



COPAL COCOA Info

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 275

17th – 21st March 2008

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)
17 th March	1669.12	2754.73	1420.00	2709.00
18 th March	1670.08	2757.45	1418.67	2696.00
19 th March	1546.48	2538.92	1335.33	2469.33
20 th March	1472.71	2399.09	1270.67	2317.33
21 st March	-	-	-	-
Average	1590.00	2613.00	1361.00	2548.00

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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 17th March 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1485	1412	-75	1492	1379	11,089
Jul 2008	1521	1455	-74	1533S	1418	5,172
Sep 2008	1470	1393	-81	1475	1360	1,758
Dec 2008	1450	1384	-70	1462	1369	549
Mar 2009	1436	1366	-70	1452	1364S	400
May 2009	1449	1372	-69	1455S	1447S	17
Jul 2009	1460	1381	-70	1466	1402	534
Sep 2009		1393	-67			0
Dec 2009		1403	-71			0
Mar 2010		1403	-71			0
Totals		1396				19519

Tuesday 18th March 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1400	1415	3	1419	1356	12,933
Jul 2008	1445	1460	5	1465	1403	5,326
Sep 2008	1388	1381	-12	1388	1336	903
Dec 2008	1378	1378	-6	1381	1327	818
Mar 2009	1353	1355	-11	1363	1318	285
May 2009		1360	-12			0
Jul 2009	1335	1371	-10	1339	1335	35
Sep 2009		1382	-11			0
Dec 2009		1393	-10			0
Mar 2010		1393	-10			0
Totals		1389				20300

Wednesday 19th March 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1429	1334	-81	1464	1333	16,006
Jul 2008	1479	1361	-99	1511	1360	9,603
Sep 2008	1391	1311	-70	1420S	1317	1,751
Dec 2008	1386	1301	-77	1409S	1303S	2,570
Mar 2009	1370	1280	-75	1397	1284S	466
May 2009	1388	1285	-75	1393	1388S	25
Jul 2009	1385	1295	-76	1418	1385	88
Sep 2009		1303	-79			0
Dec 2009		1314	-79			0
Mar 2010		1314	-79			0
Totals		1310				30509

Thursday 20th March 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1316	1268	-66	1319	1,200	14,801
Jul 2008	1340	1298	-63	1340	1,235	11,775
Sep 2008	1290	1246	-65	1290	1185	3,987
Dec 2008	1254	1232	-69	1270	1183	3,791
Mar 2009	1196	1217	-63	1265S	1169S	882
May 2009	1189	1224	-61	1268S	1162S	172
Jul 2009	1295	1234	-61	1295	1235S	11
Sep 2009	1295	1245	-58	1295	1181S	199
Dec 2009		1256	-58			0
Mar 2010		1256	-58			0
Totals		1248				35618

Friday 21st March 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008						
Jul 2008						
Sep 2008						
Dec 2008						
Mar 2009						
May 2009						
Jul 2009						
Sep 2009						
Dec 2009						
Mar 2010						
Totals		#DIV/0!				0

Average for the week	#DIV/0!				26487
Total for the week					105,946

Spot Prices (US\$ per tonne)

	17 th March	18 th March	19 th March	20 th March	21 st March
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	3153	-	-	2722	-
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	3042	-	-	2611	-
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	3027	-	-	2596	-
Superior Arriba	3055	-	-	2624	-
Sanchez f.a.q.	3102	-	-	2671	-
Malaysian 110	2705	-	-	2274	-
Sulawesi f.a.q.	2947	-	-	2516	-
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	4959	-	-	4177	-
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	7844	-	-	6606	-
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	1256	-	-	1058	-

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association

News

Health and Nutrition

Ghanaian cocoa hybrids have no nutritional drawbacks

FoodNavigator.com, France

By Jess Halliday

17-Mar-2008

Four hybrid cocoa species developed in Ghana to have improved resistance to pest damage during storage have similar nutritional properties to conventional cocoa, says a study that topples a barrier to commercial trade. Ghana is one of the world's largest cocoa producers. According to the International Cocoa Organisation the country's commercial crop in 2005/2006 reached a record high of 646,000 tonnes.

However while cocoa consumption has increased in the last decade, the researchers of the study from the University of Nottingham, UK, say that yield has been on the decline. To combat this, and to help deal with disease and pest resistance issues, a number of hybrids have been developed. The researchers say that while these are not yet in commercial use, they are likely to be introduced in the near future. "However, very little is known about the level of key nutrients and phenolics in these hybrids," wrote the researchers, led by Gregory Tucker. This is an issue given the increasing attention to the health benefits of cocoa and its growing reputation as a source of dietary antioxidants linked to protection against cardiovascular disease.

Polyphenols identified in the cocoa bean make-up include several different catechins, as well as procyanins, anthocyanins, and flavone and flavonol glycosides. Tucker and team therefore set out to determine the phenolic content and antioxidant capacity of five kinds of cocoa - Amazon/Trinitario hybrids, two different Amazon/Amazon hybrids, Amazon/Amelonado hybrids, and the traditional cocoa type. They wanted to see whether there could be any impact on the nutrient content.

Total extractable phenolics were seen to be similar in all four of the hybrids, ranging from 69.9 to 81.6 FAE g⁻¹.

These levels are also similar to those of traditional cocoa beans. The team then determined the phenolic profile using HPLC. They observed a total of 25 peaks, with only minor differences between the hybrid profiles and that of the traditional beans.

Most interestingly, when the researchers determined the antioxidant capacity using the FRAP test, traditional beans were seen to have levels of 12.4 micro-mol TEg⁻¹. The capacities of the hybrid beans, on the other hand, were seen to range from 21.6 to 45.5 micro-mol TEg⁻¹. "Since the phenolic and antioxidant levels in these hybrid varieties were either similar to, or higher than, that obtained from traditional beans, the introduction of these new varieties would be unlikely to impact detrimentally on these nutritional components of the beans," concluded Tucker.

Several of the major chocolate manufacturers have been investigating the healthy properties of cocoa, such as Mars, Nestle, Barry Callebaut and Natraceutical. A review of the research to date conducted by Nestle and published last year in the British Journal of Nutrition concluded that future of research into the potential health benefits of cocoa should focus on the mechanisms and active compounds, with well defined clinical trials key to this burgeoning segment.

The majority of studies to date using flavonoid-rich cocoa have focussed on potential benefits for cardiovascular health, while a small number of studies have reported benefits for diabetes and skin health.

Sources

Food Chemistry 108 (2008) 1155-1159, DOI: 10.1016/j.foodchem.2007.12.001, "Phenolic content and antioxidant capacity of hybrid variety cocoa beans". Authors: WA Jonfia-Essien, G West, PG Alderson, G Tucker

British Journal of Nutrition, Published on-line ahead of print, Forthcoming Article, doi: 10.1017/S0007114507795296, "Cocoa and health: a decade of research". Authors: Karen A. Cooper, J.L. Donovan, A.L. Waterhouse and G. Williamson

Sweet indulgence

Manchester Evening News, UK

17/ 3/2008

EASTER is the time to indulge your chocolate cravings. Lisa Haynes shows how you can give your beauty routine a sweet make-over too.

We always knew chocolate was good for you. Something to do with releasing happy chemicals to the brain, apparently, although we don't need to know all the facts and figures to encourage us to tuck into a few eggs this week as Easter approaches.

But, if you are looking for a guilt-free cocoa fix, why not plump for some feel-good chocolate beauty products instead?

Chocolate bathing

You may have fallen in love with the smell of chocolate but cocoa ingredients are also the perfect concoction for pampering your skin, according to Helen Ambrosen, co-founder of Lush. "The smell is especially appealing - but as an ingredient it's also softening, moisturising and relaxing due to its cocoa butter content," she says.

TRY 1 Anatomicals Hey Tubs Want Some Chocolate? Bath Creme, £1.97; Boots. Lush Heavenly Bodies Butter Cream, £3.75 per 100g; Mark Hill Gorgeous Brunette Choc to Espresso Shampoo and Conditioner, £5.49 each, Boots; 2 Lush Sonic Death Monkey chocolate shower gel, from £3.75.

Cocoa pamper kit

If you're on a strict nil-by-mouth chocolate ban, luxurious chocolate beauty products are the perfect way to reward yourself - and can even evoke the same endorphins in the brain.

TRY 3 Germaine de Capuccini Chocoscrub, £26 (germaine-de-capuccini.co.uk); 4 B Never Too Busy To Be Beautiful Sweet Lips Sugar Scrub, £4.25 (lush.co.uk); Crabtree & Evelyn Naturals Botanical Body Butter in Cocoa Butter, Nutmeg & Cardamon, £15.95; Montagne Jeunesse Chocolate Mud Masque, 99p (montagnejeunesse.com); Superdrug Skin Rescue Warming Chocolate Mud Face Mask, 89p.

Make-up chocolate box

If you're not so keen on strong cocoa fragrances, sprucing up your make-up bag with neutral chocolate-inspired products is a great alternative to bathroom pampering.

TRY Bobbi Brown Pot Rouge For Lips and Cheeks in Chocolate Cherry, £16; Clinique Colour Surge Eye Shadow Duo in Chocolate Kiss, £14; 5 Givenchy Prismatic Eyes palette in Tempting Chocolate, £31; Bellapierre Shimmer Powder in Cocoa, £12.99 (bellapierre.com); Stila Lip Glaze in Brown Sugar, £15; B Bitten Lip Cream, £8.50 (lush.co.uk); Elite nail polish in Dark, Milk or White Chocolate, £5 each, from Superdrug.

Chocolate soothes the soul

Courier Mail, Australia

Philip Johnson

March 18, 2008

FOR years, chocolate has been bringing us joy. A gift box of chocolates delights; hot cocoa on a cold day warms the soul; and a chocolate dessert feels a bit naughty. Using chocolate in a savoury dish seems a little off-the-wall, but some cultures have always done it.

The Aztecs of Central America put chilli with cinnamon and vanilla into a drink made from ground cocoa beans. The traditional Mexican dish mole is made from a fried chilli and tomato sauce thickened with dark chocolate. The Italians and Spanish use it with hare, wild boar and venison.

Molecular gastronomist Heston Blumenthal of The Fat Duck, near London, discovered that the chemical structure of blue cheese and chocolate is similar – so they're a flavour match. On Blumenthal's menu, you'll find cauliflower risotto with chocolate jelly and, for dessert, chocolate sorbet with cumin caramel. Try this week's unusual chocolate recipes – much cheaper than dinner at The Fat Duck and no chemistry set required.

Easter extravaganza

The Times, South Africa

Mar 22, 2008



Full of beans: A chocolate cocoa pod filled with Champagne truffles

Salivate on what a master chocolatier conjured up this Easter. Hilary Biller spoke to Keith Hurdman of Melt in London.

The first bite was unexpectedly salty — the chocolate was dappled with crunchy salt flakes on top of a delicious coating of chocolate which covered a nugget of soft caramel. My every mouthful was being monitored by master chocolatier Keith Hurdman, owner of Melt, a specialist chocolate store in Notting Hill. I had just tasted one of the new varieties in the very exclusive range. It was a freezing cold autumn day. Even the door to the shop was closed “because it was too cold for tempering the chocolate”, the owner said.

The team, Hurdman and his two assistant chocolatiers, were putting the finishing touches to a special Easter egg order for Harrods. Like artists they were adding the final stokes to their pieces as they deftly painted the facial expressions onto the bunnies using cocoa butter. Oblivious to the company the master bemoaned that his assistant had painted sad faces and should start again. “Remember Easter bunnies are happy bunnies,” he exclaimed.

With Easter their busiest time, weeks away, it was a hive of activity. They sell between 300 to 400 chocolate Easter creations. Hurdman reminded me that each is handmade, as are the extensive range of 30 different types of chocolates. They are extraordinary. Hurdman is clever. In collaboration with London’s best chefs he has matched his craft to their preferred chocolate tastes.

Designer Sophie Conran’s is an interesting combination of Earl Grey tea, ginger and cranberry, while celebrity chef Skye Gyngell’s taste is for a dark chocolate mixed with salt and a hint of caramel, the one which I had just tasted.

In the Easter range there were chocolate hens and rabbits. Only the British could take a bulldog and turn it into chocolate. The chocolate eggs are unique — soft-boiled eggs with the yolk perched on the top.

Hurdman was really proud of their latest creation — a cocoa pod consisting of a moulded double layer of milk chocolate, hand painted with coloured cocoa butter, dark and white chocolate. The surprise was the “seed” filling of gorgeous fresh Champagne truffles.

Hurdman takes his craft very seriously. “When customers come in saying they are addicted to chocolate, in most cases it’s an addiction to sugar and fat when they speak of their love for devouring commercial brands of chocolate.” But he is hopeful. “The awareness has exploded and people are discovering what real chocolate is.”

I’m reprimanded when I ask if they use Belgian chocolate, believing this was one of the finest in the world. “Belgian, French, Italian are merely styles of chocolate. The type of chocolate is all about where the cocoa bean originated and cocoa beans are grown around the world. “We work with a Santander chocolate, which originates in Colombia. It comes from the only bean-to-chocolate bar manufacturer in South America,” he said.

Mix the granadilla pulp with the jelly made up with only one cup (250ml) warm water. Mix with the condensed milk and gently fold in the whipped cream. Pour into a decorative glass dish and refrigerate until set or pour into individual serving dishes and set.

The joy of chocolate

Irish Independent, Ireland

Karen Creed

March 21 2008

There is no need to feel guilty as you tuck into an Easter egg this weekend. The world’s favourite sweet treat is actually good for you, writes Karen Creed.

Yummy: everyone likes chocolate

With over six million Easter eggs expected to be demolished this Sunday, it is fair to say we are a nation of chocoholics. And who could blame us? Chocolate is one of the most popular sweet-tasting treats in the world, and has been for centuries.

Nearly all of us love chocolate, especially women, and it is hard to find anyone who doesn't like some type of it, whether it's white, milk or dark. Self-confessed celebrity chocoholics include Charlotte Church, Colin Farrell, Nicole Richie and Jessica Alba. But part of the myth surrounding chocolate is that if it tastes so good, it must be bad for your health. Not so, it seems.

“Chocolate can be a component of healthy eating so long as it's in moderation and not overindulgence,” says Dublin-based nutritionist Michele Van Valey.

“I love dark chocolate and eat one or two squares of it about five times a week.” Nutritional research has identified many health benefits of chocolate. While that is no licence to let loose on a massive chocolate binge, there are several reasons why we should not ban it from our diets just yet.

1. It stops bad moods

Chocolate is well known to be a mood lifter – it stimulates the brainwaves and lowers the stress levels. We want chocolate in times of stress, anxiety and pain. Chocolate is a natural pain killer and this could be the reason why lots of people stuff themselves with it when they are upset or angry.

Actually, they are unknowingly helping themselves out by eating chocolates. When you lower your stress levels, the more relaxed you become, which in turn is a plus for your health. Chocolate can soothe the savage beast in all of us (particularly women, and especially at a certain time of the month). So if you are feeling moody, irritable or even depressed, eat a piece of some good chocolate to feel better.

2. It prevents illness

To say chocolate is good for your health almost sounds like an oxymoron. However, chocolate may be a lot better for your health than you imagined.

First, it is a great source of energy. Also, chocolates raise antioxidant levels in your blood, which helps to fight against foreign bodies that can cause illnesses. With less of these foreign bodies in your blood, you are less likely to get ill from viruses.

There have been a lot of studies about the nutritional benefits. According to nutritionist Michele Van Valey, “Flavenoids are said to boost cardiovascular health by relaxing blood vessels and improving blood flow in arteries and reducing blood clots. It may also lower high blood pressure.”

And dermatologists have also determined that, contrary to popular belief, chocolate does not cause acne.

3. It makes us feel good

What is it about chocolate that makes so many of us swoon? There is something undeniably irresistible about it.

The word itself is sensual and romantic, nevermind the creamy, silky texture; the deep, dark colour; the exquisitely rich flavour; and the tantalising aroma. It's believed that chocolate is an aphrodisiac and makes us feel good, which in turn makes for a healthy sex life. Chocolate raises one's levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter which produces feelings of elation.

“If chocolate raises serotonin, which is the feel-good hormone, it must bring happy feelings,” says Michele Van Valey. Chocolate lovers often describe the melting chocolate feeling as a moment of true ecstasy. It's the cocoa butter in chocolate that gives it the rich and creamy texture that we love so much.

4. It is not bad for your teeth

Forget the myth that chocolate will ruin your teeth. As long as the chocolate consumed is not too sugary and sticky, it will not harm them. Studies have shown that chocolate causes less damage to teeth than other foods with the same amount of sugar. Chocolate is easily rinsed from the mouth by saliva, meaning it is in contact with teeth only for a short time. Chocolate also contains tannins, which inhibit the action of cavity-causing bacteria, perhaps by not allowing them to stick to the teeth. Cocoa, the source of chocolate, contains antibacterial agents that fight tooth decay. “The cocoa content in the chocolate is what is considered the healthy component,” says Michele.

5. It is a natural drug

Sometimes we get these intense cravings for chocolate. That is because chocolate contains a natural 'love drug' Although you would have to eat several pounds at one sitting, chocolate has been found to contain chemical compounds that stimulate the same receptor sites in the brain as marijuana.

Chocolate is not physically addictive, even though some people crave it. It tastes divine, which is reason enough to want to eat chocolate regularly. Even if you think of yourself as a chocoholic, your body will not experience withdrawal if you stop eating it.

While the above reasons should encourage any chocolate lover to keep indulging, there are particular chocolates that are better than others. This may not be news to some but many people who have been happily consuming chocolate all of their lives are often unaware which chocolate treats are best.

The higher the cocoa content the more beneficial the bar. Choose the darkest, richest chocolate you can find, made with quality cocoa butter. Chocolatiers such as Lindt make dark chocolates containing 70pc or more cocoa. The average chocolate bar contains about 40pc. If you don't like dark chocolate choose chocolate with nuts or orange peel.

Avoid anything with caramel, nougat or other fillings as they are just adding sugar and fats which erase many of the benefits you get from eating the chocolate. Chocolate may taste good with a glass of milk but research shows washing your chocolate down with milk could prevent the antioxidants being absorbed or used by your body. One ounce of chocolate a day is said to be a healthy amount.

Production and Quality

Cameroon to Provide Seedlings to Farmers to Help Cocoa Output (DJ)

Source: Dow Jones Newswires

17/03/2008

Yaounde, Mar. 15 - About 280,000 hybrid cocoa seedlings developed by the government-run Cocoa Development Authority, or Sodecao, have been distributed to farmers in Cameroon's second main cocoa region of the Center province, the body's managing director Jerome Mvondo told Dow Jones Newswires Saturday. "We've a project to develop up to 4 million cocoa seedlings that we will sell to farmers at subsidized rate. These seedlings will be distributed to farmers during the 2007-08 season and 2008-09 season," said Mvondo. Each seedling sold to farmers, Mvondo said, will cost 250 Central Africa francs (\$.60), adding that the 280,000 seeds to be distributed are just the first phase of a national project.

The Sodecao chief said he just returned from a two-day tour in the Center province to drill farmers on modern techniques on running cocoa farms. "We want these techniques to be strictly followed by the farmers in respect to guidelines given by the researchers, because these are high-yielding cocoa species," said Mvondo. The Center province accounts for 30-35% of Cameroon's yearly cocoa output, followed by South-West province, which produces about half of the country's cocoa beans, government and industrial statistics show.

Cameroon is heading to a close of its main crop cocoa harvest, which routinely runs from September/October through February March. Officially, the cocoa season in Cameroon starts from August of each year through mid-July of the subsequent year. Cameroon produced 179,239 metric tons in the 2006-07 season, up from 164,301 tons produced in the preceding season, according to recently published official data. The Cameroon government has outlined a strategy to raise its annual cocoa output to at least 200,000 metric tons by the year 2010, leading to the government support to farmers.

Liberia: 3,500 Cocoa Seedlings for Farmers

AllAfrica.com, Washington

The Analyst (Monrovia)

17 March 2008

The Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) and Mercy Crops Liberia, an American based Ngo will shortly begin the distribution of about 3,500 cocoa seedlings to farmers in Compound #2 Grand Bassa County as part their farm extension and rehabilitation project being considered in line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed late last year which the 78.2 acres cocoa farm is being rehabilitated agriculturally at several stages.

Over the weekend, LPMC and Mercy Corps officials including Managing Director Nyahn Mantein and Country Director Tom Ewert, visited the farm and expressed satisfactions over the progress achieved thus far. Mr. Mantein described the achievement

so far gained as very important in the history of LPMC and nation's produce sector because according to him, "cocoa and coffee play a very essential role in the life of the nation and people".

According to LPMC release issue in Monrovia, said LPMC's cocoa and coffee farms would be brought under the economic limelight because in the concept, poverty reduction depends on the vitality and productive capacity of cash crops including cocoa and coffee. Mr. Mantein paid tribute in a special way to Mercy Corps Liberia for the job well done and assured his open hand and heart to the entity hoping that such gesture would be extended to other parts of LPMC's farms across the country.

Meanwhile, Mercy Corps Country Director, Mr. Tom Ewett has pledged his group preparedness to help LPMC in its strive rebirth as far cocoa production is concerned. Mr. Ewett, praised Mr. Mantein and the LPMC management for the vision to rehabilitate LPMC's cocoa farms which he said have a good rating considering their organic nature. At the farm, essential projects including the construction of a palaver are talking place and jobs are being created for several persons. Technicians there predict a very good harvest by the produce season beginning July this year.

Cocoa farmers advise to adopt new hybrid

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Ghana

Mar 20, 2008



The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, Isaac Osei has advised cocoa farmer in the Volta Region to plant the new cocoa hybrid optimum yield instead of the old breed to maximise their yields.

He noted that only 30% of cocoa farms in the Volta Region are planted with high yieldings and drought resistant hi-tech seedlings. Mr. Osei gave the advice at a stakeholder's durbar at Kadjebi in the Nkwanta district on the last leg of his three-day tour of the region.

Minister for Food and Agriculture, Mr Enerst Debrah

He said incentive packages such as free treated mosquito nets, payment of bonus and provision of solar street lights in cocoa growing areas have been introduced by government to develop the sector.

The Nkwanta District Chief Executive, Joseph Denteh commended the cocoa-spraying gangs in the district for their dedication and hard work. The farmers called on government to expedite action the national feeder roads development programme earmarked for the region.

Indonesia 2008 Cocoa Output May Hit 600,000 Tonnes

Source: Reuters

21/03/2008

Jakarta, March 20 - Indonesia's cocoa production may rise to as much as 600,000 tonnes this year, compared with 520,000 tonnes in 2007, due to better weather conditions, senior industry officials said on Thursday. "Cocoa plants need more water. It is good that this year's dry season will be wetter than last year's," Zulhefi Sikumbang, secretary general of Indonesian Cocoa Association (Askindo), told Reuters by phone.

Indonesia is the world's third-largest cocoa producer. Cocoa output fell to 520,000 tonnes in 2007, from 590,000 tonnes in 2006, because of a prolonged drought in the previous year.

The country's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency has released its dry season forecast, saying that this year's will be wetter than in the last two years. Halim Razak, chairman of Askindo, said he expects the harvesting season to start in April.

Seek expert's advice in applying chemicals to cocoa trees

Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Ghana

Mar 21, 2008

The Oda District Cocoa Officer of the COCOBOD, Albert Akomaning, has called on cocoa farmers to consult Agriculture experts in the course of applying chemicals to their trees. He said regular spraying of the cocoa trees and clearing of unwanted trees would lead to good yield, but the misapplication of the chemicals could destroy the trees. Mr Akomaning was speaking in an interview with the GNA at Akim Oda in the Birim Central Municipality.

He also advised that it is safer to plug any pod infected with the Black Pod Disease in the course of working on their farms. He said black pod also kills pepper and cassava trees. He also spoke about the cocoa swollen shoot disease saying currently there

is no medicinal solution to combat it, except to cut down the affected trees. Mr Akomaning advised the farmers to ensure that their process of fermenting the cocoa is accurate in order to make them thoroughly dry.

Business & Economy

Ghana cocoa purchases 530,000T by end-Feb -cen.bank

Reuters South Africa, South Africa

17 Mar 2008

ACCRA, March 17 (Reuters) - Cocoa purchases in Ghana reached 530,000 tonnes by the end of February, Bank of Ghana Governor Paul Acquah said on Monday. Acquah gave no comparative figure for the same stage of the previous season.

Purchases declared to the Cocobod regulator reached around 526,000 tonnes by Feb. 21, the end of week 18 of the main crop, compared with 504,720 tonnes in the same period of the previous season, an industry source told Reuters on Monday.

Data obtained last week by Reuters showed declared cocoa purchases in the first 16 weeks of the season to Feb. 7, totalled 519,480 tonnes, up from 489,777 tonnes in the same period the previous year. (For full Reuters Africa coverage and to have your say on the top issues, visit: <http://africa.reuters.com>) (Reporting by Kwasi Kpodo; writing by Alistair Thomson and Peter Blackburn)

Brazilian army finds plantation; First cocoa site, along with lab, found in Amazon jungle

Sudbury Star, Canada –

Mar 17, 2008

The army said Sunday it has discovered the first known cocoa plantations in Brazil's Amazon, along with a fully equipped laboratory to manufacture cocaine.

The army used helicopters and small boats to reach the plantations and the lab near the northwestern city of Tabatinga, close to the border with cocaine-producing countries Peru and Colombia, army Lt.-Col. Antonio Elcio Franco Filho said. "It is the first time these plantations have been found in Brazil," he said. The discovery surprised authorities and prompted a search for similar fields in the region. "This is new in Brazil and it's a concern," Walter Maierovitch, an organized crime expert who once headed Brazil's anti-drug efforts, told the government's Agencia Brasil news service. "It could mean a change in the geo-strategy of some Colombian cartels."

The cocoa leaf - the key ingredient in cocaine - is usually grown in mountainous regions of Andean countries. The climate in the Amazon was not believed to favour cocoa plantations, according to Maierovitch. "We believe they are using a transgenic or an adaptation of the leaf used in the Andean region," Filho said. "They are probably trying to find new locations to grow this, so we need to stay alert."

He added that cocoa fields in the Amazon could increase if drug leaders find them lucrative. "Authorities need to crack down on them immediately," Filho said. "If we don't do anything it might even become a source of deforestation." Authorities were led to the cocoa fields by satellite images of huge clearings in the jungle - four plantations on more than 100 hectares.

Agencia Brasil said the cocoa - which was destroyed - was almost ready to be harvested, and the lab was equipped to transform the leaves into cocaine. There were no arrests.

Little chocolate shop chock full of bunnies and other treats for Easter

The Canadian Press

17/ 3/2008

This is chocolate heaven. There are Easter bunnies on bicycles, scooters, motor cars and speedboats. Chocolate eggs for the children's Easter Sunday hunt are filled with truffles, fudge, pecans, caramel and peanut butter.

In this family-owned chocolate shop, the aromas wafting from the small plant next to the retail store are inviting. It's almost like walking into a vat of dark chocolate!

Marshville Chocolates in Wainfleet, Ont., on the shores of Lake Erie in the Region of Niagara, is close to eating local (only the big blocks of chocolate come from elsewhere) in that every confection is made on the premises, with fresh ingredients, says Mary-Beth Benner, who owns and runs the business.

Her mother, Elaine Malcwany, is a self-taught chocolate maker, and before the shop opened 30 years ago she would experiment at home and make treats for friends and family. "As her little home-based business grew, she and my father John would travel to many different candy shows and seminars," says Benner.

In 1977, John, an electrician, made the first tempering kettle for his wife to use, and as the business grew he maintained and prepared the equipment necessary to keep it going. The following year, the shop was established and it wasn't long before it became a destination for townspeople as well as the many tourists who flock to the small hamlet in the summertime to visit or stay in the rental cottages along the lake.

When her parents retired three years ago, Benner, who was involved in the business from the very beginning, purchased it. Five employees work at Marshville, manufacturing, packing and selling - "most of whom have worked for years for the business," she adds. Twice a week Elaine Malcwany works filling baskets with chocolates and other treats for the big rush expected during the week running up to the Easter weekend. "Even now she comes in to work with us on Tuesday and Saturday because a lot of local people like to come in to say hello to her," says Benner.

Her mother has collected hundreds of moulds, and in doing so she met a lot of chocolatiers who gave her many tips on perfecting the art of making chocolate, says Malcwany. "The chocolate that we use has cocoa butter in it," she says. "In most commercially made chocolates the cocoa butter is removed and substituted with other ingredients so they will remain shelf stable. "When it is substituted it doesn't melt, but it sticks to your teeth. Eating pure chocolate is actually good for your teeth" because it doesn't stick to them, she says.

Malcwany says the growing popularity of dark chocolate as more is discovered about its antioxidant benefits has meant the shop is seeing a rise in sales of confections made with it.

Antioxidants work by protecting cells from damaging molecules called free radicals. Free radicals are basically unstable oxygen molecules that can trigger changes in the structure of normally healthy cells. This damage is thought to be an underlying cause of many chronic diseases. Antioxidants neutralize free radicals, according to the website allchocolate.com.

One of the most sought after items in the shop are chocolate-coated apples. "I always like eating an apple along with chocolate," she says. "I found some dried apples while shopping one day, dipped them in dark chocolate and it was a winner." She took them to a craft sale being held on a Thanksgiving weekend and sold out, "and people kept coming back for more."

Another product not made by the business but carried because of their popularity are Crystal Beach waffles. "They used to be made on the spot at an amusement park near here," explains Benner. "When Crystal Beach closed down about 1989, a man bought the rights to the recipe and the equipment from the original owner of the park, and he makes them and we are one of the outlets in the area selling them year around."

Marshville Chocolates is on Highway 3, Wainfleet Village, Wainfleet, ON, L0S 1V0, 905-899-2380, or visit <http://marshvillechocolates.ca>.

Facts about chocolate and tips on eating it. Before biting into that Easter chocolate, you might want to consider these facts:

-A 30-gram (one-ounce) serving of solid chocolate contains about 150 calories and two to three grams of protein.

-Sweet or semi-sweet chocolate contains between 40 and 53 per cent fat or cocoa butter.

-Recent research has found that the flavonoids in chocolate, and also found in red wine, have some disease-fighting antioxidant properties.

-When tasting chocolate, let it sit in your mouth for a few seconds to release its primary flavours and aromas. Then chew it a few times to release the secondary aromas.

Source: "Foods That Harm, Foods That Heal: An A - Z Guide to Safe and Healthy Eating" by Joe Schwarcz and Fran Berkoff (Reader's Digest).

Judy Creighton welcomes letters at 9 Kinnell St., Hamilton, Ont. L8R 2J8, but cannot promise to answer all correspondence personally. She can also be reached by e-mail at [jcreighton\(at\)golden.net](mailto:jcreighton(at)golden.net).

U.S. Chocolate Company to Launch Origin-Specific Syrup

Source: Reuters

20/03/2008

New York, March 20 - A small U.S. company is set to launch what it believes will be the first origin-specific chocolate syrups, latching onto a growing trend among consumers who want to know where their favorite treats come from. The chocolate syrups, one made with cocoa powder from Ghana and the other from Santo Domingo, will be sold to specialty coffee roasters and retailers, starting this spring.

The syrups will be used in cafe mocha drinks, a blend of espresso coffee and chocolate, the company's co-owner said on the sidelines at the recent National Coffee Association of USA conference in Florida. "I don't know of anybody else doing this. Within five years, we'll have about half a dozen," Michael Szyliowicz, co-owner of Mont Blanc Gourmet in Denver, Colorado, said, referring to its single-origin chocolate syrups.

Mont Blanc produces about 1 million gallons of chocolate and caramel syrup annually, Szyliowicz said. The trend in marketing that highlights the region where a luxury product was produced was established in the wine industry years ago, and recently has grown in the coffee and chocolate bar industries. "Some customers will indeed match the coffee they use from a specific origin with the syrups, while others will be trying to combine different geographic areas from around the world in order to create very distinctive, unique taste profiles," Szyliowicz said.

Such geographic indicators, referred to as GIs among industry, are a marketing tool that combine identifying a specific territory and the human component, such as traditional methods of production.

For coffee and cocoa, the majority of such origin-specific products come from developing countries. "It's definitely not a short-lived trend. You're able to create a premium coffee -- and all the growth is in specialty coffee," Szyliowicz said.

Ghana Increases Cocoa Purchases From Farmers 7% This Season

Bloomberg

By Emily Bowers

March 20, 2008

(Bloomberg) -- Ghana, the world's second-biggest cocoa producer, increased purchases of beans from farmers by 7 percent so far this season, according to buyers with access to the information.

A total of 535,067 metric tons of cocoa was bought on behalf of the state-run Ghana Cocoa Board, known as Cocobod, in the 20 weeks to March 6, compared with 499,425 tons a year earlier. The buyers based their figures on data compiled by Cocobod. They declined to be named because the data are confidential.

Purchases in the 20th week of this season, which began on Oct. 19, were about 4,747 metric tons, compared with 1,100 tons in the same period a year earlier, the buyers said.

A call to the office of Cocobod Chief Executive Officer Issac Osei was referred to the board's public affairs department, which referred Bloomberg News to the research department, where no one answered the phone. Last month, Cocobod increased the price it pays farmers for beans by 26 percent in an attempt to curb smuggling to neighboring Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer.

Ghana also increased its forecast for the October-to-May main-crop harvest to at least 636,000 metric tons, from 600,000 tons estimated at the start of the season. Ghana ranks behind Ivory Coast as the world's second- biggest grower of cocoa and accounts for 20 percent of global production.

Cocoa for May delivery, the most actively traded contract on London's Liffe exchange, fell 89 pounds, or 6.7 percent, to 1,245 pounds (\$2,468) a metric ton as of 12:47 p.m. local time.

News briefs: Cocoa, Cadbury and Sweet China

ConfectioneryNews.com, France

By Charlotte Eyre

20-Mar-2008 - In financial news this week, cocoa prices go up yet again, Cadbury reveals more de-merger plans, and Sweet China is allowed to return to the London stock market.

Cocoa prices continue to rise

The daily price for cocoa hit record highs on both the London and the New York stock markets in February, the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) said in its monthly review.

By the end of the month, prices in London reached £1,441 per tonne, their highest level for five years, while in New York prices surged to \$2,811 per tonne, the highest level for 28 years, the ICCO said. The organisation attributed the increase to investors pouring money into the commodity sector, a trend that in general is defying the global economic slowdown. However, the ICCO also questioned whether the high prices are here to stay, as crops this season has increased substantially compared to the year before.

Global cocoa bean production increased 10 per cent to 3,713,000 tonnes in the 2007/2008 cocoa year, with Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, the two main growing regions, showing "a very strong start" this year, the ICCO said. World cocoa stocks should therefore "be considered large", and the supply deficit is a lot smaller than in previous months, the organisation added.

Cadbury updates de-merger proposals

Cadbury yesterday released more information about the planned de-merger of its US beverage arm, announcing how shares in the company will be distributed once it is divided into two.

If the de-merger is approved, ordinary shareholders will receive 64 ordinary shares in the Cadbury confectionery company, and 12 shares of common stock in the US beverage firm, instead of 100 Cadbury Schweppes shares, the company said.

The company also announced the appointment of four additional board directors for the US-based Dr Pepper Snapple Group (DPSG), adding to the hiring of the new chairman Wayne Sanders, first announced last month. Details about the de-merger have slowly been forthcoming since the move was first announced in June last year, after the credit crunch ruled out selling the beverage arm.

Rumours over the financial difficulty of the deal have persisted, as earlier this month the Bear Stearns bank warned investors of weakening debt markets. However, Cadbury later insisted the deal is going ahead, stating it has signed new credit agreements with five banks - JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and UBS. The new Cadbury confectionery business will then have net debt of £1.65bn after the payment of the group's final dividend, the company said.

Sweet China re-listed on stock exchange

Confectionery company Sweet China today returns to the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) after a deal to acquire Essential Box Confectionery fell through in 2005, Thompson Financial yesterday reported.

According to AIM rules, a transaction must be concluded within a year of the deal agreement. Sweet China failed to complete the necessary negotiations three years ago because of what it called "structural issues", the news service said.

The company is now, however, in a position to complete the £6m deal, and the business is expected to have a market value of around £7m once it floats on the market. The deal will allow the firm to start selling Essential Box Confectionery brands in mainland China, the firm said. Previously, Sweet China had focused its areas of distribution on export markets.

Essential Box Confectionery produces products such as Turkish delight and coconut ice under the Lings brand, and a range of children's confectionery through CandyCraft.

'FG will ensure take-off of Tinapa Resort'

Nigerian Tribune, Nigeria

Gbola Subair, Abuja

Mar 20, 2008

THE Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Ahmed Garba Bichi, has assured the government and people of Cross River State that the Federal Government would put every machinery in motion to clear the bottleneck and obstacles that were hindering the smooth take off and effective operation of the Tinapa Business Resort in Calabar, Cross River State.

According to the minister, the huge investment made by the state government could not be allowed to lie fallow and watch the infrastructure decay because of bureaucracy.



President Umaru Yar'Adua

The minister gave the assurance in response to an appeal by the Deputy Governor of Cross River State, Mr. Efik Cobham, who hosted Ahmed Bichi and the Minister of Youth Development, Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi, who was in Calabar with Commissioners for Youth Development from 35 states of the federation for National Council for Youth Development, to a state dinner.

The deputy governor had, earlier in a speech, appealed to the Federal Government through the minister to act fast so that the huge amount spent in constructing the place would not go down the drain, noting that other sister African countries that copied the concept may overshadow the Tinapa effort.

Ahmed Bichi, who was on a two-day working visit to Calabar on the invitation of a private investor in rubber plantation, Mr. Bob Lin, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of EngHuat Rubber Plantation, also appealed to the state government to make more land available for the Calabar Free Trade Zone, as more companies and investors from China and other Asian countries have shown interest to set up industries in the Free Trade Zone.

This, the minister said, would boost the activities at the Tinapa Business Resort as manufactured goods would easily find their way into Tinapa. He told the deputy governor that the Tinapa issue was before the Federal Executive Council, and that his visit to Tinapa has placed him in a better position to be able to make a strong case and convince his colleagues on the need to act fast.

Bichi had inspected EngHuat Rubber Plantation where he was shown how spent rubber tree logs are used for furniture and other wooden structures, as well as some social infrastructures like water treatment plant and a Secondary School, put in place for the benefit of the workers and community around the plantation.

Commerce minister pledges support to Cocoa Association

Gbola Subair, Abuja

THE Minister of Commerce and Industry, Engr. Charles Ugwu, has assured the Cocoa Association of Nigeria of government support in order to enhance non-oil export. He stated this during a courtesy visit to his office by the delegation of the association, led by Chief Alfun Adegbulu.

The minister opined that cocoa was a major product in the non-oil export trade in Nigeria, adding that cocoa was one of the tripod products that moved Nigeria forward for the basis of economic development and prosperity of our country before the discovery of crude oil. He explained that it has gone through a whole lot of changes, disclosing that 'currently we are confronted by the position of European Union (EU) with respect to the new policy on cocoa exportation, that if we sell produce as cocoa beans in the raw state, it will come with low duty, but if we add value to cocoa, they will place tariff on the product.'

Ugwu said, "The reason Nigeria is insisting on not signing the agreement is that it will open the gate of import of all manners of products into Nigeria, which will eventually destroy the little progress we have made in the industry, and the little activities we are generating in the agricultural sector." He admitted that a number of sectors were suffering and the government was looking at a way to ensure that those affected by the current difficulties could be compensated. Ugwu added that the delay was because the committee that was looking at the issue on EPA, waivers and export expanded grant had just submitted its report and the report has not yet been debated.

Earlier in his address, the President of the Cocoa Association of Nigeria, Chief Alfun, said the cocoa association was geared toward sanitising the cocoa industry in Nigeria in order to make exporters confident. He added that they have intensified efforts to increase the revenue generation in terms of cocoa grading and registration of practitioners in the country.

DJ Ivory Coast San Pedro Cocoa Arrivals Seen At 451,000 Tons

Trading Markets (press release),

By Vincent t'Sas, Dow Jones Newswires

March 21, 2008

ABIDJAN (Dow Jones)-Arrivals of cocoa beans from the farms at Ivory Coast's southwestern port of San Pedro in Oct. 1 to March 16, the first 24 weeks of the 2007-08 season, totaled around 451,000 metric tons, a source with access to official data told Dow Jones Newswires Friday. In the same period last season, some 375,000 tons had arrived at the port.

Arrivals in the seven days to March 16 were 9,000 tons, well up from the 2,000 tons delivered in week 24 of the last season.

DJ Ivory Coast Oct-Feb Cocoa Pdt Exports Down 15% On Yr – Ports

Trading Markets (press release)

By Vincent t'Sas, Dow Jones Newswires

March 21, 2008

ABIDJAN, Mar 21, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- -- Ivory Coast exported 120,945 metric tons of semi-manufactured cocoa products in October-February, the first five months of the 2007-08 season, down by 20,917 tons, or 15%, on the 141,862 tons shipped a year earlier, port data showed Friday.

Output was down at the start of the season as processing plants lacked beans because harvesting in the preceding months was down due to a dry spell.

The following table shows the net weight of shipments per port.

All figures are in metric tons.

Port	Feb 08	Feb 07	Cum 07-08	Cum 06-07	Abidjan	19,836	24,450	106,689	128,842	San Pedro	3,645	2,366	14,256	13,020
Totals	23,481	26,816	120,945	141,862										

Follows a breakdown per product of Abidjan shipments:

Feb 08	Feb 07	liquor	8,917	10,880	butter	4,652	6,291	powder	2,353	2,983	cake	2,469	3,315	unspecified	1,445	981	Totals	19,836	24,450
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Shipments from San Pedro included 703 tons of cake, up on the 301 tons exported in February last year.

The export data as given by the ports may differ from export declarations made by shippers and published by Dow Jones Newswires every 14 days. The port data show products which have left the port, while the export declarations include products which are being made ready for export.

Labour Issues

Ivory Coast Cocoa Warehouse Workers Consider Suspending Strike

Bloomberg

By Pauline Bax

March 17, 2008

(Bloomberg) -- Warehouse workers in the Ivory Coast, the world's biggest cocoa producer, are considering suspending a strike over pay and working conditions to hold talks with the Labor Ministry.

Employees at the warehouses, who stopped work March 10, continue to strike today for a sixth day, Fidel Dogba, head of the Daily Workers Union, said in an interview in Abidjan today. "The ministry of labor has contacted us to discuss our demands," Dogba said. "But they have asked us to suspend the strike before talking to them, so we're going to decide soon what to do."

A three-day strike in December slowed cleaning and bagging of cocoa beans at Ivory Coast's ports, delaying exports. *To contact the reporters on this story: Pauline Bax in Abidjan via Johannesburg at pmrichardson@bloomberg.net*

Ivory Coast Cocoa Warehouse Workers Suspend Strike - Union (DJ)

Source: Dow Jones Newswires

18/03/2008

Abidjan, Mar. 17 - A week old pay strike by day warehouse workers at Ivory Coast's main port of Abidjan, which slowed cocoa exports, was suspended on Monday, a trade union leader said.

Fidel Dogbo told Dow Jones Newswires his Sytrajopci Trade Union of Ivory Coast Port Day Workers had agreed to suspend the strike after the Ministry of Works organized a tripartite meeting (government-employers-workers). "We have called all our comrades to our headquarters to announce the suspension of the strike," Fidel Dogbo said. He said the tripartite meeting was scheduled for Wednesday.

Industry sources at the Abidjan port have said they were really beginning to feel the strike, which started on March 10 and delayed shipment of 3,000 metric tons of cocoa beans over the weekend.

There was no industrial action at the second, south-western port of San Pedro, which handles about 40% of cocoa shipments from the world's top cocoa grower.

The dark side of chocolate Easter eggs

NEWS.com.au, Australia

By Tim Costello

March 19, 2008

IT IS almost unthinkable to have Easter without Easter eggs. This year we will spend more than \$200 million on them. And as a father of (now grown-up) children, I have witnessed over many years the joy they bring. Yet there are hundreds of thousands of other children who are profoundly effected by Easter eggs and not for the better.

They are the children who work in the cocoa plantations of West Africa – they toil to produce cocoa that goes into the 924,000 tonnes of chocolate Australians eat each year. It is estimated that in the West African nation of the Ivory Coast alone more than 600,000 children work on cocoa fields.

Research in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, which together make up 60 per cent of the world's cocoa, reveal up to 80 per cent of children in the cocoa fields are being exposed to dangerous practices such as unprotected use of chemicals, carrying heavy loads, brush burning and using machetes. About half of these children do not go to school. There is also evidence of children being trafficked. The study estimated up to 12,000 children had been trafficked for cocoa in West Africa.

I have just returned from West Africa where I have seen the problem. I have seen the mug shots of the traffickers; spoken to children, cocoa farmers, authorities and local organisations desperately trying to help trafficked and exploited children. It was an experience that saddened me but also made me determined to do all I can to change the plight of these children.

It is difficult to estimate the scope of trafficking of children for cocoa in the Ivory Coast but what evidence police have uncovered reveals it is a sophisticated network involving fake identity papers and established smuggling routes. The trafficked child will often live with the cocoa farmer's family but as a second-class citizen. That child won't go to school, won't get paid and will do the dirtiest and most dangerous work on the cocoa field.

World Vision Australia has launched the Don't Trade Lives campaign, designed to focus public attention on the modern-day trafficking and enslavement of people across the world.

More than 200 years after British parliamentarian William Wilberforce successfully campaigned for the abolition of state-sanctioned slavery – slavery still exists. It is estimated that trafficking enslaves 27 million people worldwide today. In September 2001, members of the chocolate industry signed a voluntary protocol – the Harken Engel Protocol – to establish credible standards of public certification that ensured cocoa production was free of the worst forms of child labour practices in Ivory Coast and Ghana.

This process was to be completed by July 2005. The industry failed to meet this deadline and it has now extended to July 2008. It is also critical that manufacturers outline a plan of action by Christmas to ensure the chocolate we eat is free of human exploitation. We don't want people to stop eating chocolate or to boycott some brands; this will only further hurt the children we are trying to help. But consumers must send a message to chocolate makers that they are watching.

To help people make the right choice, World Vision had made available a "Good Chocolate Guide". People can also find out more about this problem and what action they can take at www.donttradelives.com.au. Chocolate and Easter eggs bring so much joy to children in Australia but let's do all we can to ensure it doesn't continue to bring misery to children on the other side of the world. *Tim Costello is chief executive of World Vision Australia.*

Chef's tip

Chocolate quality is graded by the percentage of cacao, a combination of cocoa butter and cocoa mass, as well as the quality of the cocoa beans. Cocoa butter is flavourless but gives chocolate its beautiful creamy texture and melting properties. Cocoa mass gives chocolate its classical flavour.

Good-quality dark chocolate with 70 per cent cocoa mass is best for use in savoury recipes, the intense flavour and bitterness working well with the stronger flavours of the blue cheese, chilli, ham and duck meat that feature in this week's recipes. Some dark chocolates can go as high as 90 per cent though I find them far too bitter and they would probably be used only in kitchens in Europe, added to sauces for game meats.

Others

DJ Ghana Cocoa Body: Anti-Black Pod Spraying Plan to Begin Jun 1

Trading Markets (press release), CA

By Francis Kokutse

March 20, 2008

ACCRA, Ghana, Mar 20, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- A nationwide spraying program in cocoa growing areas to control black pod disease is to begin June 1 and run until the end of October, the state cocoa regulator, Cocobod said. Also, insecticide spraying to control capsids will start in the first week of August until the end of December, Cocobod said in a statement.

Last year, Cocobod's Swollen Shoot and Virus Disease Control Unit said black pod disease had attacked some cocoa farms in the Western and Volta regions and trees were cut down so disease-resistant varieties could be planted.

This year's program is intended to help farmers to control capsids in black pod areas where there hasn't been any disease control, Cocobod said.

Cocobod says it will provide motorized spraying machines as well as insecticides to farmers in these areas to make the program more successful, though farmers will be responsible for the safekeeping and maintenance of the machinery.

Nigeria: Association Moves to Check Cocoa Smuggling

AllAfrica.com, Washington

Clem Khena-Ogbena, Abuja

21 March 2008

The Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN) has mandated all operators in the country's cocoa industry to identify with the association, with a view to checkmating the unpleasant activities of smugglers who smuggle cocoa out of the country.

Besides, according to the association, such identification would go a long way in reducing expenditure and duplication of various task forces' agents in Nigerian cocoa market.

The president of CAN, Chief Alfun Adegbulu, who led some members of the association to pay a courtesy call on the minister of Commerce and Industry, Engr. Charles Ugwu, in his office, told their host that the decision to mandate stakeholders to identify with the association was taken, among others, at a recent national conference of the association held in Akure, Ondo State, in collaboration with Ondo State government, Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

Adegbulu also said that as part of efforts to find lasting solution to the problem of quality in the industry, CAN further resolved that "Federal Produce Inspection Services and Nigeria Customs Services should submit their proper records on cocoa export to the association (CAN) on monthly basis in accordance with forms A and C and any cocoa not certified by CAN should not be allowed out of Nigerian shores."

In his address read before the minister, the CAN president added that the collation of all the data should be in the form approved, while the association would be responsible for collating data from states inspection services, saying that "Cocoa association should sign the certificate of country of origin in conjunction with Federal Produce Inspection Services and Nigerian Customs."

This Easter, think about where your chocolate egg came from

Scotsman, United Kingdom

David Martin

22 March 2008

IN today's consumer society, Easter is associated as much with the exchanging of chocolate eggs as it is with religious significance. I learnt recently that the British are in fact Europe's biggest consumers of chocolate: last Easter, we spent £336 million on 80 million chocolate eggs.

The primary product of all chocolate, cocoa, is a key agricultural export for some of the world's poorest countries. In a society ever more conscious of climate change, the fact imported produce is linked to high carbon emissions makes it easy to argue buying imported produce is irresponsible.

An economic analysis, however, highlights the benefits of choosing products imported from developing countries whose economy is highly dependant on exports of primary produce such as cocoa or fruit and vegetables. These twin arguments, environmental versus ethical, are at the heart of a debate. It is the Food Miles versus Fair Miles debate.

In 2006, Tim Lang, a university professor, coined the term Food Miles as a way for consumers to understand the ecological consequences of food. UK retailers adopted this concept through the use of airplane stickers on imported (non EU) food to signal its potentially high carbon emissions.

Since 2006 there has been extensive research on comparing the food miles and fair miles theories. Cranfield University illustrated the two major failings of the system: it doesn't calculate the carbon emissions in the production process and it doesn't highlight the ethical benefits of buying developing world produce.

Their analysis showed the carbon cost of Kenyan roses is almost six times less than Dutch roses due to the fact they are grown naturally in the sun in Kenya rather than in heated greenhouses in Holland. The Kenyan horticultural industry supports the Fair Miles theory, which it considers can more accurately reflect the impact of imported produce.

So this Easter, what can we do to reduce our carbon footprint without undermining the livelihoods of poor farmers?

I suggest looking for Fairtrade products, from chocolate to bananas to wine and coffee, available in the supermarket. As Fairtrade products are made using environmentally sustainable farming methods, such as organic farming, consumers can know that they are limiting their impact on the environment.

And, from a social point of view, Fairtrade guarantees farmers a fixed price for their produce as well as encouraging reinvestment in the local farming cooperative and the wider community. Given that sales of Fairtrade products in the UK rose 41 per cent last year, it seems clear that British consumers want to limit their carbon footprint without undermining the livelihoods of farmers. *David Martin is an MEP for Scotland.*

TIT BITS

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

Fairtrade system at risk

LONDON (March 19, 2008): The Fairtrade marketing system designed to guarantee fair prices and premiums to farmers could be a casualty of the global boom in commodities prices, campaigners and industry analysts say. Coffee, tea and cocoa prices have soared to multi-year highs in recent months as turmoil in stock markets has sent investors in search of safe places to put their cash.

London coffee, sugar and cocoa rise

LONDON (March 19, 2008): Robusta coffee, sugar and cocoa futures all ended higher on Tuesday as the markets began to recover from the steep losses of the last few days, but the focus remained firmly on turmoil in global financial markets. "The (coffee) market is marking time to see what will move out of financial markets," one dealer said, referring to the prospect of a Fed rate cut later on Tuesday.

London cocoa and sugar down; coffee up

LONDON (March 20, 2008): Fund selling sparked a sharp decline in cocoa and sugar prices on Wednesday but the benchmark robusta coffee contract bucked the trend, boosted by heightened fears of a supply squeeze, dealers said. "It is general commodity selling by the funds. cocoa, coffee and sugar went down at the same time. Everything has been hit," one soft commodity trader said.

US MIDDAY: cocoa slips

NEW YORK (March 20, 2008): cocoa futures trading on ICE Futures US dropped 3 percent early on Wednesday, in a commodity-wide sell-off that triggered sell-stops and pushed the market into a wide trading range exceeding \$230, dealers said.

New York cocoa futures sharply lower

NEW YORK (March 20, 2008): US cocoa futures settled sharply lower for the second straight day on Tuesday, at a three-week low on heavy speculative long-liquidation and chart-based weakness, traders said. "We are seeing more long liquidation in the cocoa market. This is technical failure after failing to get above the psychological \$3,000 level," one cocoa dealer said, about the May contract.

US MIDDAY: cocoa dips

NEW YORK (March 21, 2008): cocoa futures trading on ICE Futures US sank nearly 11 percent to a 7-week low early Thursday on heavy long liquidation amid across-the-board commodity weakness, traders said. The benchmark May cocoa contract tumbled \$268, or 10.6 percent, to \$2,265 per tonne, a low last seen January 30 for the spot contract.

Coffee and cocoa suffer sharpest one-day fall

LONDON (March 21, 2008): London coffee and cocoa suffered their sharpest one-day fall in recent years on Thursday on a wave of fund selling as part of a broad-based decline in commodity prices and profit-taking, dealers said. Though still posting strong gains compared to the start of the year, coffee futures plummeted almost 8 percent and cocoa fell nearly 5 percent.

New York cocoa ends at four-week low

NEW YORK (March 21, 2008): US cocoa futures settled sharply lower for the third straight day on Wednesday, at a four-week low as speculative long-liquidation returned to the market that traded in an exceptionally wide \$335 range, traders said.