



COPAL COCOA Info

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 279

14th – 18th April 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)
14 th April	1600.78	2628.81	1385.67	2551.00
15 th April	1590.75	2610.96	1375.33	2559.00
16 th April	1619.50	2665.89	1395.00	2613.00
17 th April	1672.96	2749.62	1425.67	2696.67
18 th April	1651.35	2708.23	1402.33	2651.33
Average	1627.00	2673.00	1397.00	2614.00

In the News (from Newspapers worldwide)

Health and Nutrition

- Ivory Coast Company Aims to Conquer Health Cocoa Market (DJ)
- How to ... Use chocolate for your skin
- A Brotherly Love of Chocolate
- What Works to Lower Cholesterol? Try this Chocolate Bar
- Food for thought : Chocolate lovers beware
- Can chocolate help your skin?

Production and Quality

- Nigerian Cocoa-Bean Exports Rose 7.7% to 140,148 Tons Last Year
- Cameroon Cocoa Exports declined 16% Last Week on Lower Supplies
- Cameroon Government Gives \$3.4 Million to Boost Cotton, Cocoa, Coffee Crop (DJ)
- Chocolate firm donates to farmers
- CIB working with Farmers to Boost Production
- Edo Releases N5.2m for buying of Chemicals, Inputs for Cocoa Farmers
- Oyo To Lead In Cocoa Production
- DJ Nigeria wants to produce 600,000 MT of Cocoa Annually by 2011

The Market

- DJ Liffe Softs: Cocoa, Coffee Up On Strength Across Softs

Processing & Manufacturing

- European Q1 Cocoa Grind Rises 4.7 pct Year on Year
- WAMCO to be closed down... due to non-availability of cocoa beans

- Kraft Expands production capacity at Belgian Chocolate Factory
- US Q1 2008 Cocoa Grind down 5.85 pct from Year Ago
- Flavanol content of cocoa cut during manufacturing

Business & Economy

- Ghana cocoa purchases 530,000T by end-Feb - cen.bank
- Cocoa makes a big comeback
- DJ Cameroon Aug-March '08 Cocoa Bean Exports 152,723 Tons – NCCB
- Nestle's Chocolate Looks to Dark, Refined Products (DJ)
- Barry Callebaut and Biolands to replicate tested Smallholder Cocoa Program
- Barry Callebaut buys 49 percent of Tanzanian cocoa exporter Biolands UPDATE
- Sweet and upscale
- Pay rises and high utility tariffs to affect economy
- Callebaut ethical investment ensures cocoa traceability
- Technology start-ups

Labour Issues

- Chocolate, Child Labor tie subject of April 17 Talk

Others

- Minister - Let us do movies about our cocoa???
- Ondo to host 4th National Cocoa Day

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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 14th April 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
May 2008	1408	1396	-18	1417	1388	1,628
Jul 2008	1434	1422	-15	1440	1413	1,984
Sep 2008	1342	1339	-14	1344	1332	456
Dec 2008	1313	1310	-15	1318S	1304S	687
Mar 2009	1301	1292	-17	1303	1286S	285
May 2009	1300	1298	-17	1303S	1299	14
Jul 2009	1310	1308	-18	1313S	1304	29
Sep 2009	1317	1318	-18	1317	1317	15
Dec 2009		1328	-18			0
Mar 2010		1328	-18			0
Totals		1334				5,098

Tuesday 15th April 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1404	1409	13	1420	1393	2,636
Jul 2008	1430	1439	17	1449	1420	2,333
Sep 2008	1349	1358	19	1367	1341	949
Dec 2008	1320	1329	19	1335	1312	1,688
Mar 2009	1308	1308	16	1320	1307	149
May 2009	1314	1317	19	1326	1305S	107
Jul 2009	1337	1327	19	1337	1323	5
Sep 2009	1330	1336	18	1330	1330	2
Dec 2009		1346	18			0
Mar 2010		1346	18			0
Totals		1352				7,869

Wednesday 16th April 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1414	1430	21	1442	1414	1,924
Jul 2008	1445	1462	23	1471	1444	4,005
Sep 2008	1368	1379	21	1388	1367	793
Dec 2008	1336	1344	15	1351	1336	1,349
Mar 2009	1316	1319	11	1330	1313S	1,656
May 2009	1325	1330	13	1341	1325	252
Jul 2009	1327	1339	12	1343S	1327	16
Sep 2009		1348	12			0
Dec 2009		1358	12			0
Mar 2010		1358	12			0
Totals		1367				9,995

Thursday 17th April 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1434	1452	22	1463	1434	1,744
Jul 2008	1465	1480	18	1490	1465	5,990
Sep 2008	1390	1414	35	1420	1390	2,033
Dec 2008	1351	1383	39	1385	1350S	1,137
Mar 2009	1330	1354	35	1355	1328S	1,721
May 2009	1341	1363	33	1358	1341	103
Jul 2009		1372	33			0
Sep 2009		1381	33			0
Dec 2009		1392	34			0
Mar 2010		1392	34			0
Totals		1398				12,728

Friday 18th April 2008

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	1458	1429	-23	1458	1388S	3,203
Jul 2008	1483	1456	-24	1488	1410	5,465
Sep 2008	1416	1388	-26	1419	1344	3,093
Dec 2008	1383	1363	-20	1384	1326	2,131
Mar 2009	1355	1331	-23	1355	1302S	622
May 2009	1343	1341	-22	1343	1312S	511
Jul 2009	1350	1351	-21	1350S	1327S	60
Sep 2009		1361	-20			0
Dec 2009		1371	-21			0
Mar 2010		1371	-21			0
Totals		1376				15,085

Average for the week	1361					10155
Total for the week						50,775

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

Monday 14th April 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	2530	2550	9	2563	2525	5,211
Jul 2008	2553	2560	-	2572	2538	8,720
Sep 2008	2534	2541	-9	2552	2524	2,420
Dec 2008	2508	2503	-15	2517	2484	255
Mar 2009	2502	2498	-15	2506	2498	115
May 2009	2505	2504	-15	2515	2504	22
Jul 2009	2521	2510	-15	2522	2510	20
Sep 2009	2541	2528	-11	2542	2528	3
Dec 2009		2551	-8	2551	2551	9
Mar 2010		2566	-8	2566	2566	0
Totals		2529				16775

Tuesday 15th April 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	2555	2640	90	2678	2555	4054
Jul 2008	2560	2589	29	2601	2560	6334
Sep 2008	2548	2568	27	2580	2543	2081
Dec 2008	2523	2515	12	2535	2499	137
Mar 2009	2497	2508	10	2524	2494	28
May 2009	2523	2515	11	2538	2508	81
Jul 2009	2542	2519	9	2542	2513	10
Sep 2009		2537	9	2537	2537	3
Dec 2009		2560	9	2560	2560	0
Mar 2010		2575	9	2575	2575	0
Totals		2553				12728

Wednesday 16th April 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	2643	2686	46	2729	2642	4,078
Jul 2008	2589	2641	52	2663	2589	8,583
Sep 2008	2576	2614	46	2631	2572	1,712
Dec 2008	2532	2571	56	2580	2525	1,375
Mar 2009	2539	2557	49	2557	2539	108
May 2009	2541	2561	46	2582	2540	150
Jul 2009	2548	2559	40	2583	2548	23
Sep 2009	2582	2577	40	2582	2577	0
Dec 2009	2586	2600	40	2600	2576	0
Mar 2010		2615	40	2615	2602	0
Totals		2588				16029

Thursday 17th April 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	2687	2776	90	2787	2669	2637
Jul 2008	2650	2741	100	2753	2649	9112
Sep 2008	2625	2714	100	2723	2625	655
Dec 2008	2575	2670	99	2675	2575	659
Mar 2009	2573	2632	75	2637	2565	364
May 2009	2576	2633	72	2633	2571	1265
Jul 2009	2605	2638	79	2638	2605	86
Sep 2009		2656	79	2656	2656	2
Dec 2009	2609	2679	79	2679	2605	116
Mar 2010		2694	79	2694	2694	0
Totals		2683				14896

Friday 18th April 2008

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
May 2008	2745	2700	-76	2745	2612	90
Jul 2008	2755	2665	-76	2755	2535	8410
Sep 2008	2723	2650	-64	2723	2561	1457
Dec 2008	2662	2618	-52	2662	2511	895
Mar 2009	2631	2590	-42	2631	2495	101
May 2009	2600	2582	-51	2600	2582	57
Jul 2009		2585	-53	2585	2585	8
Sep 2009		2603	-53	2603	2603	
Dec 2009	2567	2624	-53	2636	2563	32
Mar 2010		2639	-53	2670	2639	0
Totals		2626				11050

Average for the week	2613					17870
Total for the week						71,478

Spot Prices [US\$ per tonne]

	14 th April	15 th April	16 th April	17 th April	18 th April
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	2983	3034	3086	3186	3110
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	2848	2904	2956	3056	2980
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	2842	2886	2938	3038	2962
Superior Arriba	2885	2891	2943	3043	2967
Sanchez f.a.q.	2928	2952	3004	3104	3028
Malaysian 110	2532	2602	2654	2754	2678
Sulawesi f.a.q.	2770	2829	2881	2981	2905
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	4497	4272	4358	4523	4397
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	7140	7189	7333	7611	7400
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	1131	949	968	1005	977

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association

News

Health and Nutrition

Ivory Coast Company Aims to Conquer Health Cocoa Market (DJ)

Source: Dow Jones Newswires

14/04/2008

Abidjan, Ivory Coast, April 14 - Biotrade SUARL is planning to conquer the new niche market for unfermented, polyphenol-rich cocoa beans used in the production of chocolate, the Ivory Coast-based company's founder and director told Dow Jones Newswires in an interview.

Unfermented cocoa beans contain more than three times as many polyphenols - a class of plant chemical considered good for preventing heart disease and cancer - as fermented cocoa. But at 5,000 metric tons a year, the market for such beans is tiny, with chocolate makers still testing the appeal to consumers. "I will become the biggest supplier," Biotrade Director Antonio Ghelazzi told Dow Jones Newswires, adding that he has set up and trained his own network of farming cooperatives based around the towns of Grand Beribi and Meagui to harvest and treat the product.

So far this cocoa season - running from October to September - Biotrade has supplied almost 500 tons of unfermented cocoa, Ghelazzi said, mainly to Barry Callebaut AG for the Swiss firm's Acticoa brand of health chocolate. But Biotrade aims to more than double this by the end of the season. "I targeted this season 500 tons but it is looking like Biotrade is going to do 1,000 tons," he said. Chocolate from polyphenol-rich cocoa sells for several times the price of ordinary milk chocolate in health food shops, allowing Biotrade to pay its farmers \$1.55/kilogram for unfermented cocoa beans, compared with the around \$1.10/kg paid by buyers of fermented beans, Ghelazzi said.

The exact size of the health chocolate market is difficult to estimate, but farmers involved in Barry Callebaut's project told Dow Jones Newswires that the company wants to buy 2,000 tons a season. Barry Callebaut spokeswoman Josiane Kremer said the company doesn't comment on individual suppliers or customers, adding that it buys around 450,000 ton of cocoa beans worldwide every year from hundreds of suppliers.

To prepare beans for the production of ordinary chocolate, they must be wrapped in banana leaves or plastic sheeting, still covered with a kind of mucus from the cocoa pod, which is essential for the fermentation process and enhances taste, but which reduces their polyphenol content.

Unfermented cocoa, however, is first cleaned of this mucus, after which the beans are dried thoroughly, Ghelazzi said, adding that he has designed and produced a table for this process for which patents are pending. Some 600 farmers in Ivory Coast's southwestern cocoa growing areas around Grand Beribi and Meagui are already using this table, he said.

How to ... Use chocolate for your skin

Seattle Post Intelligencer

Apr 16, 2008

Anyone who still thinks chocolate is just for eating -- and maybe drinking -- is well behind the times. Just talk with friends or browse the Internet: People are using chocolate to make soap, finger paint, candles and even sculptures. And chocolate skin-care products, for use in spas and at home, also have made their way into popular culture.

For many raw foodies, it's not just about feeling great. They contend that people can get the benefit of chocolate's healthful properties by putting it on their skin. "It didn't make sense to be pure on the inside, eating a diet that was 90 percent raw, and then put all these products with preservatives on my skin," said Lisa Lennon, 40, an artist and co-founder of U.K.-based Raw Gaia, which has a Raw Chocolate Face Pack. The company specializes in organic and raw skin care products. "Our whole philosophy is that if you put food on the skin, it actually feeds the skin, with the chocolate," she said. Lennon said she is not aware of studies to prove it, but from experience, she sees that chocolate is good for the skin.

David Wolfe, of San Diego, co-author of the book "Naked Chocolate," has gained a reputation as a raw nutrition expert and leader of a raw chocolate movement in the United States. According to Wolfe, raw cocoa butter delivers the essential elements of the raw cocoa to the skin, such as vitamins and anti-oxidants, because the butter consists of oils that have such small particles that they can penetrate even the smallest of pores.

"The role of the skin is to keep things out, and it does a good job of that," said Dr. Zoe Diana Draelos, a dermatologist in High Point, N.C., and editor of the Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology. Anti-oxidants can be good for the skin when they enter the bloodstream, but they do not get absorbed through the skin itself, said Draelos, who had a chocolate facial once but does not use chocolate skin products to treat herself or her patients.

Chocolate facials may leave the skin feeling smooth and soft, she added, but those are temporary effects, likely from other components of the facial product, including moisturizers. What's certain is that scientific controversy has not hindered creativity when it comes to raw chocolate skin products. Check out the links to some companies that offer chocolate-based skin care products:

Seattle-based Sweet Beauty offers chocolate body, lip and face products: sweetbeautyspa.com

Raw Gaia makes a Raw Chocolate Face Pack: rawgaia.com

Simply Devine Botanicals has a How Now Brown Cacao body butter: simplydivinebotanicals.com

A Brotherly Love of Chocolate

New York Sun, NY

By LINDSAY FELDMAN

April 16, 2008

Patrons who wander on weekends through the Artists and Fleas market in Williamsburg know the founders of Mast Brothers Chocolate as much for their red, Amish-style beards as for the handmade bars they sell wrapped in floral- and paisley-printed papers.

Unlike the many chocolatiers who use couverture — discs of premade chocolate that can be remelted for confections and bars — Rick and Michael Mast count themselves among a small cadre of artisans who make their chocolate from cocoa bean to bar. "You have a lot more control over the quality of the process — and so much of the flavor development comes from the roast of the bean," Rick, 31, said of the batches of bars and custom-made bonbons they have been making out of Michael's Greenpoint apartment.

"Plus," Michael, 28, added, "it's a challenge."

Mast Brothers Chocolate, in business since last year, also sells its \$7, 3 oz. bars at Marlow & Sons, Spuyten Duyvil Grocery, and Urban Rustic, all in Brooklyn. But come fall, the brothers — having pooled their savings and maxed out their credit cards — will open their own chocolate factory and store at the corner of Wyeth and Berry streets in Williamsburg. (The address of their new shop is the inspiration for their new white chocolate and cranberry bar, not surprisingly called the Wyeth Chocolate and Berry Bar.) "There are no outside investors and no trust funds," Rick said of their new store. "I feel like I have to get that out there because everyone in this neighborhood is so cynical."

For the time being, though, they are making due with an apartment-size kitchen, where the interior thermostat — regulated by an infrared thermometer — is always set for the chocolate's comfort level, not that of the human inhabitants or visitors. The scent of the chocolate is worth the occasional chill, Michael said, noting: "It makes the apartment smell nice."

They employ classic French confectionary techniques Rick gleaned while apprenticing under the legendary chocolatier Jacques Torres. Adhering to old-fashioned culinary traditions, the brothers do everything by hand: folding parchment into little cornets, or cones, and manually smacking their chocolate molds on a table to get rid of any air bubbles. "You can buy prefab cornets or mechanical vibrating tables designed just for this purpose, but to me it takes away from the authenticity," Rick explained.

The brothers are lanky, despite a steady diet that includes at least two cups of hot cocoa and any misshapen confections that these beatnik epicureans do not consider good enough for their customers. As Rick put it: "We're trying to teach people enough so they can enjoy the best."

For them, that means chocolate derived from "fair trade" cacao beans from Venezuela, Dominican Republic, and Ecuador. Liberal handfuls of Cape Cod cranberries, almonds brushed with Celtic sea salt and extra virgin olive oil, and walnuts sautéed in maple syrup imported from Quebec are among the ingredients in their seven types of chocolate bars, whose base is between 40% and 81% cacao.

On a recent morning, the brothers set to work on two trays of custom-ordered white chocolate bonbons infused with Jamaican chili pepper ganache. Rick selected a fresh tray and, using simple brushstrokes and red colored cocoa butter, painted a delicate

contemporary design on each mold. Then the molten chocolate was poured in. Making the chocolate base used in each shell requires a four- to five-day process of mixing, heating, and cooling.

After the Caribbean-spiced chocolate-cream ganache was injected and the bonbons chilled, Rick hunched over the finished product to examine his work. "You look at the design and how it influences the expectation of flavor," he said of the abstract scarlet brushstrokes indicating cinnamon chili. "Is it going to enhance the experience? You eat with your eyes first."

What Works to Lower Cholesterol? Try This Chocolate Bar

Source: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

17/04/2008

Urbana, April 16 - Have recent news reports sent you hurrying to the doctor to evaluate your cholesterol medications? The results of a new University of Illinois study have demonstrated one effective way to lower cholesterol levels--and it's very easy to take your medicine.

"Eating two CocoaVia® dark chocolate bars a day not only lowered cholesterol, it had the unexpected effect of also lowering systolic blood pressure," said John Erdman, a U of I professor of food science and human nutrition. The study was published in this month's Journal of Nutrition.

Erdman attributes the drop in cholesterol numbers (total cholesterol by 2 percent and LDL or "bad" cholesterol by 5.3 percent) to the plant sterols that have been added to the CocoaVia® bar and the drop in blood pressure to the flavanols found in dark chocolate.

Forty-nine persons with slightly elevated cholesterol and normal blood pressure were recruited for the study, but not before dietitian Robin Allen's computer crashed. "Basically, we said, would you like to eat chocolate and have your cholesterol measured? Let's just say we had a lot of interest," said Allen, who conducted the study under Erdman's supervision.

Those chosen for the double-blind, placebo-controlled, cross-over study began the American Heart Association's (AHA) "Eating Plan for Healthy Americans" (formerly the Step 1 diet) two weeks before the study started; then they were divided into two matched groups. Two types of CocoaVia® bars were then introduced, one with plant sterols and one without.

While remaining on the AHA diet, participants ate one CocoaVia® formulation twice daily for four weeks, then switched to the other bar for an additional four weeks. Blood cholesterol levels, blood pressure, body weight, and other cardiovascular measures were measured throughout the eight-week study. "After the participants started the AHA diet, a lot of them began to lose weight, so we had to keep fussing at them to eat more. We didn't want a weight change because that also lowers cholesterol," said Ellen Evans, a U of I assistant professor of kinesiology and community health and co-author of the study. "After starting the CocoaVia® bars, we saw a marked differential effect on blood cholesterol, with the sterol-containing products doing better than those without sterols," she said.

According to Evans, a CocoaVia® bar contains 100 calories, so adding two to your daily diet means you have to cut out 200 calories elsewhere. "But, if you're already having a chocolate snack each day, why not pick one that's going to have a beneficial effect on your health? I think one of the reasons so many people wanted to be in the study is that they're looking for something they can reasonably do, and this fits into that category," she said. And, if you eat the chocolate bars in combination with a lifestyle change, such as adopting a heart-healthy diet or adding 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day, you might have a 10- or 12-point reduction in cholesterol, she said.

According to Erdman, who chairs the Mars Scientific Advisory Council, the Mars Company has spent millions of dollars studying the biological impact of the flavanols found in cocoa beans and learning how to retain their benefits during the refining process. "And we know that flavanols are still present in dark chocolate after processing. But milk chocolate is processed differently, and most flavanols are lost," he said.

Is the study biased because it was funded by Mars, Inc.? Erdman says that some people will assume the study is flawed for that reason. "I know that it was a double-blind trial that wasn't skewed toward a particular result. Moreover, the paper was peer-reviewed and published in the Journal of Nutrition, which ranks in the top 10 percent of all the biological science journals," he said.

CocoaVia® bars are available at many retail locations.

Other authors of the study are LeaAnn Carson of the U of I and Catherine Kwik-Urbe, research manager of Mars, Inc. The work was supported in part by a grant from Mars, Inc., and by the University of Illinois.

Food for thought : Chocolate lovers beware

Southtown Star, IL
April 17, 2008

The dish on --

"Essence of Chocolate: Recipes for Baking and Cooking With Fine Chocolate," by Robert Steinberg and John Scharffen Berger

Established in 1996, Scharffen Berger has become America's pre-eminent maker of cooking chocolate. "Essence of Chocolate," by the firm's founders and food writer Susie Heller, offers more than 100 recipes for a broad selection of delights like Chocolate Pudding Cakes, Chocolate Marbled Gingerbread, Cocoa Caramel Panna Cotta and Chocolate Chunk Cheesecake, as well as savory edibles made with chocolate like Tortilla Soup and Chile-Marinated Flank Steak. Unusual recipes also include the likes of Chocolate Chunk Challah and TKOs, a homemade version of Oreos that leaves those favorites on the supermarket shelf.

Arranged by chocolate intensity, the recipes come from the company's files and from chefs including Flo Braker, Jim Dodge, Thomas Keller and Stephanie Hersh. Although the formulas vary in difficulty, most are within the range of all cooks interested in making something terrific. Readers should note, however, that the recipes require chocolate with specific cocoa-solids contents - 62 percent semisweet, for example - that may be difficult to find. Most cooks will know, however, that one high-quality chocolate of similar cocoa content can usually replace another. With narrative sections in which Steinberg and Scharffenberger trace (at perhaps excessive length) their career trajectories, interesting asides such as Bread and Chocolate, lots of chocolate lore and a good primer on how chocolate is manufactured - plus color photos - the book makes a happy addition to the chocolate lovers' kitchen library. (Amazon.com)

Easy recipe: monkey bread

It's tree-tapping season. When the sap is flowing, our thoughts turn to maple syrup and pancakes. But Kathy Pucci uses maple syrup year-round to add pizzazz to myriad recipes. "I put it in baked beans. It's my secret ingredient," she said. "I put it on ham when I'm baking it. Brown sugar tends to fall off. I squirt syrup on it like a glaze." Pucci's favorite secret is the addition of maple syrup to her "monkey bread," a pull-apart bread made with ready-to-cook biscuits from a tube. She starts by melting butter in a bundt pan (you could use a tube pan), then stirs in brown sugar, vanilla and a healthy squirt of maple syrup. She then cuts each biscuit into quarters and rolls the pieces in cinnamon-sugar before tossing them in the pan (a fun job for children). After baking, turn the bread upside down onto a serving plate to expose the caramel topping. "Everyone thinks you've created this marvelous wonder," Pucci said, laughing. "It's so simple."

Kathy's Maple Monkey Bread

Melt butter in bundt pan in oven. Remove pan and stir in brown sugar until it begins to melt. Add maple syrup and vanilla, stirring well. Mix sugar and cinnamon and nutmeg in shallow bowl. Separate biscuits, then cut into quarters. Roll each piece in cinnamon mixture and drop into bundt pan. Bake in a 350-degree oven for about 25 minutes. Immediately put a plate on top of the pan and invert. Wait a couple minutes and remove pan. Quickly scrape out the remaining topping and put on top of the bread. (It will harden as it cools, so move fast.) Serve warm. Yields 8 to 10 servings. (Saimi Rote Bergmann/Canton Repository)

Can chocolate help your skin?

Cape Cod Times, MA

By DENISE OLIVEIRA

COLUMBIA NEWS SERVICE

April 18, 2008



Johanna Skrzypczyk of New York City tries Raw Gaia's Raw Chocolate Face Pack. Raw foodies say chocolate isn't just a guilty pleasure; it actually feeds the skin. **RUZGAR BARISIK**

Yoga teacher Joanne Eales loves raw chocolate. At first, just as a delicious snack that's high in anti-aging antioxidants. Now she's doubling her pleasure by putting it on her skin. "It's like food for my skin," said Eales, 32, of London. "It feels quite nourishing," she said of the Raw Chocolate Face Pack, a new product from U.K.-based Raw Gaia, which specializes in organic and raw skin care products. She said that raw chocolate — which is made at low or no heat using raw, unprocessed cocoa beans — makes her skin glow and feel alive, and that the darker shade of the chocolate seems to put a slight natural tan on the skin.

Anyone who still thinks chocolate is just for eating — and maybe drinking — is well behind the times. Just talk to friends or browse the Internet. People are using chocolate to make soap, finger paint, candles and even sculptures. And chocolate skin-care products, for use in spas and at home, have also made their way into popular culture. "We always say that this is a place where people come to be dipped, wrapped, and submersed in chocolate," said Lynne Zsido, a manager at The Spa at Hotel Hershey, commonly referred to as The Chocolate Spa, part of the chocolate maker's entertainment and lodging complex in Hershey, Pa.

The Chocolate Fondue Wrap, the Whipped Cocoa Bath (a patented foaming chocolate milk bath), and even a chocolate pedicure are all on the menu at The Chocolate Spa. And so is the latest addition from 2007, the Cocoa Facial Experience, which in one rendition includes the same Hershey's cocoa powder used to make the chocolate bars. During its first year, in 2001, The Chocolate Spa received just under 19,000 guests. In 2007, the number soared to just over 50,000, according to a spokeswoman at the Spa.

"They rubbed the chocolate all over my body and my face. It was wonderful," said Mary Morris, a novelist and travel writer from Brooklyn, N.Y., describing the Chocolate Embrace she received recently at The Spa at The Westin Puerto Vallarta in Mexico. The embrace includes a chocolate and mint exfoliant, a warm chocolate mask, and finishes off with a chocolate moisturizing lotion. "My skin felt great afterwards," Morris said.

But for many raw foodies, it's not just about feeling great. They contend that people can get the benefit of chocolate's healthful properties by putting it on their skin. "It didn't make sense to be pure on the inside, eating a diet that was 90 percent raw, and then put all these products with preservatives on my skin," said Lisa Lennon, 40, an artist and co-founder of Raw Gaia. She started the company after experimenting with raw products in the kitchen to treat her own excessively dry skin. "Our whole philosophy is that if you put food on the skin, it actually feeds the skin, with the chocolate," she said. Lennon said she is not aware of studies to prove it, but from experience she sees that chocolate is good for the skin.

David Wolfe, of San Diego, Calif., co-author of the book "Naked Chocolate," has gained a reputation as a raw nutrition expert and leader of a raw chocolate movement in the United States that has had rippling effects abroad. Back in 2004, when Wolfe could not find raw cocoa beans for purchase in the United States, he started importing them from Hawaii and Ecuador through Sunfood Nutrition, a company set up to sell raw foods and related products. "I couldn't believe the most popular food in the world, in its original form, was impossible to get," said Wolfe, 37, who has a law degree and a master's in vegan and live food nutrition from the University of Integrative Science California.

The raw cocoa beans that Sunfood Nutrition imports do not undergo any cooking or processing, and thus retain their original antioxidants, minerals and vitamins, Wolfe said. Sunfood Nutrition sells not only the beans, but also raw cocoa nibs, raw cocoa powder, and raw cocoa butter, for eating and use as a skin moisturizer.

According to Wolfe, raw cocoa butter delivers the essential elements of the raw cocoa to the skin, like vitamins and antioxidants, because the butter consists of oils that have such small particles that they can penetrate even the smallest of pores. Cooked cocoa butter, on the other hand, would just stay on the skin surface without penetrating it, because the oils get coagulated in the cooking process, according to Wolfe. He said he has not experimented with other raw chocolate skin-care products to know how well they penetrate the skin.

But not everyone agrees that applying chocolate to the skin has any lasting effect. "The role of the skin is to keep things out, and it does a good job of that," said Dr. Zoe Diana Draelos, a dermatologist in High Point, N.C., and editor of the Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology. Antioxidants can be good for the skin when they enter the bloodstream, but they do not get absorbed through the skin itself, said Dr. Draelos, who had a chocolate facial once but does not use chocolate skin products to treat herself or her patients.

Chocolate facials may leave the skin feeling smooth and soft, she added, but those are temporary effects, likely due to other components of the facial product, including moisturizers.

What's certain is that scientific controversy has not hindered creativity when it comes to raw chocolate skin products. The Altogether Now Love Butter was launched in 2006 by Flowers Shining Everywhere, of Haliburton, Ontario, a company that produces a line of products called Living Libations that it sells via the Internet and in retail stores.

The Love Butter, a massage oil made from raw cocoa beans, is "for use from lips to hips," said Nadine Artemis, 33, a botanical formulator who co-founded the company five years ago with her husband Ron, 38, a yoga instructor who likes to feed raw chocolate to his students at the start of his chocolate yoga classes. The Artemises were introduced to raw cocoa beans by Wolfe in 2004 in Toronto, where they started their company, Flowers Shining Everywhere. Last year they started selling a raw cocoa oil for bath, body and massages.

Hector Bolanos, who with Lennon co-founded Raw Gaia in Britain, said it is tough to top the power of chocolate. "It quickly became one of our best-selling products. We sold over 500 jars in the first two months, and it keeps growing." With distributors in Canada and in Europe, the company wants to enter the U.S. market, according to Bolanos. It sells the Raw Chocolate Face Pack to U.S. customers over the Internet, but wants to expand by into retail sales through health food stores, apothecaries, and spas. He also noted that matcha tea, a type of powdered green tea, has high levels of antioxidants. But when asked about the possibility of a Matcha Tea Face Pack, he answered, "Well, normally you only drink tea."

Production and Quality

Nigerian Cocoa-Bean Exports Rose 7.7% to 140,148 Tons Last Year

Bloomberg -

By Dulué Mbachu

April 14, 2008

(Bloomberg) -- Cocoa-bean exports from Nigeria, Africa's fourth-biggest grower of the chocolate ingredient, rose 7.7 percent to 140,148 metric tons last year, the Federal Produce Inspection Agency said.

Shipments increased from 130,074 tons a year earlier, the Lagos-based agency said in an e-mailed statement today. The figures represent beans officially inspected and certified as fit for export and don't take into account cocoa smuggled out of the country to avoid quality-control checks and payment of duties, it said. Cocoa shipments have risen from 116,811 tons in 2005, according to the agency.

Nigeria is the world's fifth-biggest producer of cocoa, after Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia and Cameroon. The west African country produced 160,000 tons of cocoa in the 2006-2007 cocoa season, according to the International Cocoa Organization's Web site. Output is forecast to reach 173,000 tons this season. *To contact the reporter on this story: Dulué Mbachu in Lagos via Johannesburg at pmrichardson@bloomberg.net.*

Cameroon Cocoa Exports Declined 16% Last Week on Lower Supplies

Bloomberg

By Pius Lukong

April 14, 2008

(Bloomberg) -- Cocoa exports from Cameroon, the world's fourth-biggest producer of the chocolate ingredient, fell 16 percent last week as supplies from farmers dwindled ahead of the new season, the Cocoa and Coffee Board said.

Exports from the country's main port of Douala declined to 98 metric tons in the week to April 13, from 116 tons a week earlier, Angoula Assogo, an official at the board, said in an e-mailed statement from the city yesterday. The average export price rose to 1,048 Central African CFA francs (\$2.52) a kilogram (2.2 pounds), from 1,001 francs previously, he said. "Cocoa farmers are simply clearing their stocks while working toward the new harvest," Assogo said.

Beans from the western growing region sold at 891 francs, compared with 888 francs a week earlier, while those from the central region declined to 880 francs a kilogram, from 883 francs, the board said. Cocoa from the southern region fetched 895 francs a kilogram, compared with 878 francs.

Cocoa for May delivery, the most active contract, fell 3 pounds, or 0.2 percent, to 1,411 pounds (\$2,786) a metric ton on the Liffe exchange in London at 10:38 a.m.

Cameroon is the world's fourth-biggest cocoa producer, after Ivory Coast, Ghana and Indonesia. The cocoa season in the central African nation runs from August to mid-July. *To contact the reporter on this story: Pius Lukong in Yaounde via the Johannesburg bureau at +27- pmrichardson@bloomberg.net.*

Cameroon Government Gives \$3.4 Million to Boost Cotton, Cocoa, Coffee Crop (DJ)

Source: Dow Jones Newswires

15/04/2008

Yaounde, Cameroon, April 15 - The government of Cameroon will give some XAF1.4 billion (\$3.4 million) to boost farmers' cotton, cocoa and coffee output, a senior official in the country's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development told Dow Jones Newswires Tuesday.

"This government donation of XAF1.4 billion is part of a move to boost harvest and ensure that our cotton, cocoa and coffee production is raised," Chief of Projects and Programs in the ministry, Jean Pierre Tchokam Ngassa told Dow Jones in an interview.

"Some 32 cooperatives of the farmers involved in these three crops have requested government financial assistance to enable them sustain the crops on their old farms and newly opened ones."

Tchokam Ngassa said his ministry's Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative met last week and took the decision which he will supervise. "The money will be managed by the farmers themselves through the 32 cooperatives and common initiative groups, or CIG, to which they belong," explained Tchokam Ngassa. "The most efficient way to assist farmers is by using their groupings so as to ensure that the funds are managed in transparency."

The Cameroon government official said: "In the past farmers of cocoa, cotton and coffee had benefited from government financial assistance, but they diverted the money to instead grow food crops in order to make quick benefit. This is not the government's goal".

The funds will be handed out in the weeks ahead and farmers will have to buy inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and seedlings and ensure the upkeep of their nurseries "as spelled out in their requests" for the cash, Tchokam Ngassa said.

Chocolate firm donates to farmers

The Statesman Online, Ghana

Vassillisa Serwaah Antwi ,

15/04/2008

J S C Rakhat, a confectionery company based in Kazakhstan has donated 470 cartons of assorted chocolate products valued at \$18,000 to Ghana Cocoa Board and cocoa farmers in appreciation of their hard work and contribution to the cocoa industry worldwide.

Making the donation at the Cocoa House in Accra recently, Ernest Kufuor, a local representative of B D Associates UK Ltd said the company uses Ghana's cocoa in the production of their confectionaries because of its premium quality, adding that B.D. Associates supplies Ghana cocoa beans to the confectionery.

Receiving the items on behalf of the farmers, Isaac Osei, Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board expressed the appreciation of the Board to the company for the gesture and said the Board will continue to ensure that cocoa beans that leave the shores of Ghana are nothing short of the premium quality it is noted for worldwide. "In order to ensure that cocoa beans are of premium quality, the Board will continue to encourage farmers to adopt good agronomic practices", he said.

Mrs. Pauline Adobea Dadzawa, Public Affairs Manager, who was also at the function added that the items will be sent to farmers in the cocoa growing areas.

CIB working with Farmers to Boost Production

Government of Jamaica, Jamaica Information Service, Jamaica

KINGSTON (JIS) BY: ALPHEA SAUNDERS

April 16, 2008

The Cocoa Industry Board (CIB), is working assiduously to implement widespread production of a hybrid cocoa plant, that is disease resistant and will produce high quality cocoa, consistently. Manager of the CIB, Naburn Nelson explains in a JIS News interview that the way forward for cocoa farmers rests heavily on the development of this new type of plant. He says this will not only ensure higher quality cocoa, but the plant will also do well against hurricanes.

"The concept is that we will be promoting it by bringing back the bamboo pot technology. We are normally used to seeing potted plants in black plastic bags, but the thing about it is, after you set the plant in the plastic bag, what do we do with all those bags afterwards, that are not biodegradable? So the concept is, bamboo is a natural tree, we make the pots, plant the crops and in the end we will bury the bamboo pot in the earth and that eventually will rot and form part of the natural soil and organic material," he outlines.

Mr. Nelson says that although hurricanes are part of the problem that has caused setbacks with production over the years, in recent times it has been discovered that the black pod disease has also affected the industry negatively. Consistent production of the new plant will effectively address this issue, he notes.

"We will be producing it not from seedlings, because with all the goodwill in the world, when you plant from seedlings, you are not able to capture the exact species that you want. What we are doing with the new plant is wedge-budding. The idea behind this is we will be budding it with a strong rooted stock. This rooted stock will have a top root, which will anchor into the earth against any eventuality, and on top of that, we will be budding the rooted stock with this high quality, high disease resistant plant," he explains.

"So, we will get the best of two worlds. The top root system will ensure that the plant, under adverse conditions (such as high winds), does not tumble over. The hybrid section will ensure that during these heavy rains and humid conditions, the black pod disease will be limited. The plant is up to 80 per cent disease resistant," he points out.

The CIB Manager says a "conscious view" of planting is being taken, with plans to re-plant the entire island with cocoa on as much land as is available. This, he says, has become necessary to prevent a complete crop wipe-out in the event of a hurricane. "We have discovered that in the worst of times, the hurricane does not affect all of the island at once. So, our concept now is that, with these highly resistant plants, we will be planting them across the length and breadth of the island, so if the hurricane hits the southern belt, at least cocoa being produced in the northern side of the island, will still be there," Mr. Nelson argues.

Meanwhile, he notes that farmers have been benefiting from the increase in the price paid to them by the Board, with a 20 per cent increase on the first payment effective October 1 of last year. Some 10,500 boxes of wet cocoa have been produced by farmers for the 2007 crop season up to March 2008.

In addition, in order to bolster cocoa production, 300 cocoa agents have been doing field work with the farmers. "To complement that, we have our extension team doing spot checks and dealing with technical cases. Also, soon to be implemented, the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) will be further complementing our extension team, so the support services are pretty good now," Mr. Nelson tells JIS News.

Turning to the five-acre demonstration plot project, which has been established at the College of Agriculture, Science and Education (CASE) in Portland, he says this initiative has been so successful that another 10-acre commercial plot has since been established. "The idea behind it was to get the students to learn the whole cultural practice of farming cocoa. CASE on a whole is being used as a model project for schools. This model will be brought to just about all the other schools in the cocoa bearing region," he points out. There are a total of 22,000 cocoa farmers in the island, with 15,000 being active producers. Some 80,000 boxes of cocoa were exported last year.

Edo Releases N5.2m for buying of Chemicals, Inputs for Cocoa Farmers

Nigerian Tribune, Nigeria

Uchechukwu Olisah, Benin City

19.04.2008

The Edo State Government has said it has released N5.2million for the buying of chemicals and inputs for the benefit of cocoa farmers in the state. The state deputy governor, Mr. Lucky Imasuen, announced the release of the money while briefing newsmen on Friday in Benin City on the occasion of the 4th National Cocoa Day celebration.

Besides, Mr. Imasuen said the state government would fully participate in this year's National Cocoa Day celebration holding in Akure, the Ondo State capital. He added that the state government would be sponsoring 20 cocoa farmers from the state to the event. He said the government in September 2007 established 22 Cocoa Farmers' Fields Schools in the state under the first phase of the program

Oyo To Lead In Cocoa Production

Nigerian Tribune, Nigeria

19.04.2008

THE present administration of Otunba Christopher Adebayo Alao-Akala has stated its resolve to take the lead in cocoa regeneration towards improving the revenue of the state. This was disclosed by the state Deputy Governor, Alhaji Taofeek Oladejo Arapaja, while fielding questions from newsmen during a press conference organised in preparation for this year's 4th National Cocoa Day coming up in Akure from Tuesday 22nd to Thursday 24th April, 2008.

Alhaji Arapaja declared that the Alao-Akala Administration subscribed to the current efforts by the 14 cocoa-producing states to bring back the lost glory of cocoa in order to improve the socio-economic well-being of the people.

On the theme of this year's Cocoa Day, Cocoa for Health and Wealth, the Deputy Governor said the state government was prepared to invigorate production, processing and marketing of cocoa with a view to helping farmers and the people to benefit maximally from this renewed efforts to bring cocoa back to prominence.

DJ Nigeria wants to produce 600,000 MT of Cocoa Annually by 2011

Trading Markets (press release), CA

By Obafemi Oredein; Dow Jones Newswires

April 18, 2008

IBADAN, Nigeria, Apr 18, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- -- Nigeria plans to raise annual cocoa production to 600,000 metric tons by 2011, the minister of state for agriculture and water resources said Friday.

Ademola Seriki said the introduction and planting of a new cocoa variety, sale of cocoa chemicals to farmers at discount prices and other positive steps by the state-supported National Cocoa Development Committee has resulted in the country's cocoa output rising to 385,000 tons in 2006 from 170,000 tons in 1999. Seriki spoke ahead of the annual National Cocoa Day in Akure.

The Market

DJ Liffe Softs: Cocoa, Coffee Up On Strength Across Softs

Trading Markets (press release), CA

By Sarah McFarlane, Dow Jones Newswires

April 17, 2008

LONDON, Apr 17, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- -- Liffe cocoa and robusta coffee traded higher Thursday on strength across the soft commodity markets. However, neither had the impetus to break far above recent ranges.

COCOA

July cocoa traded up GBP9, or 0.6%, at GBP1,471 a metric ton, with 1,072 lots traded, as at 1026 GMT.

Hitting a fresh five-week high early in the session, cocoa continued its upward trend, benefitting from strength across the commodity markets. However, the market has been rising on thin volumes, failing to attract much activity. "Spread trading has made up around 75% of the activity," thus far in the session, said a London-based broker.

New York's front-month cocoa futures traded up \$4, or 0.1%, at \$2,690/ton, as of 1027 GMT.

Ivory Coast, the world's largest cocoa producer, recorded a 3% rise in exports to 973,844 tons, from Oct. 1 to April 14, compared with 946,469 tons declared in the same period last season.

COFFEE

May robusta coffee traded up \$29, or 1.3%, at \$2,328/ton, with 2,073 lots traded, as at 1028 GMT. July traded up \$31, or 1.3%, at \$2,365/ton, with 4,389 lots traded.

Coffee reached a four-week high as it fought to break out of its recent range. "Coffee has been stuck in a range - if it closes above this range then it might push higher - but it hasn't been doing much," said a London-based broker.

Like cocoa, robusta coffee has struggled to attract large volumes of trade, as a dramatic downturn in prices across both markets in March made investors cautious.

New York's front-month arabica traded up 135 points, or 1%, at \$1.3610 a pound, as at 1029 GMT.

Processing & Manufacturing

European Q1 Cocoa Grind Rises 4.7 pct Year on Year

Source: Reuters

14/04/2008

London, April 11 - Europe's first-quarter 2008 cocoa grindings rose 4.7 percent from the same period a year earlier to 354,571 tonnes, the Brussels-based European Cocoa Association said on Friday. The ECA's quarterly statistics cover most of the European grinding industry.

WAMCO to be closed down... due to non-availability of cocoa beans

Modern Ghana, Ghana

By Alfred Adams, Sekondi - Ghanaian Chronicle

Tue, 15 Apr 2008

INVESTIGATIONS conducted by The Chronicle have indicated that the West Africa Mills Company (WAMCO 1), a cocoa processing company operating in Sekondi-Takoradi is to be closed down. According to sources, this is due to the non availability of low grade cocoa beans, which is used in the company's production. From January 2008 to date, this paper can report on authority that the company has not been able to operate due to prevailing circumstances. This has raised concern among the almost 209 workforce whose fate appears to be in limbo.

As a result, the workers union held a meeting with the shop stewards last week in order to communicate the information to the entire staff about the problems facing the company. Out of the three plants installed, the company is currently operating just one plant. This has resulted in a situation where workers are compelled to work in shifts.

WAMCO 1 is using low or light class cocoa beans for processing and production on the grounds that it is cheaper to buy. The sister company WAMCO 2, on the other hand relies on main or large crop cocoa beans for processing and production which is said to be expensive than the low class cocoa beans.

Reuters news report have it that light crop cocoa beans, harvested between July and September last year make up only a small proportion of the annual output but regularly sell at 20percent discount to larger main crop beans. Light crop beans are smaller and cheaper beans as compared to the main crop which has dwindled in size over the years as a result of improved growing practices and the adoption of modern methods of farming which has boosted good quality main crop production.

As a result, management of WAMCO 1 has written to the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) of the Trade Union Congress to intervene on the steps to take to lay down its temporary staff with due regard to the labour law if the situation continues unabated.

Management is also expected to communicate the problem to the staff to disabuse speculations making rounds that the incompetence of management has resulted in the situation. Speaking in an interview with The Chronicle, Mr. Anthony K. N. Clement, General Manager-Operations, confirmed the story. If it comes to the worse, he said the company would have no option but to close down. He also confirmed the fact that management has written to the ICU on the steps it has to take to lay down the staff if the situation does not improve with time.

Kraft Expands production capacity at Belgian Chocolate Factory

Source: FLEXNEWS

17/04/2008

Belgian media report that food and drink giant Kraft Foods inaugurated a new production line at its Hale chocolate factory. The state-of-the-art production line, which is entirely automated and cost \$15 million, will take the factory's annual production capacity from 60,000 to 80,000 tonnes, once it is fully operational.

The new facility marks Kraft's largest investment in the European chocolate sector in 15 years. It aims to allow the group to tap into the lucrative and growing premium chocolate market. In 2007, this segment grew 14% in Europe and 26% in Belgium.

Kraft operates two chocolate plants in Belgium. The Herentals factory processes cocoa into a semi-finished product which is then sent to the Hal manufacturing site, where Côte d'Or, Milka, Freia and Marabou chocolate items are produced.

Hal was chosen as the location for the line thanks partly to its geographical proximity to Kraft's main European markets for chocolate, namely Belgium (33%), France (33.4%), Germany (8.5%), the Netherlands (7.8%) and Scandinavia (3.8%). The investment is seen to be reinforcing the importance of Belgium within the multinational group.

US Q1 2008 Cocoa Grind down 5.85 pct from Year Ago

Source: Reuters

18/04/2008

New York, April 17 - U.S. cocoa grindings in the first quarter of 2008 fell 5.85 percent from a year ago to 91,876 tonnes, data from the National Confectioners Association (NCA) showed Thursday. The quantity of chocolate liquor melted in the first quarter dropped 67.76 percent to 1,194 tonnes while the butter melt was down 15.69 percent at 8,487 tonnes, according to the NCA data.

Cocoa traders' estimates of the grindings ahead of the report ranged from about flat to 5 percent lower from the the same quarter last year, when grindings sat at 97,584 tonnes. Some cocoa grinding, traditionally seen as a measure of demand for the key chocolate ingredient, has shifted to producing countries.

Survey respondents include chocolate makers like Barry Callebaut USA , Hershey Co , Nestle Chocolate & Confections and Masterfoods USA, a Mars Inc Co. The results compare to Europe's first-quarter 2008 cocoa grindings that rose 4.7 percent to 354,571 tonnes, from the year-ago figure, the European Cocoa Association said last week. In Germany, it was up 16.2 percent at 102,122 tonnes, compared to the first quarter of 2007, the association of German confectionery producers BDSI said last week.

Flavanol content of cocoa cut during manufacturing

NutraIngredients-usa.com, France

By Laura Crowley

18-Apr-2008

Alkalisating cocoa beans reduces the total flavanoid content by two-thirds, reducing the antioxidant potential of the product, according to new research. Cocoa is alkalisated during the manufacturing process to make it easier to mix and digest. Alkalisating can also be applied to change the colour of the product.

The health benefits of antioxidant-rich chocolate such as improvements to cardiovascular health have received much recognition in recent years, with positive findings from a number of studies impacting on consumer awareness. Chocolate manufacturers are using high cocoa content (over 70 per cent) as a means of differentiation, and cocoa has also received attention for its potential in functional food applications.

However, the cocoa content does not necessarily mean that the flavonol content is high, as new research published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry found that alkalisating has negative impacts on the flavonol levels. "The large decrease found in the flavonoid content of natural cocoa powder, together with the observed change in the monomeric flavanol profile that results from the alkalisating treatment, could affect the antioxidant properties and the polyphenol bioavailability of cocoa powder products," said the study's authors.

The study

Major brands of cocoa powder products present in the Spanish market were analysed for monomeric flavanols (epicatechin and catechin) and flavanols (quercetin and quercetin-3-glucuronide, -glucoside and -arabioside). Researchers found that epicatechin was in the range of 116-730 micrograms per gram and catechin was in the range of 81-447 micrograms per gram. Among flavanols, quercetin-3-arabioside and isoquercitrin were the major flavanols in the cocoa powder (2-40 micrograms and 4-43 micrograms respectively).

The researchers said this was the first time quantitative data of individual flavanol derivatives in cocoa powder products. They added: "This data is very useful for the calculation of daily flavanoid intake and its correlation with disease incidence or early markers in epidemiologic and clinical studies." To measure the effect of the manufacturing process, 10 batches of natural cocoa powder were submitted to alkalisating up to pH 7.2. The alkalisating treatment resulted in 60 per cent loss of the mean total flavanoid content.

Among flavanols, epicatechin presented a larger decline (67 per cent as a mean percentage difference) and in the case of flavanols, quercetin presented the highest loss (86 per cent). "Considering that cocoa powder products have a lower level of saturated fats than chocolate bars, it seems necessary to establish a compromise between colour and phenolic content, especially for cocoa powder products derived from alkalisated cocoa powder," said the study's authors.

Increasing flavanols in cocoa products

Manufacturers wishing to tap in to the 'healthy' chocolate market are aware of the detrimental effects of processing on the final flavonol content of their products, and this has led to the development of new processing techniques.

Confectionary giant Mars, for example, has been pro-active in research into the potential health benefits of flavanols from cocoa and has been sponsoring researchers in Germany and the US for about 15 years. Other companies targeting this market include Barry Callebaut, with its Acticoa range, which boasts high polyphenol content and are marketed as healthy options.

Spanish firm Natraceutical has also made inroads into the market, but has been the subject to legal challenges from Mars regarding alleged patent infringements. Similarly, US chocolate manufacturer Hershey increased its health-boosting chocolate range last year with Antioxidant Milk Chocolate and Whole Bean Chocolate. Hershey's goodness portfolio also consists of the Extra dark chocolate range - with a 60 per cent cacao content - and Hershey's Sticks which contain 60 calories per bar.

Business & Economy

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

Reuters South Africa, South Africa

Reporting by Kwasi Kpodo

Mon 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>;

Cocoa makes a big comeback

The Star Online, St. Lucia

By Kayra Williams

April 14, 2008



Precious little is left of St Lucia's once thriving cocoa industry. Only eight countries in the world are designated as exclusively fine flavoured locations for cocoa and St Lucia is one of them. For that reason, its mind-boggling why the industry has been at an all-time low for years. St Lucia isn't especially famous for it's chocolate but Hotel Chocolat's investment in the island's cocoa industry is already changing that perception. Already, Hotel Chocolat has five St Lucian products on the world market.

This year Hotel Chocolat went away with three awards at the Academy of Chocolate Awards held in London. They received three bronze awards, one for the best filled praline or bonbon, the second in the golden bean category and also for having the best drinking chocolate and original cocoa stick.

On Tuesday, Hotel Chocolat held a their launch at Rabot Estate. The launch was a celebration of the first two years of cocoa renaissance and also a late launch of St Lucia's chocolate products on the world market in December. The company also launched the Hotel Cacao-Growers Program of Engaged Ethics (HCCAPEE). Membership is free and farmers under the HCCAPEE will receive a higher price for their cocoa beans than anywhere in the Caribbean; something the company thought was necessary to get farmers back into the cocoa industry.

Hotel Chocolat already has 30 retail outlets in the UK and has plans to increase that number. The chocolateers plan to open yet another outlet right here in St Lucia. At the launch, Philip Buckley, St Lucia's Estate Director for Hotel Chocolat spoke of his desire to create a sustainable market for cocoa growing in the island so local farmers could feel secure.

"One farmer asked me what he would do if he planted 5000 plants and we didn't buy. I told him, listen, if I build this chocolate factory I need 500 tonnes a year, what am I going to do with the chocolate factory if you don't have the cocoa? You can't

make a chocolate factory to make bricks so we're in this together." The Estate director had plans for creating a minimum of 1000 sustainable jobs in the cocoa growing community on island.

"I think we can do this, we're looking for bright young people wanting to go into agricultural technology," he said. "We'll be looking to recruit for the next phase shortly. It's not just about using a cutlass, it's about using your brains as well." Buckley revealed that places like Papa New Guinea and Madagascar had gone into fine flavoured cocoa and were perceived as being the best when they originally got the best from the Caribbean.

"It's no longer possible for cocoa farmers throughout world to be growing this crop so people in industrialized countries with more money with spare cash can endorse themselves in this luxury," he said. "It's not fair or ethical. This can't go on. If I were a cocoa farmer I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't grow my beans for nothing and let someone else enjoy it, that's why we're here, to change it." Buckley stressed that Hotel Chocolat was not a typical developer. Neither was it a hotel company or property developer.

"People come here and think we've got rooms," he said. "All our shops are laid out as if you're going into hotel lobby. You can browse through each room and there are different types of chocolate from all over the world. Buckley said a hotel was necessary because their brand demanded it. For that reason, Hotel Chocolat would begin construction of the brand's first hotel in St Lucia in 2010.

"There's no where else in the world with a chocolate factory with a hotel right next to it so when people are looking for somewhere to go, once again, they'll pick St Lucia. This is a way to connect agriculture to tourism." Before plans for the hotel got into gear, Buckley said it was necessary to make sure farmers were stable and Hotel Chocolat was up and running.

The factory itself would be built to blend in with the nearby UNESCO World Heritage Site. The exterior would be built with natural materials, while the inside would be hi-tech. Eddie Hazel, managing director of West Indies shipping and logistical partner in Hotel Chocolat's project said the company had big plans for St Lucia's agricultural industry.

"People used to say that every time you drive around the countryside its all dead and all you see is just trees, now you can sense a difference in the agricultural industry," said Hazel. "Someone was saying that you could actually hear the cocoa trees around the island singing now because all of them are standing up right. "Now everything is all flourished and this is a different impact of Hotel Chocolat's investment into the island."

Caption: Phillip Buckley, St Lucia's Estate Director for Hotel Chocolat (R) and Eddie Hazel, managing director of West Indies Shipping at the launch in Rabot Estate.

DJ Cameroon Aug-March '08 Cocoa Bean Exports 152,723 Tons – NCCB

Trading Markets (press release), CA

By Emmanuel Tumanjong

April 14, 2008

YAOUNDE, Cameroon, Apr 14, 2008 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- -- Cameroon exported 152,723 metric tons of cocoa beans between August and March of the ongoing 2007-08 season, up from 146,316 tons a year earlier, according to data released Tuesday by the National Cocoa and Coffee Board, or NCCB. Cameroon's cocoa season officially starts in August and ends in mid-July.

According to the data, a total of 5,621 tons of cocoa beans were exported in March, up from 1,533 tons shipped in the same month of the previous season. The country is expected to have closed its main crop cocoa harvest, which generally stretches from September of each year through February/March. But farmers and traders in the second main cocoa region of the Center province told Dow Jones Newswires the main crop harvest is overlapping onto the mid-crop.

This region, which accounts for about 30-35% of the country's annual cocoa output, has been experiencing a near all-year-round harvest which from the mature hybrid cocoa plants which have replaced the traditional cocoa trees.

Cameroon produced 179,239 tons of cocoa beans in the 2006-07 season, up from 164,301 tons the previous season, CCIB data show.

Nestle's Chocolate Looks to Dark, Refined Products (DJ)

Source: Dow Jones Newswires

14/04/2008

Lausanne, Switzerland, April 14 - Nestle SA aims to sharpen its premium chocolate focus as aging populations in many countries boost the demand for darker chocolates, said the food company's head of chocolate operations, Petraea Heynike. "Dark chocolate is a still-accelerating trend. Even countries which have no dark chocolate tradition are successfully introducing such products," Heynike told Dow Jones Newswires on the sidelines of the company's annual general meeting in Lausanne last Thursday.

"Premiumization, the move towards refined chocolate, is another important trend. In our strengthened focus on premium, we want to increase our use of high-quality raw materials and production methods," she added.

In the global chocolate market, worth about 90 billion Swiss francs (\$90.37 billion) and growing about 5% annually, Nestle takes the number-two position with a market share of around 12.5%, second to Mars Inc. with 14.8%. Nestle is the global leader in dark chocolate, and has rolled out more than 200 new chocolate products in the past few years, according to Heynike, a South African national who took charge of Nestle's chocolate business in March 2006.

Recent moves to push into the premium segment are the inauguration of Nestle's first premium chocolate research center in western Switzerland, and a pact with Belgian luxury chocolate company Pierre Marcolini. Under the agreement, Nestle will receive creative input from Pierre Marcolini while helping the Belgian company to expand. However, Nestle remains underrepresented in the top price segment, where annual growth rates range between 7% and 8%.

Sales from Nestle's premium chocolate portfolio comprising local brands such as Perugina in Italy, Cailler in Switzerland - predominantly non-dark chocolate - and Black Magic in the U.K., amounted to just 36% of the confectionary division's total of CHF12.2 billion last year. Heynike didn't comment on whether Nestle's premium chocolate strategy could involve takeovers or a launch of a global premium brand. The company has two global but non-premium brands, Kitkat and Nestle.

Simple recipes may be one way to go forward, Heynike said. "I believe in simplicity. A lot of consumers go back to products they are familiar with, products that are sometimes ingrained in their memory from early childhood." Simplicity wasn't always Nestle's answer to market challenges. Some years ago, Nestle's launch of new Kitkat flavors flopped because there were too many varieties of the same product. However, this should be a thing of the past, Heynike said. "Now we have relaunched Kitkat with great success. Dark Kitkat, for instance, was a limited edition initially and is now being launched on a large scale."

The above-average growth of the premium segment has to do with an emergence of refined consumer tastes, partly due to physiological reasons. "Human taste buds start losing their sensitivity the minute you are born. The taste of dark chocolate with its intense flavor is appreciated with (the) progressing age of the consumer," Heynike said.

Nestle stresses the health benefits of dark chocolate, relying on data from its research and development. "Dark chocolate is rich in health-enhancing antioxidants and this is something we pitch in our marketing," Heynike said. At the same time, Nestle tries to convey a message of moderation by showing consumers eating small portions of chocolate only, Heynike said. "We also take care to promote moderate chocolate consumption within a balanced diet," he added.

Barry Callebaut and Biolands to replicate tested Smallholder Cocoa Program

Source: Barry Callebaut AG

16/04/2008

Zurich, Switzerland, April 16, 2008 - Barry Callebaut, the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality cocoa and chocolate products, has acquired a 49% stake in Biolands, Africa's largest exporter of certified organic cocoa based in Tanzania, after purchasing 100% of Biolands' top-grade cocoa for the past eight years.

* Barry Callebaut to enter into strategic partnership with Biolands of Tanzania

* Biolands is one of world's largest organic smallholder cocoa programs - IMO organic and ISO 9001 certified

* Biolands to replicate its successful bottom-up cooperation with farmers in other cocoa producing countries around the world

Barry Callebaut buys 49 percent of Tanzanian cocoa exporter Biolands UPDATE

Forbes, NY

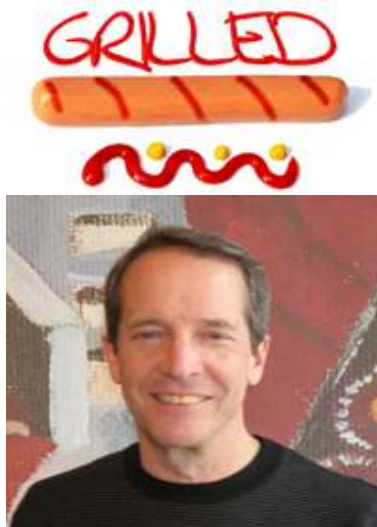
04.16.08

ZURICH (Thomson Financial) - Barry Callebaut AG said it has acquired a 49 percent stake in Biolands, a Tanzania-based exporter of certified organic cocoa for an undisclosed sum. The Swiss chocolate maker said the deal comes after Barry Callebaut had purchased 100 percent of Biolands' top-grade cocoa for the past eight years.

Biolands is one of the largest organic smallholder cocoa programs in the world, working directly with smallholder farmers to ensure fair prices are paid to the farmers and to improve the quality of cocoa, Barry Callebaut said. The two groups now plan to replicate the concept in other countries, the group said.

Sweet and upscale

Detroit Metro Times, MI
Jeff Broder, Metro Times
Apr 16, 2008



Douglas Cale owns Schokolad, the chocolate café that recently opened in Birmingham. The parent company, Schokolad Factory, based in Orlando, Fla., is run by the son and grandson of the founder, who got into the business in 1969, combining his name and the word chocolate. The Schakeds have been franchising about 12 years. Doug retired from Deloitte in 2002 after 25 years as a management consultant. Five years later, he acquired a franchise and began another career.

METRO TIMES: You were a consultant at Deloitte until your retirement a few years ago. Was life too quiet for you?

DOUGLAS CALE: I retired to start doing some things that I wanted to do and stop traveling on airplanes, to do some things that were fun, not necessarily for profit. So I got into ski racing, home remodeling and things that expanded my horizons. I took classes in drawing and painting. I relaxed, got into good shape. I even took up cooking — self-taught — and became the family cook. My wife was teaching at the time. I did do some sweets — cookies, cakes and puddings. It never occurred to me to make candy.

MT: What got you into the candy making business?

CALE: I was looking for a good business opportunity that would be a nice fit in downtown Birmingham. I got to know the owners of a couple of the other local Schokolad stores. Over a period of time I thought that it would be a lot of fun and a cool thing to open a store in Birmingham. There didn't seem to be anything quite like it. The kind of concept I came up with was a gourmet, European-style, family-owned chocolate café, the kind of place where people were comfortable coming in for a hot chocolate and a couple of handmade truffles. Eventually we plan to have gelato and desserts.

MT: What is European-style chocolate?

CALE: It's really got to do with truffles being homemade, hand-dipped dark and milk chocolate. A truffle is a small candy about the size of a mushroom. It's kind of a European thing as opposed to American fudge.

MT: How does your chocolate differ from other premium brands that are available?

Cale: When you look at each truffle, every one is unique because they have been hand-dipped. We don't have a machine that does the work. When you look at a Godiva, every one is identical, machine-made. Ours are individually made, hand-formed, including how we make the centers and cook the ganaches. I don't know if that, in and of itself, adds flavor, but I think the individuality of a box of our chocolates stands out because everything's a little bit different. It adds a little character.

MT: How complicated is the process of making chocolate?

CALE: Some of it can be very straightforward. If you're pouring a mold of solid dark chocolate, you go over to the tempering machine and pour it into a mold and chill the mold down, take it out and package it up. If you're making a ganache, a rich cream-based center that has to be cooked the night before, it has to be set out to rest at exactly the right temperature before you dip it. These are all things that we learned the hard way in a lot of cases. We've thrown away many batches. Chocolate is very temperamental.

MT: What exactly is tempering?

CALE: Basically, tempered chocolate has a nice, shiny, dark look to it with a nice surface, which means that the chocolate crystals are lined up. If it is out of temper, it has a grayish color to it and it doesn't reflect light. Taking it in and out of refrigeration can take it out of temper. Chocolate likes to be kept at 68-70 degrees. The process involves going through a temperature cycle. We store our chocolate at over 100 degrees at night. We drop it down about 20 degrees, and then bring it to a stable temperature. It's something that you have to keep an eye on all day. There are some tricks of the trade that are not documented, intentionally so, but are verbally passed along.

MT: Do you make the chocolate?

CALE: We do not process the chocolate from the cacao. We get our chocolate in 10-pound blocks about a half a ton at a time. We get our chocolate from two sources: One is Belgian, the other is French.

MT: What differentiates great chocolate from plain old chocolate?

CALE: Certainly cocoa content has a lot to do with it. If you go out and buy a typical candy bar, the cocoa might be 15 to 20 percent. The cocoa content in our dark chocolate is probably four times that. Our milk chocolate would be three times that. *Schokolad is at 167 N. Old Woodward Ave., Birmingham; 248-723-8008.*

Pay rises and high utility tariffs to affect economy

Joy Online, Ghana

15 April 2008

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), has in its March 2008 report on Ghana, expressed the view that "the inflation outlook for 2008-09 is also not promising; state-owned utilities are expected to raise electricity and water tariffs in the coming months; food prices will remain high until the main harvest begins mid-year; and continuing high oil prices and planned pay rises for the public sector will also be a cause for concern.

Overall, we expect inflation to remain largely unchanged, at 10.4% in 2008, before rising to 11.7% in 2009 as a result of election related spending and government pay rises." Other economic highlights are:
Failed divestiture and higher spending threaten budget.

The government's fiscal policy will continue to focus on the three pillars of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II), namely investing in human resource development, promoting the private sector and deepening good governance as anchors of social and political stability. On resource mobilisation, it is expected that no new tax policies will be introduced in 2008. The government plans to increase revenue mobilisation through improved administration of the tax system with reduction in leakages and corruption, although in an election year, priorities are likely to lie elsewhere.

However, the final impact of the government's decision to suspend the sale of a large stake in the state-owned Ghana Telecom is likely to be a shortfall in planned non-tax revenue, resulting in a larger than budgeted fiscal deficit (see Economic performance).

Operationally, there are strong indications of budgetary overrun on the expenditure, especially as a result of public sector wage adjustments. This will be exacerbated by expected increases in expenditure to boost the government's image in the run-up to the presidential election in December.

However, on the budget books some expenditure will be delayed until the 2009 budget through what has become a form of government borrowing by proxy: the government gives out construction contracts, which are pre-financed by private firms. These firms then borrow from the deposit money banks with letters of comfort from the implementing government ministry, department or agency. This will be one way in which the government can boost spending in an election year while maintaining that its fiscal targets are still being met.

Inflation story for 2007 ends on a high in fourth quarter

Year-on-year inflation rates for October through to December 2007 were 10.1%, 11.4% and 12.7% respectively. Inflation trended downwards in the first quarter of 2007, reaching 10.2% in March, but this trend was reversed in the second quarter when inflation averaged 10.7%, as drought caused food prices to rise for staples such as maize, yam, cassava, and plantains.

Despite the earlier drought, the rate of inflation decelerated in June and July 2007 as a result of the beginning of the major crop-harvesting period. In August 2007, the rate of inflation resumed a rising trend as a result of upward adjustment in the

prices of petroleum products, which also translated into higher transport fares and cost-push pressures, the slight reduction in inflation in September and October 2007 was largely due to lower prices for food and beverages.

Inflationary pressure accelerated in November and December 2007 as a result of further upward adjustment in the prices of utilities and petroleum products as international oil prices continued to rise and the Public Utility and Regulatory Commission announced increases in tariffs for water and electricity. These translated into higher transport fares, which had cascading effects on cost-push inflation.

Other pressures were due to the higher spending patterns of consumers during the Christmas season and increased government spending to prepare for the Africa Cup of Nations 2008 (CAN 2008) football tournament.

Upward price trend continues into 2008

The acceleration of inflation, which started in October 2007, shows no sign of abating. Year-on-year inflation for January 2008 was 12.8%, the highest since July 2006. The main factors responsible for the new high are surges in the non-food prices such as transportation, hotels, cafes and restaurants group on account of high demand during CAN 2008.

Housing, water, electricity, gas for cooking and other utilities groups also saw increases. Higher prices for food and beverages, including bread and cereals, and fats and oils, also contributed to the upward movements of the rate of inflation.

Producer price of cocoa increased

In late February the government announced a 26.4% increase in the producer price of cocoa for the 2007/08 crop year, to GH¢1,200/tonne (US\$1,239/ t), from GH¢950/t. The last time the price of cocoa was increased was in February 2002 for the 2001/02 main crop season.

The price increase was in response to increased cocoa smuggling into Cote d'Ivoire, where cocoa was fetching GH¢1,190/t. The total cost to the state-run Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) as a result of the price increase is estimated at GH¢27.8 million (US\$29.6 million), as COCOBOD will pay the higher price for an estimated 111,050 tonnes yet to be purchased this season. Historically, farmers in both countries have smuggled their product across the border in response to relative price differentials

Callebaut ethical investment ensures cocoa traceability

ConfectioneryNews.com, France

By Laura Crowley

17-Apr-2008

Barry Callebaut has acquired a 49 per cent stake in Biolands of Tanzania, Africa's largest exporter of certified organic cocoa, after purchasing 100 per cent of its top-end cocoa for the past eight years. The Swiss cocoa manufacturer has been buying cocoa from Biolands since the programme first started up, allowing it to develop their organic smallholder cocoa programme.

After years of strengthening the partnership followed by the recent investment, Biolands will be able to replicate the model with cocoa farmers in other countries. This latest investment demonstrates the focus on sustainable and ethical farming while improving traceability, as Barry Callebaut will be able to enter into involvement with other countries through the programme.

"As a company, we are committed to contributing to a sustainable cocoa industry and a sustainable cocoa supply chain," Gaby Tschofen VP for corporate communications at Barry Callebaut told ConfectioneryNews.com.

"This includes working with cocoa farmers in order to empower them. We will test the models in the field to find out how we can improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and their families in the most effective way."

Bottom-up approach

As consumers become more concerned about environmental issues and fair trade, there is a corresponding demand from purchasers for organic and ethical products. This partnership provides a more ethical cocoa supply by working directly with smallholder farmers to ensure they are paid fair prices, enabling organic and fair trade certification.

The approach brings Barry Callebaut closer to the roots, ensuring all measures have been taken to produce cocoa in a sustainable and responsible manner. Through a bean collection system, farmers are paid at delivery, with a second payment made following the season. The farmers also receive training, ensuring better quality cocoa.

Eric Smeets, founder and managing director of Biolands, said: "For many farmers, this is the first time they are being treated seriously as partners - as partners who are expected to produce a good product in return for a better price."

Barry Callebaut has previously demonstrated policies to guarantee more ethical cocoa supplies. "In our own project in Ivory Coast called 'Quality Partner' programme, we work top-down, i.e. through farmer cooperatives," said Patrick De Maeseneire, CEO at Barry Callebaut. "We intend to test the two models in the field - with the goal to contribute to a sustainable cocoa industry and improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and their families in the most effective way." The companies did not disclose the cost of the investment.

Organic demand

The niche organic cocoa market is rapidly growing as consumers become increasingly conscious of how their food is produced.

In a European consumer survey, Euromonitor found that half of respondents thought organic food and drink was either important or very important. The organic finished product market is expected to grow by 32 per cent from 2006 to 2011, according to Euromonitor.

Technology start-ups

Economist, UK

Apr 17th 2008

SAN FRANCISCO

TCHO, a small company based in a warehouse in San Francisco, sounds like a typical high-tech start-up. The brainchild of an engineer who previously worked on computer-vision systems for the space shuttle, the firm is developing "beta" versions of its new product. Volunteer testers are invited to submit feedback via the web. Louis Rossetto, the co-founder of Wired, a technology magazine, is on board as chief executive. All the employees have stock options. But Tcho is not about to launch a new website or mobile device; it is a technology firm that makes chocolate.

Its founders believe there is vast scope for innovation in the way chocolate is made and sold. Most cocoa farmers have never tasted chocolate, and produce cocoa beans without any idea of how they will be used, says Timothy Childs, Tcho's founder. The resulting chocolate is classified and sold in a very unsophisticated way, labelled at best by country of origin and percentage cocoa solids. (It is rather like labelling a wine "France, 13% alcohol".) So Mr Childs wants to put things on a more technical footing—just as Americans formalised techniques for winemaking in the 1970s. He has developed ways to analyse and grade beans, and a six-segment "flavour wheel" to map out their natural aromas. Using a variety of jury-rigged spice grinders, heaters and temperature sensors, he has worked out how to get cocoa beans to reveal their complex flavours and to get chocolate to solidify evenly.

Tcho is also working with cocoa growers, in conjunction with two research groups it has equipped with satellite-internet connections, to help them improve the quality and consistency of their beans. Tcho hopes that the most effective techniques will then spread in an "open source" fashion to other growers. Beans will be turned into chocolate on Tcho's elaborate production line, which is being used as a test-bed for remote video-monitoring of industrial processes by researchers at Fuji Xerox in Palo Alto.

The firm will sell much of its chocolate to other food companies, for use in other products. Such customers, says Mr Rossetto, like the idea of buying chocolate based on a consistent flavour profile; Tcho's flavour wheel could become a de facto industry standard, he suggests, as IBM's PC did in the computer industry. Tcho will also sell chocolate using its website, and through a shop and visitors' centre due to open in the summer.

San Francisco, a capital of food culture as well as technology, is the logical place to produce a high-tech chocolate. John Kehoe, Tcho's sourcing director, says chocolate is going down the trail blazed by speciality coffee, as consumers become more discerning. Chocolate today, he says, is where coffee was five years ago. Having been ahead of the curve with Wired, which launched just as the web was emerging, Mr Rossetto seems to have spotted another trend.

Labour Issues

Chocolate, Child Labor tie subject of April 17 Talk

TheDay, CT

Apr 13 2008

New London --The surprising association between chocolate and child labor in West Africa's Cote d'Ivoire will be the subject of this month's Third Thursday presentation April 17 at the Custom House Maritime Museum at 150 Bank Street.

In their illustrated talk, "Slavery is Alive and Picking Cocoa Beans," Marcie Boyer and Dr. David Lewis, co-founders of Flavors of Life, a fair trade business in New London, will examine how boys as young as 12 are sold into slavery and forced to harvest the beans from which chocolate is made on small cocoa farms under conditions of extreme abuse. Boyer and Dr. Lewis will describe the work of the Fair Trade Cocoa Campaign, current efforts to end exploitive labor practices, and how people can take action for slave-free cocoa and guilt-free candy.

Prior to opening their business, Boyer and Lewis held positions with a major pharmaceutical company -- Boyer as an IT specialist and Lewis as director of regulatory affairs. She was recently elected vice-chair of the Board of Fair Trade Federation of North America. Fair Trade is an international movement which ensures that disadvantaged producers get a fair price for their goods and receive a living wage.

The presentation, which begins at 7 pm, will be preceded by a wine and cheese reception at 6:30. The event is free to New London Maritime Society members and \$5 for non-members. For further details, call 447-2501 or visit www.nlmaritimesociety.org

Others

Minister - Let us do movies about our cocoa???

Modern Ghana, Ghana

By ghanasentertainment.com

Tue, 15 Apr 2008



Ghana Movies

First of all, although Minister S. K. Boafo has the right intentions about Ghanaian movies going international, i don't think any body will really be interested in movies about cocoa...(sign). I have a better idea..

HON. S. K. Boafo, Minister of Chieftaincy and Culture, in a meeting with some of the top producers and production houses in Ghana had some strategies regarding the Ghana movie industry: "To build a vibrant movie industry, we must put our house in order. Let us be honest with ourselves and come up with good movies. What are we doing with our villages? Let us do movies about our cocoa and the

many historic relics of this country," he said.

I agree with the historic relics but will that really sell? Will you buy a movie about cocoa or the history of Ghana? Wouldn't that be best in a documentary? This type of movies will only interest Hollywood (Thats if they get of their Harry Porter and take notice).

Hollywood is not interested in us (according to my opinion) and like many Ghanaians or lovers of Ghanaian movies, we don't really care if Hollywood feel us or not.

We have our own thing going on and we also love our D-graded movies. Westernizing it to please the western World would just ruin the foundation that African Movies stands for (Boy meets girl, poor girl marries rich boy, mother-in-law puts juju on the daughter-in-law and all the corny story lines we enjoy)

He also expressed his concerns with Nigerian Movies in Ghana.

That is kind of limiting people's taste. If some Ghanaians prefer Nigerian movies, they should have a choice. Banning or limiting Nigerian movies will not make a difference in people buying more Ghana movies I think.

Some things I strongly did agree with him on is as follows:

He said that Nigerians producers bring their equipments to Ghana to shoot their movies without recourse to the recognized bodies. “You can’t go to Nigeria and do that.”

Ogah Naija, if you going to shoot movies in Ghana, please make sure you go through the right Channel. The minister is right, Ghanaian Producers would not be allowed to shoot in Nigeria without permission. Respect our country and do the same. By the way, is Ghana finer than Nigeria? They also made a point about Local Shows on TV. According to him, the cultural policy of Ghana requires TV stations to telecast 70% of local soaps and 30% foreign ones but TV stations have failed to do that.

TV3 needs to be sanctioned for showing all those Cheesy Spanish Soap Operas that Spanish Televisions have thrown away. I could swear they have someone they sponsor every year to search in the rubbish bin of Spanish TV stations. They should consider supporting locally made TV soap operas instead of banning music artists (Becca). It will create more Ghanaian stars. Van Vicker, Jackie Appiah, Majid Micheal and a whole lot of other Ghanaian actors and actresses all started from Local TV Soaps.

Ondo to host 4th National Cocoa Day

The Tide, Nigeria

Apr 15, 2008

The Ondo State Government has confirmed that it would host the 4th National Cocoa Day between April 22 and 24. The Deputy Governor, Chief Omolade Oluwateru, gave the confirmation in Akure at a meeting with the Local Organising Committee (LOC) of the event, which, he said, had already received the Federal Government’s approval.

Oluwateru said that Government Olusegun Agagu had since September last year, inaugurated the Cocoa Day Planning Committee. He said the motive behind the celebration was to increase cocoa production in the state, add value to it and create awareness for cocoa farmers and buyers. “It is important to further sensitise ourselves as a leading state in the production of cocoa in the country,” the deputy governor said.

He called on the authorities of the 18 local government areas of the state to ensure that they created the necessary awareness on cocoa production. He also urged them to give the farmers the necessary support.

TIT BITS

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

US MIDDAY: cocoa and coffee up

NEW YORK (April 16, 2008): US cocoa futures trading on ICE Futures US climbed to a one-month high in early trade Tuesday, while arabica coffee futures rallied as fund buying boosted commodities in general. July arabica contract up 2.90 cents or 2.2 percent at \$1.3635 per lb at 9:30 am (1330 GMT). Wide trading band \$1.33 to \$1.384.

Abundant rains help Ivory Coast cocoa mid-crop

ABIDJAN (April 16, 2008): Abundant rain and hot spells in Ivory Coast's main cocoa growing regions over the past week bode well for the development of the April-September mid crop, farmers and analysts in the world's top grower said on Monday.

London soft commodities rise on fund buying and record oil

LONDON (April 17, 2008): London sugar, coffee and cocoa futures all ended higher on Wednesday, boosted by an early wave of fund buying linked to record oil prices, although gains were trimmed in late trade, dealers said. They noted the weakness of the dollar also helped to trigger broad-based fund buying in commodities, adding a late setback tracked a reversal in energy markets.

US MIDDAY: cocoa and coffee up

NEW YORK (April 17, 2008): US cocoa futures trading on ICE Futures US rose to another four-week high in early trade Wednesday, while arabica coffee futures also moved up on the weak dollar and continued fund buying. July arabica contract up 1.75 cents at \$1.3825 per lb at 9:36 am (1336 GMT). Trading band \$1.358 to \$1.392.

New York cocoa settles at a one-month high

NEW YORK (April 17, 2008): US cocoa futures settled at a one-month high on Tuesday, after buying interest in the spot month pushed the market into backwardation and on support from fund buying that boosted commodities in general, traders said. "It appears there is going to be a stopper in New York," one cocoa trader said.

Cameroon April cocoa farmgate prices at record highs

YAOUNDE (April 17, 2008): Farmgate prices for cocoa in Cameroon are at record highs this month, fuelled by high prices on world markets, tight supply and booming demand, farmers in the central African country said on Wednesday.

London soft commodities rise

LONDON (April 18, 2008): London coffee and cocoa surged to their highest levels in around a month on Thursday, buoyed by fund buying linked to record oil prices and a weak dollar, dealers said. Sugar futures first followed the move but weakened in late trade after news of a record sugar cane crush seen in Brazil.

US MIDDAY: coffee, cocoa climb

NEW YORK (April 18, 2008): ICE arabica coffee futures surged to a 1-month high in early trading Thursday as sellers sat on the sidelines, while US cocoa also climbed to a 1-month high on manufacturer buying and support from stronger sterling.

New York cocoa settles at four-week high

NEW YORK (April 18, 2008): US cocoa futures settled at another four-week high on Wednesday, on the coattails of other strong commodity markets and the weak dollar that attracted new investors, traders said. "New highs brought in some new specs with the weak dollar, but not much volatility. It rallied and then kind of just eroded lower with the rest of the CRB," one cocoa trader said.

London coffee, cocoa and sugar plummet

LONDON (April 19, 2008): London coffee, cocoa and sugar futures fell sharply as the dollar jumped on Friday as funds took profits from a surge to one-month highs this week. "We're seeing a pullback across the (commodities) space," said fund manager Matthew Sena of US-based Castlestone Management, which manages around \$1 billion in assets.

New York cocoa settles at one-month high

NEW YORK (April 19, 2008): US cocoa futures settled at a one-month high on Thursday, supported by the strong sterling and investor and manufacturer buying, traders said. "It's just a steady flow of speculative buying rolling in," one cocoa trader said.

US first quarter 2008 cocoa grind down

NEW YORK (April 19, 2008): US cocoa grindings in the first quarter of 2008 fell 5.85 percent from a year ago to 91,876 tonnes, data from the National Confectioners Association (NCA) showed Thursday. The quantity of chocolate liquor melted in the first quarter dropped 67.76 percent to 1,194 tonnes while the butter melt was down 15.69 percent at 8,487 tonnes, according to the NCA data.

Nigerian cocoa price tumbles

LAGOS (April 19, 2008): The upcountry price of Nigeria's graded cocoa fell 26 percent to 220,000 naira (\$1,872) per tonne on average in the last month with the end of the main crop and slow start of the mid crop, exporters and buyers said on Friday.

New York cocoa futures down

NEW YORK (April 20, 2008): US cocoa futures settled sharply lower on Friday, but well off the day's lows that yanked the market down nearly 8 percent on heavy profit-taking from the recent one-month high, traders said. "There's profit taking across all commodities. cocoa (felt) violent swings of spec profit taking," one cocoa trader said.