, currently the firm's only manufacturing site in Asia. Importantly for Barry Callebaut, the trend towards higher quality chocolate is already evident in China. The company that prides itself on its range of dark chocolate and high polyphenol content products says it is seeing stronger demand for dark chocolate in China, like many other of its markets.

"You can see this growing interest in quality everywhere – in cars, in coffee and in chocolate too," said Decio. Confectioners offering products with higher cocoa content will be boosted by a new regulation entering into force on 1 December that requires products with more than 5 per cent vegetable fat to be labeled as containing cocoa substitutes. "This is a positive move towards quality but it is the market that is already driving this trend ahead of any regulations," believes Decio. He added that the firm's gourmet business – selling chocolate to artisans, hotels and restaurants – is growing 'really, really strongly', another indication of the good demand for higher end products.

Indeed the gourmet business takes a higher proportion of sales than in many other parts of the world. Real growth in volumes will however come from the industrial side. It is difficult to predict the speed at which this will happen but Decio notes that confectionery companies are increasingly making more of their sales in Asia than western markets.

China's Food Industry Association says that annual chocolate consumption, currently worth around CNY3 billion, is expected to reach CNY20 billion (€1.9bn) in the future, making it the largest chocolate market in the world.

Christmas chocolatiers go green

Food Industry & Consumer TRENDS News Headlines, Decision News Media

10/11/2006 - Ethical chocolate company Green & Black's has devised an innovative new way to raise its socially responsible profile in the confectionery industry with a unique Christmas concept. The company, which produces fair trade and organic chocolate, has launched what it calls 'the ultimate advent calendar', worth £30,000 (€44,734), in order to publicise its 'green' credentials.

With ethics increasingly creeping into consumer choices, companies are striving to keep up with the trend and promote a more environmentally and socially aware side to their business.

Green & Black's, which is the UK's leading ethical chocolate brand, has created a four foot tall, wooden tree-shaped advent calendar. Hidden within the oak and walnut wood structure are 24 drawers and compartments containing 15 organic own-branded Green & Black's chocolate bars and nine specially created products.

The bespoke chocolates include mini chocolate Christmas Puddings and chocolate dipped marzipan squares. Green & Black's source their cocoa from an organic farming co-operative in Belize and are now the UK's leading supplier of organic chocolate. Market researchers Leatherhead International report that the UK organic chocolate market is the largest in the EU with sales of \$35m (€27.3m) in 2005.

The company said in a statement: "Each year, around this time, people often phone to ask us if we make chocolate advent calendars. This year we decided to look into creating one but as with most of our products, we added a twist. Instead of making lots of calendars, we have created the ultimate Advent Calendar."

The calendar will be on display in prestigious UK department store Harrod's throughout November, the proceeds from its sale will go to Green & Black's Maya Gold project which helps cocoa growers in Belize.

Christmas cubes and tubes for Mars

By Catherine Boal

Food Industry & Consumer TRENDS News Headlines, Decision News Media

03/11/2006 - Confectionery giant Masterfoods has begun planning early for the predicted Christmas sales boom, with new packaging designs being rolled out across a number of chocolate product ranges.

Core brand Mars chocolate will be redistributed in a 'cube' format along with Galaxy Ripple to make the product more suitable for sharing or as a gift.

Savvy confectioners are embarking on pre-Christmas marketing drives earlier and earlier each year in order to target a growing body of organised consumers planning ahead of the hectic holiday.

Marketing research undertaken by Masterfoods suggests that families with young children begin Christmas shopping as early as September, with 22 million hitting the shops in that month. In comparison, the last minute shopping done by young professionals in the week before Christmas Eve accounts for 40 per cent of all festive sales in that period.

Masterfoods' new Cube versions, costing £2.49 (€3.72) each, are compact, easy to unfold and extend out into a serving bowl shape which can be topped up with further chocolates.

Inside the Cubes are 10 to 12 mini, fun-sized Mars, Mars Delights or Galaxy ripple bars. Also in the pipeline for the festive season is new Christmas-style 'tubes' packaging for the Skittles, Galaxy Minstrels, Revels and Maltesers brands. They will be sold by major retailers such as Tesco and priced £1.39 (€2.08).

Industry should engage in behaviour and nutrition research

By Jess Halliday

Food Industry & Consumer TRENDS News Headlines, Decision News Media

06/11/2006 - More research is urgently needed into the effects of better nutrition on behaviour, and the government and food industry should be more involved, said experts at last week's Healthy Foods Summit in London.

Bernard Gesch, senior research scientist at Oxford University's Department of Physiology and director of research charity Natural Justice, presented attendees with compelling case studies indicating that addressing nutritional needs can lead to dramatic improvements in behaviour in adults with serious social and mental problems and criminal convictions.

His comments are particularly pertinent at a time when prisons, particularly in the UK, are full to bursting point and governments are casting about for ways to reduce the inmate population.

A double-blind placebo-controlled study conducted by Gesch and colleagues from the University of Surrey in 2002 found evidence that giving vitamin, mineral and essential fatty acid supplements to young adult prisoners (aged 18 to 21 years) considerably reduced antisocial behaviour including violence.

Published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, the study concluded that the implications were similar for those eating poor diets in the community. "We urgently need more research," said Gesch. "But we can't do it without the help of the government and the food industry."

Gesch said that it is now thought that humans evolved in an aquatic environment, not in the savannahs of Africa as previously thought. Water in the savannahs is in short supply and there are no rich sources of the omega-3 fatty acid DHA, which figures large in the make-up of the human brain. "The ability to exploit coastal and lakeside resources

is now seen as a decisive factor in surpassing Neanderthals," he said. "It is the reason for the increasing brain size, and our genes probably adapted to that diet and the kind of diet that made us smart."

In developing countries, a deficiency of essential nutrients such as vitamin A, iron, zinc and iodine leads to physical disease and seriously impacts mental development and function. Back in the modern and developed world, in the USA 84 per cent of the population's essential fatty acid intake is omega-6 and 16 per cent is omega-3. In Japan, on the other hand, 35 per cent is omega-6 and 65 per cent omega-3.

While scientists cannot yet say for sure what the effects of these ratios may be on the human brain, there are suggestions that a lower omega-3 intake may be related to a higher homicide rate.

When it comes to more research into nutrition and behaviour, however, the area falls between the demarcations of different disciplines: the medical community considers nutrition to be part of alternative and complementary medicine, while the nutritional sciences do not cover behaviour.

"Nutrition affects the genes. Are genes alternative?" asked Gesch. "If the nutritional approach works, it will work irrespective of legislative and social boundaries," he said. "We need a joined up approach. There can be no better investment".

Organic, fairtrade chocolate hits ethical niche

By Catherine Boal

Food Industry & Consumer TRENDS News Headlines, Decision News Media

10/11/2006 - As confectionery makers jostle for a share in the increasingly popular organic market, UK company Venture Foods has launched two new additions to its niche organic and fairtrade chocolate bars. The Premium Organic White Bar and Swiss Dark Chocolate with Mint Crisps bar are the latest extensions to the company's successful Organica range which was developed to target ethical consumers.

Market analyst Mintel forecasts that UK shoppers are set to spend over £2 billion (€2.6bn) on ethical foods this year alone and the trend has been making inroads into the confectionery industry with organic chocolatiers such as market leader Green & Blacks experiencing sales growth from £10m (€14.8m) to £50m (€73.8) in the last four years.

Within the ethical foods market, Fairtrade remains the star performer in terms of sales growth. The niche is set to be worth £230m (€342m) by the end of this year, experiencing some 265 per cent growth between 2002 and 2006 alone.

Both the UK Soil Association and Fairtrade Foundation have approved the Venture bars – certifying their organic and fairtrade status. According to market researchers Leatherhead International the UK organic chocolate market is the largest in the EU with sales of \$35m (€27.3m) in 2005. But it's not just the British market that is feeling the need to go organic – figures provided by Mintel's Global New Product Database, (GNPD) show that 170 new organic chocolate products have been launched globally in the past year.

The new Organica chocolate will be on sale in upmarket retailing chain, Waitrose, priced £1.79 (€2.66) for a single 100g bar.

Traceability requirements relaxed by UK regulator

By Ahmed ElAmin

Foodproductiondaily.com

06/11/2006 - The UK's processors will be given more leeway on how they apply the EU's traceability requirements, under proposed guidance notes issued by the country's food safety regulator. The proposed UK guidance note covers EU legal requirements on food and feed safety, traceability provisions and the need to notify, withdraw or recall products. The The Food Standards Agency (FSA) decided to re-issue the guidance notes after the food sector complained that they would result in high costs to the industry.

Traceability is a key concern within the food industry due to consumer concerns over food safety, new regulations and the cost of recalls to plants when products are found to be contaminated. The FSA published the guidance notes for comment from industry, the public and others involved in the food supply chain. The guidance notes are part of the ongoing series of advice the FSA plans to issue for processors on provisions in the EU's General Food Law.

The new draft now focuses primarily on the legal requirements of the EU regulation, the FSA stated. Under the revision the FSA would give a greater discretion to food businesses than is contained in the EU guidance over how long they need to keep records for traceability purposes.

The FSA is also amending the requirement that food companies need to immediately produce traceability records by allowing processors in certain cases to produce these within "a short timescale". The new guidance notes also concentrate more on the requirements of the EU legislation and provide minimal advice on good practice, the FSA stated. "The agency view is that these new FSA guidance notes are more appropriate for food businesses in the UK," the regulator stated. " This approach has been discussed with the European Commission."

The FSA says it is now seeking comments on the revision, especially on the partial regulatory impact assessment, which seeks to identify key issues and potential costs. "In particular we would welcome your views on whether the focus on the requirements of legislation rather than best practice is more helpful to businesses and if this will remove the additional administrative costs businesses thought were contained in the EC guidance," the FSA stated.

The FSA is also seeking comments on the content and form of its guidance notes, the regulator's opinion that they will result in no additional administrative costs to the industry beyond those incurred during the normal course of business, and the assessed cost estimates from a partial regulatory impact assessment.

The proposed UK guidance notes on traceability are dealt with in article 14-16 and 18-20 of the EU regulation. The revised guidance notes are being issued to address concerns raised in a public consultation on the European Commission guidance on the regulation, held between July and October 2005.

The FSA originally issued its guidance notes on the general food law's legislative requirements on 31 December 2004. The European Commission's guidance was issued on 20 January 2005. The FSA revised its guidance on 10 March that year to take account of the Commission's guidance notes.

The FSA subsequently consulted the public in July 2005 on how well the Commission's guidance had been working to help inform industry as to what procedures it need to take under the law. "The reaction from business was that the EC guidance was resulting in disproportionate costs to the food industry," the FSA noted. "The EC guidance classifies traceability information in two categories, the first to meet the legal requirements and the second to be followed as best practice. Responses from food businesses to the consultation exercise indicated that following such best practice guidance could result in additional costs."

The deadline for comments is 26 January 2007.

TIT BITS

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

New York cocoa futures down

NEW YORK (November 15, 2006): US cocoa futures ended slightly lower, but held the \$1,500 a tonne level on Monday, as producer sales limited the upside momentum and traders sped up contract rollover, sources said.

US MIDDAY: cocoa futures up

NEW YORK (November 16, 2006): US cocoa futures closed higher Wednesday as short-covering helped the market rebound from the previous session's losses, and prices could be trapped within a \$20-to-\$40 range in the near-term, dealers said.

New York cocoa futures down

NEW YORK (November 16, 2006): US cocoa futures settled with sizeable losses on Tuesday as short-term speculators liquidated some of their long positions after origin sellers nudged prices lower in London, traders said.