



COPAL COCOA Info

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 259

26th – 30th November 2007

Cocoa Producers' Alliance

ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

	ICCO daily price (SDRs/tonne)	ICCO daily price (US\$/tonne)	London futures (#/tonne)	New York futures (US\$/tonne)
26 th November	1229.47	1963.40	965.33	1943.33
27 th November	1231.53	1968.15	970.00	1946.00
28 th November	1240.16	1971.95	973.00	1944.33
29 th November	1257.20	1998.64	984.33	1979.00
30 th November	1263.21	2008.73	993.33	1988.67
Average	1,244.31	1,982.17	977.20	1,960.27

Up-coming Events

In the News (from Newspapers worldwide)

Health and Nutrition

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 Food for a heart-healthy diet
 Research finds chocolate may improve mood
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 Ivorian cocoa arrivals strong but pace lags 2006/07
 Ivorian cocoa arrivals 412,000T by Nov 25-exporters
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 Ghana sells better quality cocoa
 Ghana bans transit of foreign cocoa across country
 Trading family

Markets

WEEKLY COMMODITIES REVIEW: Oil price within a whisker of \$100, gold rebounds
 The Weekly Pit Review for November 26th
 Softs - Coffee falls in London as warehouse stocks build
 Ivory Coast cocoa prices mainly lower Nov 19-25
 DJ ICE Cocoa Review: Ends Up; Shy Of Key Resistance
 Cocoa Traders Should Keep an Eye on the Ivory Coast

Processing and Manufacturing

- Ivory Coast President to Inaugurate New Cocoa Grind on Dec 4 (DJ)
- Cloetta Fazer invests in new chocolate lines
- Nestle Strengthens its Leadership in the Russian Chocolate Market

Business & Economy

- Nigeria maintains worrying silence over Euro-Africa trade agreement
- Nigeria: Unpaid N14bn Grant Threatens Cocoa Industry
- Chocolate giants face Canadian price fix enquiry
- Chocolate Bar Investigation
- Nestle: Russian chocolate provides smooth investment potential

Environmental

- How Chocolate Can Save the Planet

Labour Issues

- Ghana: Denmark boosts anti child labour efforts
- Your Christmas chocolate – will it be Fair Trade chocolate?
- UN: Consumers, Act against Slavery

Others

- Consumer Reports rates top hot chocolates
- EU Assists Ghana's Cocoa Sector
- Shortage of coins push up chocolate sale
- Heritage Workshop on Cocoa in Cuba Ends
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- Nigeria maintains worrying silence over Euro-Africa trade agreement
- Ivory Coast elections by June 2008: mediator

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- ✓ NEWS & TIT-BITS

Do your health a favour, drink Cocoa everyday?

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

Monday 26th November 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Dec 2007	920	917	-3	924	917	2,692
Mar 2007	952	950	-2	958	949	3,196
May 2008	966	965	-2	973S	965	614
Jul 2008	982	981	-3	989	981	551
Sep 2008	995	992	-1	999	992	486
Dec 2008	1000	998	-2	1004S	999S	126
Mar 2009	1008	1006	-2	1008	1008	34
May 2009		1016	-2			0
Jul 2009		1026	-3			0
Sep 2009		1038	-3			0
Totals		989				7,699

Tuesday 27th November

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	920	922	5	922	913	3,485
Mar 2007	952	955	5	955	948	4,492
May 2008	967	969	4	970	963	434
Jul 2008	980	986	5	986	979	639
Sep 2008	990	996	4	996S	990	398
Dec 2008	995	1003	5	1003	995	68
Mar 2009	1007	1010	4	1010	1007	46
May 2009		1020	4			0
Jul 2009		1030	4			0
Sep 2009		1042	4			0
Totals		993				9,562

Wednesday 28th November 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	921	925	3	926	919	1,923
Mar 2007	954	959	4	959	951	5,103
May 2008	969	972	3	973	965	453
Jul 2008	985	988	2	988	982	978
Sep 2008	997	999	3	1000	995	509
Dec 2008	1003	1006	3	1007	1003	189
Mar 2009	1010	1013	3	1013	1010	60
May 2009		1023	3			0
Jul 2009		1033	3			0
Sep 2009		1045	3			0
Totals		996				9,215

Thursday 29th November 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	925	936	11	941	921	3,510
Mar 2007	958	970	11	975	954	9,272
May 2008	969	984	12	989	969S	664
Jul 2008	989	999	11	1005	984	1,637
Sep 2008	1000	1010	11	1016	1000	354
Dec 2008	1006	1017	11	1021S	1006S	225
Mar 2009	1012	1023	10	1026	1012	267
May 2009	1025	1033	10	1025S	1025S	2
Jul 2009		1043	10			0
Sep 2009		1055	10			0
Totals		1007				15,931

Friday 30th November 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	936	951	15	954	936	4,098
Mar 2008	974	979	9	985	968	10,872
May 2008	990	993	9	997	983	1,132
Jul 2008	1002	1008	9	1011	999	1,217
Sep 2008	1010	1019	9	1021	1010	2,066
Dec 2008	1018	1025	8	1027	1018	159
Mar 2009	1029	1030	7	1032	1029	114
May 2009	1040	1040	7	1041S	1040	181
Jul 2009		1050	7			0
Sep 2009		1062	7			0
Totals		1016				19,839

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

Monday 26th November 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	1912	1901	-15	1912	1901	33
Mar 2008	1947	1936	-15	1955	1925	4814
May 2008	1955	1943	-17	1955	1943	1007
Jul 2008	1951	1951	-18	1951	1951	477
Sep 2008	1959	1959	-18	1959	1959	56
Dec 2008	1968	1968	-21	1968	1968	90
Mar 2009	1982	1982	-22	1982	1982	386
May 2009	1988	1988	-22	1988	1988	2
Jul 2009	2009	2009	-21	2009	2009	-
Sep 2009	2025	2025	-21	2025	2025	-
Totals		1966				6865

Tuesday 27th November 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	1896	1903	2	1903	1896	27
Mar 2008	1935	1938	2	1943	1929	4692
May 2008	1945	1946	3	1946	1945	370
Jul 2008	1954	1954	3	1954	1954	204
Sep 2008	1962	1962	3	1962	1962	152
Dec 2008	1973	1973	5	1973	1973	148
Mar 2009	1987	1987	5	1987	1987	123
May 2009	1996	1996	8	1996	1996	1
Jul 2009	2019	2019	10	2019	2019	0
Sep 2009	2035	2035	10	2035	2035	0
Totals		1971				5717

Wednesday 28th November 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	1890	1902	-1	1920	1890	5
Mar 2008	1925	1936	-2	1940	1923	2671
May 2008	1945	1945	-1	1945	1945	134
Jul 2008	1955	1955	1	1955	1955	51
Sep 2008	1961	1961	-1	1961	1961	53
Dec 2008	1971	1971	-2	1971	1971	95
Mar 2009	1986	1986	-1	1986	1986	51
May 2009	1993	1993	-3	1993	1993	1
Jul 2009	2018	2018	-1	2018	2018	-
Sep 2009	2034	2034	-1	2034	2034	-
Totals		1970				3061

Thursday 29th November 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	1920	1967	65	1974	1908	9
Mar 2008	1935	1971	35	1986	1934	3582
May 2008	1979	1979	34	1979	1979	148
Jul 2008	1991	1987	32	1991	1987	146
Sep 2008	1995	1995	34	1995	1995	109
Dec 2008	1991	2004	33	2004	1991	17
Mar 2009	2017	2017	31	2017	2017	2
May 2009	2026	2026	33	2026	2026	1
Jul 2009	2041	2041	23	2041	2041	-
Sep 2009	2057	2057	23	2057	2057	-
Totals		2004				4014

Friday 30th November 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Dec 2007	1978	1978	11	1978	1978	253
Mar 2008	1968	1983	12	1998	1968	9138
May 2008	1988	1988	9	1988	1988	1008
Jul 2008	1995	1995	8	1995	1995	585
Sep 2008	2003	2003	8	2003	2003	359
Dec 2008	2011	2011	7	2011	2011	281
Mar 2009	2024	2024	7	2024	2024	159
May 2009	2033	2033	7	2033	2033	36
Jul 2009	2049	2049	8	2049	2049	-
Sep 2009	2065	2065	8	2065	2065	-
Totals		2013				11819

Spot Prices (US\$ per tonne)

	26 th November	27 th November	28 th November	29 th November	30 th November
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	2363	2365	2363	2398	2410
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	2243	2245	2243	2278	2290
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	2228	2230	2228	2263	2275
Superior Arriba	2461	2463	2461	2496	2508
Sanchez f.a.q.	2271	2273	2271	2306	2318
Malaysian 110	1939	1941	1939	1974	1986
Sulawesi f.a.q.	2123	2125	2123	2158	2170
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	3465	3469	3465	3528	3550
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	5660	5665	5660	5762	5797
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	903	904	903	920	925

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association

News

Health and Nutrition

Satisfy Cravings for Chocolate and be Healthy Too--Naturally Sweetened Cocoa is New Healthy Solution

Emediawire (press release), WA

28-Nov-2007

Serious immune support at the right time: since most Americans are fighting colds and flu during the winter months, Enerhealth Botanicals Cocoa Mojo is made from pure, organic cocoa and is naturally sweetened with Rapadura, a natural unprocessed sweetener. Cocoa Mojo, not only tastes delicious but it's packed with all the health benefits of chocolate plus the immune boosting Chinese herbs Cordyceps and Ganoderma.

(PRWEB) November 28, 2007 -- Whoever said medicine or anything you take to make yourself feel better and healthier had to taste bad to work has just been proven wrong. Enerhealth Botanicals' latest cocoa creation, Cocoa Mojo, not only tastes delicious but it's packed with all the health benefits of chocolate plus the immune boosting Chinese herbs Cordyceps and Ganoderma. Now, drinking cocoa is a great way to drink your way to great health. Studies have found that chocolate is a complex food that has amazing health benefits; proving to have higher levels of antioxidants than green tea. The addition of these immune boosting herbs makes drinking this hot cocoa a powerful and delicious way to prevent colds and flu for kids too.

Enerhealth Botanicals Cocoa Mojo is made from pure, organic cocoa and is naturally sweetened with Rapadura, a natural unprocessed sweetener made by juicing sugar cane and allowing the water to evaporate, the crystals are then ground into a powder. There are no chemicals or fillers in Cocoa Mojo; only natural cocoa, rich in minerals that can benefit in lowering cholesterol, boost blood flow and reduce hypertension amongst other health related benefits. In addition, Enerhealth Botanicals Cocoa Mojo contains two (2) Chinese herbs that have proven immune system boosting properties as well.

Cordyceps has been used throughout history to treat chronic respiratory disorders such as asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis as well as chronic fatigue, chronic renal failure, diabetes, heart disease and more. Ganoderma has been found to strengthen the immune system by assisting the body in cleansing itself of toxins; it especially enhances liver detoxification which improves its overall function and regeneration.

Serious immune support at the right time: since most Americans are fighting colds and flu during the winter months it only makes sense to provide a healthier herbal hot cocoa that boosts immune system response during the flu season. As with all supplements, Enerhealth Botanicals reminds consumers they should discuss this and any health options with their health care provider.

For more information about Cocoa Mojo other of Enerhealth Botanicals natural health products please call toll-free 866-762-9238 or email: info@enerfood.com Visit us online at www.enerhealthbotanicals.com.

Food for a heart-healthy diet

Atlanta Journal Constitution, USA

Charlotte Savignac, Atlanta

11/29/07

Q: If someone has a high blood cholesterol level, are peanut butter, olive oil, and dark chocolate appropriate foods for a heart healthy diet?

A: This is a question that many readers have asked, so let's look at all three of these foods in more detail.

- According to the Peanut Institute (www.peanut-institute.org), Americans eat about 700 million pounds of peanut butter every year and half of all of the peanuts grown are made into peanut butter, so we're eating a lot of it. The good news is that peanuts and peanut butter contain oleic acid, a monounsaturated heart-healthy fat. The key to using peanut butter is to use small amounts (2 tablespoons per serving) and to use it to replace saturated fat. One serving of peanut butter contains 190 calories and 16 grams of fat (or about 3 teaspoons of fat) with a small amount (3 grams) of saturated fat and no cholesterol. A peanut butter sandwich for lunch is good idea, but eating a burger and fries for lunch and snacking on peanut butter and crackers in the afternoon would increase your fat intake and not help to reduce the "bad" fat found in the burger and fries. While you may prefer natural peanut butter to commercially prepared, there is not a lot of nutritional difference. Natural peanut butter isn't blended or homogenized so it has to be

stirred to blend the oil that separates during storage. Commercial peanut butter contains about 1 gram more of saturated fat than natural versions and may contain a little more sodium, but not that much more (150 milligrams sodium for commercial peanut butter versus 120 milligrams for natural types.)

- Olive oil is another heart healthy fat and a key ingredient in a Mediterranean eating plan. People who live in regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea have lower rates of heart disease despite a high fat intake. Olive oil is the predominant fat used for cooking and the diet of people in this region is also high in seafood, whole grains, fruits and vegetables with lower amounts of meats and processed foods. You can use olive oil for most of your cooking and for making salad dressings and sauces, but always remember that all fat — good and bad fat — contain the same amount of calories. One tablespoon of oil has 130 calories, so if weight management is an issue, be careful about the amount of oil that you use.
- Chocolate is everyone's new health food. Dark chocolate is rich in plant compounds called flavonoids. Studies show that flavonoids can help prevent blood clots, make blood vessels less stiff and lower blood pressure in some people. However, not all chocolate is created equal when it comes to these health benefits. When cocoa is made into candy, the processing causes a loss of flavonoids. Dark chocolate retains more flavonoids than milk chocolate and cocoa that has not been processed by alkalization is another good choice. You might also have seen that some chocolate manufacturers are making products that have retained the good compounds and these are usually sold in the health food section of your grocery store. For example, a line of chocolate goodies from Mars called "CocoaVia®" contains higher levels of flavonoids than most chocolate candy. All chocolate should be consumed in moderation, because it is still high in calories and total fat.

Research finds chocolate may improve mood

Insight Journal

The idea that chocolate can soothe us in times of sadness, help a woman through a breakup, or lift our spirits when we're down has been part of our cultural consciousness for decades. The women on *Sex and the City* talk about eating an entire box of Oreos to handle low self-esteem. But does chocolate actually do anything for depression or a blue mood, or is that simply a cultural myth?

A study recently performed at the Black Dog Institute, Prince of Whales Hospital in Sydney, Australia showed that chocolate may help in cases of depression, and these findings point to possible causes of atypical depression.

The researchers wanted to investigate the link between chocolate cravings and personality style as well as atypical depressive symptoms. It appeared that certain depressed people craved chocolate while others did not, and this study wanted to ascertain if there were any similarities across those who experienced cravings to learn whether or not chocolate cravings were an indicator of specific personality traits or depressive symptoms, which would answer questions about both depression treatment and possible causes of certain kinds of depression.

Researchers surveyed 3,000 depressed people using web-based questionnaires. They found that those with higher-order neurotic personality and atypical depression were more likely to crave chocolate. They also found that more women craved chocolate when depressed than men. This may point to a possible hormonal component of depression.

Dark Chocolate Is Good For The Heart

Medi News Direct, India - Nov 24, 2007

November 24th, 2007 by The MediNEWS Team

Chocolate is widely perceived to be a harmful food item owing to its high content of saturated fat. However, studies have proven that it has beneficial effects on some mechanisms in heart disease. The antioxidant properties of chocolate have been known for some time, and are attributable to the cocoa flavonoids. Dark chocolate is rich in flavonoids, and it has cardioprotective effects owing to its inhibition of platelet activity, and activation of endothelial nitric oxide synthase, in addition to its antioxidant action. According to data recently presented by Andreas Flammer from the University Hospital Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland, dark chocolate induces vasodilatation, improves coronary vascular function, and also decreases platelet adhesion as early as 2 hours after consumption (Circulation, 2007).

Topics Covered At The American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2007

Sunday, November 25, 2007 by: Katherine East

(NewsTarget) Results from various research projects were presented to the American Heart Association at their Scientific Sessions 2007 at the beginning of November of this year. This annual meeting provides a forum for attendees such as physicians, scientists, nurses, and healthcare professionals to discuss, present and learn about current breakthroughs in all aspects of cardiovascular disease.

Here are three of the studies from amongst those presented:

1) Energy Drinks Increase Heart Rate and Blood Pressure

Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, recently conducted a study on the effect of energy drinks on the heart. Adult volunteers of an average age of 26 and in good health drank 2 cans of energy drink containing 80 milligrams of caffeine and 1,000 milligrams of taurine for a period of seven days. (They stopped consuming caffeine from other sources.)

On the first day, their systolic blood pressure went up by 9 points. It had risen to 10 points at the end of the week. Their diastolic blood pressure (the lower number) had risen 5 points at both times.

On the first day, their heart rates had increased by 5 beats per minute and by seven beats on the last day.

Results suggest that consuming more than 2 cans a day of energy drinks can be dangerous especially for patients with high blood pressure and heart disease. The healthy volunteers were not negatively affected but it could be dangerous for someone on medication for high blood pressure or those with heart ailments.

Study leader, Dr. James Kalus suggested that people with high blood pressure and heart rates should avoid these drinks.

2) Chocolate Boosts Blood Flow

Good quality dark chocolate is known to be rich in flavonoids. Japanese researchers from Chiba University discovered that dark chocolate can also improve coronary blood flow.

The two-week trial assessed the coronary flow velocity reserve (CFVR) in 39 healthy adults, average age 29. The volunteers ate either 550 milligrams per day of dark chocolate or white chocolate with no flavonoids.

Coronary flow velocity reserve indicates the blood vessels' ability to dilate, or expand. The study results showed that participants who ate dark chocolate showed significantly improved CFVR after two weeks, while those who ate white chocolate showed no change.

The current study supports many other studies that have shown benefits from cocoa flavonoids.

3) Exercise Boosts Muscle and Blood Vessel Regeneration in Heart Patients

Despite the recommendations of the American Heart Association, many heart failure patients fail to exercise and enter a cardiac rehabilitation program. One reason for this is the already weakened condition of the patient.

Two new studies have shown that exercise is essential in the recovery process of heart failure patients. Exercise can boost the growth of new cells to regenerate weakened muscles and improve the growth of blood vessels in people with heart failure.

"People with heart failure can regain 70% of their exercise capacity if they stick to an exercise program," says Axel Linke, MD, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Leipzig in Germany.

In two research studies the effects of regular exercise on the progenitor cells, a pool of immature cells in skeletal muscle that can divide into mature cells as needed for muscle repair was assessed.

Heart patients who were at similar levels of heart failure were placed on a doctor-supervised exercise program and their progress monitored. Results showed that the number of progenitor cells actively dividing to form new cells and repair muscle damage increased dramatically

By the end of the program their exercise capacity had also increased by an average of 35%, giving the men about three-fourths the capacity of healthy men their age.

About the author

Katherine Oosthuis manages and writes for a health and nutrition website Detox For Life . Her passion is to make research available to those who are looking to improve their well-being and revolutionise their health through better nutrition and alternative medicines.

A bar chocoholics will enjoy

By Emilie LeBeau , McClatchy-Tribune

Sunday, November 25, 2007

Empty calories. Fat. Sugar. Trans fat. Cholesterol. Health experts don't usually see benefits to eating chocolate bars. So a favorite childhood habit becomes something most people force themselves to outgrow. Except not all chocolate will cause you to tip the scale. There are actually chocolate bars with health benefits. The Attune Probiotic Wellness Bar comes in three chocolate varieties and packs five times more active cultures than a tub of yogurt.

Each 20-gram bar has more than 10 billion probiotics that can survive in the digestive tract and help balance the digestive system. The chocolate bars are 100 calories each and have 6 grams of fat and 8 grams of sugar. They also pack 20 percent of the daily calcium intake, 1 gram of fiber and 2 grams of protein.

More importantly, they taste like chocolate, not a health food version of chocolate. The Chocolate Mint flavor is reminiscent of Frango mints while the Chocolate Crisp tastes like a treat from the candy aisle. The Blueberry Vanilla has the look and taste of white chocolate with soft hints of vanilla and a smooth blueberry aftertaste.

Suggested retail price is \$1.29, available in Whole Foods stores or online at AttuneFoods.com

News briefs: Healthy cocoa and confectionery games

ConfectioneryNews.com, France - Nov 30, 2007

By Charlotte Eyre

30/11/2007 - Cocoa made with Chinese herbs is launched in the US; and two new games bring an extra layer of fun to chocolate and snacks.

Fortified cocoa fights colds, manufacturer claims

A new cocoa product with added Chinese herbs can help protect against colds and flu, the manufacturer claims. According to Enerhealth Botanicals, Cocoa Mojo is the first product of its kind to contain Cordyceps, traditionally used to treat respiratory disorders and chronic fatigue, as well as Ganoderma, which strengthens the immune system. "Since most consumers are fighting colds and flue during the winter months it makes sense to provide a healthier herbal hot cocoa that boosts immune systems during the flu season," the US based company said.

The product is totally natural, the company added, as the cocoa is organic and sweetened with Rapadura, a sugar cane crystal sweetener. Cocoa has for some time been promoted as health benefits, with nutritional experts claiming the product lowers cholesterol, boosts blood flow and reduces hypertension.

According to Barry Callebaut scientist Hans Vriens, chocolate contains 750 different components identified by the company, of which 230 can contribute to better human health - be it antioxidant capacity, brain health, relaxation or any number of other benefits.

New board game gives positive spin to confectionery

Eat It!'s new trivia game, re-launched this week for the Christmas season, explores the fun and nostalgic side to chocolate, candy and snacks, providing a real marketing boost for manufacturers. First launched on the market three years ago, the Eat It! company's new board game grew from an idea that there should be a fun trivia game on chocolate, candy and sweets, as it is a topic everyone knows and can enjoy, chief executive officer Tim Ash told ConfectioneryNews.com.

During the game, players must respond correctly to questions such as "What fruity, chewy candy was originally called the Dancing Bear?" before moving around the board.

This game has been such a success in the US that several companies have this year agreed to provide vouchers, worth approximately \$5, for this year's version that can be exchanged for various confectionery products. "Most companies agreed to get involved straight away, as they like being associated with the fun side of confectionery," Ash said. "This game has nothing to do with anything like obesity, calories or trans fats."

If the game again proves popular this Christmas - 50,000 examples have been sold to date - next year's edition will include game pawns shaped like confectionery and snacks products, as part of "the third phase of our branding strategy", Ash said.

Fairtrade launches online cocoa game

Dubble Fairtrade chocolate has announced the winner of its DubbleClick computer game competition, designed to promote ethical chocolate buying amongst children in the UK. The winning Chocamonkey game, created by 13 year old Grace Conium,

requires players to help a monkey character collect cocoa beans through several different levels, and then finally sell them to a Fairtrade stall.

"DubbleClick was a big success - giving young people a great opportunity to put their game expertise to good use.....focusing on a Fairtrade theme," said Dubble spokesperson Sara Barron.

The game will be officially launched 14 December, and the company hopes that young players will pass on the links to their friends. Chocomonkey has already been forwarded along the Fairtrade supply chain, Barron said, from the children of Ghanaian cocoa farmers to leading figures from retailers Sainsburys, Co-op and Oxfam.

Production & Quality

Cocoa farmers to receive bonuses next week

Joy Online, Ghana
28-Nov-2007

Payment of bonuses to cocoa farmers accruing from last year is to begin next week, Mr Emmanuel Asamoah Owusu-Ansah, Ashanti Regional Minister, has announced. He said this has come about following the President's directive issued recently that bonuses to the farmers should be processed for payment. The Minister made this known in an address read on his behalf by Mr Osei Assibey Antwi, Deputy Regional Minister, at a durbar to commemorate the seventh Regional Cocoa Farmers' and workers' award ceremony at Offinso on Tuesday. The ceremony organized by the Produce Buying Company (PBC) of the Ghana Cocoa Board was on the theme: "Produce Buying Company and the Cocoa Farmer: A Better Future". Mr Owusu-Ansah urged the farmers and workers of the company to continue to work hard to ensure that the nation maintained its position in the league of world cocoa production.

Mr Anthony Osei-Boakye, Managing Director of the PBC, said the Company would as from the next cocoa crop year, drill a number of boreholes fixed with pumps in distressed cocoa growing communities in the country as a new phase of its social responsibility. He said the Company was also in the process of diversifying further into the internal and external sheanut trade this season, stressing that it would be operated in the Northern, Upper East and Western regions.

Mr Fred Amponsah, Ashanti Regional Manager of the PBC, stressed the need for the farmers to work harder, saying that it was the aggregates of the few kilograms of cocoa the Company bought that brought the big scale that sustained the Company and the nation. He appealed to those who did not win awards not to be discouraged but to work harder so that they would also receive recognition next year.

Nana Wiafe Akenten III, Paramount Chief of Offinso Traditional Area commended the farmers and urged them to continue to work harder and adopt proper husbandry practices to ensure that the nation derived maximum returns to promote the cocoa industry.

In all, 44 farmers from 18 districts of the Company's areas of operation were honoured with sets of cookware, full piece of Ghana @ 50 anniversary cloth, a pair of Wellington boots, two crocodile matchets and certificates each. Another 187 farmers from the Company's societies in the region received awards.

Mr Yaw Ahenkora Afrifa, Ejisu-Juaben District Chief Executive and a farmer at New Edubiase was adjudged the best Regional Farmer and received a 21-inch colour Television, half piece Ghana @ 50 cloth, two crocodile matchets and a plaque. Six workers of the Company were also honoured.

Ivorian Cocoa Union Says to Blockade San Pedro - labor

Source: Reuters
29/11/2007

Abidjan --- Ivory Coast cocoa farmers union SAPICOCI threatened on Wednesday to blockade the southwestern port of San Pedro from the start of next week unless they were paid a guaranteed price of 600 CFA francs (\$1.35) per kg. "We are writing letters to the regional prefect, exporters and the management of San Pedro port to ask them to close everything from Monday morning because we will be on strike," SAPICOCI President Joseph Kouame Yao told Reuters. "If our demands are not met, we will close the two main roads through town and forbid cocoa trucks from entering."

Ivorian cocoa workers call strikes for next week

(Recasts with new strike threat to San Pedro port)

By Ange Aboa

ABIDJAN, Nov 28 (Reuters) - Workers in Ivory Coast's key cocoa sector have called two strikes for early next week to demand improvements in their pay and working conditions, union leaders said on Wednesday. Farmers union SAPICOCI threatened to blockade the southwestern port of San Pedro from the start of next week unless they were paid a guaranteed price of 600 CFA francs (\$1.35) per kg. The government set a guideline price of 450 CFA francs in September but it is not binding.

The SYNASGFICC union, which groups workers and agents of the Cocoa and Coffee Bourse (BCC) and other industry bodies, said they would stop work a day later. "We've decided to go on strike from next Tuesday," Augustin Kouassi N'Goran, secretary general of SYNASGFICC, told Reuters.

Employees and agents of the BCC and affiliated industry bodies are responsible for registering and checking deliveries of cocoa beans to ports and exports, so any stoppage by them could cause chaos in the world's No. 1 cocoa producer. The strike announcement by SAPICOCI, a smaller rival to the main ANAPROCI farmers union, comes as Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo prepares to visit San Pedro port next week to celebrate its 35 anniversary.

POWER STRUGGLE

"We are writing letters to the regional prefect, exporters and the management of San Pedro port to ask them to close everything from Monday morning because we will be on strike," SAPICOCI President Joseph Kouame Yao told Reuters. "If our demands are not met, we will close the two main roads through town and forbid cocoa trucks from entering."

The strike calls were the latest threat to the strategic Ivorian cocoa sector, which has been shaken since the start of the 2007/2008 season by a struggle for control of the various farmer-controlled structures that manage the industry. "While we receive our salaries late and have no social plan, our directors live in opulence and wealth, without paying attention to our demands," N'Goran told Reuters.

Last week, Anaproci suspended a threatened strike until the end of November to work out a deal with government technicians to finance farmer cooperatives.

ANAPROCI wants grants and loans to enable cooperatives to buy more beans at this peak stage of the October-March main crop season, when cash flow is tight.

It had threatened to block cocoa exports from the West African country if the government did not unlock funding for the farmers' cooperatives. The farmers' association and employees in the sector organisations frequently threaten to strike or block exports to press their grievances, but the stoppages often fail to materialise or are averted by last-minute deals.

Ivorian San Pedro cocoa arrivals up at 139,478 T

ABIDJAN, Nov 28 (Reuters) - Cocoa arrivals at Ivory Coast's port of San Pedro reached 139,478 tonnes from Oct. 1 to Nov. 11, up from 69,115 tonnes in the same period last year, according to Coffee and Cocoa Bourse data obtained by Reuters on Wednesday. The figures showed 32,405 tonnes arrived at San Pedro port from Nov. 5 to 11, up from 27,590 tonnes in the same period of the 2006/07 season.

Data for the port of Abidjan were not immediately available.

Ivorian cocoa workers to strike Dec 4

By Ange Aboa

ABIDJAN (Reuters) - Workers in Ivory Coast's cocoa organisations will strike from next Tuesday to demand improvements in their pay and working conditions, a union leader said on Wednesday. "We've decided to go on strike from next Tuesday," said Augustin Kouassi N'Goran, secretary general of the SYNASGFICC union which groups workers and agents of the Cocoa and Coffee Bourse (BCC) and other industry bodies.

Employees and agents of the BCC and affiliated industry bodies are responsible for registering and checking deliveries of cocoa beans to ports and exports, so any stoppage by them could cause chaos in the world's No. 1 cocoa producer.

The strike call was the latest to threaten the strategic Ivorian cocoa sector, which has been shaken since the start of the 2007/2008 season by a power struggle for control of the various farmer-controlled structures that manage the industry. "While we receive our salaries late and have no social plan, our directors live in opulence and wealth, without paying attention to our demands," N'Goran told Reuters.

Last week, Ivory Coast's main farmers' association, Anaproci, suspended a threatened strike until the end of November to work out a deal with government technicians to finance farmer cooperatives. Anaproci wants grants and loans to enable cooperatives to buy more beans at this peak stage of the October-March main crop season, when cash flow is tight.

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Ivorian cocoa sector workers call strike from Tues

ABIDJAN, Nov 28 (Reuters) - Workers in Ivory Coast's cocoa sector organisations will strike from next Tuesday to demand improvements in their pay and working conditions, a union leader said on Wednesday.

"We've decided to go on strike from next Tuesday," said Augustin Kouassi N'Goran, secretary general of the SYNASGFICC union which groups workers and agents of the Cocoa and Coffee Bourse (BCC) and other industry bodies.

Ivorian cocoa farmers welcome hotter, drier weather

ABIDJAN, Nov 26 (Reuters) - Rains were light and sunny spells were lengthy in Ivory Coast's cocoa zones last week farmers said, giving respite to the trees after months of regular rainfall which some growers said was excessive. "The sun was out, it was very hot and we didn't have a single drop of rain during the week," said farmer Magloire Gnankan who grows cocoa on the outskirts of Daloa, one of the main cocoa-producing areas in the world's top grower. "There's still a lot of water in the soil so it's fine. That will give force to large numbers of cherelles and small pods so we can have plenty of cocoa in January and February," he said.

Further southwest in Meagui, 85 km directly north of the western San Pedro port, farmer Innocent Zamble said the drier weather had made working conditions easier for buyers. Hot weather also makes it easier to dry out newly-harvested beans. "It hasn't rained. It's good because the rain ruined all the dirt tracks and it was difficult for buyers to get here," he said. "Because of the (recent) rains, we'd seen a lot of beans going mouldy during drying."

Zamble said there were plenty of flowers and small pods on the trees which would provide more cocoa to harvest several months from now.

Months of regular rainfall since April, following several months of drought-like conditions, have enabled the moisture-loving fungal disease black pod to spread and destroy thousands of cocoa pods, even larger mature ones. The current hot, dry weather, consistent with the West African state's dry season which begins in November, should help ease the spread of the disease.

"After the recent rains, the plantations have produced a lot of flowers. This sunny weather is good ... to give us a lot of pods around February," said farmer Joseph Amani in Abengourou in the east, one of the zones worst affected by black pod.

Farmer Labbe Zoungrana in San Pedro said there had been two heavy showers there during the week coupled with long, hot sunny spells. He said he expected strong supplies of cocoa there to continue at least until the end of the year.

Ivorian cocoa arrivals strong but pace lags 2006/07

By Ange Aboa

ABIDJAN (Reuters) - Cocoa arrivals at Ivory Coast's ports remained strong last week, but for the first time this season the pace of arrivals slipped below that of last year, according to estimates by big exporters on Monday.

Shippers reckoned arrivals totalled 412,000 tonnes between Oct. 1 and Nov. 25, well up on the 287,571 tonnes received in the same period last year, though the estimated 60,000 tonnes that arrived from Nov. 19-25 was slightly down on the 64,544 tonnes received by ports in the same period last season.

"For the time being we are happy that arrivals volumes at the ports are still at 60,000 tonnes (a week) for three weeks running, because there are quite a few rumours about the end of the harvest, because of black pod," the director of a large international exporter in Abidjan said. "We were not really expecting such volumes, but so far so good. We are happy. We hope this will continue until the end of next month -- even if some of us don't think it will," he said.

Shippers were divided about whether arrivals can keep up their current pace after the October-March main crop harvest got off to a strong start, well ahead of last year when a farmers' strike disrupted the start of the season.

Some expected arrivals to hold up between 65,000 and 70,000 tonnes a week until the end of the year as farmers and merchants sell stocks to pay for holiday celebrations, but others were less optimistic. "I think we have hit peak production and arrivals. We can't expect more than we are receiving at the moment. On the contrary, it will drop to 50,000 tonnes (a week) by mid-December, and 40,000-45,000 tonnes at the end of the year," said the head of an exporting company based in the second port of San Pedro.

Bean quality has held up despite excess humidity after weeks of heavy rainfall caused problems for farmers drying their beans, operators said. "It's fine as far as mould is concerned -- we are about 4 or 5 percent (of beans), which is a little above the standard, which is 3 percent for grade 1 cocoa, but high humidity levels are more of a problem," said a commercial representative for an international exporter in Abidjan.

"Moisture is averaging 10 percent, whereas 7 percent is the acceptable limit, and things aren't getting any better," he said.

Ivorian cocoa arrivals 412,000T by Nov 25-exporters

ABIDJAN, Nov 26 (Reuters) - Cocoa arrivals at ports in Ivory Coast totalled 412,000 tonnes between Oct. 1 and Nov. 25, well up on the 287,571 tonnes received in the same period last year, exporters said on Monday. However, the weekly arrivals of an estimated 60,000 tonnes from Nov 19-25 were slightly down on the 64,544 tonnes received by ports in the same period last season.

Ivorian San Pedro cocoa arrivals 165,259 T by Nov 18

ABIDJAN, Nov 29 (Reuters) - Cocoa arrivals at Ivory Coast's San Pedro port reached 165,259 tonnes by Nov. 18, 2007, according to data from the Coffee and Cocoa Bourse (BCC) obtained by Reuters on Thursday. That compared with 94,571 tonnes delivered to the port during the same period of the 2006/07 season. The figures showed 25,781 tonnes arrived at the port from November 12-18, up slightly from the 25,456 tonnes in the same period of the 2006/07 season.

Data for the port of Abidjan were not immediately available.

Ghana sells better quality cocoa

Friday, 30, November, 2007

Source: GBC NEWS



There has been improvement in the quality of cocoa from Ghana. The improvement has been due to good control measures instituted by COCOBOD AND cocoa farmers' adherence to the measures.

The Deputy Ashanti Regional Controller of the Quality Control Division of COCOBOD, Samuel Amponsah said this at the Seventh Produce Buying Company, PBC Annual Best cocoa farmer and staff awards at Offinso in the Ashanti region.

Mr. Amponsah said there is the need to further improve and maintain the quality of the nation's cocoa to enhance sales on the world market. He advised cocoa farmers to desist from engaging in child labour. Mr. Amponsah also advised farmers not to give their cocoa pass books to their folks in the city, since that could deny them scholarships for their children.

Ghana bans transit of foreign cocoa across country

By Kwasi Kpodo

ACCRA, Nov 30 (Reuters) - Ghana has banned the overland transit of cocoa and cocoa waste from neighbouring states across its territory to stop this being used as a cover for smuggling Ghanaian beans out of the country, officials said on Friday.

Stephen Ntim, deputy chief executive of industry regulator Cocobod, told Reuters some foreign cocoa merchants who obtained customs permits to transport cocoa from the Ivory Coast through Ghana to Togo were found to have been smuggling beans produced in Ghana's high-yielding Western cocoa region.

"We did our search and found that these people were operating along the borders in the Brong Ahafo region and part of the western region," he said.

Cocobod's Ntim said significant volumes of Ghanaian cocoa had been trafficked out of the world's No. 2 cocoa producer through what he called this "cunning way of smuggling". But he declined to give an estimate of the amount involved.

Recently, Ghana's Commissioner of Customs ordered the cancellation of permits granted to foreign companies engaged in the overland transit of foreign cocoa beans and cocoa waste, but the government was now transforming this into an all-out ban. Ntim said although Ghana paid higher farm-gate prices than its neighbours, including the world's leading cocoa grower, Ivory Coast, merchants in those countries often preferred to have Ghana's cocoa to mix with their stock and improve its value. Ghanaian cocoa is ranked among the world's best in terms of quality and enjoys a high premium.

ANTI-SMUGGLING DRIVE

Robert Kwabena Poku Kyei, the government's advisor on cocoa, said the ban was part of a general crackdown on smuggling. "We're concerned about the activities of these people who all along had operated under the transit permit. They used it as an incentive for our cocoa to be smuggled outside," he said.

Local authorities in the eastern Volta Region, which shares a border with Togo, said smuggling of cocoa was on the increase and they were setting up a task force of farmers, local chiefs and young people to combat the illicit trade.

"The region's future in terms of cocoa production is threatened and there is a need for us to rise up and combat the menace," District Chief Executive Solomon Donkor said.

He mentioned the Jasikan, Hohoe and Kadjebi growing areas as the main focus of the proposed taskforce in the east. As part of the anti-smuggling efforts, Cocobod has been providing vehicles and incentives to a unit of the armed forces that patrols the country's borders to stop smuggling of cocoa from high yielding areas such as Western, Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions.

Ghana now pays a farm-gate price of 950 new Ghana cedis (\$990) per tonne of cocoa, higher than the equivalent farm-gate prices in neighbouring countries, including Ivory Coast.

Trading family

Danee Wilson

Gauntlet, Canada - Nov 29, 2007

Cocoa producers in the Dominican Republic will get the opportunity to be involved in fair trade through Conacado, a Dominican organization aimed at improving the income and quality of life of small cocoa producers and their families. National Confederation of Dominican Cocoa Producers operation manager Abel Fernandez was one of several presenters at the University of Calgary's Fair Trade Forum. "In the beginning we only had about 900 farmers," said Fernandez.

Conacado was founded in 1988 in response to the low international price of cocoa. Now the organization boasts 9,500 farmers. "Conacado is working at the national level," he said. "We develop policies to be used in local and international markets."

Conacado consists of three organizational levels with the farmers forming small associations at the base. The second level involves Blocks, which operate in each of the provinces. The highest level is Conacado itself, working nationally and internationally.

According to Fernandez, in addition to improving the quality of life of the cocoa producers, Conacado is dedicated to community development and preservation of the environment. "The funds generated by the premium price [of fair trade cocoa] are reinvested in education, health, construction of nursery products, as well as building infrastructure," he said.

Cocoa produced by farmers is almost entirely consumed overseas, with only one per cent sold locally. Eighty-five per cent goes to Europe, while 14 per cent is sold to Canada and the United States.

Cocoa production in the Dominican faces many challenges, including worker demographics, explained Fernandez. "Much of the farmers in the Dominican Republic are 55 to 60 years old," he said. "We should involve the young people in cocoa production."

Other challenges facing farmers include rehabilitation after natural disasters and the development of new niche markets.

Fernandez emphasized the importance of equal opportunity for men and women, the elimination of forced child labour and respectful environmental policies in fair trade practices.

Markets

WEEKLY COMMODITIES REVIEW: Oil price within a whisker of \$100, gold rebounds

Daily Times, Pakistan - Nov 24, 2007

Sunday, November 25, 2007

Cocoa: Cocoa prices were mixed as the market tracked the performance of sterling and the dollar. By Friday on the LIFFE, London's futures exchange, the price of cocoa for March delivery fell to 952 pounds a tonne, from 959 pounds a week earlier. On the New York Board of Trade (NYBOT), the March cocoa contract rose to 1,951 dollars a tonne, from 1,927 dollars.

The Weekly Pit Review for November 26th

Nov 26 2007, PitGuru, www.pitguru.com

The Softs Pit Review

For the week of November 26th, 2007

By PitGuru Jamie Fink

Cocoa fell after reports that ample supplies of the beans were being delivered from Ivory Coast farmers, but this market may be poised for the little push as Ghana reports accelerated spread of black pod disease from heavier than normal rainfall. As the second largest producer of cocoa, Ghana now looks for conditions to improve for their mid-crop but the main crop has most trees struck with black pod.

Softs - Coffee falls in London as warehouse stocks build

11.26.07,

LONDON (Thomson Financial) -

In other softs traded on Liffe, cocoa for March delivery was up 3 stg at 955 stg a tonne, while no.5 white sugar for March delivery was down 30 cents at 287.40 usd a tonne.

Ivory Coast cocoa prices mainly lower Nov 19-25

ABIDJAN, Nov 27 (Reuters) - Farm gate prices for cocoa in Ivory Coast's main growing regions were mostly lower from November 19-25, data from the Coffee and Cocoa Bourse showed on Tuesday, as the supply of cocoa continued to rise. The average price fell 20 CFA francs per kg to 430 CFA (\$0.97) during the period in the centre-western Gagnoa area due to the abundance of beans available. "The price fell a bit because there's a lot of cocoa for sale," said farmer Francois Badiel in Ouragahio, a village in the Gagnoa area from where the country's President Laurent Gbagbo originates. "In spite of the fall, a lot of farmers are happy with the price because it's above 400 CFA francs. You can make a profit with that rate," he said.

Gbagbo will make his second visit to the northern half of the country since it was seized by the New Forces rebels in a 2002-2003 civil war. He has since appointed the rebel leader prime minister after they agreed to reunite the country. Some lorries bringing cocoa to Abidjan port will be forced to use more minor routes as the main road running south from the capital Yamoussoukro to Abidjan will be closed to traffic at times this week to make way for presidential vehicles.

In the coastal region of the San Pedro where the average price rose 10 CFA francs to 445, farmers said competition for supplies between grinders and major exporters supported prices there. "Processors and exporters are still looking for large volumes. Prices even reached 460 CFA during the week at SACO (a processor)," said farmer Labbe Zoungrana, adding bean quality there was generally satisfactory.

Cocoa arrivals in the world's top cocoa grower have been hovering around annual peaks of about 60,000 tonnes per week. Production has been strong thanks to months of regular rainfall but the damp also caused fungal black pod disease to spread.

Below are average farmgate prices in CFA francs per kg as quoted by private buyers, cooperatives and shippers, and published by the BCC. Included are prices paid on delivery at San Pedro and Abidjan ports.

	Nov 19-25	Nov 12-18		Nov 19-25	Nov 12-18
Abengourou	450	460	Aboisso	430	435
Adzope	445	n/a	Agboville	450	n/a
Bongouanou	435	445	Daloa	400	n/a
Divo	455	455	Gagnoa	430	450
San Pedro	445	435	Sassandra	n/a	n/a
Sinfra	395	465	Soubre	415	440

Abidjan (port)	480	495	San Pedro (port)	470	470

DJ ICE Cocoa Review: Ends Up; Shy Of Key Resistance

NEW YORK (Dow Jones)--ICE Futures U.S. pit-traded cocoa settled slightly higher Friday as the market backed off of key resistance, leaving it poised to push through \$2,000 next week, market participants said. Most-active March futures settled \$12 higher at \$1,983 a metric ton and December ended up \$11 at \$1,978.

March pit-traded cocoa futures opened slightly lower, despite having gained technical strength in recent sessions. However, the contract moved quickly toward resistance, hitting the session high of \$1,998 a ton, but backed off the key ceiling of \$2,000.

Up-side stops were hit around \$1,992-\$1,993, said Mike Otto, broker at Otto Commodities in New York. March then moved choppy within a \$30 range for the session, settling in the upper half. The December contract didn't trade until just ahead of the close.

Light speculative and commercial buying has been enough to rally the market recently, said James Cordier, founder of Optionsellers.com, based in Tampa. "Producers have sold what they were interested in selling as fast as possible, now manufacturer buying and less producer selling will push the market through \$2,000 early next week," he said.

"(The) \$2,000 (point) is the big ballgame here," Otto said. "If we get through that, the market is really going to run." New open interest looks to add upside momentum to the market as well, Cordier said.

In other cocoa news, the International Cocoa Organization World estimated that cocoa grindings will outpace cocoa output in 2006-07 by 242,000 metric tons, the organization said in Friday's quarterly estimate. This is up from the previous quarter's estimate of 156,000 tons and contrasts from 2005-06 when a 167,000-ton-surplus was produced.

Ivory Coast is to start redeploying customs officials on its northern borders by Dec. 30, according to an agreement published Friday by the state-owned Fraternalite Matin newspaper. The redeployment aims to halt smuggling of an estimated 70,000 metric tons of cocoa beans from the world's top cocoa grower. The agreement was signed Nov. 28 by President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, who is also the leader of the rebel New Forces movement that has controlled the north since a brief civil war in 2002.

On Liffe, cocoa futures ended higher, as the March contract rose GBP9 to GBP979 and December gained GBP15 to settle at GBP951.

On ICE, volume was estimated at 11,686 contracts on the screen and 337 in the pit. In options, approximately 947 calls and 109 puts traded.

Open interest increased by 2,166 positions Thursday to total 141,468 as traders sold 179 December and bought 1,460 March and 345 May.

	ICE	Change	Range
Dec	\$1,978	+11	\$1,978-\$1,978
Mar	\$1,983	+12	\$1,968-\$1,998

Cocoa Traders Should Keep an Eye on the Ivory Coast

Friday, November 30, 2007

by Jurgens Bauer of RJO Futures

About a half an hour after outcry trading commenced, cocoa prices began to stiffen and show strength as volume offers were absorbed. It turns out that political unrest-which seems to always be nearby in a vast majority of cocoa-producing nations-showed itself once again. Such news brings heightened uncertainty, and typically raises concern about the cocoa crop availability-thus firming prices.

Now what is going on, and how will it impact prices? Well, first of all I am not an expert on the politics involved in the Ivory Coast. Beyond that I'm always skeptical about the availability and validity of news, especially when I do not know or feel I cannot trust the messenger. That being said, here is what I have harvested from various news reports (and please feel free to pass along anything you might hear):

As we had already learned from reports on Wednesday, Ivory Coast cocoa farmers have threatened to blockade the southwestern port of San Pedro beginning next week-unless they get paid a guaranteed price. This means a difficult time getting trucks carrying cocoa into the port. Then today additional reports suggested rebel problems. It seems that militia groups

in the unstable west of the country briefly began to disarm in May this year, but the process quickly fell apart amid squabbles over money. There has been confusion regarding a call for "disarmament, reunification and organization of long-delayed elections." All of this uncertainty breeds nervousness in the cocoa market, and subsequently the potential for higher prices.

While regular readers will attest to my bullish flavor toward cocoa, one thing I can recommend is to get long volatility in options regardless of what transpires-as volatility will rise as does the uncertainty of price and the pace of any moves. I expect the pace will heat up and with a positive March close (albeit just above 1970, 2000 should be visited soon).

Support: 1960-55, 1942-27, 1910, 1892-1880, 1860-50

Resistance: 1970, 1985-2000, 2040-2060

Processing and Manufacturing

Ivory Coast President to Inaugurate New Cocoa Grind on Dec 4 (DJ)

Source: Dow Jones Newswires, 28/11/2007

Abidjan --- Coast's President Laurent Gbagbo is to inaugurate on Dec. 4 the Societe d'Usinage et de Conditionnement du Sud-Ouest, or SUCSO, a new Ivorian-owned cocoa processing plant in the southwestern port of San Pedro, the company's financial director said. SUCSO is to produce cocoa liquor, has an annual grinding capacity of 15,000 metric tons and has been operational since mid-October, Faustin N'datchi told Dow Jones Newswires on Wednesday.

The company is set up and wholly-owned by Ivorian businessman Martial Yace, who is also chairman and managing director of Cantalou's 60,000 tons/year Cemoi cocoa processing plant in the main port of Abidjan. SUCSO is Ivory Coast's seventh cocoa processing plant and takes the country's total installed annual cocoa grinding capacity to 377,000 tons or 29% of the average annual cocoa crop of around 1.3 million tons.

Cloetta Fazer invests in new chocolate lines

By Charlotte Eyre, ConfectioneryNews.com, France

27/11/2007 - Sweden-based confectionery firm Cloetta Fazer today announced it is investing SEK 270m (€29m) in two new chocolate manufacturing lines, as part of a drive to boost its market share in the Nordic region. Chief executive officer Jerper Aberg said new lines will be built in both countries where the company has production facilities - one in Sweden and the other in Finland.

Unlike many confectionery companies, which often move factories out to emerging markets in Eastern Europe and Asia, Cloetta Fazer has decided to concentrate on production in its key market countries. "New product launches, delivery reliability and high quality are key success factors, and this investment in our own Nordic factories will give us the necessary conditions to achieve all of these," Aberg said. The new lines will process popular Cloetta chocolate brands, such as Karl Fazer, Kexchlad and Dumle.

Aberg added: "Because chocolate is currently the most expansive segment of market, we will continue to focus on development of our prioritised brands and aim to offer interesting new chocolate products to the consumers."

Cloetta Fazer is currently one of the largest confectioners in the Nordic region, with a 22 per cent market share. The company has 1,500 employees, with 600 in Finland and 370 in Sweden, and produces throat lozenges, toffee and lollipops as well as chocolate.

For the third quarter ending September 2007, the company said that sales rose 8 per cent to SEK 745m, despite high commodity and manufacturing costs pulling operating profits down.

The company's overall strategy is to increase its presence in the Nordic region, and last month it acquired Swedish pastilles-maker Karamellpojarna, the third biggest supplier of throat pastilles in Sweden.

Nestle Strengthens its Leadership in the Russian Chocolate Market

Source: Nestle S.A.

Vevey, Switzerland, November 26, 2007 - Nestlé Rossiya, the leading food and beverage company in Russia, today announced the acquisition of Ruzskaya Confectionery Factory (RKF). This company offers consumers a wide range of chocolate products under the Comilfo and Ruzanna brands. The acquisition price was not disclosed. Completion of the transaction is subject to the usual regulatory approvals by the Russian Federation authorities.

With sales of about USD 51 million in 2006 and an estimated 40% organic growth rate for 2007, RKF is a leading premium chocolate producer in Russia. Once the acquisition is completed, about 1,000 RKF employees, with their specific know-how, will join Nestlé Rossiya. Nestlé plans to extend the production capacity of RKF, which is located in the Ruza district near Moscow. With its strong supply and distribution network, Nestlé will bolster the presence of the acquired brands in Russian regions outside Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

The high-quality image of the Comilfo and Ruzanna brands ideally complements Nestlé's chocolate brand portfolio in Russia, and will boost Nestlé's presence in the fastest growing segment of the Russian chocolate market, the premium category. Indeed, the move is a further testimony to Nestlé's commitment to the premium chocolate market across the world.

Over the past 13 years, Nestlé has built up a strong presence in Russia with over 10,000 employees and 13 factories. With double-digit growth rates and sales of more than CHF 1.6 billion in 2006, Nestlé is market leader in Russia in coffee, chocolate, culinary products and infant nutrition, and is making good progress in pet food and ice cream.

Business & Economy

Nigeria maintains worrying silence over Euro-Africa trade agreement

Business Day, Nigeria , Simon Njoku & Godfery Ofurum
28 November, 2007

Africa trade agreement is causing major unease among the organised private sector of the economy. African countries along with their Caribbean Pacific counterparts are locked in discussions with the European Union over some economic partnership agreements (EPAs) involving trade relations.

Nigeria's organised private sector operatives are currently taking different positions on whether the Federal Government should assent to the agreement. For instance cocoa processors, who are rooting for government to sign the agreement, say this has put exports from Nigeria at disadvantage. Abimbola Oladapo, president, Cocoa Processors Association of Nigeria (COPAN), told Business Day that cocoa exported from Nigeria attracts 4.2 percent duty as a result of non-signing of the agreement. He said: "Non-endorsement of the agreement by Nigeria means that every processed cocoa shipped from Nigeria will attract duty of 4.2 percent or about \$250 a ton."

There are 21 cocoa factories in Nigeria with an installed capacity of 266,000 tons. The belief among industry stakeholders is that value addition to cocoa products could boost Nigeria's foreign exchange revenue, employment opportunities and wealth creation. But fiercely opposed to signing the agreement, Ogo-Oluwa Bankole, chairman, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Ogun State branch (OGUNMAN), warns local manufacturers to gird their loins and get set for another round of challenges that the economy would throw up. According to him, the resultant effect of signing the agreement could be best imagined as the Nigerian economy would be flooded by European products that were produced under "conducive" business environment at prices that our products may not be able to compete with.

Adeniyi Ogunsanya, vice chairman, Industrial, Small and Medium Industries (SMI) Trade Group of the Nigeria Association of Chamber of Commerce Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), said government should suspend signing the agreement until such a time the industries in Nigeria could compete in the global market. Ogunsanya said lack of infrastructural facilities was putting Nigerian industries in a disadvantaged position.

In the same vein, Dunning Oyegbile, managing director, Nigerian Distilleries Limited (NDL), said any government position that would not take cognisance of the limitations imposed on Nigerian manufacturers would not be in the interest of the Nigerian economy. Oyegbile said: "Any decision taken must appreciate the limitations we have in our environment, where we generate everything for ourselves, where it takes a long time to clear our goods from the ports, where we pay high interest rates, where the excise and import duties are not competitive."

However, analysts are of the opinion that the trade agreement proposed by the EU will constitute a major threat to poverty reduction and overall development in ACP countries. They based their conclusion on the basis of unfair trade rules that the agreement will present to the EU and ACP countries as well as significant losses in government revenue due to significant reduction in trade tariffs, which may undermine African regional integration.

On September 27 2002, the European Union and the ACP (African and Caribbean Pacific) countries officially opened negotiations on partnership agreements. These negotiations, to take place over five years, are aimed at redefining the trade regime between the two groups of countries as well as open up the ACP countries to the Europeans for competitiveness.

However, this development has become a crucial matter of concern to the Organised Private Sector (OPS), particularly, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), which perceives it as another form of imperialism from the Europeans against Africa and the Caribbeans.

The Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 is the successor to Lome Convention and it is a shift from aid package to trade as the promoter of development in the sub-region. In the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, emphasis was placed on EPAs as the driver of the new relationship. Each regional block in the ACP is expected to enter into agreement with the EU based on negotiation terms.

The roadmap of EPA prescribes many conditionalities. One of the conditions is the harmonisation of tariff and related trade matters with effect from January 2008. It also stipulates opening up of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) market on a reciprocal basis, to EU products on gradual reduction of tariff from 2008 and complete elimination of tariff on EU products by 2020.

As part of preparation for the EPA negotiation, the meeting of stakeholders continues at the regional and national levels. Impact assessment studies have been conducted to determine the implications of EPA on each country in ECOWAS and Nigeria's report was categorical that EPA represents a major challenge to the country.

Nigeria: Unpaid N14bn Grant Threatens Cocoa Industry

AllAfrica.com, Washington

Adelanwa Bamgboye, Lagos, 29 November 2007

President of the Cocoa Processors Association of Nigeria, COPAN, Mr. Abimbola Oladapo has said that the suspension of the Export Expansion Grant and non-payment of two years N14billion arrears owed the processors under the scheme are threatening the cocoa industry in Nigeria. Speaking at a press briefing in Lagos on Tuesday, Oladapo said the suspension of the EEG could kill the industry, and force 70,000 factory workers and 200,000 farmers, out of jobs.

The EEG is an export incentive that offsets 30 per cent of production costs suffered by exporters due to poor infrastructure. Oladapo said the suspension was counter-productive, especially to the cocoa industry that employs several thousands of Nigerians, including resourceful but poor farmers. "It is pertinent to state that with the present situation, foreign partners are beginning to develop cold feet and the survival of factories under construction is being threatened," Oladapo said.

According to him, the cocoa medium ginneries cost about N2 billion to N4 billion to set up. He said the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo had put the EEG in place to encourage the growth of industries, which saw the emergence of new industries. "For example, before the Obasanjo regime, we had four operational cocoa processing factories: however within eight years, three new factories were established and about five were refurbished," he said.

Oladapo also said the failure of the government to sign free trade agreements with the African, Caribbean Pacific (ACP) could see exports from Nigeria trading at a disadvantage. "Non-endorsement of the agreement by Nigeria means that every processed cocoa shipped from Nigeria will attract duty of 4.2per cent or about \$250 per tonne," he said. He said while the association would not compel the government to sign the agreement, there was need for government to put in place a price cushioning mechanism for operators.

The COPAN Secretary, Mr. Felix Oladunjoye, said there are 21 cocoa factories in the country with installed capacity of 266,000 tonnes. He explained that value addition to products could enable Nigeria to earn more revenue and accelerate employment and wealth creation.

Chocolate giants face Canadian price fix enquiry

FoodNavigator-USA, France, By Neil Merrett

11/29/2007 - Cadbury, Mars and a number of other leading global confectioners are under investigation in Canada over allegations of price fixing in the country, press reports have said. The country's Competition Bureau told UK newspaper The Daily Telegraph that the Canadian operations of Nestle and Hershey, Cadbury and Mars, have handed over documents regarding their pricing strategies.

News of the investigation highlights pressure on confectioners to remain competitive in pricing their goods on the back of unstable cocoa prices. The competition Bureau said there was no indication as yet of any wrongdoing and no charges had been brought against any companies, according to the report. Though the enquiry focuses solely on pricing of chocolate bars, news sources suggest that the investigation could be expanded to the wider confectionery market in the country.

Allegations over the price fixing have come at a particular difficult time for manufacturers of chocolate. Earlier this month, the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) said a strong increase in cocoa supply from the Ivory Coast has failed to put an end to market uncertainty over the price of the commodity. In the organization's full monthly report for October, the daily price of Cocoa was down \$23 (€15) from the previous month to \$1,915 (€1,293) per tonne, though a drive for top-quality beans resulted in a late rally in prices.

Chocolate Bar Investigation

580 CFRA Radio, Canada -Josh Pringle

Wednesday, November 28, 2007

The Competition Bureau is conducting an investigation into chocolate bar pricing in Canada. The Globe and Mail reports the bureau served search warrants on several chocolate bar makers this week. The Globe reports Federal regulators made the move after hearing allegations that some companies teamed up to fix prices. The bureau is investigating Nestle, Cadbury, Mars and Hershey. Representatives from all four major chocolate makers say their companies will fully co-operate with any probe.

Nestle: Russian chocolate provides smooth investment potential

Food Business Review - Nov 27, 2007

By Vicky McCrorie

Nestle has acquired Moscow-based chocolate manufacturer Ruzskaya Confectionery Factory. Nestle's acquisition of leading Russian chocolate maker Ruzskaya Confectionery Factory highlights its confidence in the buoyant Russian market. As a result of a booming economy and rising disposable incomes, Russian consumers are increasing their spend on premium chocolate, a fact which has led global players such as Nestle to seek out a bigger slice of the market.

Nestle has paid an undisclosed amount for the Moscow-based Ruzskaya Confectionery Factory, which specializes in premium chocolates under the brand names of Comilfo and Ruzanna. The confectioner generated a turnover of around US\$51 million in 2006 and is estimated to achieve sales growth of 40% in 2007.

The acquisition will complement Nestle's solid Russian chocolate portfolio, cementing its position as the leading chocolate company in the country, with over 13 years of experience in Russia. Nestle's strong supply network in Russia will be used to enhance the distribution of Ruzskaya products, which currently have a Moscow and St Petersburg bias.

The \$1.3 billion Russian chocolate market has one of the strongest growth rates in Europe, with a forecast CAGR of 8.0% by value in the 2006-2010 period. This compares to a CAGR of 2.3% for Europe as a whole over the same period. It is this strong growth potential that has encouraged global players such as Nestle to look to enhance their share in the market.

A key reason for the buoyant chocolate market in Russia is the rising disposable income in the country, led by the growing commodity price of oil - the main source of Russia's growing wealth. This rising affluence has led consumers to spend greater amounts on luxury goods, including everyday luxuries such as premium chocolate.

Nestle is not the only company to exploit this rising growth. Earlier in 2007, Wrigley bought an 80% stake in Russia's second leading premium chocolate maker, A. Korkunov, paying \$300 million. This marked Wrigley's first foray in to chocolate; the fact that it made this entry in Russia highlights how the global players perceive the country as having strong growth potential.

With prior knowledge of both the Russian chocolate market and premium chocolate in general, Nestle has an advantage over Wrigley in the market and is expected to develop Ruzskaya into a strong local brand. 'End Intelliext

Environmental

How Chocolate Can Save the Planet

(Weekend of 11/24/2007)

(oskay) Many people agree that chocolate is good for the soul, and researchers are finding that chocolate can be good for the body, too. But the environment? How could chocolate help with global climate change?

The answer is found in a little piece of paradise, a patch of rainforest in eastern Brazil. Everywhere you look, something is growing. Orchids nestle in the crooks of trees. There are hundreds of shades of green, and the forest is loud with birds and insects.

Some areas have been thinned out and planted with cacao trees — the source of chocolate. The pods contain the magical beans that Aztecs counted like gold. The cultivated cacao trees grow just a bit higher than a man can reach, and rain forest trees tower over them like something out of Dr. Seuss — some round like lollipops, some flat like a plate.

And here's the climate connection. Rainforest trees and plants store massive amounts of carbon — keeping it from getting into the air as carbon dioxide.

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Labour Issues

Ghana: Denmark boosts anti child labour efforts

AfricaNews, Netherlands

Francis Ameyibor, Africa News reporter in Accra,

Ghana

Tuesday 27 November 2007

The Danish Embassy in Ghana has provided cash, inputs and equipment worth 12,000 dollars to people in communities in 11 cocoa growing districts in the country to help fight against child labour. The equipment including motorbikes, computers and accessories were presented to communities in Bia, Sefwi Wiawso in the Western region; Suhum Kraboa Coaltar in the Eastern region; Amansie Central, Amansie East, Asante Akim North and South, Atwima Nwabiagya, Wassa Amenfi West, Aowin Suaman, and Kwabibirem Districts in the Ashanti region.

Miss Patience Dapaah, Communication Officer in-charge of National Programme for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Cocoa (NPECLC) of the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment announced this at a day's workshop on child labour at Offinso in Ashanti on Thursday. The workshop organised by the Ministry, was sponsored by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to eliminate worst forms of child labour in the cocoa sector by 2011. She said the Ministry had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the 11 districts to initiate action plans to curb child labour, while efforts were being made to solicit for more funds for the remaining 35 cocoa growing districts where child labour was predominant.

Mr Eric Appiah Okrah, Child Protection Specialist of UNICEF, disclosed that UNICEF would spend 40,000 Ghana cedis to sponsor sensitization workshops in the 46 cocoa growing districts in the country.

Mr Augustine Collins Ntim, Offinso District Chief Executive, said the district had for the past two years nursed about 1.7 million seedlings of cocoa, citrus and oil palm for distribution to interested farmers for planting. He said arrangements were far advanced to establish committees to fight child labour in the district and called on assembly members, unit Committees, and other stakeholders to ensure total elimination of child labour in the district.

Your Christmas chocolate – will it be Fair Trade chocolate?

Anglican Church of Canada, Canada - Nov 24, 2007

Christmas is coming with all the associated chocolate. If you have a sweet tooth and love chocolate, enjoy it ethically. Did you know that you can buy Advent Calendars (yes the real one with the Bethlehem scene) with Fair Trade Chocolate inside

What is happening in the growing, picking and buying of cocoa that is unfair? Why do we need to have Fair Trade

While chocolate is sweet for us, it is heartbreaking for cocoa producers and their families. Most cocoa farmers are trapped in poverty and forced to rely on child labour and even child slavery. Meanwhile the chocolate companies profit from the cheap prices. The six largest cocoa producing companies are in the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, and Cameroon.

In a 2002 study by The International Institute Of Tropical Agriculture of the 4500 African cocoa farmers, it was found that an estimated 284,000 children laboured under terrible conditions. They often worked from 6 am to 6:30 pm applying insecticides and pesticides, and using machetes without the necessary protective equipment.

Some parents in poverty stricken Baurkina Faso or Mali sell their children to traffickers believing that they will find honest work once they arrive on the Ivory Coast and then send their earnings home. Their wages are so low that this does not happen.

The \$13 billion chocolate industry is consolidated in just two firms. They take little responsibility for the conditions under which they receive the chocolate ingredient "cocoa"

Carol Off, a Canadian broadcaster, has written Bitter Chocolate. In this book, she investigates the dark side of chocolate. She traces the origins of the cocoa craze and follows chocolate's evolution under such overseers as Hershey, Cadbury and Mars. In the Ivory Coast, that produces nearly half of the world's cocoa beans, she follows the dark seam of greed. Against a backdrop of civil war and corruption, desperately poor farmers engage in appalling practices such as indentured servitude of young boys-children who don't even know what chocolate tastes like!

In a CBC radio interview Ms. Off relayed a conversation in which she asked children who picked the cocoa pods from the high branches with the long-handle machetes if they knew what was made with cocoa. They had no idea. They couldn't even imagine what a chocolate bar tasted like!

What takes us a few minutes to pop in our mouths is brought to us at a terrible price. What can we do? We can buy fair trade chocolate, cocoa, and sugar as well as coffee.

Fair Trade means decent working conditions and wages, along with a greater possibility for schooling and health care for children and adults working on the farms as well as decent return for the farmers.

When you eat chocolate, think Fair Trade!

You can buy Fair Trade Chocolate Advent Calendars and Bars at Ten Thousand Villages www.tenthousandvillages.com. You can also get it at most health food stores, the East End Food Co-op on Commercial Drive, or Famous Foods on Kingsway.

Have a Fair Trade Chocolate Sunday at your parish in the next week. Ten Thousand Villages will help you with this.

You can get more information on Fair Trade and where the Fair Trade La Siembra Camino chocolate is sold in Canada www.lasiembra.com. For further information go to www.globalexchange.org.

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund nationally (www.pwrdf.org) and within the diocese is giving leadership in the area of Fair Trade. You are welcome to contact your parish PWRDF representative or me at St. Margaret Cedar Cottage, 604 874-5030.

Margaret Marquardt
Chair, Diocesan Justice and Peace Unit

UN: Consumers, Act against Slavery

United Nations, Nov 27 (Prensa Latina) A UN official warned consumers of chocolate, cars and diamonds Tuesday that they may be buying products soaked in the sweat of thousands of child slaves. "We should be watching those predators dedicated to human traffic and governments should facilitate the necessary security for the task," declared Antonio Maria Costa, director of the UN Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC), speaking at an international meeting in Abidjan, capital of Ivory Coast.

The Italian diplomat urged the governments of western and central Africa especially to take measures to fight the kidnapping of children, which nations are particularly vulnerable to this global crime due to the great numbers of "lost children," including orphans and child soldiers.

He also urged consumers to use their purchasing power with greater force, "Do you really want to consume chocolate, to drive on wheels or wear diamonds soaked in slaves perspiration and blood?" he asked. In the same sense he asked all companies and organizations with business in Africa to be certain of their supply chains and that employment practices do not support human traffic.

Others

Consumer Reports rates top hot chocolates

Chatham Journal Weekly, NC , November 28, 2007

Yonkers, NY — With the holiday season and colder weather rapidly approaching, Consumer Reports tested 10 popular hot chocolates. Topping the list and rated Excellent were Ghirardelli Double Chocolate and Cacao Reserve Mayan Blend by Hershey's, prepared with water at 53 cents per serving and 140 calories.

Consumer Reports also identified two CR Best Buys that rated Very Good: Swiss Miss Dark Chocolate Sensation and Hershey's Cocoa. Calories in the tested hot chocolates ranged from 80 to 262 per serving and cost from 22 cents to 64 cents per serving. Both calories and cost were affected by whether the manufacturer recommended using milk or water to prepare the cocoas.

CR's trained testers prepared the 10 cocoas according to manufacturer's recommendations and found that the best hot chocolate tastes like its name. But choose wrong from the ones CR tested, and cocoa connoisseurs could be sipping a thin reddish concoction that tastes wimpy and feels oily in the mouth. "The best tasting products are pricey, but for about half the price, consumers can get Swiss Miss Dark Chocolate Sensation or Hershey's Cocoa, which tasted very good," said Leslie Ware, editor at large, Consumer Reports. "If you choose wrong, you could end up feeling the need to add whipped cream or marshmallows to make it taste better."

When milk is used to make the Ghirardelli Reserve, it adds calories and fat. When CR used milk instead of water to make the Cacao Reserve, the chocolate flavor became more milk-chocolaty. In the lower-rated products, milk not only added flavor, but covered some defects.

The full results of the cocoa ratings are available in the December 2007 issue of Consumer Reports, available wherever magazines are sold. Portions of the report will be available on www.ConsumerReports.org.

EU Assists Ghana's Cocoa Sector

Business/Finance - Tue, 27 Nov 2007

By Emelia Ennin, : [Daily Guide](#)



THE GHANA government and the European Commission have signed a €8 million (GH¢9.6 million) grant to support the cocoa sector and the Ghana Police Service. As part of the agreement, €5 million would be used to support the cocoa sector while the other €3 million would go to the Police Service.

The €5 million grant, which is expected to support an initial programme in the cocoa sector, is dubbed, "Cocoa sector support programme phase II", and projected to be executed within four years with the aim of improving the livelihood of small holder cocoa farmers. It would also help sustain cocoa production in the country.

Finance and Economic Planning Minister, Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu who initialed on behalf of Ghana explained that the Cocoa Sector Support Programme Phase II would focus on addressing the environmental and social impacts of cocoa production, strengthening the management capacities of existing and emerging cocoa farmers as well as community-based organizations.

Filiberto Ceriani Sebregondi, Head of the European Commission in Ghana, who signed the agreement on behalf of the European Union, said the support to the cocoa sector would help reduce income vulnerability and thereby improve livelihoods in line with Ghana's will to improve competitiveness, foster growth and become a middle-income country.

Commenting on the financial sector, William Mensah, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), who was also present at the signing ceremony, explained that the COCOBOD would implement the first component aimed at improving farmer's access to high quality hybrid planting material. The second and third components, Mr Mensah said, would be implemented by the sustainable Tree Crops Programme, a consortium bringing together players in the chocolate industry, producers, researchers, government agencies and conservation people.

Ghana has so far received a total of €315.6 million (GH¢440 million) from the European Development Fund through this assistance.

Shortage of coins push up chocolate sale

27 Nov, 2007, 1149 hrs IST, PTI

Economic Times, India

MADURAI: Sale of fifty paise chocolates in this city has picked up manifold not because of people's sudden love for it, but to tide over acute shortage of 50 paise coins. The chocolates are given in some government and private buses, canteens, hotels, drug stores and parking places in place of coins, a wholesale dealer of confectionaries told media. Some scrap dealers attribute this shortage to mass purchase of coins by blade manufacturers in Mumbai for making high-quality razor blades.

The dealers said that they were paying two rupee for one rupee coin and one rupee for a 50 paise coin. The companies in turn would pay more margin to us, they said. "Though the business was at a peak till a month ago there was shortage of coins at present", said Nazeer and Selvam, dealers in scrap iron business.

They said they had a deal with employees who were manning the vehicle parking areas and some bus conductors to supply coins. But they were also problem of procuring coins now. "We sell two bottles of chocolate instead of one bottle", said Krishnamurthy a leading agent of branded chocolates.

Even in hospital canteens, where the coffee or tea cost Rs 3.50, chocolates were given for 50 paise balance, he said. "A conductor or a parking site employee would earn about Rs.15 if he is able to use a bottle of chocolates for the purpose of giving the change," said a transport official.

However, the chocolates were not given in all the buses as in rural areas there was no coin shortage. "In some city buses they (chocolates) are given without our authorisation," a city transport corporation official told media.

Heritage Workshop on Cocoa in Cuba Ends

Cuban News Agency

Havana, Nov 26 (acn) Experts from four countries in the field of intangible cultural heritage toured the Cuban 'Cocoa Route' after the First Workshop on "Bearers of the cacao tradition in Cuba; Safeguarding and transmission" held in the island's eastern city of Baracoa, ended on Sunday.

On the route, the Cuban, French, Spanish and Belgian specialists had a first-hand view of the different stages related to the production of cocoa, which included sowing, transplanting, harvesting, drying, storing and industrial processing leading to the manufacture of chocolate.

This basic productive structure was implemented by about a hundred French families who came from Haiti between 1781 and 1804, and gave a boost to the growing of cocoa in plantations in Cuba.

The Workshop, which was sponsored by the UNESCO regional office of culture for Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Aruba, based in Havana, was attended by Belgian ambassador to Cuba, Claudia de Maesschalck, and president of the National Council of Cultural Heritage, Margarita Ruiz.

Baracoa city historian Alejandro Hartmann was also on hand at the meeting. He is the author of the books "Baracoa, the first city of Cuba" and "The Days of Columbus in Baracoa".

Choccie rejects power lorry to Africa

Independent Online, South Africa - Nov 26, 2007

London - Two British environmentalists have set out on an adventurous journey to Timbuktu in a lorry powered by bio-fuel made from renewable resources, including recycled chocolate. After driving through France and Spain, engineer Andy Pag and electrician John Grimshaw will drive their Ford lorry across the Sahara, aiming to reach the remote city of Timbuktu, in the west African state of Mali, as their final destination.

Both men, in their 30s, are keen environmentalists and want to raise awareness of the benefits of bio-diesel which produces lower carbon emissions than fossil fuels and is made from renewable resources. Their carbon-neutral trip won the support of Ecotec, a British firm which makes fuel from renewable resources, and specialises in recycling chocolate rejects into green fuel.

"Timbuktu is a city which is being eaten away by the encroaching desert. It's at the sharp end of climate change," the pair said. "If we can make it there with bio-fuel there's no reason why motorists can't use it on the school run or on their commute to work," they added.

The two men are to take a small processing unit with them on the trip, expected to take three weeks, to convert waste oil products into fuel. They are taking 2 000 litres of bio-diesel made from 4 000kg of chocolate misshapes, the equivalent of 80 000 chocolate bars, to fuel their adventure. But they will not be able to dip into their tank if they feel peckish as the bio-diesel does not look or smell like chocolate. The fuel is made from cocoa butter extracted from the waste chocolate, which is melted before being mixed with methanol and caustic soda. -

Nigeria maintains worrying silence over Euro-Africa trade agreement

Simon Njoku & Godfery Ofurum on 28 November, 2007 00:00:00

Business Day, Nigeria - Nov 27, 2007

An unspoken decision by the Federal Government not to take a decisive position on a proposed Euro-Africa trade agreement is causing major unease among the organised private sector of the economy. African countries along with their Caribbean Pacific counterparts are locked in discussions with the European Union over some economic partnership agreements (EPAs) involving trade relations.

Nigeria's organised private sector operatives are currently taking different positions on whether the Federal Government should assent to the agreement.

For instance cocoa processors, who are rooting for government to sign the agreement, say this has put exports from Nigeria at disadvantage. Abimbola Oladapo, president, Cocoa Processors Association of Nigeria (COPAN), told Business Day that cocoa exported from Nigeria attracts 4.2 percent duty as a result of non-signing of the agreement.

He said: "Non-endorsement of the agreement by Nigeria means that every processed cocoa shipped from Nigeria will attract duty of 4.2 percent or about \$250 a ton."

There are 21 cocoa factories in Nigeria with an installed capacity of 266,000 tons. The belief among industry stakeholders is that value addition to cocoa products could boost Nigeria's foreign exchange revenue, employment opportunities and wealth creation.

But fiercely opposed to signing the agreement, Ogo-Oluwa Bankole, chairman, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Ogun State branch (OGUNMAN), warns local manufacturers to gird their loins and get set for another round of challenges that the economy would throw up.

According to him, the resultant effect of signing the agreement could be best imagined as the Nigerian economy would be flooded by European products that were produced under "conducive" business environment at prices that our products may not be able to compete with.

Adeniyi Ogunsanya, vice chairman, Industrial, Small and Medium Industries (SMI) Trade Group of the Nigeria Association of Chamber of Commerce Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), said government should suspend signing the agreement until such a time the industries in Nigeria could compete in the global market. Ogunsanya said lack of infrastructural facilities was putting Nigerian industries in a disadvantaged position.

In the same vein, Dunning Oyegbile, managing director, Nigerian Distilleries Limited (NDL), said any government position that would not take cognisance of the limitations imposed on Nigerian manufacturers would not be in the interest of the Nigerian economy.

Oyegbile said: "Any decision taken must appreciate the limitations we have in our environment, where we generate everything for ourselves, where it takes a long time to clear our goods from the ports, where we pay high interest rates, where the excise and import duties are not competitive."

However, analysts are of the opinion that the trade agreement proposed by the EU will constitute a major threat to poverty reduction and overall development in ACP countries. They based their conclusion on the basis of unfair trade rules that the agreement will present to the EU and ACP countries as well as significant losses in government revenue due to significant reduction in trade tariffs, which may undermine African regional integration.

On September 27 2002, the European Union and the ACP (African and Caribbean Pacific) countries officially opened negotiations on partnership agreements. These negotiations, to take place over five years, are aimed at redefining the trade regime between the two groups of countries as well as open up the ACP countries to the Europeans for competitiveness.

However, this development has become a crucial matter of concern to the Organised Private Sector (OPS), particularly, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), which perceives it as another form of imperialism from the Europeans against Africa and the Caribbeans.

The Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 is the successor to Lome Convention and it is a shift from aid package to trade as the promoter of development in the sub-region. In the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, emphasis was placed on EPAs as the driver of the new relationship. Each regional block in the ACP is expected to enter into agreement with the EU based on negotiation terms.

The roadmap of EPA prescribes many conditionalities. One of the conditions is the harmonisation of tariff and related trade matters with effect from January 2008. It also stipulates opening up of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) market on a reciprocal basis, to EU products on gradual reduction of tariff from 2008 and complete elimination of tariff on EU products by 2020.

As part of preparation for the EPA negotiation, the meeting of stakeholders continues at the regional and national levels. Impact assessment studies have been conducted to determine the implications of EPA on each country in ECOWAS and Nigeria's report was categorical that EPA represents a major challenge to the country.

Ivory Coast elections by June 2008: mediator

1 day ago

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — Ivory Coast's president and prime minister signed a deal Tuesday agreeing to hold elections by June 2008 "at the latest", in a deal brokered in neighbouring Burkina Faso. President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister and former rebel Guillaume Soro penned the accord at a meeting in Ouagadougou and overseen by Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore. "The signing parties envision that the elections will occur at the end of the first half of 2008 at the latest," Burkina Faso Foreign Minister Djibrill Bassole said.

The meeting was called to revive a peace deal brokered eight months ago, which had shown signs of stalling. "We have begun, at the behest of the president of Burkina Faso, a short journey of friendship, fraternity and hard work to pass from one stage of this crisis to the next," Gbagbo said. "Now we enter into the stage that can properly be called practical preparations for the elections," he told journalists.

Bassole said that the exact date of the presidential and legislative elections would be proposed by the country's independent electoral commission. A technical timetable will have to be drawn up by those put in charge of establishing an up-to-date electoral roll. "It is only when all that is in place, and on the suggestion of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), that the government will be able to decide upon an election date," Bassole explained.

Since September the laborious task of first identifying Ivorians and then putting them on the electoral roll has been underway - in the face of huge obstacles. The French firm Sagem was given the contract for producing identity cards and creating a new electoral roll earlier this month.

The West African country -- the world's biggest cocoa-producer and once a beacon of peace and prosperity -- has been sliced in two by civil conflict since September 2002, when rebels attempted a coup against Gbagbo. Since then the rebels have been in control of the north, while Gbagbo has ruled the south. Gbagbo embarks Wednesday on a symbolic trip to the far north of the country aimed at showing that the Ivory Coast is on the road to reconciliation.

For the first time since the September 2002 failed coup by Soro's New Forces (NF), Gbagbo will visit the extreme north of the country, where the predominantly Muslim population bore the brunt of low-level civil conflict. He will visit over three days the cities of Korhogo, Ferkessedougou, Boundiali and Tengrela, close to the borders with Mali and Burkina Faso.

Gbagbo made a shorter trip in July less far north during which he and Soro attended a peace ceremony marking the formal end of war and the start of the reconciliation between the predominantly Muslim north and Christian-majority south.

Gbagbo, a Christian from the south, wants his visit to signify that the country has turned a page over its recent troubled past. "We must show that from now on it is possible to run an electoral campaign in peace," added Meite Sindou, Soro's spokesman.

TIT BITS

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

US MIDDAY: cocoa and coffee surge

NEW YORK (December 01, 2007): New York cocoa futures shot up in early trade on Friday on fund buying as the market tested resistance at \$2,000, while coffee also rose, traders said. On the screen, ICE benchmark March cocoa jumped \$16 to \$1,987 per tonne at 9:25 am (1425 GMT), after hitting \$1,994, its loftiest position since November 2. Aside from one, the rest were \$16 to \$22 higher.

ICCO raises world cocoa deficit estimate

LONDON (December 01, 2007): The International cocoa Organisation (ICCO) said on Friday it had increased its estimate for the global cocoa deficit in 2006/07 to 242,000 tonnes from a previous forecast of 156,000 tonnes. The ICCO estimated a global surplus of 167,000 tonnes in 2005/06. Investment bank Fortis earlier this month forecast an even larger deficit in 2006/07 of 301,000 tonnes.

New York cocoa up on short-covering

NEW YORK (December 01, 2007): US cocoa futures ended sharply higher on Thursday after hitting a 3-week peak on speculative short covering, dealers said. "This was a technical bounce. We're getting some short covering here because we've been able to hold that \$1,930 \$1,935 area basis the March contract," one trader said.

London coffee and cocoa up; sugar weakens

LONDON (November 30, 2007): Robusta coffee futures ended higher on Thursday, boosted by speculative and fund buying as the market rebounded from recent weakness, dealers said. cocoa also finished higher with the market threatening to finally break out of its recent narrow range while white sugar ended weaker on options-related selling.

US MIDDAY: coffee and cocoa up

NEW YORK (November 30, 2007): New York cocoa futures shot up in early trade on Thursday on a stronger dollar and speculative buying, while Arabica futures were slightly higher, traders said. "There's just been all of a sudden some spec buying coming in. The industry's been buying and it looks like the specs got tired of selling to them and had to cover," one cocoa trader said.

cocoa futures drift lower in New York

NEW YORK (November 30, 2007): US cocoa futures finished slightly lower on Wednesday as the weak dollar against the pound calmed trade in New York, dealers said. "I think that, basically, people are wary of being short in New York because of the weak dollar.

Ivorian cocoa arrivals up

ABIDJAN (November 30, 2007): cocoa arrivals at Ivory Coast's San Pedro port reached 165,259 tonnes by November 18, 2007, according to data from the Coffee and cocoa Bourse (BCC) obtained by Reuters on Thursday. That compared with 94,571 tonnes delivered to the port during the same period of the 2006/07 season.

London coffee, sugar and cocoa up

LONDON (November 29, 2007): London sugar futures touched a 2-week high on Wednesday boosted by technical signals indicating the market may finally end its prolonged downtrend although producer selling threatened to limit any rebound, dealers said.

US MIDDAY: coffee jumps, cocoa

NEW YORK (November 29, 2007): New York arabica futures jumped to a 5-week high in early trade on Wednesday, while cocoa futures fell. March electronic coffee rose amid talk of a possible reduction in Brazil's crop and as buy-stop orders were triggered.

New York cocoa futures up

NEW YORK (November 29, 2007): US cocoa futures ended a touch higher on Tuesday, after a quiet session of mixed, fund-led trading, dealers said. "The funds have a very large long position, which could be considered vulnerable to the downside. In light of good arrivals, I would think that this market could take a hit in here," one trader said.

Brazilian cocoa arrivals down

SAO PAULO (November 29, 2007): Brazilian 2007/08 (May/April) cocoa arrivals from Bahia and other states totalled 2.37 million 60-kg bags by November 25, down 3.7 percent from 2.47 million bags a year ago, Bahia Commercial Association said Wednesday.

London coffee weakens, sugar little changed

LONDON (November 28, 2007): London robusta coffee futures finished weaker on Tuesday after touching a one-month low, depressed by a wave of speculative selling which originated in New York's arabica market, dealers said. White sugar finished little changed while cocoa ended slightly higher but remained well within its recent range.

US MIDDAY: cocoa and coffee lower

NEW YORK (November 28, 2007): New York cocoa futures were lower on continued fund liquidation early on Tuesday, while Arabica futures dropped a bit, traders said. "The selling we have seen looks like disenchanted long liquidation, the funds are long," one cocoa trader said. "The arrivals are continuing at a brisk pace, so that will keep somewhat of a lid on the market."

New York cocoa futures fall

NEW YORK (November 28, 2007): US cocoa futures slumped late in the session to close lower on Monday on fund liquidation, dealers said. "Last week we'd seen industry buying every day and essentially had a bit of a rally in the market. Today, it's been lackluster trading and most other commodities that began their day with a plus sign have deteriorated over the course of the trading session," one trader said.

London coffee and sugar down

LONDON (November 27, 2007): London robusta coffee futures finished lower on Monday, weakened by a resumption of harvesting in top robusta producer Vietnam after recent rain delays linked to Tropical Storm Hagibis.

Ivorian cocoa farmers welcome hotter

ABIDJAN (November 27, 2007): Rains were light and sunny spells were lengthy in Ivory Coast's cocoa zones last week farmers said, giving respite to the trees after months of regular rainfall which some growers said was excessive.

PROMOTION OF THE CONSUMPTION OF COCOA AND COCOA
PRODUCTS BY COPAL DURING THE AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS 2008
IN GHANA

The Secretary General sends his compliments and has the honour to confirm the willingness of the National Organizing Committee and the Government of the Republic of Ghana to create a COPAL Village during the upcoming Cup of Nations football tournament.

The Secretary General believes this offers an excellent opportunity to promote our respective origins and cocoa products during this month-long tournament.

Interested countries should contact the Secretariat as soon as possible with the specific requirements for space and other amenities.

Hope Sona Ebai,

Secretary General