



COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 218

12th – 16th February 2007

Cocoa Producers' Alliance

ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

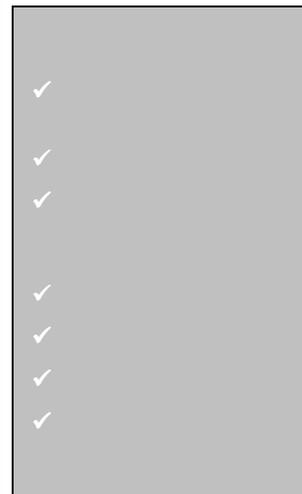
	ICCO daily price (US\$/tonne)	London futures (£/tonne)	New York Futures (US\$/tonne)
12 th February	1807.63	959.00	1750.00
13 th February	1804.63	957.67	1749.00
14 th February	1798.07	949.00	1735.33
15 th February	1861.68	984.00	1803.33
16 th February	1869.46	991.67	1807.00
Average	1828.00	968.00	1769.00

Up-coming Events



In the News:

- Minister urges Nigerians to consume cocoa for medicinal benefits
- Barry Callebaut Introduces Second Cocoa Bean Processing Line
- NCA Announces Project to Focus on Health Issues in West African Cocoa Communities
- Chocolate May Bring Love on Valentine's Day, But What About Health?
- Chocolate, A Delicious Way To Celebrate Valentine
- New programmes to help cocoa farming communities in 2007
- Cocoa haulage turn-around time reduced at T di Harbour
- DARK SEDUCTION The darker the chocolate, the better it is for you
- Chocolate... the food of love
- Ghana marks first National Chocolate Day
- US offers sweet deal to help Indonesia produce more cocoa
- Improving Cocoa production: Wienco shows the way with 'Abrabopa' Package
- Cocoa butter holds the key to exceptional white chocolate
- Ghana Runs Short Of Chocolate
- Lack of Credible Data Could Hurt Nigerian Cocoa
- Is 50 percent cocoa processing a reasonable goal for Ghana?
- New cocoa processing factory inaugurated
- Cameroon: More Cocoa Nurseries for Farmers
- Barry Callebaut and Nestlé Announce Major Cooperation in Europe
- Cameroon Cocoa Aims Upmarket with Niche Chocolate
- Ghana: Cocoa Farmers Get a Sweeter Deal With U.S. Chocolate Launch
- Masterfoods vows to cut kids marketing
- Sainsbury's launches charitable chocolate



Have you had your cocoa today?

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Thursday 15th February 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	935	953	18	957	931	4,321
May 2007	947	969	20	974	945	4,007
Jul 2007	964	984	21	988	964	1,802
Sep 2007	983	999	23	1003	983	2,170
Dec 2007	975	991	18	997S	975	6,683
Mar 2008	981	999	19	1003	981	1,283
May 2008	1003	1006	18	1010	1003S	52
Jul 2008	1009	1014	17	1013S	1009	2
Sep 2008	1018	1019	15	1021S	1015S	5015
Dec 2008		1027	15			0
Totals		996				25,335

Friday 16th February 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	958	962	9	964	954	2,519
May 2007	972	978	9	981	970	7,232
Jul 2007	986	991	7	993	982	1,455
Sep 2007	1003	1006	7	1010	998S	4,190
Dec 2007	1000	1000	9	1006S	996S	500
Mar 2008	1005	1005	6	1010	1001	108
May 2008	1008	1014	8	1015	1008	134
Jul 2008	1021	1022	8	1021	1019	54
Sep 2008	1031	1026	7	1035	1030	13
Dec 2008						

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

Monday 12th February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1711 1714	1721	4	1725	1700	7940
May 2007	1744 1747	1754	3	1758	1734	11819
Jul 2007	0 1770 ^A	1776	1	1780	1760	1475
Sep 2007	0 0	1798	2	1788	1778	1231
Dec 2007	0 0	1815	-1	1809	1800	865
Mar 2008	0 0	1834	0	1833	1820	235
May 2008	0 0	1854	2	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1868	0	1864	1851	18
Sep 2008	0 0	1891	1	1887	1868	7
Dec 2008	0 0	1908	-1	1898	1898	2
Totals		1822				23592

Tuesday 13th February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1724 1727	1728	7	1738	1706	10724
May 2007	1758 1760	1749	-5	1760	1735	15952
Jul 2007	1778 0	1770	-6	1778	1758	966
Sep 2007	0 0	1791	-7	1795	1785	632
Dec 2007	0 0	1810	-5	1816	1802	1680
Mar 2008	0 0	1828	-6	1834	1826	103
May 2008	0 0	1849	-5	0	0	50
Jul 2008	0 0	1863	-5	0	0	5
Sep 2008	0 0	1883	-8	0	0	0
Dec 2008	0 0	1902	-6	1905	1892	17
Totals		1817				30129

Wednesday 14th February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1711 0	1714	-14	1715	1685	843
May 2007	1737 1743	1739	-10	1743	1710	8659
Jul 2007	1757 0	1761	-9	1765	1732	1381
Sep 2007	1775 ^B 1785 ^A	1782	-9	1776	1765	491

Thursday 15th February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1722 0	1765	51	1765	1722	360
May 2007	1750 1757	1787	48	1793	1748	11945
Jul 2007	1772 ^B 1780 ^A	1809	48	1814	1772	938
Sep 2007	1795 0	1830	48	1825	1792	1021
Dec 2007	0 0	1849	47	1850	1814	171
Mar 2008	0 0	1867	47	1868	1832	217
May 2008	0 0	1886	46	1885	1880	43
Jul 2008	0 0	1903	49	0	0	0
Sep 2008	0 0	1925	50	0	0	0
Dec 2008	0 0	1944	52	1962	1962	0
Totals		1857				14695

Friday 16th February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1780 1788	1770	5	1788	1757	123
May 2007	1796 1801	1787	0	1801	1776	8707
Jul 2007	1813 1814	1809	0	1816	1800	900
Sep 2007	0 1845 ^A	1830	0	1832	1825	913
Dec 2007	0 1860 ^A	1850	1	1854	1844	6612
Mar 2008	0 0	1865	-2	1870	1860	420
May 2008	0 0	1883	-3	1886	1880	67
Jul 2008	0 0	1898	-5	1900	1900	97
Sep 2008	0 0	1919	-6	1923	1918	6
Dec 2008	0 0	1926	-18	1936	1917	6008
Totals		1854				23853

Average for the week	1831				25988
Total for the week					103,951

Spot Prices (US \$ per tonne)

	12 th February	13 th February	14 th February	15 th February	16 th February
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	2106	2113	2099	2150	2155
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	1994	2001	1987	2038	2043
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	1981	1988	1974	2025	2030
Superior Arriba	2514	2521	2507	2558	2563
Sanchez f.a.q.	1978	1985	1971	2022	2027
Malaysian 110	1723	1730	1716	1767	1772
Sulawesi f.a.q.	1761	1768	1754	1805	1810
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	3362	3375	3348	3448	3457
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	4595	4614	4576	4713	4726
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	895	899	891	918	920

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association

News

Minister urges Nigerians to consume cocoa for medicinal benefits

Monday, Feb 12, 2007

The Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, Malam Adamu Bello, has advised Nigerians to consume cocoa products because of their medicinal and nutritional values. He gave the advice on Sunday in Osogbo at the third National Cocoa Day celebrations. Bello said it had been discovered that cocoa powder contained some medicinal values, which, if exploited by Nigerians, could promote their health status. The consumption of good quality cocoa products, he added, could prevent and control hypertension and diabetes.

The minister said the two major diseases accounted for more than 50 per cent of deaths worldwide. He said a study by scientists in the U.S. had revealed that a cup of hot cocoa taken without milk and sugar was rich in antioxidants. He said the antioxidants could combat “free radicals” that had been linked to diseases, such as cancer, heart diseases and stroke. Bello urged cocoa processors to make cocoa powder available in the nation’s supermarkets and shops at affordable prices. “He appealed to Osun government to complete the cocoa processing factory at Ede to achieve the goals of the National Cocoa Development Committee (NCDC). Government Olagunsoye Oyinlola had earlier said the state government had taken measures to restore the glory of the state in cocoa production.

Barry Callebaut Introduces Second Cocoa Bean Processing Line

12/02/07 –

Barry Callebaut has inaugurated the second cocoa bean processing line for the factory in the Free Zone Enclave in Tema. The Tema factory was inaugurated on the first of November 2001 by His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, and now after five years, a second bean processing line was added, doubling the annual bean processing capacity from 30 000 tonnes to 60 000 tonnes.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Finance and Economic planning, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and PSI, the Ghana Cocoa Board, the Ghana Free Zones Board, the Swiss Ambassador and other stakeholders. In his address, Patrick De Maeseneire, CEO of Barry Callebaut, confirmed the importance of Ghana as a key supplier of cocoa to Barry Callebaut. He also said: “The second bean processing line as well as the investment in Barry Village, a village we have built for our employees a year ago are evidence of our long-term commitment to this country of origin, which is the no. 2 cocoa producer in the world. Through our activities and investments in origin countries such as Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon or Brazil we strive to improve the quality of our cocoa beans and at the same time we are making a contribution to the economic development of this country. Gotzon de Aguirre, Managing Director of Barry Callebaut Ghana, expressed the hope that the government would soon manage to resolve the very difficult energy situation in the country. Benoit Villers, President, Global Sourcing and Cocoa explained that one of the main reasons behind the decision to invest in Ghana is the commitment from the government to increase cocoa production to above 1 million tonnes.

Apart from the doubling of the bean processing capacity, the capacity expansion also included the expansion of the finished products warehouse, the expansion of the administrative building and the addition of an extra social block for the subcontractors so that more space is available in the old social block for the increased staff numbers. The total investment is worth more than 10 million USD.

NCA Announces Project to Focus on Health Issues in West African Cocoa Communities

News from: World Cocoa Foundation

Association addresses malaria and HIV/AIDS awareness

February 13, 2007

(CSRwire) VIENNA, VA— The National Confectioners Association announced this week its plans to address the well-being of cocoa farming communities in West Africa by targeting two critical health issues in Ghana and the Ivory Coast: malaria and HIV/AIDS. The program, the first of its kind specifically directed at cocoa farmers, was developed by Family Health International and will educate cocoa farming communities on malaria and HIV prevention, promote safe practices and provide supplies to boost prevention.

For cocoa farming families in West Africa, malaria and HIV/AIDS pose serious threats. Almost 5 percent of the population of the Ivory Coast is HIV positive, and the infection rate in the agriculture community is even higher. At the same time, malaria is the leading cause of death among Ivorian infants and children. Malaria also is

connoisseurs debate the definition, chocolate is any product based 99% on either cocoa or cocoa butter. Both derivatives of the cacao bean, cocoa is the pure cacao solid, while cocoa butter is the pure fat component of the bean. The manipulation of additional ingredients generates the many varieties of chocolate with which we are familiar. Unsweetened chocolate contains only pure cocoa solids, while white chocolate is made of cocoa butter without the solids. Dark chocolate contains no milk, while milk chocolate's common name accurately describes its composition.

The health benefits of chocolate have largely been attributed to flavinoids, substances found naturally in the cacao bean. Flavinoids are metabolites most well known for their activities as antioxidants. The types of flavinoids found in the cacao bean have also been shown to reduce lipids in arterial walls as well as counteract mild hypertension. Red wine, green tea, and citrus fruits also contain flavinoids, but no food can boast the same high content as chocolate.

Sound too good to be true? It might be. Here's the catch: studies show that the simple addition of a milk product to chocolate counteracts the activities of the flavinoids. This would mean that only pure, dark chocolate -- by definition a food that has a 70% or greater cocoa content -- would be beneficial to our health. Unless you are part of the 37% of Americans who claim to enjoy the dark stuff, therefore, your box of chocolate might more detrimental to your heart than helpful. Chocolate's high calorie and fat content means that consuming more than a few small pieces may also counteract its positive attributes.-umle

- ♦ Milk chocolate: Consists of cocoa butter, milk, sweeteners and flavours that are added to the cocoa liquor. Milk chocolate lends itself to good use for garnishes and candy coatings.
- ♦ White chocolate: It is milk chocolate without the cocoa liquor. It contains cocoa butter, sugar, milk powder and flavours such as vanilla.

Generally, chocolate is eaten in the form of bars, drops, hollow objects and as fillings in other products. In Ghana, like many other countries, milk chocolate is the most popular brand of bar chocolate on the market.

However, due to recent scientific finding on flavanoids, an antioxidant which is in abundance in cocoa the interest of consumers in dark chocolate is on the rise. This is because the addition of milk, especially reduces the levels of antioxidants in chocolates significantly. Nutritionally, a typical 50gm milk chocolate (chocolate without inclusions like nuts) with about 35 per cent of cocoa solids has about 274 calories of energy.

It will deliver more than 12 per cent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin A, eight per cent of calcium, and eight per cent of iron which are very important for the correct functioning of the body. More than 30 per cent of the fat is saturated stearic and oleic acids which research has already shown to have very little effect on blood cholesterol level while also lowering low density lipoproteins (LDL) which transport cholesterol. This means that chocolate does not pose any risk to health, since it also has low cholesterol content. It also has useful quantities of vitamins A, D and E.

Of significant quantity in chocolate is sugar which is over 35 per cent. This is very significant and useful for energy. There are many negative perceptions about chocolate that are not supported by any scientific fact. These are chocolate consumption increases acne, dental cavities and increases stored fat in the body. On the contrary, numerous dental studies have revealed that eating chocolate does not cause dental cavities, neither does it cause acne or makes it worse.

Rather, eating chocolate has been found to induce feelings of happiness as it contains the substance phenylalanine, which is virtually identical to the hormone-triggering substance manufactured by the brain when an individual is in love.

On storage, chocolate should be kept well to avoid problems like insect infestation, fat bloom, sugar bloom and contamination from foreign odours. Fat bloom is the formation of a thin white layer of fat crystals on the surface of chocolate while sugar bloom is a rough irregular white patch on the surface of the chocolate. They are normally caused by temperature shocks from fluctuating temperatures. These do not indicate unwholesomeness however, by this the chocolate loses its gloss, making the product unappetising.

To avoid these phenomenon please store chocolate under stable, cool and dry conditions. The environment should be neutral and free from unacceptable odours, perfumes, soaps, paints and stuffy odours. Worthy of note is the golden rule for the storage of chocolate products; the shorter the storage period the better the quality. The best way to enjoy your chocolate is to avoid chewing and rather allow it to melt slowly while you relax to enjoy the slow release of all the acceptable chocolate flavour.

Again it is best enjoyed when your mouth is free from strong odours like soup, stew and spices. Also it is great after a hot beverage like tea or coffee and not after taking cold water. It is important to state that while many brands of chocolate will be visible on the market not all that is labelled chocolate is real chocolate. Some contain cocoa butter substitutes and alternatives which are not pure cocoa butter. For us Ghanaians, I advocate that though all chocolate is good, chocolate without sub

improving cocoa farm family incomes, and expanding children's access to education. Industry support for community health initiatives in cocoa farming areas also will grow in 2007.

"Millions of rural families around the world depend upon cocoa farming for their livelihood," said Bill Guyton, President, World Cocoa Foundation (WCF). "However, they face many challenges. Over the past five years, we have developed proven approaches to helping cocoa farming families and are now taking these efforts to the next level."

Industry support for cocoa farmers, their families and communities focuses on four key areas:

- ♦ Improving the economic return from cocoa for smallholder farmers growing this important crop;
- ♦ Strengthening farming communities by addressing such needs as access to quality education;
- ♦ Ensuring that cocoa is grown responsibly, adhering to internationally accepted labor standards; and,
- ♦ Supporting efforts to protect and enhance the environment in which cocoa farmers grow their crops.

Established in 2000, the WCF plays a leading role in strengthening the partnership between industry and cocoa farmers. With nearly 60 member companies, the WCF has helped more than 200,000 cocoa farmers through a range of economic, social and environmental programs in Africa, Asia, Central America and South America. "Healthy Communities" Underway in West Africa.

The rollout of the industry-supported "Healthy Communities" program is among the most significant efforts to help cocoa farmers and their families in West Africa. A multi-year partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "Healthy Communities" will benefit up to 150,000 farm families over the next five years by supporting economic, social and environmentally sustainable development at the cocoa farm level.

Working through the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) farmer education network, the program is rolling out in Ghana, the Ivory Coast and other West African countries. Classes are being organized to provide farmers with hands-on instruction in better farming techniques, while tackling such important issues as the need for safe, responsible labor practices.

"Healthy Communities" expands upon the earlier "Farmer Field Schools" program which has helped farming families earn from 24 to 55 percent more for their cocoa crop, while reducing the number of children engaged in hazardous, unacceptable work.

International Cocoa Initiative Tackles Labor Issues, Expands Reach

The International Cocoa Initiative, a leader in addressing labor issues on cocoa farms, is expanding its community-based work in West Africa. Established in 2002, The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is the leading vehicle to promote responsible labor practices on cocoa farms, and is supported by individual chocolate and cocoa industry members. ICI efforts are led by a board composed equally of industry and civil society representatives.

In 2007, the ICI will build upon its work at the village level in Ghana and the Ivory Coast. The ICI engages local leaders in the development and implementation of action plans to address the worst forms of child labor and forced adult labor. The approach drives change in labor practices, improves educational opportunities for children, and encourages a better informed, more actively engaged community.

In Ghana, the ICI has programs underway in 24 communities. A similar effort is underway in the Ivory Coast, reaching a population of more than 70,000 in 21 communities.

The ICI also supports MESAD, an Ivory Coast non-governmental organization (NGO) that provides a safe haven for children who have been trafficked to cocoa production areas. In Ghana, the ICI provides support for a government-run shelter that helps children in similar situations.

"Certification" Moves Forward: Ghana Report

The Government of Ghana will release its first cocoa farming "Certification" report in 2007. This report is the result of an intensive, multi-year effort on the part of industry, West African governments and experts to develop a certification program for cocoa farming labor practices.

Certification for cocoa farming will answer the following key questions:

- ♦ What child and adult labor issues exist on cocoa farms in West Africa?
- ♦ Are steps being taken to address these issues?
- ♦ Are the lives of children and families on cocoa farms improving?

When fully implemented, the process will certify that efforts are in place within a country's cocoa sector to measure and report on labor practices and help those who may be in a child or forced adult labor situation.

The first report will be based on visits by trained surveyors to more than 500 farms across Ghana's cocoa growing districts in late 2006. This statistically representative sample accounts for more than 10 percent of the country's total cocoa production. The release of this report is a key step towards covering 50 percent of the cocoa sector in Ghana and the Ivory Coast by July 2008, an important Protocol goal.

New Program to Combat Malaria, HIV

To improve the well-being of cocoa farming communities, the industry is supporting a program that targets two critical health issues: malaria and HIV/AIDS. For cocoa farming families, malaria and HIV/AIDS pose a serious threat. In the Ivory Coast, for example, malaria is the leading cause of death among children. The four cocoa producing regions of Ghana suffer from the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the country.

The program, developed by Family Health International and funded by the National Confectioners Association, will educate cocoa farming communities on malaria and HIV prevention; promote safe practices, and provide supplies to boost prevention. The program will be active in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

Cocoa haulage turn-around time reduced at T`di Harbour

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

-GNA- A number of cocoa haulage truck owners within the Shama Ahanta East Metropolis, have commended the management of the Ghana COCOBOD for decongesting the Takoradi Harbour and reducing haulage turn-around time. The truck owners said the practice where vehicles spent a month or two waiting at the Fijai by-pass, PWD Park, along the Main Harbour Road and other open spaces in the metropolis to off-load their cocoa beans at the Harbour, had greatly minimised since the decongestion exercise was started.

Speaking to the media on behalf of the truck owners in Takoradi on Monday, Mr. Isaac Nketsia, a transport owner, commended the Chief Executive Officer of COCOBOD Mr. Isaac Osei and his management team for initiating the new measures to decongest not only the Harbour but also the entire metropolis, safeguarding their investments and minimising delays. He said presently, the management of COCOBOD had assigned specific days for which cocoa from all licensed buying companies (LBCs) could be dispatched to the Harbour and arrangements were in place to receive the vehicles into the Harbour on a "first come first served" basis.

Mr. Nketsia said many transport owners who out of frustration and losses over the long delays had abandoned the haulage of cocoa and ventured into other businesses were returning to the fold following the adoption of the new measures. He suggested that serious efforts should be made to construct more warehousing facilities outside the Harbour to facilitate storage to prevent congestion. With the new measures in place, he said, cocoa haulage operators in Assin Foso and Assin Adubiase in the Central Region now preferred to use the Takoradi Harbour. Mr. Solomon Brenim, also a cocoa haulage truck owner appealed to all LBCs to adhere strictly to the laid down procedure to maintain the rapid and improved transportation and off-loading of cocoa.

DARK SEDUCTION The darker the chocolate, the better it is for you

By JILL WENDHOLT SILVA

The Kansas City Star

Wed, Feb. 14, 2007

Roses are red. Violets are blue. The darker the chocolate, the better for you — and your heart. For chocolate lovers, the news that a food so rich and indulgent could actually be healthy seems too good to be true. "Some people are very skeptical, as they should be. They have questions," says Nicole Kreber, a registered dietitian at the Barry Road and Englewood Hy-Vee stores.

Scientists have discovered dark chocolate contains more antioxidants than red wine. Numerous studies have shown that flavonoids — a class of plant nutrients — may promote cardiovascular health by lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, helping the blood to clot and promoting flexibility of the arteries. But to reap the heart health benefits, the chocolate must contain at least 70 percent cocoa. The more cocoa the more flavonoids — and, as a

rule, the more bitter the taste. “If somebody is going to have chocolate pudding, it’s not going to work,” says Melissa Ohlson, nutrition project coordinator for preventive cardiology and rehabilitation for the Cleveland Clinic, which has been rated the nation’s leading heart hospital, according to U.S. News & World Report. Andre’s Confiserie Suisse, an artisanal chocolatier in Kansas City, has long produced dark chocolate bars with high cocoa content. But sales of dark chocolate have grown dramatically in the last two or three years.

“Some of my customers want to know which bar is best for their heart,” says owner Marcel Bollier.

Although Bollier offers a bar that contains a whopping 90 percent cocoa, he usually steers customers to chocolate in the 70 percent to 73 percent range because “it has a strong flavor but is still pleasurable.” As more Americans flirt with dark chocolate, an increasing number of mass-market chocolate companies are revving up the cocoa content in their lines. Last month Hershey’s launched Cacao Reserve, a line of premium chocolate bars, truffles and drinking chocolates. The ingredient list for the São Tomé Premium Dark Chocolate with 70 percent cocoa is simple: cacao beans, sugar, natural vanilla flavor, soy lecithin (an emulsifier) and milk. By contrast, the Cacao Reserve drinking cocoas take the health claims a step further by comparing the antioxidant levels in a 6-ounce serving of hot chocolate to the

Despite what the label says, if you want to enjoy chocolate every day you should eat no more than a 1 ounce square per day (about 150 calories and 11 grams of fat).

- Choose added flavors carefully: Lots of dark-chocolate-covered products are coming on the market. If you choose to add a flavor to your chocolate, look for bars with added antioxidants or nutrition, like blueberries, cranberries or nuts, says Nicole Kreber, a registered dietitian for Hy-Vee stores.
- Skip the chocolate diet: Sure, cabbage is good for you, but the Cabbage Diet is a bit extreme. "Just choose a variety of foods," says Melissa Ohlson, a registered dietitian and nutrition project coordinator for preventive cardiology and rehabilitation for the Cleveland Clinic. "You don't want to bank your health on any one food."

CHOCOLATE TRENDWATCH

Get ready for:

- Quaker's Life Chocolate Oat Crunch: Chocolate for breakfast? A European trend that's come to America, the press release indicates. And, yes, we checked on the cocoa content: 30 percent.
- Altoids Dark Chocolate Dipped Mints: "A curious and original chocolate experience."
- Chocolove's Chilies & Cherries in Dark Chocolate: It's 51 percent cocoa, with anchos and chipotle to add heat to the cherries' sweetness. It's simply divine.

A CHOCOLATE TASTING

- Choose six to 12 bars with similar cocoa content.
- Allow the bars to come to room temperature; the flavors of chocolate are easier to discern when the bar is warm rather than cold.
- Taste each bar and observe the aroma, texture and taste.
- Between tastes, nibble on salty crackers. Serve cool, never cold, water, which can make the chocolate taste like wax.

Chocolate... the food of love

Wednesday | February 14, 2007

Rosalee Brown

Most women and a large number of men love chocolate. This irresistible and tantalising food, made from the cocoa bean, has a reputation that dates back centuries.

The Olmec Indians are believed to be the first to grow chocolate as far back as 400 BC. The Mayans were said to migrate to South America and had the first cocoa plantation in the Yucatans. During the 14th century, cocoa drink became popular among the Aztec upper classes and history says that Montezuma, the Aztec King, drank up to 50 cups of chocolate a day to sustain his harem of 600 women.

Joseph Fry and Son, who joined forces with the Cadbury brothers in 1849, created the first modern chocolate bar in 1847. Richard Cadbury created the first heart-shaped box for chocolate candy in 1861. In 1879, Rodolphe Lindy of Switzerland produced a more smooth and creamy chocolate that melts on the tongue. Filled chocolate was introduced in 1913 by Swiss Confiseur Jules Sechaud of Montreux and in 1926 Belgian chocolatier, Joseph Draps, started Godiva to compete with Hershey and Nestlé.

It's irresistible

Now chocoholics, this must have got your juices flowing. What is it that makes chocolate so irresistible? Is it its sweet taste, the fact that it melts in your mouth, or that it satisfies some deeper desire or craving? Women are known to have an acute overwhelming craving for chocolate during ovulation and menstruation. Does this have a relationship to its aphrodisiac effect?

Chocolate contains phenylethylamine, a naturally occurring neuroamine that comes from the amino acid phenylalanine. This chemical is released naturally in the body when you are in love. Chocolate also contains other substances such as dopamine, which gives a pleasurable feeling similar to that you get after a good workout and serotonin which acts as an antidepressant and theobromine which has a stimulating effect.

Chocolate is also rich in antioxidants. It is a rich source of the antioxidant, catechin, that has cancer-fighting benefits. Other flavonoids in chocolate have a positive effect on blood flow and reduce the risk of artery clogging. Chocolate is also a source of vitamins and minerals.

Cocoa powder ranks highest of all the chocolate products, followed by dark chocolate and then milk chocolate in terms of antioxidant benefits. Milk chocolate and other types of chocolates have sugar added to increase

sweetness and flavour. Chocolate is also high in fat (the cocoa butter comes from the cocoa pod) but like every thing else in your diet, you should use it in moderation. Moderation is very important for all high-calorie foods.

- ♦ Tips on savouring the chocolate flavour
- ♦ Melt or make a fondue and dip fruits such as banana, pieces of apple or strawberry. Share and enjoy.
- ♦ Dip your finger right in and share in small amounts.
- ♦ Have fresh fruits served with whipped cream and drizzled with rich, melted chocolate.

If you receive one of those sinfully rich chocolate packages high in cocoa, creamy and not very sweet, let the decadent pieces last, enjoy only one morsel each time. No need to abstain, just enjoy it in small amounts for weeks. Remember, if you had a little too much chocolate, you can burn the extra calories in a good workout. Enjoy Valentine's Day and every day!

Ghana marks first National Chocolate Day

Source: GNA

14-Feb-2007

The Minister of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, Mr Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey on Wednesday presented chocolates and other cocoa products to the Osu Children's Home as part of the celebration of the first ever National Chocolate Day. The occasion, which also coincided with the Valentine Day celebrations, brought together stakeholders in the cocoa industry, including Mr Isaac Osei, Chief Executive Officer of Ghana COCOBOD, Mr Henry Duranton, Managing Director of Nestle Ghana Limited, officials from the Cocoa Processing Company (CPC) and members of the Ghana Chefs Association.

Mr Obetsebi-Lamptey, who personally joined in sharing small bars of assorted golden tree chocolates to all the people gathered said the National Chocolate Day celebration was being celebrated on Valentine Day to tell the world that love was not just lust or carnality but sharing with the less privileged in society. "We need to re-orient the day in such a way that it is dedicated to real love which is sharing. The best way one can get love in this world is to show love," he said. He expressed gratitude to everybody who had in one way or the other contributed to make the day a success, with special commendation to the media for promoting the day in various ways. The Minister also officially opened a centre dubbed: "Chocolate Avenue" where all cocoa products as well as a cocoa museum were on display for chocolate and cocoa lovers.

Mr Isaac Osei, who pledged his support for the National Chocolate Day celebration said it was important to celebrate cocoa and chocolate and noted that cocoa was an important tourist product but until now there was no effort to promote it. Mr Duranton spoke about the health benefits of cocoa and said that sale of cocoa products had gone up because of the celebration of the National Chocolate Day. Mr Ekow Rhule of CPC said the day was an opportunity for his company to make the best chocolate in the world and repeated that Ghana's cocoa was the best in the world.

Mr Ebenezer Amartefio, Deputy Director of the Social Welfare Department, lauded the initiative of the Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations and said the day used to be a day where young people had their first sexual experience. He commended the Minister for choosing the Osu Children's Home saying, "The home is where love is needed most."

Mr John Ankrah, Acting Director of the Social Welfare Department, who received the products, said children were influenced by what they heard and saw and expressed the hope that the National Chocolate Day celebration would end irresponsible ways of showing love among the youth. "Today's presentation, coming at a time when our nation is 50 years has given all of us an insight that love can be shown on this day to those who are less advantaged."

US offers sweet deal to help Indonesia produce more cocoa

February 15, 2007

Jakarta (ANTARA News) - The United States on Wednesday announced a training programme to help Indonesian farmers battle cocoa bean-eating pests and boost exports to one of America's largest chocolate manufacturers. Indonesia is the world's third largest cocoa producer, after Ivory Coast and Ghana.

The US Agency for International Development has facilitated an agreement between Blommer Chocolate Co. and supplier PT Olam Indonesia to train farmers on Sulawesi island to improve productivity and tackle the cocoa

pod borer, the US embassy was quoted by AFP as saying in a statement. The moth-like pest lays its larvae in cocoa pods, reducing yields by up to 60 percent and leaving the farmer with a poor quality crop.

Sulawesi's farmers lost 127 million dollars last year due to the ravages of the pest, the embassy said. The training programme would also help them to improve productivity and quality by 30 percent, enabling them to increase production by 35,000 tonnes a year, it said. Blommer has agreed to buy premium quality beans at above market value. The US imported 136,000 tonnes of cocoa from Indonesia in 2005, with American chocolate manufacturers buying about 40 percent of Sulawesi's cocoa butter exports, the embassy said. (*)

Improving Cocoa production:Wienco shows the way with 'Abrabopa' Package

, 14/02/2007

Thousands of cocoa farmers across the country have adopted, and many more will adopt, an initiative by Wienco Ghana Limited, which promises to help increase their yields by up to about 500 percent. Currently, most cocoa farmers (especially those who have not adopted the Wienco initiative) harvest just about three bags of the crop per acre. Those who are working with the Wienco support package have seen their yield per acre increase by up to 10 bags in the first year and 15 bags and over after 2-3 years of adoption.

Under the scheme, known as the cocoa 'Abrabopa' Package, Wienco - Ghana's leading supplier of fertiliser and other agricultural inputs – provides farmers with essential supplies and advisory services throughout the cocoa season.

The package is essentially a means to a good life for farmers who have formed farmers groups of between 5 and 15 members each. So far, in all the cocoa growing regions of the country, there are 425 such groups now existing, with an average of nine members per group. The group guarantees input credit for its members and after the necessary legal documents are signed, Wienco starts working with group members – educating them on essential modern agricultural practices and technologies and providing them with inputs on credit.

"Farmers have been used to their own ways of doing things on their farms and these have not been bringing returns that are anything to write home about," says Raphael Odei-Tettey, the technical manager in charge of the 'Abrabopa' scheme. "There are a whole lot of problems plaguing the industry, which we have to take a look at. We talk about all these problems and we bring the farmers to the knowledge of the products we have." These are the products that make up the 'Abrabopa' [or 'good life'] package.

First, there is the education on appropriate measures for maintaining the farm, to ensure that optimum growing conditions are created for the cocoa trees to bear bountiful fruit. The farmers in the group usually gather on the farm of one of their members and listen to the practical advice of Wienco's extension staff. They are shown when and how to undertake various cultural maintenance practices chupon removal, shade manipulation mistletoe removal, weeding etc....

After the practical demonstration of cultural maintenance, the farmers are given the inputs – 'Asaase Wura' fertiliser, Confidor 200SL which is an insecticide, Ridomil Plus and Nordox Super 75 which are fungicides and a Matabi knapsack sprayer. Wienco's extension staff work with the farmers and guide them on how and when to apply each of these inputs. "When we finish with the classroom work, which is the education and the briefing, we have to go into the farms at the time when each input has to be used to demonstrate to them how each input can be used", Odei-Tettey says. "So we are there to ensure that the inputs are properly used so that we can get the desired results."

The farmers first have to apply 'Asaase Wura' fertiliser which boosts soil fertility and helps improve the quality and taste of the cocoa beans. As the trees begin to bear fruits, fungicides – Ridomil Plus and Nordox Super 75 – should be applied to protect the pods from diseases such as blackpod. A few months before harvest, Confidor 200 SL the insecticide must be applied at regular intervals to control pests such as capsids. After all this, one important thing Wienco tries to train farmers to do, is to change their attitude to credit, encouraging them to repay their inputs loans according to the agreed date, to ensure sustainability of the Abrabopa Package on their farms.

Farmers who have used the 'Abrabopa' Package have seen a drastic improvement in their yields. Kojo Nkrumah, a farmer in the Assin District of the Central Region, who has been diligently following the recommended 'Abrabopa' guidelines (which are approved by the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana) says the scheme has made him a happier and wealthier farmer. "Before I joined the scheme, my crop yields were very low and even though

many people knew me as a successful farmer, I had nothing in my account,” he says. “But with all the support and guidelines from the Wienco staff, I can say that my life has been turned around. I harvest about nine sacks per acre compared to the two-and-a-half I was getting before I joined the ‘abrabopa’ scheme.”

It is testimonies like these that make the managers at Wienco realise that apart from selling their inputs they are actively contributing to increasing Ghana’s cocoa production, thereby boosting the nation’s foreign exchange earnings and improving the livelihoods of hundreds of farmers. And with the farmers so satisfied with the scheme, they are paying the loans back. “With the credit we’ve given them we expect a minimum of 99 percent payback,” says William Kotey, Wienco’s Marketing Manager. He’s not the only optimistic one. Marc Kok, Wienco’s General Manager in charge of Agric Services, is hopeful that the ‘abrabopa’ scheme can only move in one direction – up! “Seven years ago, it was the farmers who said ‘we need your help’ and that’s when the package started”, he says. “Through their assistance, we have been able to evolve a more comprehensive package. Every year, we are changing things to improve on the efficiency of the package, which is a tool against poverty.”

In 2006, Wienco spent approximately 1.8 million dollars on the ‘abrabopa’ scheme. With the successes achieved so far, the company hopes to invest even more in the next cocoa season in the hope that it could help propel Ghana back to the top of the league of the world’s leading cocoa producers. “We are recruiting more field staff to work with the farmers and our target is to reach 7000 farmers on 30,000 acres, in the year 2007” William Kotey says. In 5 years, we hope to work with up to 50,000 farmers handling 300,000 acres, and that will be a massive impact on Ghana’s Cocoa Industry.

Cocoa butter holds the key to exceptional white chocolate

By ANNIE OVERBOE

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Thinking about white chocolate brings visions of sweet delights dancing before my eyes. This delicious ingredient rarely fails to capture my attention on any dessert table. Yet few bakers understand the science behind white chocolate. Before we

White chocolate provides gently perfumed sweet notes and stabilization. Cream tones down the sugar and lightens the texture. The resulting topping offers an unusual take on whipped cream. Now that you understand the science and secrets of white chocolate, don't let this unique ingredient be a stranger on your dessert table.

- Annie Overboe, a Culinary Institute of America graduate, lives in Villa Park. To submit a topic to be addressed in this column, write to Baking Secrets, Daily Herald Food section, P.O. Box 280, Arlington Heights, IL 60006. Or send an e-mail to food@dailyherald.com. Questions will not be responded to personally.

A GUIDE TO CHOCOLATE

Wed, Feb. 14, 2007

JUPITERIMAGES

Chocolate is both. For some people, it inspires as much devotion as a relationship. And as an ingredient, it can be as frustrating as a bad date. Warm it, and it melts into a smooth pool. Add the tiniest bit of moisture, and it becomes a hard, grainy mass. Raise and lower the temperature just right, and it will harden to a lovely sheen at room temperature. Miss by just a few degrees, and you'll get a gooey mess. But you can conquer chocolate. With the right information and tools, you can make it do your bidding.

TYPES

- Chocolate comes from cacao beans. The beans are fermented, roasted and aged, and the nibs inside are ground in a heavy press. The press's heat releases the fat, called cocoa butter. The remaining paste, called chocolate liquor, has the flavor.
- Unsweetened. Also called chocolate liquor or baking chocolate (not Baker's Chocolate, which is a brand of sweetened chocolate). Good unsweetened chocolate contains only cocoa butter and solids from cacao beans. Cheaper versions may contain lecithin as an emulsifier.
- Dark chocolate. Usually called sweet, semisweet or bittersweet. The difference among them is the amount of sugar and chocolate liquor. They are usually interchangeable, and there is no standard for the difference in sweetness. Dark chocolate has at least 35 percent chocolate liquor. Bittersweet is darker and higher in chocolate liquor than sweet and semisweet. Extra-dark chocolate can go as high as 85 percent.
- Milk chocolate. A minimum of 10 percent chocolate liquor, plus milk solids, sugar and vanilla. It's milder and lighter in color, and it doesn't keep as long as dark chocolate. It's usually not used in baking except for making candy and flavoring cake frosting.
- Cocoa. Chocolate liquor, the paste left after the cocoa butter is removed from ground cocoa beans, is dried, ground and fluffed. When a base is added to neutralize the acidity, cocoa is called Dutched or Dutch-process. If the recipe doesn't specify, Dutch-process or natural can be used, but recipes with baking soda won't work as well with Dutch cocoa. Because it has no cocoa butter, it is lower in fat than solid chocolate.
- White chocolate. Not true chocolate because it contains no chocolate liquor. It does contain cocoa butter, sugar and milk solids. Check the label and make sure it has cocoa butter, which gives a smooth texture; cheaper brands use lecithin.

TERMS

- Bloom. A white or grayish film, streaks or spots caused when cocoa butter separates from the other ingredients and crystallizes on the surface. It's harmless and disappears when chocolate is melted.
- Conching. Rolling or stirring chocolate to smooth out particles during manufacture. The longer chocolate is conched, the smoother it is.
- Chocolate liquor. The thick, nonalcoholic liquid made from grinding the nibs inside roasted cacao beans. It's sometimes called chocolate paste.
- Cocoa butter. The fat extracted when cacao beans are processed into chocolate.
- Confectionery coating. Made with a vegetable fat, sugar, milk solids and flavorings. It sets up at room temperature and is sometimes called candy coating or compound coating. It's used as a chocolate substitute, but it isn't chocolate.
- Couverture. Chocolate with at least 32 percent cocoa butter. It is used to create the thin, smooth coating on dipped candies. Because of the high cocoa butter content, it must be tempered.
- Seizing. When a small amount of moisture gets into melting chocolate, it latches onto sugar crystals and turns the chocolate into a grainy or clumpy mass. Some sources say you can fix it by adding a small amount of shortening; others say the chocolate is ruined and must be discarded.

SHAPES

- Chunks. Large quantities of chocolate for baking or candy making are usually sold in thick blocks. Use a wide-bladed chef's knife to chop or cut off pieces. Never use a food processor to chop chocolate.
- Bars. Many chocolates are sold in thinner bars that can be eaten as is. It can be used for cooking, but doing so will be more expensive than buying in bulk.
- Chips. They have less cocoa butter than bars and blocks, so they hold their shape in baking. Don't substitute chips for bar chocolate in recipes; they don't melt as smoothly.
- Wafers. Discs that are sold in baking supply stores and specialty catalogs. They melt faster and are easier to work with than large blocks that have to be chopped or small bars that have to be unwrapped.

TECHNIQUES

- Storing. Keep it well-wrapped at room temperature, preferably in a dark place away from anything that produces heat, such as the oven. The ideal temperature is 65 to 75 degrees. Be careful what you store it around. Even wrapped chocolate can pick up strong scents.
- Melting. Usually, chocolate is melted in a double boiler over hot or barely simmering water. If you use a single pan, keep the heat low. Chocolate can also be melted in the microwave; use a lower setting (50 percent, or medium, for dark chocolate; 30 percent, or low, for milk or white chocolate). Stir every 30 seconds.
- Quick tempering. To shortcut tempering, mix a small amount of fat, such as vegetable shortening, into melted chocolate
- Tempering. To set at room temperature with a fine sheen and good texture, chocolate must be tempered. The easiest way is shortcut tempering:
- Finely chop at least 1 pound of good semisweet or bittersweet chocolate. Place 3/4 of it in a heatproof bowl and set the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water. Make sure the bowl fits tightly in the pan with no room for steam to escape. Stir gently until the chocolate melts. Use a thermometer to make sure it doesn't get hotter than 115 degrees.
- Remove the bowl from the pan, immediately wiping the outside dry with a towel. Add half the remaining chopped chocolate. Stir until it melts. Stir in more unmelted chocolate until chunks no longer melt. Check with a thermometer; the chocolate should be 79 or 80 degrees. Return to the pan of hot water. Stir until the temperature reaches 88 or 89 degrees. Don't let it go above 90 degrees, or you'll have to retemper it. If the chocolate cools too much while you're working, return it to the pan of water and reheat to 88 degrees. If you don't use it all, it can be cooled and stored.

EQUIPMENT

- Chocolate fork. Shaped like a pitchfork, it is used to break up bulk chocolate.
- Dipping forks. Used to dip candies, such as truffles, or fruit into melted chocolate.
- Double boiler. If you don't have a double boiler, place a stainless steel bowl over a saucepan. Make sure the fit is tight. If steam escapes around the edge of the pan, it can cause the chocolate to seize.
- Kitchen scale. Most recipes give the amount in ounces, which is more precise than measuring chopped chocolate in a cup.
- Silicone spatulas. These won't melt at the low temperatures used for chocolate, and they can get all around the edges when stirring or removing chocolate from the pan.
- Thermometers. Tempering chocolate requires precisely controlling the heat. An instant-read or digital thermometer with a remote probe will help. Check the accuracy by placing in a glass of ice water; it should register 32 degrees. A candy thermometer is needed for boiling-sugar mixtures for things like fudge.
- Heating pad. After chocolate has been tempered, turn a heating pad to the lowest setting and place the pan of chocolate on it to keep it from cooling. Check regularly with a thermometer; it shouldn't go above 89 degrees. Cover the pad with a towel to keep it clean.
- Parchment or nonstick foil. For lining pans to hold dipped chocolates while they set. It saves cleanup and keeps them from sticking.

SOURCES: Chocolate Chocolate by Lisa Yockelson (Wiley, 2005); In the Sweet Kitchen by Regan Daley (Artisan, 2001); All About Chocolate by Carole Bloom (Macmillan, 1998); and A Baker's Field Guide to Holiday Candy & Confections by Dede Wilson (Harvard Common, 2005)

Ghana Runs Short Of Chocolate

Source: Times

Thursday, 15 February 2007

Chocolate was in short supply yesterday the first National Chocolate Day celebration instituted by the government and intended to promote local consumption of the product. The day was chosen to coincide with St.

Valentine's Day, February 14, and was to be the major gift item for loved ones. Dealers in the product expressed disappointment at the shortage of the product and wondered why so much publicity had been made about it but no adequate measures put in place to ensure that there was large supply. At the Shivsai Supermarket at Kaneshie, Accra, the manager of the shop, Saj Niduri, said chocolate was in short supply in the shop. He said the Golden Tree chocolate, which is the local chocolate, was in short supply, compelling them stock imported products. He said the local product is "fantastic" and called on government and other relevant stakeholders to ensure adequate supply of the product.

Another seller at Kokomlele, Ms Esther Boasiako complained bitterly about the shortage. She said it has seriously affected her sales as most people wanted to buy parcels containing local chocolate. When the Times contacted the Public Relations Manager of Cocoa Processing Company (CPC), Mr. Ekwow Rhule, he said that the shortage was rather unfortunate because the company had increased production four times this month. He said as at yesterday, people were still trooping to the CPC to collect their order. He acknowledged that the demand for chocolate had increased and people were now consuming so much that the company had to re-strategise for the ensuing years so that there will not be any shortage as reported yesterday.

Mr. Obetsebi Lamptey, Minister of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, commenting on the shortage said he was impressed about the high patronage from the public since the National Chocolate Day was launched on January 9. A group of chocolate producers who were interviewed on the shortage of chocolate on the market, said 50 tonnes of chocolate is produced every month and for the occasion, 150 tonnes was produced. They said the shortage only meant that demand was high. This was confirmed by the Minister of Tourism and Diasporan Relations. The Valentine Day celebration itself, seemed to be quite low-key, as the usual excitement even during day time was virtually absent. Sales of other Valentine souvenirs was also in low patronage at some shops that the Times visited

At the Vans Ventures in Accra Central the situation was the same. The salesman, Kojo Antwi complained that sales of Valentine souvenirs was very low. He said he stocked a large quantity of Valentine wear in anticipation of high purchase but sales had been very disappointing. "It is because the publicity for this year was not that intensive so a lot of people did not take this year's event seriously," he noted.

A student of the Accra Polytechnic, Emmanuel Abotsi, who was spotted dressed all in red, the traditional Valentine colour, said he had regretted dressing that way. "This was how I was dressed in 2002 and 2003 and no one talked, but today my friends are teasing me and I look very odd among them," he said. Another student of the Polytechnic, Gifty Anarfi told the Times that she did not want to get involved in such "unnecessary fantasies" because she said they will not in any way enhance her love life.

Kingsley Hope reports from Kumasi, that there was a shortage of the Golden Tree chocolate at various supermarkets and gift shops in the metropolis. Reports from Kumasi, that there was a shortage of the Golden Tree chocolate at various supermarkets and gift shops in the metropolis. Some owners of shops visited expressed irritation at the shortage stressing that they rather have the foreign chocolates in abundance. They said that it was better if the Cocoa Processing Company had taken advantage of the Val's day to produce in abundance and urged them to do that in view of the Jubilee celebration.

Times gathered that the shortage had persisted for about two months.

We gathered that the shortage had persisted for about two months. Contrary to the expectation that school children would be head over heels in love with the celebration and flock the shops and streets of Adum, the hub of commerce in the metropolis, to purchase Valentine items, the shops, streets were virtually empty. The situation was quite different among the radio stations. Though some radio stations did some talks, it was not as it used to be in the early days.

Ms Rosemary Mensah, a student told the Times, here in an interview that "this year's Valentine is very shocking as students in general are not showing much interest." The Times, visits to some shops filled with Valentine stocks revealed that there had been no serious patronage. Ms Anna Amankwa, a sales girl at Pat's Enterprise in Adum, said "sales are not good at all, and that was also buttressed by Esther Simpe of Lady M's Touch of class.

There was shortage of chocolates in Cape Coast David Yarboi-Tetteh reports.

A visit to some shops in the municipality about 3 pm witnessed a shortage of the commodity as most people particularly students brought the products for their loved ones early in the morning. The University of Cape Coast campus witnessed a high rise in chocolate consumption as students who could not get the product on

campus rushed to town to get it in addition with the purchase of hampers. A sales girl on the Kingsway Road, told the Times that a few chocolates numbering about 20 she brought to the shop got finished around 11 a.m. The demand, she said, was high as people thronged to the shop in a bid to buy chocolate. I hope that Ghanaians continue to buy chocolate on a daily basis to promote the consumption of made in Ghana goods, she said.

Lack of Credible Data Could Hurt Nigerian Cocoa

Source: Reuters

15/02/2007

Lagos, Feb 14 - The lack of a credible database could be detrimental to Nigeria's cocoa sector development and trade, the Cocoa Producers Alliance (COPAL) said on Wednesday. President Olusegun Obasanjo stirred a new controversy over Nigeria's cocoa production when he said this month that output had grown at an average of 18 percent a year in the last three years to 400,000 tonnes in 2006. The International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO) and exporters in Nigeria estimate the country's output at between 180,000 and 210,000 tonnes a year.

COPAL secretary general Hope Sona Ebai said the uncertainty over Nigeria's output means cocoa traders who are not affiliated to multinational firms can only do spot trading and not futures. "There is a problem somewhere. I am not saying the ICCO figure is wrong or that the government figure is correct," Ebai told Reuters. "The lack of a reliable cocoa statistical base could be detrimental to the cocoa sector development and trade in Nigeria," Ebai said. "Futures contracts are difficult to agree upon if the statistical basis of the cocoa sector is not credible." Ebai urged Nigeria to take advantage of next month's council meeting of the ICCO in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to harmonise its figures with those of the world body to provide the sector with a credible database. He said COPAL has designed a booklet to help Nigerian cocoa farmers make output entries which they can then pass to the government in a key step towards improving data collection in the world's fourth biggest grower.

RELIABLE STATISTICS

Nigeria's cocoa sector was deregulated in 1986 and this may have affected record-keeping, Ebai said. "The booklet will help government in the collection of reliable statistics," Ebai said.

Obasanjo attributed the jump in Nigeria's output to the government's ambitious cocoa rehabilitation programme launched in 2005 to lift production to 600,000 tonnes next year. He said Nigeria aims to become number two producer in the world by 2010, overtaking Ghana. The cocoa development programme aims to raise production by supplying improv

chocolate flavour, not specialty flavours like say, Trinidad, but bona fide straight up quality. This is Ghana's competitive advantage, and it provides a reliable source of cash. Other countries provide usable, indifferent quality cocoa (e.g. sometimes mouldy), that gives an off-flavour in chocolate. The multinational companies buy this kind of cocoa from countries like Cote d'Ivoire at a discounted price compared to Ghana. The risk of processing Ghanaian cocoa in Ghana is that the country will lose its \$150 per tonne premium.

The process

To turn cocoa into chocolate is not technically difficult. The process is this: 1. roast the beans, 2. grind them into cocoa liquor, 3. press the liquor into cocoa powder and cocoa butter, and 4. Add sugar and milk to the liquor and butter. The result: delicious chocolate, and the bi-product of cocoa powder which can be sold without great profit or fanfare to bakers or cocoa drink manufacturers.

The key ingredient is the cocoa liquor; that is what your international man of chocolate is after. The cocoa butter is flavourless (if deodorised) but essential for gaining the right melt-in-your-mouth consistency. Major chocolate companies buy cocoa beans from Ghana and cocoa butter from the Ivory Coast, Malaysia, and other quality light-weights, because flavour is irrelevant when it comes to cocoa butter. As a result, cocoa butter carries no premium. So, if Ghana gets into the processing business, it runs the risk of losing the premium it gets from selling pure beans. A slight complication arises because some beans are of high quality but smaller than average size. These are called light crop, versus the regular-sized main crop.

Of Ghana's 700,000 tonnes total production, about 150,000 is light crop. Light crop, despite its high quality, sells at a reduced price because of its size. There is a high demand for light crop beans because those beans are cheaper yet of equal high quality. Because light crop has no premium, there is nothing to lose by processing them locally. One estimate gives a reasonable processing target as being 250,000 tonnes, which is about 35 percent of Ghana's total production, considerably less than official targets. This amount would avoid sacrificing the main crop quality premium by selling cocoa butter and powder at non premium prices. Current processing facilities in Ghana are actually selling butter at a discount compared to Cote d'Ivoire based on quality and delivery performance.

Manufacturing drawbacks

Some in Ghana want to go further down the processing road to manufacturing because they want to create new industry here and keep more cocoa money in the country. However, there are four potential drawbacks to this route:

- 1) There is not enough disposable income to support big chocolate manufacturers. Chocolate is essentially a luxury product. While the sources of cocoa reside in poor countries in the southern hemisphere, its consumers reside in just a few wealthy countries, mostly in the North. Not enough Ghanaians can afford to buy products they don't absolutely need to support a chocolate industry here, yet.
- 2) The milk and sugar ingredients would need to be imported at great expense.
- 3) Ghana would lack flexibility in mixing chocolates. Large manufacturers generally create unique chocolate brand tastes by mixing chocolate sources, a little Ghana A, a little St. Lucia B, a dash of Trinidad C for pizzazz, all blended into one product. Without importing the beans or cocoa liquor of other producing countries Ghana could only make dark or light, not subtle variations, putting us at a competitive disadvantage should we try to export. It would be a good product, but a limited one. On the other hand if we imported our ingredients we would end up in an unusual position of producer buyer, and our chocolate prices, and revenue, would be up and down.
- 4) Like an industry in its infancy, profits would be a struggle, especially with current processing inefficiencies and a small market with no economies of scale

It's evolution, baby

Change must happen in stages; as Ghanaians know radical coups end in disaster. As our source pointed out, "the cocoa farmer is a very vulnerable guy; he can't take on buyers." Compared to the average Ghanaian cocoa farmer, buyers have far more money and are generally more organised. That is why the Ghana Cocoa Board has such an important role in annual planning of Ghana's cocoa supply. This role is recognised by both the international banking industry and the major confectionery manufacturers.

GCB arranges all contracts and ensures financing for the farmers to meet demand and get a fair price. At the moment, it is paying 70 percent of the FOB price (about \$1,000 per tonne for high quality beans) directly to

farmers, which is about twice what Cote d'Ivoire is paying its farmers. As a result, the trend of Ghanaian farmers smuggling their cocoa to the western border has been largely reversed, with Ivory Coasters coming here for a better bargain.

Some of our closest cocoa neighbours, like Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, and Cameroon, did away with their cocoa boards over the past couple of decades. Contrary to expectations of free marketeers, this change has not been a boon to their industries. In some cases production has decreased without a centralised organising body for the farmers. In addition to the Board, there is an international attempt to unify cocoa producers along the line of what OPEC has done for oil producers. This organisation is called the Cocoa Producer's Alliance, and it has at times tried to hold back cocoa supply with little success.

Unlike oil, cocoa goes bad if it is left in the ground. Once harvested good quality cocoa can be stored for up to five years in a temperate climate, or two years in a climate like Ghana's. Poor quality cocoa, with moisture above 8 percent, will quickly mould and taste awful.

Withholding cocoa also puts a strain on producing countries, which tend to be cash-starved and need the annual infusion that cocoa provides. And, of course, the world's chocolate addiction is nothing compared to our oil addiction; chocolate snack foods are too easily replaced by salty chips if the price goes too high.

The CPA has been a useful negotiator, particularly within the International Cocoa Organisation, and has helped formulate the rules of trade used in the industry, and our Cocoa Board is both a CPA and ICCO member. The needs of such members are very diverse, and they are all competing over a small market totalling about 3 million tonnes.

It seems that any power shift to the chocolate producer will have to be taken by the farmers, slowly, over time, in the form of cooperatives. Previous top-down attempts to create such cooperatives have failed, but perhaps self-generated, grassroots, versions of the same are more Ghana's style. One such organisation, Kuapa Kokoo, has already sprung up in Kumasi.

Pricing factors

There are four factors going into the price of chocolate: cocoa, milk, sugar, and labour. Ghana is trying to make the price of labour more consistent and more liveable, but clearly there are other factors that determine prices in the retail markets of our snowy friends. Primary among these are the cost of milk, much of which comes from the cow-filled factories of the United States and Canada, and sugar, which has been heavily supported particularly within the European Community.

Many activists, including former UN Special Envoy Stephen Lewis, have argued that the government subsidies given to large multinational food companies create an unethical form of competition for African farmers. In an interesting spin on that argument, if such subsidies were cut cocoa farmers would likely receive a boon to their business because the price of chocolate snacks would decrease and demand would likely increase.

The final result: more cocoa could be produced and sold from Ghana. At the moment there is probably 900,000 tonnes of cocoa in the ground that could be produced and harvested. But because prices in this industry are so elastic, a reasonable price would have to be maintained for farmers in order for them to benefit from any increase in production. Otherwise, the market will be flooded with cheap product with no increase in revenue.

New cocoa processing factory inaugurated

Ghana News Agency

15/02/2007

Alan Kyerematen, the Minister of Trade, Industry, Private Sector Development and PSI, has expressed Government's determination to pursue programmatic trade policies to ensure investors enjoy attractive returns on their investments. This would encourage the investors, both local and foreign, to invest more and become frontline ambassadors in attracting foreign direct investment in Ghana. The minister said this in a speech read for him at the inauguration of a second cocoa bean processing line with a capacity of 30,000 tonnes per annum for Barry Callebaut Ghana Limited, a cocoa processing factory operating in the Free Zone Enclave at Tema.

The inauguration of the second line together with the expansion of the finished product, warehouse, administration building and extra social block cost over \$10 million. The first line, which was inaugurated five years ago when the factory was established, also has a capacity of 30,000 tonnes bringing it to 60,000 tonnes per

annum. Mr Kyerematen said the thrust of government's industrial policy is to add value to the country's local resources particularly agricultural products to produce quality and competitive products for the domestic and export markets. He said the successful utilization of Ghana cocoa by the company held tremendous potential for transforming the rural economy of the cocoa growing areas and this should help Ghana achieve its goal of processing at least 40 per cent of cocoa locally.

Patrick De Maeseneire, Chief Executive Officer of Barry Callebaut, said the second line as well as the investment in "a village we have built for our employees are evidence of our long-term commitment to this country." Mr Maeseneire said the company strives to improve the quality of "our cocoa beans and at the same time we are making a contribution to the nation economic development."

The Managing Director of Barry Callebaut Ghana, Gotzon de Aquirre, expressed the hope that the government would soon resolve the energy situation. Benoit Villers, President of Global Sourcing and Cocoa, said the company invested in Ghana following the government's commitment to increase cocoa production to above one million tones a year. Isaac Osei, the Chief Executive Officer of Ghana Cocoa Board, gave the assurance that the board would work in partnership with the company to achieve success. He said investors who have kept faith in their activities would be supported to make strides. Emmanuel Calvin Nqwem, Operations Manager, said no by-product is wasted, as everything is re-cycled for another new product.

Cameroon: More Cocoa Nurseries for Farmers

Cameroon Tribune (Yaoundé)

February 15, 2007

Lukong Pius Nyuylime

The nurseries will be supplied by IITA's Tree Crops Production, Marketing and Livelihoods Program. One of the major projects of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Cameroon, the Tree Crops Production, Marketing and Livelihoods Program has announced it will be supplying over 5,000 cocoa nurseries to cocoa growers in the Centre province in 2007. The decision is contained in the proposals made at the workshop organised last week in Mbalmayo to identify activities of the program for 2007.

According to the project coordinator, Jonas Mva Mva, ten major activities will be carried out by the project to boost cocoa, oil palm and Banana/Plantain production in the Centre province. "We intend to train 80 cocoa growers on nursery production with the aim of producing at least 5,000 plants in 2007", he said. The ten major activities to be carried out in 2007, he said, include: training of 70 facilitators in agricultural schools, support to 35 farmer schools, training of 80 nursery growers, support to the 80 trained cocoa nursery growers so they can produce at least 5,000 nursery plants, financing of five cocoa agro forestry demonstration centres, fight against cocoa diseases and participatory research on fertilizer application on cocoa nursery farms. The ten activities on cocoa are among the 64 to be carried out by IITA in three different sectors: cocoa, oil palm and Banana/Plantain. Sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture within the framework of its "Food for Progress" program, the Tree Crop Production, Marketing and Livelihood program is a practical approach to poverty alleviation in the rural areas. It sets out to boost agricultural production, enhance the marketing of the products among farmers, and improve the competitiveness of tree crops in Cameroon to ensure the wellbeing of families. The Tree Crops Production, Marketing and Livelihoods Program is a three-year project to run from 2006 to 2008.

Barry Callebaut and Nestlé Announce Major Cooperation in Europe

Feb 15, 2007

Barry Callebaut, the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality cocoa and chocolate products, has announced its intention to acquire from Nestlé the cocoa liquor and liquid chocolate production facility at the chocolate factory in San Sisto/Italy as well as a chocolate factory in Dijon/France.

At the same time, Nestlé would enter into a long-term agreement with Barry Callebaut for the supply of 43,000 tonnes p.a. of liquid chocolate and the production of some Nestlé consumer products. The Pan-European project, which also incorporates a commitment to supply Nestlé in Russia with liquid chocolate, spans three countries. Barry Callebaut would be able to use the existing capacity at the acquired sites and intends to install additional capacity of 25,000 tonnes to better serve its growing industrial and artisanal customer base in the promising Southern European markets.

Patrick De Maeseneire, CEO of Barry Callebaut, said: "The planned transaction is an excellent opportunity for Barry Callebaut to increase our production capacity for cocoa liquor and chocolate for industrial and artisanal

customers in the fast-growing Mediterranean markets. It would also mark an important step ahead in our strategy to be the outsourcing partner of choice for co-manufacturing brand packaged consumer products. With a limited investment the supply agreement with Nestlé would increase our sales volume as of next fiscal year 2007/08 and would provide us with free production capacity allowing us to target the Southern European markets in a more tightly focused way.”

The two parties expect the final agreement to be signed during the summer of 2007, after completing works council consultations. The transaction is subject to regulatory approvals. The two parties have decided not to disclose any financials of the transaction.

Cameroon Cocoa Aims Upmarket with Niche Chocolate

Source: Reuters

16/02/2007

Yaounde, Feb 15 - The first chocolate made entirely from Cameroonian cocoa will hit the market in August and should restore the battered image of the country's beans, a French master chocolate maker said.

Claude Streit -- who has been making speciality chocolates from his base in Besancon, eastern France, for 35 years -- is working on the new product with the backing of Cameroon's ONCC cocoa board and Conaprocac, a federation of 18,000 farmers. "The Cameroonian bean has a very bad reputation among grinders in particular. They say it has a smoked smell and is of poor quality," Streit told Reuters this week during a trip to the central African country. "But in fact the cocoa trees planted in Cameroon are the same as those in Sao Tome, whose beans have a good reputation. There is no reason why we can't get the same quality from Cameroon," he said.

In recent years, the world's top chocolate makers have sought to give value-added pedigree to their products by using beans from so-called single source origins -- a specific farm or region in a particular country, be it Venezuela, Indonesia or Ecuador.

Such labelling -- which mimics the denomination of origin already employed in the wine market -- is increasingly popular with chocolate connoisseurs who seek such exclusive cachet when consuming or making a present of chocolates.

Since Cameroon's cocoa sector was liberalised in the early 1990s, the world's fourth biggest producer has seen quality decline as unregulated merchants and poor infrastructure force ever-more desperate growers to sell beans at knock-down prices.

With less state support, growers lack the necessary means to look after their crops properly and are often forced to sell beans that are not properly dried or fermented. "On top of that, exporters mix up all the beans without making any distinction on quality. They pay producers the same amount whether their beans are good or not. That doesn't encourage farmers to produce high quality beans," Streit said.

SMALL BEGINNINGS

The niche chocolate maker, whose current specialities include sugar-coated roasted cocoa bean flakes and crunchy hazelnut pralines, said he planned initially to import two tonnes of Cameroonian beans and grind them in Besancon. "We're starting with a small amount of beans so as not to get ahead of ourselves. Until now, pure Cameroonian produce has not been made. Cameroonian beans are usually mixed with beans from other places," he said.

To guarantee the quality of the beans he uses, Streit has agreed with Conaprocac on an internationally approved label detailing the size of the tree, the condition of the plantation, the drying method and guaranteeing the limited use of chemicals. "If the plantation is regularly maintained, cutting the trees in such a way as to allow a breeze to circulate and to stop humidity building up on the ground, you can cut the amount of chemicals you use by 50 percent," he said, adding he hoped Cameroon would eventually produce purely biological beans.

Streit's new chocolate, which will initially be distributed in France, aims to prove that top-range products can be made with Cameroonian cocoa, giving growers in the largely impoverished country the motivation to improve their output. If it succeeds, Streit hopes next year to set up a small factory in Cameroon itself to produce top-end chocolate for the local and regional market. "Eighty percent of the cocoa growers in the bush here have never tasted chocolate," Streit said. "That's what shocked me the most the first time I visited Cameroon."

Ghana: Cocoa Farmers Get a Sweeter Deal With U.S. Chocolate Launch

February 17, 2007

Washington, D.C.

Divine Chocolate, a fair-trade enterprise partially owned by cocoa farmers in Ghana, launched a new company in the United States on a snowy Valentine's Day. The brand's U.S. launch, in Washington D.C., where the company is headquartered, is the result of years of development. Until 1993, all marketing of Ghana's cocoa production was controlled by the government. Soon after legislation that year that liberalized trade and marketing, a group of Ghanaian farmers organized a cooperative, Kuapa Kokoo, aimed at reaping the benefits of new trade opportunities.

Comfort Kumeah, a mother of five and an elected member of the farmers' union board, attended the U.S. launch. She said Kuapa Kokoo is organized democratically on community, regional, and national levels, with women in leadership positions at each level. In 1997, Kuapa Kokoo decided to create its own chocolate company. Support came from three groups in Britain: the Body Shop company, the relief and development organization Christian Aid and Comic Relief, a group that uses comedy to raise money to fight world poverty. The next year, with a loan guarantee from the U.K. Department for International Development that enabled the farmers to secure commercial credit, the Day Chocolate Company was formed.

The company is part of the fair-trade community – a global movement espousing fair wages, equitable international trade regulations, environmental policies that promote sustainable practices and public accountability. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, cocoa prices are especially volatile due to overproduction and boom-bust cycles. Kuapa Kokoo farmers now receive a fair trade price of \$1,600, a number close to the global market price, and a \$150 social premium per ton of cocoa, distributed to farmers through the cooperatives' projects.

Because cocoa production is both labor-intensive and seasonal, the social premium provides health services, schools, safe drinking water, toilets, and other income-generating activities for the off-season such as soap-making and mushroom harvesting. About 20,000 farmers currently benefit from participation in the cooperative. "For every bar of Divine Chocolate that you buy," Kumeah told attendees of the corporate launch, "you are putting a smile back on the faces of Ghanaian farmers."

The U.S. company is headquartered in Washington DC for a reason, said chief executive Erin Gorman, former program director of Co-op America and vice chair of the U.S. Fair Trade Federation. Divine Chocolate wants to be visible to national policymakers and to expand awareness of fair-trade issues.

In the U.K., said Sophi Tranchell, managing director of the Day Chocolate Company, parliamentary offices "lead by example", serving fair trade coffee in canteens and at functions. The brand has been successful, she said, because the company "offered a business rather than an aid solution" to the problem of unfair trade. Tranchell said the young company is already profitable, with plans to issue a dividend, and it hopes its U.S. counterpart will be a similar commercial success. Day Chocolate owns 26 percent of Divine Chocolate, whose other investors include Lutheran World Relief and Oikocredit.

Tranchell said the importance of the two chocolate companies stretches beyond the considerable benefits they can provide to the farmers who grow the cocoa. They can demonstrate what is possible. With agribusiness having come to dominate so much of the international cocoa market, she said, bigger chocolate companies argue that they don't and can't control what goes on at the farm level. "But the reality is that they can," she said, "because they are enormous companies." "We do hope that by doing good business and doing well at it, we will raise the bar on how business is done," she said. We hope to set a good example, so that bigger companies will realize that you can run a big company and have a dignified supply chain."

At the launch at the Old Ebbitt's Grill, a Washington establishment near the White House, journalists and well-wishers were treated to a spread of chocolate desserts created by Marian Pitcher, pastry chef for the Clyde's restaurant group. Purely by chance, Pitcher is Ghanaian by birth. The chance to participate in a project that can help transform the lives of rural farmers in her home country, she said, was an inspiration to use all her creativity. Besides, she said, the product "is a dream" to use. "The velvety feel of the chocolate, its fine flavor and the way it melts – how chocolate melts is a prime consideration for a chef – makes it a wonderful ingredient for cooking." Pitcher said she expects the chocolate to be a big success in the U.S. market.

Masterfoods vows to cut kids marketing

By Catherine Boal

07/02/2007 - The owner of Mars and Snickers chocolate brands, Masterfoods, has pledged to stop marketing its products to children younger than 12 – a move that is sure to increase consumer confidence in the brand and appease advertising regulators. By the end of this year, the chocolate company will call a halt to all advertising of its core confectionery and snack brands to youngsters below the age of 12. There are currently no global restrictions on snack marketing to children but Masterfoods is unusual in setting the bar so high as many companies currently either have no in-house policy or set the age limit at around eight.

In a letter to the European Commission's director-general for health and consumer protection Robert Madelin, Masterfoods said it would apply its new policy to advertising, media and new media. According to a report in the Financial Times earlier this week, the company stated in the letter: "We have decided to make an official policy change to a cut-off age of 12 years for all our core products."

Advertising has long been a contentious issue within the snack industry with government, consumer organisations and health bodies putting pressure on manufacturers to take responsibility for rising consumption of unhealthy products. The current UK restrictions on junk food advertising were announced at the end of last year by independent communications regulator Ofcom to prevent advertisers targeting under 16s with promotions for food and drinks high, in fats, salts and sugars.

Sainsbury's launches charitable chocolate

By Catherine Boal

05/02/2007 - Major UK retailer Sainsbury's is diving into the charitable chocolate market this month with the launch of new Fairtrade chocolate slabs, Chocpix, in collaboration with the Divine chocolate company. The supermarket, which is the UK's top Fairtrade retailer by value, has ordered 40 tonnes of cocoa from Ghanaian farmers co-operative Kuapa Kokoo to produce over eight million white chocolate squares.

The Fairtrade market has proven a profitable sector in recent years and was estimated to be worth £230 million by the end of last year, experiencing some 265 per cent growth between 2002 and 2006 alone. What is more, market analyst Mintel predicts Fairtrade will see sales crashing through the half a billion pound mark (£547 million) by 2011.

The Kuapa Kokoo co-operative co-owns Divine Chocolate – previously known as the Day Chocolate company – which produces the Divine chocolate brand range and recently underwent a structural overhaul to place a greater share of the company in the hands of the growers.

TIT BITS

(Source: Business Recorder – www.brecord)

Ivory Coast cocoa arrivals rise

ABIDJAN (February 13, 2007): cocoa arrivals at ports in Ivory Coast from October 1 to February 4 reached 851,439 tonnes, compared with 845,553 tonnes received in the same period last year, exporters said on Monday. The figures showed 20,679 tonnes arrived at ports from January 29 to February 4, up from 17,356 tonnes in the same period of the 2005/06 season.

New York cocoa settles mixed

NEW YORK (February 14, 2007): US cocoa futures contracts traded in open-outcry closed mixed on Monday after late-day speculative and fund buying overwhelmed initial selling pressure, boosting nearby contracts, traders said.

London cocoa weakens

LONDON (February 15, 2007): London cocoa futures closed weaker on Wednesday on profit-taking and origin selling, dealers said. Spot March dropped 8 pounds to 935 pounds a tonne. Benchmark May fell by 9 pounds to 949 after trading between 938 and 959. Volume was light at 9,184 lots traded.

cocoa settles down

NEW YORK (February 15, 2007): US cocoa futures contracts traded in open-outcry settled mostly lower on Tuesday after speculative and fund profit taking knocked prices down, traders said. "Specs have got a good taste of this market. Industry's still pretty short. Manufacturers need some cover. They're still not buying at the moment," one trader said.

Brazilian cocoa arrivals fall

SAO PAULO (February 15, 2007): Brazilian 2006/07 (May/April) cocoa arrivals from Bahia and other states totalled 3.34 million 60-kg bags by February 11, down 4.3 percent from 3.49 million bags a year ago, Bahia Commercial Association said Wednesday.

New York cocoa ends off

NEW YORK (February 16, 2007): US cocoa futures contracts settled lower on Wednesday after speculative and origin selling pulled prices down in what some called an overbought market, traders said. The weaker trade followed four straight sessions of sideways trade high above the 40-day moving averages.

Nigerian January cocoa arrivals down

LAGOS (February 16, 2007): cocoa arrivals in Nigeria's port city of Lagos fell by 27 percent to 20,000 tonnes on average in January compared with the corresponding month of last year, estimates by exporters showed on Thursday. The drop in January is in line with the trend since the start of the 2006/07 main crop in October in the world's fourth biggest cocoa grower.

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