



COPAL COCOA *Info*

A Weekly Newsletter of Cocoa Producers' Alliance

Issue No. 219

19th – 23rd February 2007

Cocoa Producers' Alliance

ICCO Daily Cocoa Prices

	ICCO daily price (US\$/tonne)	London futures (£/tonne)	New York Futures (US\$/tonne)
19 th February	0	994.00	0
20 th February	1845.88	977.67	1782.67
21 st February	1860.68	987.33	1795.67
22 nd February	1853.58	981.33	1789.00
23 rd February	1864.84	983.33	1800.33
Average	1485.00	985.00	1434.00

Up-coming Events

✓ **34TH EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 9TH MARCH 2007, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

In the News:

- Flavanol rich cocoa may have Aspirin-like effects
- Farmer-Owned Chocolate Company Debuts in the U.S.
- Feeding Your Brain: New Benefits Found in Chocolate
- Brain food: Cocoa could promote brain function as you age
- Some cocoa may improve blood flow in the brain, researchers say
- Cargill introduces sugar-free chocolate powder
- Cargill adds new chocolate product to portfolio
- The story of Dutch cocoa
- Cocoa, not loco
- Chocolate and where it comes from
- Compounds In Special Cocoa May Enhance Brain Blood Flow And Improve Cognitive Health
- Vietnam cocoa rated top in Asia
- Petra, Armajaro Form European Cocoa Venture
- Fortis Raises 2006/07 World Cocoa Deficit Estimate
- Sao Tome and Principe cocoa exports total US\$3.2 million in 2006
- Nestle teams up with Barry Callebaut

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- ✓ **ORDER FORM - 14TH INTERNATIONAL COCOA RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

Have you had your cocoa today?

COCOA PRODUCERS' ALLIANCE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMPLEX TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE,
P.O. BOX 1718, LAGOS, NIGERIA. TEL: +234(0)1-263-5574 FAX: +234(0)1-263-5684

Email: econs@copal-cpa.org Website: www.copal-cpa.org

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

Monday 19th February 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	Daily High	Daily Low	Volume
Mar 2007	965	967	5	968	959	2,087
May 2007	980	981	3	981	977	1,813
Jul 2007	993	993	2	993	988	265
Sep 2007	1007	1008	2	1008	1004S	395
Dec 2007	1002	998	-2	1002	996	406
Mar 2008	1005	1003	-2	1005	1003	57
May 2008		1011	-3			0
Jul 2008		1019	-3			0
Sep 2008	1029	1024	-2	1029	1029	2
Dec 2008		1030	-3			0
Totals		1003				5,025

Tuesday 20th February 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	967	951	-16	970	947	2,800
May 2007	980	965	-16	985	962	4,408
Jul 2007	993	977	-16	997S	975S	1,935
Sep 2007	1006	991	-17	1009	989S	545
Dec 2007	996	986	-12	1000	987	1,362
Mar 2008	1002	990	-13	1005	989	997
May 2008	999	997	-14	999S	999S	17
Jul 2008	1007	1007	-12	1007S	1007S	2
Sep 2008	1016	1015	-9	1016S	1015	18
Dec 2008	1024	1023	-7	1024	1024	1
Totals		990				12,085

Wednesday 21st February 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	955	960	9	967	940	2,981
May 2007	971	974	9	981	955	7,057
Jul 2007	981	987	10	991S	968	1,568
Sep 2007	987	1001	10	1002	982	469
Dec 2007	988	996	10	998	979S	866
Mar 2008	990	1001	11	1001	984	696
May 2008		1009	12			0
Jul 2008	1007	1017	10	1019	1007	28
Sep 2008	1014	1024	9	1014	1014	2
Dec 2008	1019	1032	9	1019	1019	1
Totals		1000				13,668

Thursday 22nd February 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	958	952	-8	962	950	3,900
May 2007	968	968	-6	978	966	4,534
Jul 2007	985	981	-6	990	979	843
Sep 2007	998	995	-6	1000	993S	214
Dec 2007	990	990	-6	999	987	369
Mar 2008	995	994	-7	997	993	160
May 2008	1001	1002	-7	1001S	1001S	11
Jul 2008	1011	1010	-7	1011	1011	22
Sep 2008		1017	-7			0
Dec 2008		1025	-7			0
Totals		993				10,053

Friday 23rd February 2007

Month	Opening Trans	Settle	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	952	954	2	950	951	838
May 2007	967	970	2	975	967	2,995
Jul 2007	981	983	2	988	981	1,223
Sep 2007	998	997	2	1002	996	218
Dec 2007	991	992	2	995	990	166
Mar 2008	996	995	1	998	993	30
May 2008		1003	1			0
Jul 2008		1011	1			0
Sep 2008		1018	1			0
Dec 2008		1026	1			0
Totals		995				5,470

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

Monday 19th February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007						
May 2007						
Jul 2007						
Sep 2007						
Dec 2007						
Mar 2008						
May 2008						
Jul 2008						
Sep 2008						
Dec 2008						
Totals						0

Tuesday 20th February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1735 0	1745	-25	1760	1735	125
May 2007	1790 1800	1761	-26	1800	1757	7865
Jul 2007	0 1812 ^A	1783	-26	1816	1780	766
Sep 2007	0 0	1804	-26	1822	1802	156
Dec 2007	0 0	1822	-28	1838	1838	6
Mar 2008	0 0	1840	-25	1868	1863	35
May 2008	0 0	1860	-23	1860	1860	5
Jul 2008	0 0	1876	-22	0	0	0
Sep 2008	0 0	1896	-23	0	0	0
Dec 2008	0 1933 ^A	1907	-19	1933	1933	10
Totals		1829				8968

Wednesday 21st February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1728 ^B 1740 ^A	1763	18	1750	1740	55
May 2007	1746 1748	1777	16	1788	1746	8687
Jul 2007	1766 ^B 1771 ^A	1798	15	1809	1768	1511
Sep 2007	1790 ^B 1792 ^A	1819	15	1812	1790	766
Dec 2007	0 1815 ^A	1836	14	1843	1807	1274
Mar 2008	0 0	1852	12	1850	1828	343
May 2008	0 0	1872	12	1877	1877	5
Jul 2008	0 0	1886	10	1892	1866	220
Sep 2008	0 0	1908	12	1916	1880	7
Dec 2008	0 0	1912	5	1916	1916	266
Totals		1842				13134

Thursday 22nd February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1720 ^B 1765 ^A	1737	-26	1756	1730	16
May 2007	1770 1774	1769	-8	1782	1756	6281
Jul 2007	1790 ^B 1794 ^A	1791	-7	1800	1781	590
Sep 2007	1813 1815	1813	-6	1819	1808	580
Dec 2007	0 0	1830	-6	1840	1825	745
Mar 2008	0 0	1846	-6	1855	1845	158
May 2008	0 0	1866	-6	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1879	-7	1876	1876	22
Sep 2008	0 0	1901	-7	0	0	0
Dec 2008	0 0	1911	-1	0	0	0
Totals		1834				8392

Friday 23rd February 2007

Month	Open	Price	Change	High	Low	Volume
Mar 2007	1760 0	1762	25	1763	1727	24
May 2007	1774 1775	1779	10	1787	1770	5506
Jul 2007	1799 0	1803	12	1808	1795	1357
Sep 2007	1818 0	1824	11	1824	1818	451
Dec 2007	1825 ^B 1837 ^A	1842	12	1845	1838	861
Mar 2008	0 0	1858	12	0	0	0
May 2008	0 0	1878	12	0	0	0
Jul 2008	0 0	1894	15	0	0	5
Sep 2008	0 0	1916	15	0	0	0
Dec 2008	0 0	1927	16	0	0	0
Totals		1848				8204

Average for the week		1845.6			
Total for the week					38,698

Spot Prices (US \$ per tonne)

	19 th February	20 th February	21 st February	22 nd February	23 rd February
Main Crop Ghana, Grade 1	-	2130	2148	2122	2162
Main Crop Ivory Coast, Grade 1	-	2018	2036	2010	2062
Main Crop Nigerian, 1	-	2005	2023	1997	2032
Superior Arriba	-	2538	2556	2530	2687
Sanchez f.a.q.	-	2002	2020	1994	2047
Malaysian 110	-	1747	1765	1739	1764
Sulawesi f.a.q.	-	1785	1803	1777	1832
Ecuador Cocoa Liquor	-	3409	3444	3393	3528
Pure Prime Press African Type Cocoa Butter	-	4659	4707	4638	4845
10/12% Natural Cocoa Press Cake	-	907	917	903	937

Source: Cocoa Merchants' Association

News

Flavanol rich cocoa may have Aspirin-like effects

Chocolate lovers may have another reason to feel good about including this favorite indulgence in their diets. According to a study published in *Thrombosis Research*, certain chocolates appear to support heart health by positively affecting the way certain blood components function.

As part of a clinical trial, researchers examined the effects consuming a flavanol-rich (flavanols are a subcompound of flavonoids) cocoa beverage, aspirin or both had on platelet function, which is believed to be an important indicator of heart health. Participants who consumed the cocoa beverage showed positive effects, similar to that of those who took aspirin. Results showed a decrease in platelet reactivity two hours following the consumption of the cocoa beverage, and six hours after the aspirin. This desired effect was enhanced in the group who consumed both the cocoa beverage and aspirin. Until now, very little was known about the effects of flavanols in comparison to taking aspirin, which is associated with a decreased incidence of coronary heart disease. Doctors often prescribe baby aspirin to patients in order to decrease platelet function. Decreasing platelet function and activation allows blood to flow more freely through blood vessels, which is important in maintaining cardiovascular health.

The cocoa beverage used in this study was formulated to be high in flavanols, components naturally found in tea, wine, apples, certain cocoa and chocolates. While flavanols are inherent in cocoa beans, not all chocolate is created equal. Mars, Incorporated has developed proprietary, patented methods of processing cocoa beans so that flavanols are retained in their chocolate products. While it is important to consume a variety of foods, including a range of fruits and vegetables, studies suggest that chocolate rich in flavanols can be included as part of a heart-healthy diet too. -Weber Shandwick Worldwide

Farmer-Owned Chocolate Company Debuts in the U.S.

By Donna Ware

Epoch Times Washington, D.C. Staff

Feb 19, 2007

British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown (R) is presented with a cocoa bud from Fairtrade cocoa farmer Comfort Asare-Kwabi from Ghana, at the Treasury in London, March 7, 2006. Asare-Kwabe and Comfort Kwaasibea, both cocoa farmers from Ghana flew to Britain to join Divine Chocolate, the company they co-own. (Jane Mingay/AFP/Getty Images) One day before Valentine's Day, the first farmer-owned and fair-trade chocolate company announced the launch of its U.S. sister company. Divine Chocolate, a U.K. based company formerly known as The Day Chocolate Company, makes its debut in the U.S. in partnership with Lutheran World Relief (LWR), a non-profit development agency.

The announcement made at a Capitol Hill briefing, sponsored by Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, was coupled with a discussion about the benefits of fair trade and farmer ownership.

Comfort Kumeah was among those representing the company at the briefing. Kumeah is a 55-year-old mother of five, teacher, and member of the Ghanaian farm collective that grows the cocoa used to make Divine Chocolate. Kumeah knows first hand the journey of chocolate from bean to bar. As a member of Kuapa Kokoo, she is involved in all aspects of chocolate production, from cutting the cocoa pods from the tree and scraping the bean from the pod, to fermenting, drying, weighing, and preparing the cocoa for export. Most fair trade arrangements provide growers like Kumeah with a living wage in addition to premiums that villages use to improve their standard of living. Unlike most fair trade arrangements, Kumeah's involvement does not stop there.

In 1997, some Ghanaian cocoa farmers voted to change the chocolate industry forever by establishing their own fair trade chocolate company, now called Divine Chocolate. By joining together in the Kuapa Kokoo cocoa growers' cooperative, the farmers acquired a voice in the operation and future of their company. Kumeah is one of 2,000 Kuapa Kokoo farmers chosen to represent their farm village at Divine Chocolate's annual meetings.

DIVINE: 3.5 oz Divine Dark Chocolate with Mint with traditional West African Adinkra symbols on the wrapper. (Divine Chocolate) Kumeah says that before fair trade, "we growers were cheated. People adjusted the scales. We got little money from the purchasing clerks and no bonuses. The growers' welfare was neglected."

Divine Chocolate has taken the fair trade model one step further by giving farmers like Kumeah the opportunity to own a share of the company, to make decisions about how Divine chocolate will be manufactured and sold,

found in cocoa beans that can increase blood flow to the brain, researchers said Sunday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Ian MacDonald of England's University of Nottingham reported on tests given to young women who were asked to do a complex task while their brains were being studied with magnetic resonance imaging. Among the women given drinks of cocoa high in flavanols, there was a significant increase in blood flow to the brain compared with subjects who did not drink the cocoa, he said. This raises the prospect of using flavanols in the treatment of dementia, marked by decreased blood flow in the brain, and in maintaining overall cardiovascular health, he said. The next step, MacDonald said, is to move from healthy subjects to people who have "compromised" blood flow to the brain.

Norman Hollenberg of Harvard Medical School said he found similar health benefits in the Cuna Indian tribe in Panama. They drink cocoa exclusively. But the cocoa typically sold in markets is low in flavanols, which usually are removed because they impart a bitter taste, Hollenberg said. He also said the findings do not mean people should indulge in chocolate. "Chocolate is a delight. It can never be a health food because we have a calorie problem," Hollenberg said. But, he added, in cocoa a lot of fat is removed from the chocolate. "I see a bright future for cocoa," he said.

Hollenberg, an expert in blood pressure, studied the Cuna because those who live on native islands do not have high blood pressure. He said he found that when tribe members move to cities, their blood pressure rises. A major difference is the consumption of their own prepared cocoa, which is high in flavanols. In native areas, that is all they drink; in cities they adopt the local diet. In addition to having low blood pressure, Hollenberg said, there are no reports of dementia among the native Cuna.

Henriette van Praag of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies discussed the effects of a specific flavanol, Epichatechin, in tests in mice. She said when that chemical was added to their food, the mice showed improved ability to solve a maze and remembered it longer than mice without the flavanol. She said Epichatechin affected the hippocampus, the brain area important in memory.

In a study reported a year ago, older men in the Netherlands who ate the equivalent of one-third of a chocolate bar every day had lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of death. The researchers said, however, it was too early to conclude that chocolate led to better health. The men who ate more cocoa products could have shared other qualities that made them healthier.

Hagen Schroeter of Mars Inc., the candy company that paid for some of the research reported Sunday, said that cocoa long has been studied for potential medical benefits. He noted that in addition to cocoa, flavanols occur in other foods such as fruits, tea and wine that have been associated with dilation of the arteries.

Mars last year announced plans to market a line of products under the name CocoaVia which is high in flavanols. Other major chocolate companies, including Hershey's, have started promoting the flavanol content of their dark chocolates.

Some cocoa may improve blood flow in the brain, researchers say

02/19/2007:

In an increasingly aging world, medical researchers are seeing more cases of dementia and are looking for ways to make brains work better. One potential source of help may be flavanols, an antioxidant found in cocoa beans that can increase blood flow to the brain, researchers said Sunday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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Hollenberg, an expert in blood pressure, studied the Cuna because those who live on native islands do not have high blood pressure. He said he found that when tribe members move to cities, their blood pressure rises. A major difference is the consumption of their own prepared cocoa, which is high in flavanols. In native areas, that is all they drink; in cities they adopt the local diet. In addition to having low blood pressure, Hollenberg said, there are no reports of dementia among the native Cuna.

Some cocoa may improve treatment in dementia, researchers say

By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID

The Associated Press

February 20, 2007

A nice cup of the right kind of cocoa could hold the promise of promoting brain function as people age. In an increasingly aging world, medical researchers are seeing more cases of dementia and are looking for ways to make brains work better. One potential source of help may be flavanols, an antioxidant found in cocoa beans that can increase blood flow to the brain, researchers said Sunday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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Cargill introduces sugar-free chocolate powder

By staff reporter

20/02/2007 - Food ingredients manufacturer Cargill has launched a new fine cocoa powder for use in the confectionery industry which can be marketed as a 'pure chocolate' alternative to standard sugar-cocoa mixes. Drinking chocolate is traditionally made with sugar to make the naturally bitter taste of cocoa more palatable. However the growing trend for low-calorie and sugar-free alternatives to all forms of confectionery has led to a surge in the market for sugar-free varieties.

As the newest addition to Cargill's Peter's product range, the chocolate is a semi-sweet chocolate ground powder ideal for use as a drinking chocolate but also appropriate for decorating cakes, tortes and other dessert items. It can also be used as a seeding agent for tempering chocolate during the manufacturing process.

Cargill claim the Finely-Ground Semi-Sweet Burgundy chocolate is process friendly as it eliminates the need for grinding blocks or wafers and is versatile – the powder has the potential to create a variety of flavoured products by adding spices to the mix. The company said: "Chocolatiers can make drinking chocolate with fruity, winey undertones. In addition, they can create their own signature-flavoured drinks by adding spices, or they can simply repackage the product and sell it to their customers."

Cargill adds new chocolate product to portfolio

By staff reporter

20/02/2007 - Food ingredients manufacturer Cargill has launched a new fine cocoa powder for use in the confectionery industry which can be marketed as a 'pure chocolate'. As the newest addition to Cargill's Peter's product range, the chocolate is a semi-sweet chocolate ground powder ideal for use as a drinking chocolate but also appropriate for decorating cakes, tortes and other dessert items. It can also be used as a seeding agent for tempering chocolate during the manufacturing process.

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The story of Dutch cocoa

Terry Feldman, Central Islip

February 21, 2007

I've been searching for Dutch-process cocoa. In the supermarkets, I just see Nestlé and Hershey's cocoa, neither of which says "Dutch" or "processed with alkali." Before we tackle where to find it, let's explore what Dutch-process cocoa is. As with all forms of chocolate, we must start with the cacao bean.

Cacao beans are found inside big, football-shaped pods that hang from cacao trees. The beans are roasted and ground to make what the industry calls "chocolate liquor." At room temperature, the liquor hardens and becomes what is sold as unsweetened chocolate.

Chocolate liquor has two principal components - cocoa solids and cocoa butter - and in 1828, a Dutchman named Coenraad Van Houten invented a method for separating the two. The newly independent cocoa solids could also be pulverized to make a fine powder with lots of chocolate flavor but little fat: cocoa powder.

Van Houten didn't stop there. He also invented a process by which cocoa powder, which is naturally quite acidic, was treated with an alkaline to neutralize the flavor and deepen the color. In honor of its inventor, this method is known as the Dutch process, and cocoa treated this way is said to have been "Dutched."

Before I started researching this column, I was under the impression that Dutch-process cocoa was a) more richly flavored than "natural" cocoa and b) more easily soluble in water. I know now that I was mistaken, and I credit these sources for opening my eyes: "Bittersweet: Recipes and Tales From a Life in Chocolate" by Alice Medrich (Artisan) and two excellent Web sites: baking911.com and joyofbaking.com.

Treating cocoa with alkali does, indeed, deepen its color; it is usually a dark, reddish brown; whereas, natural cocoa can have a disconcertingly pallid appearance by comparison. However, the Dutching process can strip

flavor nuances away with the acid it neutralizes, and the resultant cocoa, while rich-looking, has less fruity oomph. Nor, writes Medrich, does Dutched cocoa dissolve any better in water.

So what is Dutched cocoa good for? Steel yourself for some chemistry: Most cake and some cookie recipes rely on chemical leaveners, baking powder and baking soda, to make them rise. In such cases, the pH (acidity level) of the batter really matters. Baking soda happens to be alkaline and that's why most recipes calling for it also call for natural cocoa - the alkaline in the former neutralizes the acid in the latter. Recipes using the neutral-pH baking powder, though, usually call for Dutched cocoa.

This is why cookbooks always advise you not to substitute one type of cocoa for the other. But, Medrich writes, "in recipes without leavenings, natural and Dutch-process cocoas can be substituted for one another." As our questioner noted, both Hershey's and Nestlé are natural cocoas, although Hershey's also makes a "Special Dark" cocoa that has been Dutched. Lately, there has been a resurgence of interest in natural cocoa and the great American chocolatier Scharffen Berger makes one that is sold at Whole Foods in Jericho and Manhasset.

Droste is probably the most widely available brand of Dutch-process cocoa; I have seen it in many supermarkets as well as at Trader Joe's. Other brands include Lindt, Valrhona and Bensedorp.

Penzeys Spices sells both Dutch-process and natural cocoas. They are of very high quality and have a higher fat content than most, which delivers even more flavor. Shop online at penzeys.com, call 800-741-7787 or visit the Penzeys store on Route 110 in Huntington Station.

Cocoa, not loco

February 21, 2007

The latest research, some of it subsidized by a helpful candy company, suggests that chemicals in cocoa might help older people keep their wits about them. The right kind of cocoa also might lower blood pressure and promote cardiovascular health. Unfortunately, the right kind of cocoa apparently is hard to find: processing it to remove bitterness also removes the health-giving chemicals.

Still, a Harvard researcher reported Sunday week that a tribe of Panamanians who drink a lot of cocoa don't have high blood pressure. Nor did he hear any reports of dementia among them. To be sure, the findings are preliminary. Further research might disprove them. And anyone who starts taking therapeutic doses of chocolate is likely to gain weight. As the Harvard scientist put it, "Chocolate can never be a health food because we have a calorie problem." However, he said, "I see a bright future for cocoa."

EXOTIC ORGANICA CHOCOLATE LAUNCH

22-02-2007

Three exciting, exotic chocolate bars have been added to the Organica organic, fairtrade, and vegan range. Two capture the spirit and essence of Tangiers and Marrakesh while the third takes chocolate lovers to chocolate heaven with added cocoa nibs, otherwise known as 'food of the gods'.

SPIRIT OF TANGIERS

This luxurious 65% cocoa solid bar has a natural zing from orange oil swirled into the dark chocolate and a liberal scattering of crystallized orange zest pieces. Chocolate and orange have long been perfect partners and this sumptuous sweet and bitter bar inspired by Tangiers makes this classic combination very special indeed.

SPIRIT OF MARRAKESH

Close your eyes and let this exotic bar transport you to the rich flavours, smells and spices of a Marrakesh market. Cinnamon and nutmeg spice up the sweetness of the raisins in this 65% cocoa solid bar to tantalise the taste buds and warm the palate. This captivating bar captures the essence of Marrakesh.

FOOD OF THE GODS

Chocolate was first enjoyed in rough 'nibs' of cocoa – the perfect squares and rectangles we find familiar today came much, much later! In those early days of cocoa nibs, these were very much the preserve of the rich and revered: hence they became known as the 'food of the Gods'. Now you can enjoy these nibs in this smooth, rich chocolate bar – a must for serious chocoholics!

All three bars are made from luxury Swiss chocolate, are certified organic by the Soil Association and gluten free, vegan and non-GM. The Spirit of Marrakesh, Food Of The Gods and Spirit of Tangiers bars are made from ethical ingredients derived from independent accredited Third World ethical trading projects.

Find these Organica bars at good health food stores and online at www.naturalgrocery.co.uk priced around £1.89. For more information, images and samples contact: Katherine Selby, PR Workshop, Tel: 0208 657 4422 Katherine@prworkshop.co.uk

Chocolate and where it comes from

SHERYL SOLLARS

2/21/2007

This week I am going to explore one of the most fascinating of flavors: Chocolate. There are many people who will say they would "die for it." What is chocolate?

Where did it come from and why do we have such a craving for this mysterious flavoring?

With the discovery of the New World in the 16th Century, came the introduction of chocolate to the Western World. The Spanish first came across this substance which was being used in a highly spiced beverage and was being drunk by the Aztec in Mexico. They soon exported this prized possession to Europe where it was soon believed to be an exotic substance and became widely used as a "panacea" (a believed remedy for all ills). Until recently, the medicinal benefits of chocolate were doubted.

Now the medical reports show that "dark and bitter" chocolate are extremely beneficial as an antioxidant making the demand for this luxury even greater. Chocolate is produced from the beans of the cacao tree. The large pods are harvested and the pulp and the beans are fermented in the sun to develop the chocolate flavor. The outer skin or pulp is then removed and the beans are left longer in the sun for a final roasting. The pods are then shelled and the kernels ground and processed for making both cocoa and chocolate. The cocoa solids are then pressed to remove the fat, to make a substance we know as cocoa butter. The remainder is then further processed into the products we have grown to know and love as chocolate.

The quality of the raw materials and the care taken during the processing of them is what determines the final quality of the chocolate product. Good chocolate should have a shiny surface, break cleanly, and have no lumps, bubbles or white specks. The true test of a high quality chocolate product is that it should melt on the tongue like butter, have a wonderful aroma and never be greasy or sticky. Chocolate, itself, does not contain milk as many of you think. It should be melted over boiling water (in a double boiler) or carefully in a microwave. Always prevent any drops of water or steam to come in contact with the melted chocolate as it will solidify and ruin your product.

Remember when using a microwave for melting, break the chocolate into small even pieces and melt on a medium heat a few minutes at a time, making sure you check and stir the chocolate often. Since the temperature in each microwave vary, you must experiment to find out the length of time you needed to achieve the finished product you desire. Do not overcook as it will overheat quickly and can burn and solidify before you realize it. When selecting chocolate for cooking, select products that contain 70 to 75 percent cocoa solids. These will be of a higher quality and will perform better under heat.

Milk chocolate (which does contain milk products is made with a much lower cocoa butter, and are harder to use in cooking. Unsweetened cocoa is the powder left after the cocoa butter has been pressed from the roasted beans. It's rich and strong chocolate flavor has been a favorite staple in our kitchens for many years.

As for eating chocolate as a candy, I suggest you get the best grade of chocolate you can afford and remember this is one product that is worth the extra money you pay for top quality. I hate to disappoint you "white chocolate" lovers, but white chocolate does not contain any chocolate! So if you are eating it for the chocolate high you are wasting your time. As for why we crave it, we are learning more about chocolate's mystic characteristics all of the time.

pool of nitric oxide, a critical molecule in the circulatory system that helps dilate blood vessels and keeps them pliable.

Hollenberg fed flavanol-rich cocoa to healthy volunteers who were over age 50 and observed a "striking blood flow response" that evolved over several weeks. "Since this cocoa preparation is so well tolerated, it raises hope that the brain blood flow response it stimulates can result in maintenance of healthy brain function and cognition, which is an issue that unfortunately plagues many older adults today," Hollenberg said. This advancement in science related to brain health is especially exciting at a time when the nation's 78 million baby boomers are aging. The need to impact cognitive function and brain health will only continue to grow with this aging population.

million euros (\$35.5 million) for a cocoa processing factory in Hamburg, Germany, a cocoa butter melting and deodorising facility in Dunkirk, France and a trading, marketing and logistics team in Zaandam, Holland. "They (Petra Foods) are the leading processor in Asia and they want to be in Europe," Armajaro Chief Executive Anthony Ward told Reuters in an interview.

Petra Foods will pay 16 million euros for its 60 percent stake and Armajaro will contribute 10.6 million euros for the remaining 40 percent. Ward said the new company would focus on Europe. The deal is expected to be completed on March 1 and the venture will be known as Petra Armajaro Holdings Pte Ltd. Ward said his company acquired most of the assets between two and 2-1/2 years ago and brought them together under one umbrella. He noted the Hamburg plant was hardly operating at the time but now produced 50,000 tonnes a year.

NEXT STAGE

"We are now at the next stage of development. They (Petra) have some special skills in these areas and we think they bring a lot to the party," Ward said. Ward said the new joint venture would be well placed to take advantage of rising demand for chocolate in eastern Europe linked to the fastest growing economies in the European Union. "Hamburg is an extremely good location for servicing eastern Europe," he said. Ward said the venture would also aim to cater for increased demand to trace the origin of food.

"In France, if you go to a restaurant you can find out which farmer the beef came from. We are seeing that more and more with other products," he said. "Take a chocolate bar. It is easy to tell the consumer the milk came from a cow in England, the sugar from a field of beet in Suffolk (England) but no one knows where the cocoa comes from," he said, adding that Armajaro could provide the new venture with traceable cocoa from Africa or the Far East.

Fortis Raises 2006/07 World Cocoa Deficit Estimate

Source: Reuters

23/02/2007

London, Feb 23 - Fortis investment bank said on Friday it had raised its estimate for the global cocoa deficit in the 2006/07 crop year to 215,000 tonnes from a forecast of 131,00 tonnes issued last month. "We had revised upwards our estimate...almost exclusively because of lower than expected arrivals/purchases in Ivory Coast and Ghana," Fortis said in its monthly market report.

Fortis said abnormally dry weather in West Africa had encouraged a wider consensus that the region's mid-crop production could undershoot previous years. "With the peak of the West African hedging season now past, cocoa prices are becoming increasingly vulnerable to a strong rally," the investment bank said. Cocoa prices in London rose to a seven-month high, basis second position, earlier this week with May peaking at 985 pounds a tonne. Fortis also reduced its global surplus forecasts for the 2007/08 crop year to just 4,000 tonnes, down from a previous projection of 28,000 tonnes.

Sao Tome and Principe cocoa exports total US\$3.2 million in 2006

Sao Tome, Sao Tome and Principe,

(macauhub)

23 Feb. 2007 .

Sao Tome and Principe netted US\$3.2 million from cocoa exports in 2006, which accounted for 99 percent of the country's exports last year, according to the archipelago's National Statistics Institute (INE). INE added that revenue from cocoa exports rose 32.2 percent when accounted in dobras, the local currency, and that the rise in its dollar value was due to the improved international price of the product. In terms of quantity, there was a rise of 0.9 percent in the period with cocoa exports rising from 2,413 tons in 2005 to 2,434 tons in 2006.

In the list of exports from Sao Tome and Principe in 2006, following cocoa, are coconut and coconut oil, accounting for 1 percent and 0.3 percent of total exports, respectively. Cocoa, which in 2005 accounted for US\$3.02 million in revenue, reached US\$5.6 million in 2003, which was the highest figure of the last eight years, while the lowest was of US\$2.9 million in 1999. On the archipelago, which relies on foreign aid to cover over 50 percent of its budgetary expenses, the economy is based mainly on the export of agricultural products and cocoa accounts for 27 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Cocoa was introduced by Portuguese colonists to Sao Tome in the 19th century and its production levels have been falling over the last few decades due to lack of land on which to grow it, lack of financing and a lack of

rigour in the treatment of the plantations. Three weeks ago, the head of the Sao Tome and Principe government, Tomé Vera Cruz said that revenue from oil production should be applied to re-launching agriculture, particularly cocoa plantations. Sao Tome and Principe expects to net US\$28 million this year from the signing bonus from three oil blocs in its joint exploration area with Nigeria

Nestle teams up with Barry Callebaut

By Catherine Boal

16/02/2007 - Chocolate producers Nestlé and Barry Callebaut have joined forces to improve their respective positions in the competitive European market as the maker of Smarties chocolate hands over facilities and a supply contract to the Swiss processor. In an agreement which is expected to be finalised in the summer this year, Nestlé will transfer its facilities in Italy and France to Barry Callebaut as well as granting the cocoa processor a long-term supply contract to provide 43,000 tonnes a year of liquid chocolate to the Nestlé's Russian operations.

Restructuring has been a feature of Nestlé's company strategy since last year. In September the chocolate producer shifted production of core brands Smarties and Black Magic from the UK to mainland Europe while investing £20 million (€29.8m) in its York factory. And last month the company announced it would construct a new €38 million production facility in Ukraine to increase its position in the country's domestic market. This week's deal forms part of a strategic move by Nestlé to turn the company's focus away from the lower end of the cocoa supply chain. The owner of the KitKat and Crunchie brands will be jettisoning its cocoa liquor and chocolate mass production factory in Perugia as well as its factory in Dijon.

In November last year Nestlé began looking for a partnership to boost ailing production at the French factory which manufactures the iconic Lion bar brand. Volumes had significantly decreased due to waning sales of the chocolate – volumes fell by around 50 per cent over 10 years. In a statement, Nestlé said: "Widening the product range should reverse declining volumes and improve the competitiveness of this plant. Nestlé will outsource the production to Barry Callebaut who, in addition, can use the existing capacity and equipment to manufacture some of its own products."

Barry Callebaut produces cocoa and chocolate ingredients for the confectionery industry as well as owning a handful of European chocolate brands. The company is keen to take advantage of the trend for outsourcing in the confectionery industry. The company's CEO Patrick de Maeseneire said: "With a limited investment the supply agreement with Nestlé would increase our sales volume as of next fiscal year 2007/08 and would provide us with free production capacity allowing us to target the Southern European markets in a more tightly focused way." "It would also mark an important step ahead in our strategy to be the outsourcing partner of choice for co-manufacturing brand packaged consumer products."

TIT BITS

Source

Mid-February rains helpful for Ivorian cocoa crop

ABIDJAN (February 20, 2007): Abundant rain fell in Ivory Coast's main cocoa growing areas last week providing crucial moisture for the development of the April-September mid-crop after recent weeks of dry weather, farmers said on Monday.

Ivorian cocoa farmgate prices mostly above 400 CFA

ABIDJAN (February 21, 2007): Farmgate prices for cocoa in Ivory Coast were mixed for February 12-18, data from the Coffee and cocoa Bourse (BCC) showed on Tuesday, but falling supplies meant they were still mostly hovering above 400 CFA francs.

Sporadic rains fail to ease Ghana cocoa concern

ACCRA (February 21, 2007): Sporadic rains in the world's no.2 cocoa producer, Ghana, may not be enough to boost the end of the main crop in the coming months, buyers said on Tuesday, after bumper output earlier in the season.

Too much sun to harm Cameroon cocoa

YAOUNDE (February 21, 2007): Too much sunshine and not enough rain could damage cocoa output in Cameroon's main growing regions of the South-West and Centre provinces, farmers in the woV7PxW\$2TrIVR3TyI6xP767- [TnIV2PRR

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