



# COCOBOD*News*

A publication of Ghana Cocoa Board August, 2019



EMPOWERING  
WOMEN IN  
COCOA  
Production

# REASONS TO CONSUME Cocoa



- |    |   |   |    |
|----|---|---|----|
| 01 | Provides the most powerful dietary antioxidants | Has Aphrodisiac effect                                      | 06 |
| 02 | Reduces blood pressure                          | Prevents stroke by improving blood circulation              | 07 |
| 03 | Delays physical signs of ageing                 | Fights stress   | 08 |
| 04 | Fights dental decay.                            | Minimizes discomfort/pain associated with menstrual periods | 09 |
| 05 | Rich dietary iron which helps to fight anemia.  | Protects blood vessels.                                     | 10 |
|    |   | Boosts sense of well-being.                                 | 11 |

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# EMPOWERING WOMEN IN COCOA PRODUCTION



Cocoa continues to play an important role in the economy of Ghana. The industry provides employment and means of livelihood for over Eight Hundred Thousand (800,000) farm families in Ghana. Central to the sustenance of the cocoa industry is the important, yet often overlooked contributions of women, particularly at the production end of the cocoa value chain. Women are found participating in almost all stages of cocoa production: from planting cocoa seedlings to maintaining the cocoa tree, harvesting, fermenting and drying the cocoa beans; all of which are vital to the quantity and quality of cocoa Ghana is reputed for. It is estimated that up to 70%<sup>1</sup> tasks in cocoa cultivation are performed by women.

In spite of the significant contributions women make in the production of

cocoa, their efforts are given little recognition, and they receive lower remuneration than men<sup>2</sup>; particularly when the farms on which they provide labour is owned by their husbands and families. Attention is usually placed on women's roles as care givers and custodians of cocoa communities while limiting their participation in decision making processes, access to inputs, technologies, finance, trainings and other resources. These limitations hinder women from attaining their full economic potential which affect the livelihoods of their families especially children and society as a whole.

Recognizing the hard work of women in cocoa farming, Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) is empowering women in cocoa through the formation of co-operatives in the cocoa landscapes of Ghana. About 3,500 farmer groups, associations and cooperatives have been formed in communities across all the cocoa regions to enhance their access to cocoa farm inputs and finance for sustainable cocoa production. Out of these, more than 400 are active with sixty (60) consisting exclusively of women. COCOBOD supports these groups by building their capacities to handle the rudiments of co-operatives

<sup>1</sup> See Graphic Online 'Female cocoa farmer groups receive support to improve yields' (2017) Available at ><https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/female-cocoa-farmer-groups-receive-support-to-improve-yields.html>< (Accessed February 2018)

<sup>2</sup> Female farmers have levels of income and productivity 25- 30% lower than those of male farmers. See MJ Hiscox and R Goldstein, 'Gender inequality in the Ghanaian Cocoa Sector' (Harvard University 2014)

under the Co-operative Business School and strengthening such groups in the establishment and provision of services to its members. Associations and cooperatives in good standing are further supported by COCOBOD in the acquisition of fertilizer on credit to help ease accessibility to inputs.

COCOBOD acknowledges that addressing the barriers of women in cocoa and empowering them extends beyond individual benefits but improves the welfare of their children, households and communities. A conscious effort is therefore being made to ensure that women benefit from the various economic, social and environmental interventions being implemented in the cocoa sector through capacity building and development. In 2017, COCOBOD introduced the innovative Productivity Enhancing Programmes (PEPs) geared towards raising farm productivity from the current 450 kg/ha to 1500kg/ha in order to increase yield and improve the income levels of cocoa farmers. One of these viable initiatives is the hand pollination programme involving the engagement and training of about 20,000 youth in cocoa growing communities in Ghana of which about 60% were females.

The youth have undergone intensive training on hand pollination techniques and about 600 women pollinators have been trained on leadership and entrepreneurial skills at Bunso Cocoa College. These women are made aware of their own interest to become



women's fallback positions economically, allowing them to contribute substantially to the incomes and livelihoods of their households and improving the nutritional, medical, educational and other developmental needs of their children. Consequently, there has been significant reduction in children engaged in worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in cocoa farming.

future entrepreneurs when COCOBOD exits from its PEPs. The women are encouraged to develop community service centers where pollination services will be rendered to farmers to earn a living.

In like manner, women farmers are not isolated from other productivity enhancing programmes being implemented by COCOBOD, including the Mass Pruning Exercise, Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme, as well as the irrigation scheme. Women also continue to receive training on good agricultural practices, farmer business school, additional livelihood and skills development through COCOBOD's improved extension service delivery.

The innovative additional livelihood component assists cocoa families to identify viable income-generating channels (such as cocoa by-product processing, baking, soap making, animal rearing and mushroom production) to supplement their basic income from cocoa farming. This is a positive change that improves cocoa

In fostering balance in the farmer award schemes of COCOBOD, women are highly recognized with the most enterprising female farmer award during the National Farmers' Day Celebrations. This initiative has not only given prominence to the importance of women in cocoa farming but has also led to the identification and support of entrepreneurial women ready to take up cocoa farming as a business and motivated young women to become professional cocoa farmers.

Notwithstanding the practical women empowerment approaches being employed by COCOBOD, there still exist structural bottlenecks which can only be addressed through a multi-stakeholder approach. COCOBOD will therefore continue to collaborate with other government institutions, the Private Sector, NGOs and Civil Society to empower women in cocoa and promote equality in cocoa production.

COCOBOD News says Ayekoo to our hardworking women in Ghana's cocoa fraternity.





## GHANA - COTE D'IVOIRE COOPERATION

### A JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE FARMER-INCOME, 12TH JUNE, 2019

Côte d'Ivoire – Ghana Co-operation was instituted at the instance of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, SEM Alassane OUATTARA and the President of the Republic of Ghana, H. E. Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, in 2017, for the Ghana Cocoa Board and the Le Conseil du Café-Cacao to pool resources and synergize efforts in tackling common challenges of production and marketing, as well as, taking common position on international issues relating to cocoa.

The initial works culminated in the signing of the Abidjan Declaration in March 2018 by the two Presidents. The Abidjan Declaration states among others '...to find a sustainable solution for the improvement of prices obtained by cocoa producers in their respective countries'.

In pursuit of the above, a two-day Stakeholder Engagement, involving all major cocoa trade houses, processors and manufacturers was convened in Accra to discuss a mechanism for the implementation of a common floor price for cocoa beans produced from

Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

The following conclusions were arrived at end of the meeting:

- The proposed floor price of US\$2,600 was accepted by all stakeholders;
- However, processors, manufacturers and traders requested for a technical meeting to fine tune the mechanism for the implementation of the floor price;
- It was agreed that a technical meeting be held on 3rd July, 2019 in Abidjan to fine tune the modalities for implementing the floor price;
- It was also agreed that the issues of sustainability, relating to traceability, environment and child labour, although important be decoupled from the floor price and to be discussed at another forum.

Prelude to any further engagement on the matter, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana suspended sales of the 2020/21 Crop until further notice, in preparation for the implementation of the floor price



## COCOA DISEASE AND PEST CONTROL IS KEY – DR. ANIM-KWAPONG



Photo: Dr. Gilbert Anim-Kwapong, National Coordinator, CODAPEC, addressing some farmers at an orientation programme.

The control of Cocoa diseases and pests is a key aspect of cocoa cultivation and its sustainability. It is in view of this that the Cocoa Disease and Pest Control (CODAPEC) Unit, of Cocoa Health and Extension Division of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has held orientation programmes for some cocoa farmers in the Ashanti and Eastern regions of Ghana.

The orientation programme sought to deepen and at the same time sharpen the skills of farmers in order to ensure that, the spraying of their farms to get

rid of diseases and pests on their farms successfully. This is aimed at ensuring the success of the new CODAPEC regime. Dr. Gilbert Anim-Kwapong, the National Coordinator of CODAPEC programme at COCOBOD indicated that the modalities of the application of pesticides and other chemicals for the combat of pests and cocoa diseases have been modified because the activities and cycle of pests have changed.

‘Following a recommendation from the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) regarding bimodal population increase of the capsids and to effectively deal with it, the cocoa spraying regime is scheduled from April to June and September to October. Subsequently, spraying against black pod is scheduled from July to August and September to October’, he added.

This new arrangement is the first of its kind in several years and we commend our field staff and cocoa farmers for being very supportive in this respect.

‘By this new modality, we are sure to attack the pests effectively and sustain cocoa which otherwise would have been destroyed’, he added.

He further stressed that COCOBOD with the support of government will not relent in its efforts in combating cocoa diseases and pest in the Boards quest to increasing Ghana’s cocoa production beyond the already achieved one million metric tonnes in the 2010/2011 crop year.

Dr. Anim-Kwapong reiterated the concerted efforts required in dealing with cocoa diseases and pests, and called on stakeholders to be committed to the efforts of COCOBOD and government in this direction.

He noted that the successful implementation of the programme was directly dependent on the proper application of the chemicals in order to achieve the right outcomes which in total affects cocoa yields. ‘When you are taught how to apply chemicals in the right way, and you adhere, cocoa yields are increased’, he added.

Dr. Anim-Kwapong emphasized that COCOBOD has committed much efforts as a means of boosting yield.

The cocoa farmers requested that COCOBOD provides enough motorized spraying machines for farmers to enhance the exercise. This Dr. Anim-Kwapong indicated was being tackled positively.

## COCOBOD TO ASSIST FARMERS GET TRICYCLES

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo has said COCOBOD would assist cocoa farmers in the country to acquire tricycles popularly known as ‘Aboboyaa’ to help them cart cocoa beans from their farms to sales centres.

He said the move had become necessary following several complaints from cocoa farmers about the difficulties they face in transporting cocoa beans from their various farms to buying centres as well as rampant theft of harvested cocoa left on their farms. He added that farmers who had put themselves into recognized cooperatives could be assisted in this regard to help them go about their farming activities smoothly.

Hon. Boahen Aidoo was on Adom FM’s Morning Show ‘Dwaso Nsem’ to educate stakeholders on steps being taken by COCOBOD to help farmers improve upon

their farming activities for higher yields.

Commenting on the Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs), he said pruning, hand pollination, mass spraying, irrigation of cocoa farms and the other interventions were COCOBOD’s major areas of concentration in an effort to improve upon the fortunes of the sector and called for support from stakeholders.

‘Farmers need to prune their farms regularly in order to harvest more cocoa at the end of every season; maybe not less than 60bags could be recorded depending on the farm size and how well the farm had been conditioned by the farmer,’ He added.

He further stated that the rightful application of fertilizers on the cocoa farms invariably improves the soil’s fertility and boosts yields. He advised farmers to refrain from using dangerous

weedicides and other unapproved chemicals.

Responding to views expressed by some callers especially on fertilizers, Hon. Aidoo emphasized the need for cocoa farmers to form cooperatives to facilitate smooth implementation of the PEPs.

Hon. Aidoo used the opportunity to encourage farmers to adopt good agronomic practices and the Board’s PEPs to increase farm yields. He was optimistic the on-going work on removing diseased and overage cocoa trees will guarantee a blissful future for the sector and called key stakeholders to give it the required support.

‘We want all the farmers to form cooperatives to enable them access credit from financial institutions to buy the fertilizers that have been heavily subsidized by 53.4% and 81.03% respectively’, he added.

# COCOBOD SIGNS MOU WITH VOLCANI CENTRE IN ISRAEL TO DEAL WITH SWOLLEN SHOOT VIRUS DISEASE

The Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and the Volcani Centre of Israel have signed a memorandum of understanding for a scientific research collaboration into finding an immediate and lasting solution to the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD).

The disease has affected hundreds of thousands of hectares of cocoa farms in Ghana, making them unproductive.

Scientists from the Cocoa Research Institute (CRIG), the scientific research wing of COCOBOD, based in Tafo, will team up with scientists from the Volcani Centre on the various processes that will lead ultimately to a remedy to CSSVD and the effective control of its disease vector. They will further work together on ways to improve cocoa farm yields in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.

The Volcani Centre, which was established in 1921, has been described as the best agricultural research centre in the world. The success of this collaborative scientific research effort will have far-reaching implications for local cocoa production and that of the entire subregion of cocoa producing countries including Ghana where the CSSVD has destroyed several hectares of Cocoa land.

The MOU was signed on behalf of COCOBOD by its Chief Executive, Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo and on behalf of the Volcani Centre, by Professor Eli Fenerman at a ceremony at the Volcani Centre in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Joseph Boahen Aidoo emphasised the importance of finding a lasting remedy to the disease in a timely manner. Failure to do so poses a major challenge to the survival of the cocoa sector.

He cited the example of witches bloom which ravaged major cocoa farms in Brazil and resulted in the pioneer

of cocoa production now becoming a netimporter of cocoa from other countries.

Hon Aidoo was of the view that given the data and expertise of CRIG and the capacity of the Volcani Centre, this collaboration will go a long way to help Ghanaian cocoa farmers and the cocoa industry in general.

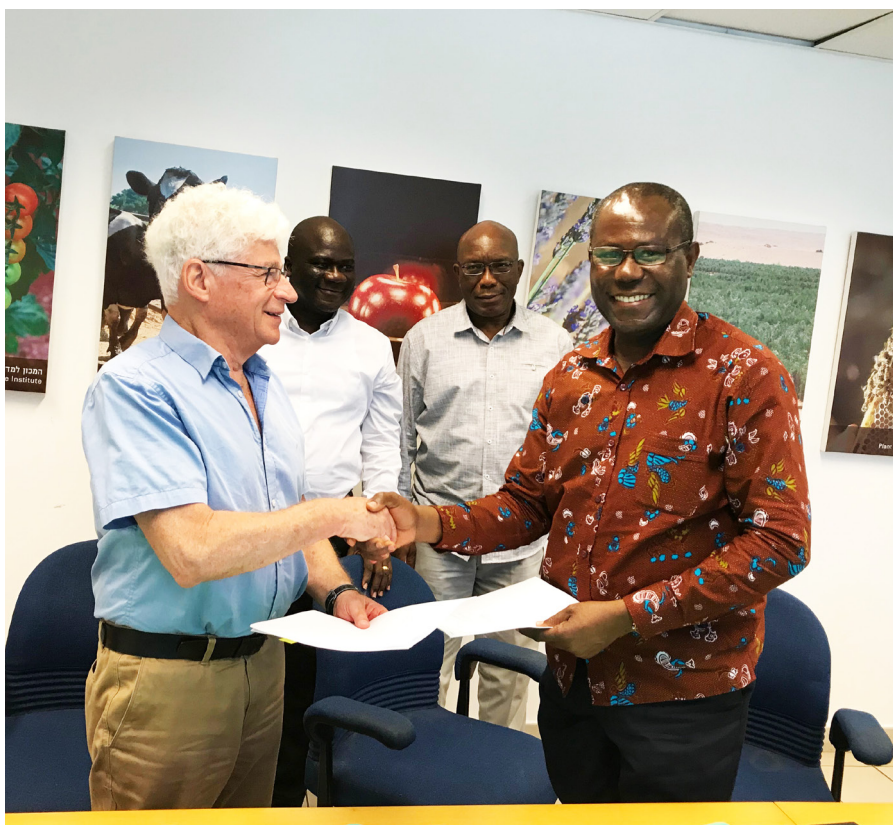
On his part, Professor Eli Fenerman said the Centre has collaborated with a lot of institutions to find solutions to problems in agriculture and believes this collaboration will definitely help improve cocoa productivity in order to sustain the chocolate industry.

The collaboration between COCOBOD and the Volcani Centre goes beyond the search for a remedy to CSSVD and an effective control of the disease

vector. The scientists will join forces and research ways of optimizing cocoa nutrition, irrigation and pollination as well as improving cocoa seedling health and resilience via biochar solutions in nurseries and during planting;

They will focus some attention on creating integrated pest management solutions for the control of pests, particularly, pathogen-carrying pests as well as the pathogens they carry. The scientists will develop climate and pest resilient cocoa strains with favourable flavouring and health profiles.

Other subjects of mutual interest such as integrated shade/irrigation solutions, post-harvest processing and storage, reduction of post-harvest losses also form part of the collaboration.





# HUNDREDS TASTE COCOA AT THE 3RD CHINA TEA EXPO

It was all joy and pride seeing hundreds of Chinese visitors and other participants thronged to the Ghana Stand on the Ghana Day to have a feel and taste of cocoa and chocolate products made from Ghana's premium quality cocoa at the 3rd China Tea and Coffee Expo.

The visitors included prominent personalities like the Chinese Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Han Changfu, his Deputy Dr. Qu Dongyu who joined their Ghanaian counterpart, Dr. Owusu Akoto Afriyie and a host of other officials from Ghana Cocoa Board, Cocoa Processing Company and Trade and Tourism Ministries as well as some private entities who interacted and tasted Ghana cocoa.

The Ghana day was set aside to honour the country and to give her the

opportunity to showcase products from her major export product, cocoa.

In recent times, Ghana and China have been exploring business opportunities in respective countries and critical on the agenda has been business prospects in the chocolate and confectionery industry.

In an interview with Dr. Edward O. Amporful of the Cocoa Clinic, Accra, one of COCOBOD's delegation to the Expo and a strong advocate of cocoa consumption, he described the Expo as very relevant in discovering new markets for the promotion and sale of cocoa products.

Meanwhile, Ghana attended the Expo at the invitation of the Chinese government as a Special Guest of Honour.

“Ghana and China have been exploring business opportunities in respective countries... in setting up chocolate and confectionery industry

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# LET'S DECOUPLE CHILD LABOUR, OTHERS FROM FLOOR PRICE – GHANA & COTE D'IVOIRE



Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire have stated that although child labour and forest degradation are critical concerns for the sustenance of the cocoa economy, these issues must be decoupled from a stakeholder engagement aimed at determining a floor price for cocoa trade.

This was contained in a communique jointly released by the two countries at the end of a 2-day engagement with representatives of Trade Houses, Cocoa Processors and Chocolate Manufacturers on floor price and sustainable farmer income in Accra.

Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and his Ivoirian counterpart Mr Ibrahima Kone of the Le Conseil du Cacao Coffee held the view that issues of child labour and deforestation should be discussed at another platform and must not interfere with moves for better income for farmers.

'We agree that child labour and deforestation in cocoa must be tackled with all seriousness, ... however, such issues must not hinder progress and discussions aimed at accepting floor price and payment of remunerative

cocoa price to our illustrious farmers,' he said.

According to him, a good and remunerative farmer income is a pre-requisite for farmer motivation and improved livelihoods and called on the stakeholders to accept the floor price concept for the collective interest of the producers and buyers.

He further explained that when disposable incomes of farmers increase for instance, they can hire labourers, purchased fertilizers and other agro-inputs to support their farming operations and produce more cocoa to feed the confectionery market.

Responding to some concerns raised with regard to the likelihood of farmers expanding their farms to encroach on forest belt, Hon Aidoo painstakingly explained that the current vertical system of farming being adopted by the Ghanaian cocoa farmer requires the use of the same acre of land combined with strict adherence to good agronomic practices for maximum yield.

He later added that unlike other crops such as potatoes which are highly cultivated in some parts of the world

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A good cocoa farm in itself, is a 'forest'... cocoa farming is generally eco-friendly' and our farmers deserve decent prices

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where trees are entirely cleared, cocoa farming rather enjoins farmers to plant sufficient number of shade and economic trees to protect the cocoa, water bodies and the entire ecosystem. 'A good cocoa farm in itself, is a 'forest' ... cocoa farming is generally eco-friendly' and our farmers deserve decent prices, he added.

At the end of the two-day conference, the proposed floor price of \$2,600 per tonne of cocoa was agreed upon in principle but participants called for further engagements on the mechanism for its implementation to ensure its sustainability.

Meanwhile, this maiden Conference on the proposed floor price was at the behest of the Presidents of both countries who are poised at ensuring cocoa farmers are remunerated well to motivate, bridge the standard of living gap and also keep the entire cocoa value unbroken.

# SEMINAR HELD FOR CHATTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF COCOBOD



financial management and improved revenue generation.

'I expect that you embrace the finest accounting software and technologies and bring them to bear on your work', he said, adding that any relevant software required to facilitate the work, irrespective of the cost, would be considered for use'.

Deputy Chief Executive in-charge of Finance and Administration, Mr Ray Ankrah said the training programme would help bring closer to the staff modern technology in finance to enable them discharge their responsibilities well.

Dr. Noel Tagoe, the lead facilitator urged the participants not to be only interested in their accounting skills and profession, but also consider issues of globalisation and help COCOBOD to remain profitable and relevant profitable in modern business.

Mr. Francis Akwasi Opoku, Director of Human Resource and Solicitor Secretary entreated the participants to embrace the skills gathered at the seminar well enough to improve on their performance and help establish a formidable accounting system for the Board.

'We will continue to give you access to modern skills through consistent training to build your capacity and grow the cocoa industry', he concluded.

Chartered Accountants with the Ghana Cocoa Board have been urged to embrace emerging trends in the financial fraternity to help build a formidable team to facilitate effective handling of revenues from cocoa. The Chief Executive, Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo, made this call at a day's seminar

held for Chartered Accountants of COCOBOD and its subsidiaries/divisions.

According to Hon Aidoo, COCOBOD was undergoing some transformation and the Board needed a lot of financial resources hence the call for prudent



# CMC MD INSPECTS PRUNED COCOA FARMS IN THE WESTERN SOUTH REGION

The Managing Director of the Cocoa Marketing Company Ltd (CMC), Mr. Joseph Forson has paid a 3-day working visit to some cocoa farms in the Western South Region.

Mr. Forson was in the Region with some members of his management staff to ascertain progress made with the Mass Pruning Exercise currently on-going in the Region.

The Mass Pruning Exercise is one of the Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) currently being implemented by the Board in an effort to increase productivity per hectare on Ghana's cocoa farms.

'Pruning facilitates the entrance of sunlight, which is essential for the pollination, fecundation of the flowers and the growth of the pods. Also, pruning strengthens the formation of new leaves and production areas,

which in turn increases the trees' productivity levels. When done efficiently, pruning helps to increase the tree's productivity", he added

'Government and COCOBOD have decided to fully bear the cost of pruning cocoa farms across the country prior to the beginning of the pollination exercise", he disclosed.

The Managing Director was thankful to farmers, staff and pruning gangs in the region for working hard in the face of the numerous challenges confronting them. He said Management of COCOBOD was working hard to address the problems of inadequate field staff, lack of operational vehicles in some districts, inadequate pruning tools, and other logistics necessary for the effective execution of duties. 'I will urged you to maintain the momentum as Management makes efforts to improve upon the existing conditions

to enable the Region to deliver on its mandate effectively and efficiently", he said.

He commended the CHED team led by the Cartography Manager, Mr. Farouk Nyame and the Ag. Regional Manager, Mr. Samuel Asare Ankamah for the warmth reception accorded him and his staff during the visit.

The team later inspected pruned farms, interacted with cocoa farmers and pruning teams to identity the challenges confronting the Productivity Enhancement Programmes and ways to address them.

The districts visited were Kejebriil, Aiyinase, Elubo, Daboase, Huni Valley, Tarkwa, Diaso, Dunkwa and Wassa Akropong. The others were Samreboi, Asankragwa, and Manso Amenfi.



# COCOA NOT DRIVER OF DEFORESTATION- COCOBOD BOSS

Chief Executive of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has urged European chocolate processing companies and international civil society groups campaigning for the protection of forests, to disabuse their minds of their long-held perception that cocoa farming results in deforestation.

Deforestation has been a major concern of the international community and cocoa farming has often been attacked as a cause.

Some European companies have in the past threatened to boycott cocoa produced in Ghana because they have been planted in reserved forest areas.

Addressing the General Assembly for Swiss chocolate producers in Zurich,

Hon Boahen Aidoo stated that he did not subscribe to the thinking that cocoa farming causes deforestation.

He explained that though cocoa has been planted on lands in Ghana which in the past were reserved forests, the activities of lumbering companies reduced the forest before cocoa farmers converted the depleted vegetation into cocoa farms.

He referenced an academic research conducted into cocoa migration in Ghana and the history of the cocoa industry which found out that farmers were not responsible for the tree felling and vegetation clearing activities that have caused the depletion of Ghana's forest reserves over the years.

Loggers working for lumbering

companies who sell the timber to Europe and the Americas, are the ones who enter those reserves and subdue the forest, Hon Aidoo pointed out.

'So, in effect, it is not cocoa farmers, who cause deforestation. If cocoa can be planted to restore some of these lands, I believe it adds up to the forest stock and that is a good thing', he added.

Hon. Aidoo said it is common to see cocoa crops planted among trees and along with food crops, adding that monocropping as practiced in other countries is not the dominant practice in Ghana. He said cocoa is a forest plant and in Ghana, it is intercropped with other forest trees; timber trees to provide permanent shade.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY EDUCATION HELD IN THE VOLTA REGION

By Abigail Ahorgba, Hohoe

The Risk and Disaster Management Unit of the Special Services Department of Ghana Cocoa Board has organized an occupational health and safety training for staff of the Board and its Subsidiaries/Divisions in the Volta region.

The lectures, which was aimed at educating and equipping staff with the essential knowledge needed to avoid accidents in any form, was attended by staff and other personnel from the organizations occupying office space in the COCOBOD Regional Office at Hohoe.

According to Mr. Edward Amoah Odame, Deputy Disaster Manager and facilitator of the programme, safety is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play in ensuring a safe environment for work

and other activities. 'Safety is not an individual affair as most presume, but a responsibility for all', he said.

He said we all need to join the campaign to be each other's keeper. This, he added, would enable us to have a safe work environment to curb many accidents.

One slogan on safety that came up during the session was 'Accident - big or small, avoid them all'. Participants were made to understand that, though our world is not devoid of accidents, caution had to be taken to avoid any form of accidents.

Mr. Odame said many people took for granted precautions that lead to safety, urging participants not to learn safety through accident because in most cases it becomes too late to

reverse any dire consequences this could cause.

Staff were also encouraged to learn the L.I.P principle in emergency response which stands for Life Safety; Incident Stabilization and Property Protection. 'In this era of internet presence, there is readily available information to educate and guide people on safety measures so let's take advantage of them', he added.

Mr. Odame suggested the need for an emergency evacuation plan and its periodic rehearsal for both public and private buildings which, he said, would ensure that building occupants recognize the evacuation alarm and know how to respond.

The program ended successfully with a brief session for questions and answers.

A 17-member delegation from the Standard Bank Group, parent company of Stanbic Bank-Ghana has met with the Management of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) as part of the company's immersion programme of providing learning opportunities on how to grow Africa's business and banking sectors.

Briefing the delegation on COCOBOD's operations, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo outlined the numerous economic contributions of the Board to Ghana and the world cocoa economy.

According to him, Ghana is second to Cote d' Ivoire in terms of top cocoa producing nations and produces premium quality cocoa beans to feed the world's confectionery market.

He said Ghana and Cote d' Ivoire produce about 60 percent of the world's annual cocoa output with Ghana contributing about 20 percent. Hon. Aidoo Boahen indicated that currently, Ghana produces an average of 900,000 metric tonnes of cocoa yearly and this translates into about \$2 billion revenue. 'Revenue accruing to Cote d' Ivoire and Ghana annually is around \$6 billion, an amount which is very low considering the fact that the world cocoa market is valued at an estimated \$100 billion', he bemoaned.

According to the Chief Executive, the low

# COCOBOD MANAGEMENT MEETS STANDARD BANK TEAM

revenue from cocoa had forced some farmers to sell off their farmlands to illegal gold miners, a development he says, poses a threat to the sustenance of Ghana's cocoa industry and the world cocoa economy at large.

Hon. Boahen Aidoo told the team that apart from the falling global cocoa prices that affect farmers, the issue of climate change has become a major threat to the sustainability of the cocoa sector. 'Various steps are being taken to ameliorate the effect of climate on cocoa production in the country', he assured.

He further stated that COCOBOD had introduced the Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) such as the rehabilitation of cocoa farms, mass pruning, and hand pollination programmes among other interventions aimed at ensuring increased and sustainable cocoa

production in Ghana.

On his part, the leader of the Standard Bank Group, Mr. Steve Hall commended COCOBOD for its enormous contribution to the world cocoa sector. He pledged his bank's continued support in the Board's annual syndicated Loan Facility for the purchase of cocoa.

The meeting in Accra is part of a programme for 80 Chief Executives of the Standard Bank Group and Ghana has been identified as one of the countries that offers mind expansion experience and provides opportunities to grow Africa's businesses.

The team later visited the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), Cocoa Processing Company (CPC) and Cocoa Marketing Company, Tema (CMC) to have first-hand experience on the activities of the Board.



# COCOBOD DONATES TO JAMES CAMP PRISON

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has donated assorted cocoa products to inmates of the James Camp Prison in Accra. The donation which forms part of COCOBOD's Corporate Social Responsibility activities was aimed at cushioning the efforts of government in providing for prisoners across the country and also help the inmates to benefit from the numerous health benefits of cocoa.

Briefing the COCOBOD delegation prior to the presentation of the items, the Officer in Charge of the James Camp Prison, DDP Patience Baffoe-Bonnie, said the facility was established in 1948 to prepare prisoners for release into society. She said prisoners who had served about 1/3 or 2/5 of their prison terms are transferred to the facility to help equip them with trade and other vocational skills before their release.

DDP Baffoe-Bonnie said the facility has training workshops for barbering, painting, construction of aquarium, tailoring, tie & die making and screen printing. She added the inmates are also trained on how to do chair bags, armrests, table cloth, wall hangings and shoes, among others.

"We want to commercialize all our workshops to help the inmates earn a living while in the cells and also help us to expand our facilities" she added.

She said the open nature of the prison makes the environment more humane



and less restrictive; this, she said, makes the prisoners less aggressive.

Presenting the cocoa products on behalf of the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Mr. Benjamin Teye Larweh, Principal Public Affairs Officer, congratulated the prison authorities for the cordial environment created for the prisoners to acquire livelihood skills before returning to their various homes.

He said research has revealed that cocoa has numerous health and nutritional benefits and that the products, which included the Royale Natural Cocoa Powder would help greatly in ensuring the good health of inmates of the facility.

Mr. Larweh asked the inmates to consider cocoa farming as a business upon their release because the cocoa industry has become very lucrative. "I know some young men, some as young as 35 years old, who harvest and sell more than 400 bags of cocoa every year. It will therefore be a wise choice if upon your return home, you decide to venture into cocoa farming", he said to the inmates whose average age is pegged at 24 years, according to the authorities.

According to him, COCOBOD has developed new hybrid seedlings which are early yielding and high bearing and that one can start earning money from his/or her cocoa farm within two years of planting. He said technical staff of the Cocoa Health and Extension Division are stationed in every cocoa district across the country to help anyone who is interested in going into cocoa farming.

Mr. Larweh said in addition to the products, COCOBOD would also fumigate the prison cells and the facilities within the camp to rid the place of mosquitoes, insects and rodents.

CSP Augustina Mensah Fiadzo, who spoke on behalf of the prison authorities, expressed her gratitude to the management of COCOBOD for the kind gesture. She acknowledged the role of cocoa in the overall development of the Ghanaian economy. "I am hopeful this will not be the end of our relationship with you. We hope to see you very often to help mitigate the numerous challenges we face here", she added.

CSP Fiadzo appealed to COCOBOD to adopt the facility's two Green Houses and any of the blocks for refurbishment.





# COCOA FARMER COOPERATIVES TO ACCESS DIRECT AGROCHEMICALS, OTHERS FROM COCOBOD – COCOBOD BOSS

The Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) is adopting a new policy of providing support services, farming products and inputs to cocoa farmers through their registered cooperatives to ensure a far more efficient and timely delivery of such products and services to all cocoa farmer across the country.

The provision of products and services through cooperatives is to ensure that adequate quantities of all products are allocated to farmers at all times and that such allocations are brought promptly to the farmers themselves upon their request; removing the need for intermediary actors.

The Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo said this on the occasion of the launch of cocoa farmer cooperatives in Ghana. The

launch, which was held in Kumasi, was to officially announce the policy, and plans to assist farmers to form such cooperatives in various communities across the country.

‘So far, a total of over 5000 farmer associations and groups with a total membership of 146,864 have been formed nationwide’, said the COCOBOD Boss. ‘Out of these, 512 are fully active cooperatives’.

To be recognized by COCOBOD as an active cocoa farmer cooperative, the farmers have to come together to form an identifiable group; create a documented record of their membership and executives/leaders and then be registered with the Department of Co-operatives, which has the mandate of registering farmer





farmers to procure slashers by October 2019”.

In his keynote address, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture in charge of Perennial Crops, Hon. George Oduro said the importance of establishing farmer cooperatives in the cocoa sector is not only limited to improving yields but will also serve other important purposes.

According to him, one major challenge facing Ghanaian farmers is the difficulty in accessing funds to support their farming businesses. He was optimistic that when farmers form cooperatives, they will be able to establish and maintain trustworthy relationships with financial institutions and this will give them easier access to loans.

Hon Oduro, further noted, that the realization of a Floor Price for cocoa produced in Ghana, which was recently announced, is a clear demonstration that the government of President Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo remains committed to improving the living standards of cocoa farmers in the country.

He also encouraged cocoa farmers to embrace the numerous Productivity Enhancement Programmes being implemented by the new administration and further urged them to make it a point to join forces in the form of cooperatives to promote their collective wellbeing.

groups into co-operatives.

The cooperatives will then work on behalf of their members for their mutual benefits and become eligible for the direct sourcing of assistance, agrochemical, implements and extension services from COCOBOD.

With help from COCOBOD, the cooperatives will also be coached on way to engage creditors in negotiations to access credit for farming operations; learn to take over the ongoing Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) when COCOBOD exits and effectively implement calendar-based farm activities to improve the management of farms.

Other plans are to help the cooperatives and their members to develop the skill of business planning, financial management and administration to become self-sustaining in

cocoa production and the efficient management of their cocoa businesses.

Hon Boahen Aidoo said COCOBOD was doing everything possible to maintain Ghana's quality cocoa. He, therefore, urged farmers not to engage in practices that will compromise the country's cocoa standards.

‘There have been concerns raised by Japanese companies about the presence of 24D, which is a harmful chemical, in some cocoa beans. This chemical is a residue from weedicides used on cocoa farms, he said. COCOBOD has, therefore, banned the use of weedicides and is urging farmers to desist from their use as they negatively affect the quality cocoa and, as well, destroy the land.

He revealed that, ‘to reduce drudgery associated with weeding with manpower, the management of COCOBOD has concluded plans to assist



# GHANA - COTE D'IVOIRE COOPERATION MEETING 2019 IN PICTURES





# COCOBOD HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR TOURS BONO AND AHAFO REGIONS

Director of Human Resource of Ghana Cocoa Board, Mr Francis Akwasi Opoku has applauded personnel engaged to undertake the Mass Pruning Exercise on cocoa farms for their commitment to increase productivity on cocoa farms across the country.

Mr Opoku was interacting with Pruning gangs during a two-day working tour of cocoa farms in the Bono and Ahafo Regions.

According to him, Management of COCOBOD is implementing several interventions aimed at increasing the productivity of cocoa farms and also improve the livelihood of farmers.

He said the Mass Pruning Exercise is one of the flagship programmes of the current administration and urged farmers to embrace it to better their lots.

'The truth is that if you prune your farms well, you may not even need any fertilizer to increase your productivity per hectare', he added.

He praised the pruning gangs for their dedication to the growth of Ghana's cocoa sector. 'We are here to interact with you to know how your work is progressing, know your challenges, and how we can help to make you more effective', he said.

Dr. Emmanuel Nii Tackie-Otoo, Ag. Deputy Executive Director of the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) noted that the Pruning Exercise facilitates the development of more flowers on the cocoa trees for effective pollination.

He urged the farmers to master the act of pollination to enable them to continue

to pollinate their farms when COCOBOD finally pulls out of the programme.

'When your farms are well pruned it significantly reduces the chances of the cocoa being attacked by diseases', he stressed.

'The National Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme, Mass Pruning Exercise, Hand Pollination Programme, Cocoa Diseases and Pest Control Programme and other Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) are all demonstrations of the good intentions that government has for cocoa farmers', he added.

The Districts visited were Bechem, Dadiesoaba, Goaso, Sankore and Berekum. The others were Nkrankwanta, Dormaa Ahenkro and Techiman.

## STAFF DURBAR AT SUNYANI

Meanwhile, Staff of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in the Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions have expressed their gratitude to Management for ensuring a conducive working environment which has propelled the growth and sustenance of the cocoa industry.

Dr Easmon Sarfo, Snr. Quality Control Manager made this known in his welcome address at a staff durbar organized at Sunyani in honour of the Director of Human Resource, Lawyer Francis Akwasi Poku, who was on a two-day working tour of the three regions.

According to Dr. Sarfo, staff in the region know the important role that cocoa plays in every facet of the Ghanaian economy and have therefore demonstrated that hard work over the years to raise the

image of the Board.

He said while acknowledging the efforts management was making to improve the fortunes of the cocoa industry, a lot still needed to be done in terms of logistics and infrastructure.

Dr. Sarfo outlined some pressing needs of COCOBOD as well as all Divisions and Subsidiaries in the region for the attention of Management.

Lawyer Francis Akwasi Opoku, in his remarks, thanked the staff for working to keep the flag of COCOBOD Board high in the region. 'I have visited a number of cocoa farms before arriving here and can boldly say that you are all doing very well', he remarked. He admonished the staff to work in any capacity they find themselves to facilitate a collective victory for all.

He urged the staff to contribute their quota to help with the effective implementation of the flagship Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) which are ultimately aimed at ensuring increased productivity and a sustainable cocoa economy.

According to him, staff welfare is paramount on the agenda of the Board of Directors and Management of COCOBOD. 'Let me say that we have the welfare of staff at heart and everything possible is being done at all levels to ensure that we all work in satisfaction, happiness and with peace of mind', he stressed.

'I have taken note of all the challenges mentioned by Dr. Sarfo and I will duly communicate same to management for redress' he said.



# NEWLY PROMOTED DEPUTY MANAGERS UNDERGO TRAINING

Newly promoted Deputy Managers of the Ghana Cocoa Board have undergone a two-day training programme at Koforidua in the Eastern Region. The purpose of the training was to broaden their knowledge of the cocoa industry and enhance their capacity to function effectively in their respective areas of work.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Deputy Chief Executive in-charge of Finance and Administration (F&A), Mr. Ray Ankrah said performance of the Deputy Managers had a direct effect on the industry. He was optimistic that the knowledge and commitment they bring to bear can help overcome some of the challenges currently facing the cocoa sector.

Mr. Ankrah was hopeful that, the training programme would prepare the managers to focus on both the pre-harvest and post-harvest activities, most especially at a time that numerous Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) are being implemented by the Board.

“Let us work to reverse the downward

trend of fortunes in the cocoa sector otherwise there will be no cocoa in the immediate future”, he said, adding that the cocoa swollen shoot virus disease is devastating considering the enormity of the destruction it has caused so far. “Whatever it takes to get the job done, do it, because you all play the role of C.E, F&A, Director HR in your own ways wherever you are”, he noted.

Mr. Francis Akwasi Opoku, Director of Human Resource and Solicitor Secretary implored the new managers to be equipped and well informed in order to give COCOBOD value for money. “This orientation is a rare opportunity to improve your worth and enhance your work in our quest to build the cocoa industry. Let COCOBOD benefit from your professional acumen”, he added.

Mr. Vincent Okyere Akomeah, Director of Research took some time to brief the participants on the cocoa value chain whereas Mr. John Akurugu of the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED), Dunkwa-on-Offin, sensitized them on the cocoa swollen shoot virus disease.

“

Let us work to reverse the downward trend of fortunes in the cocoa sector; otherwise there will be no cocoa in the immediate future.

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## THINK OF YOUR FARM AS A BUSINESS – COCOBOD CEO TELLS COCOA FARMERS



By Stephen Odoi Larbi

The Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has charged cocoa farmers to be business minded in operating their farms and to partake fully in the various programmes introduced by COCOBOD to ensure good farm yields and to increase profits.

Good farming practices, like pruning, the timely application of fertilizers and proper pests control are essential at all times, he said. Hon. Aidoo stated this while interacting with farmers in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions, on the first day of his week-long tour of cocoa farms across the county.

He is accompanied by the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations at COCOBOD, Dr Emmanuel Opoku, as well, as Directors and Research Scientists from COCOBOD.

The tour is aimed at assessing the level of farmer participation in the various farm productivity improvement programmes implemented by COCOBOD; it is also to gathering first hand knowledge of the challenges facing farmers at different parts of the cocoa producing areas; and to hold farmer rallies to interact with farmers.

‘As a cocoa farmer, you need to think of your farm as a business. And as a business person, you should always invest a portion of your profits back into your business. That is how you stay profitable for a long time,’ Hon. Aidoo advised while interacting with Joe Bafour and his farm employees, during a stop over on his eight-acre cocoa farm in the Ashanti Region.

He added, ‘If you properly prune the crops, apply the right fertilizer at the right time and practice hand pollination, an acre of cocoa trees can yield 20bags worth of cocoa. Make sure to invest the cost of at least two bags back into the farm. One bag can pay for your fertilizers and another bag for pollination. You will still have 18 bags left. That is good business.’

The COCOBOD Boss was thankful to the farmers for their hard work and profound contribution to the nation.

He encouraged them to implement all of COCOBOD’s productivity programmes to increase their produce.

The Chief Executive of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has urged chocolate processing companies in Europe to come up with innovative cocoa products that will increase the consumption of cocoa and boost international demand.

While addressing the General Assembly of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa in Zurich, Switzerland, Hon Aidoo mentioned the pressing need to create new cocoa products that will be more attractive to today’s consumer.

He emphasized the point that there has been a lot of effort from all industry players on sustainable production of cocoa and it is time for a lot of attention to be given to sustainable consumption as well.

He pointed out that, there lies a big untapped opportunity in the promotion of cocoa powder in particular, around the world. Cocoa powder consumption can be elevated to the status of tea and coffee, so, that it as well becomes a staple at homes, offices, occasions and cafés; much like the two other beverages.

Among the three beverages; tea, coffee and cocoa; cocoa should reign supreme, he said, but it has instead been relegated to the background. Hence, during occasions and programmes and at homes, tea and coffee are usually the beverages sought after, although, cocoa is delicious and has all the health and all the nutritional benefits.

## BE INNOVATIVE IN YOUR PRODUCTS: COCOBOD BOSS TELLS CHOCOLATE MANUFACTURERS IN EUROPE



‘We need to promote cocoa and cocoa powder, in particular, as an everyday beverage’, he said.

Hon Aidoo advised that as new products are been created the issue of sugar in chocolates, which is dissuading people from consuming more chocolate, must also be addressed promptly to open up the market for the sustainable consumption of the cocoa product.

The COCOBOD Boss also asked the European chocolate processing companies to strongly consider setting up processing companies in Ghana and make the country a hub for their sub-regional operations.

There are many advantages to setting up a processing company in Ghana, he said. Besides the country’s socio-economic stability, there is easy access to the most important raw material for the processing plants, cocoa; of which Ghana produces that highest quality in the world.

Source: Peacefmonline.com



## UMaT TO COLLABORATE WITH COCOBOD TO COMBAT COCOA DISEASES AND PESTS

The University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) Tarkwa is collaborating with Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to use mobile technology to help combat

diseases and pests that affect cocoa production in Ghana.

The mobile application dubbed **COCOANET** was developed by a group of students of UMaT to, among others, help farmers and field staff identify (diagnose) various diseases and pests which attack cocoa plants. This will facilitate the application of the appropriate remedy to the affected cocoa and reduce costs incurred in the treatment of cocoa farms.

A delegation from UMaT, led by Professor Jerry S.Y. Kuma, Vice Chancellor, was in Cocoa House, Accra to discuss how best the two institutions could better develop the application for the advancement of Ghana’s cocoa sector.

According to Mr. Emmanuel Asiedu who made the presentation on behalf of the students, most cocoa diseases go unnoticed or are rather detected at a time when huge devastations have already occurred. He said the introduction of the application would help ensure a more effective response to extension services, adding that the application is controlled to cater for farmers who cannot speak English to reach out to agricultural extension officers for assistance.

Professor Kuma, commenting on the presentation, explained that it was imperative to present the idea to COCOBOD as the regulator of the cocoa industry to help address the effect of diseases and pests on low yields.

The Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon.

Joseph Boahen Aidoo commended the students for the initiative and the University for providing the platform for the students to exhibit their entrepreneurial potential. He said the move would help improve the local cocoa economy in particular and world cocoa industry as a whole. ‘This is novelty that couldn’t have come at a better time considering the challenges the cocoa sector is currently facing in dealing with the disease and pests menace’, he added.

Hon. Aidoo acknowledged that, though the application sought to address some of these challenges, it should be carefully worked on to enable it meet the purpose for which it was developed. ‘We embrace it. COCOBOD is highly interested in the development of this application to its logical conclusion. We can assure you of our maximum support to ensure that this becomes a success’, he stressed.

He charged the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, a subsidiary of COCOBOD to work closely with UMaT to develop and scale up the application for the advancement of the cocoa sector.

The mobile application which was developed by Five students who emerged as the best innovative minds during the 5th Innovation and Career fair organized by the University of Mines and Technology in April, 2019, when developed will be available on android and all iOS platforms and will also be providing both text and audio formats to cocoa farmers.





## CHED LADIES INAUGURATE CLOTH

Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) ladies Club of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has inaugurated their cloth with a call, by the National President of COCOBOD Ladies Club, Mrs. Sabina Essuman Wereko to build up the cocoa industry with their expertise and dedication.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Mrs. Wereko challenged the ladies to be the beacon to forge the success of the cocoa industry. She noted, that while it was necessary to look decent in their appearance both at work and outside the working environment, it was key that they focus on their work

responsibilities as well.

She commended the president of the CHED Ladies Club, Christiana Bofo Keteku and her executives for the novelty of distinguishing themselves with the cloth, which brought them together to celebrate this group of formidable women leaders who are committed to contributing their quota to promote the development of the Cocoa Industry. She noted that the action which the club took was an unforgettable one.

'One thing worthy of note is that, every company or institution has a unique identity which manifests in the form

of their logo, colors, brochures, website and the like', adding that the ladies should not compromise the enviable COCOBOD brand but they should continue to uplift the image of the Board.

Nana Akua Achiaa, a Deputy Human Manager at CHED noted that it was the decency in the ladies' outlook that will inspire and command respect in the discharge of their duties.

To grace the occasion was the former president of CHED ladies club, Mrs. Felicia Gawu-Mensah who expressed joy at the club's effort in finally getting their cloth inaugurated.



## MRS. LINDA YOUNG RETIRES



Mrs. Linda Joyce Young, a Senior Private Secretary to the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Agronomy and Quality Control (A&QC) of Ghana Cocoa Board has retired from active service.

Mrs. Young who prides herself as serving continuously under four Deputy Chief Executives in one office exited after 36 years of meritorious service.

At a send-off party held in her honour, the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Agronomy and Quality Control (A&QC), Dr. Emmanuel Agyemang Dwomoh commended her for her continued and dedicated service to the Board and called on the staff present to emulate

her examples.

He indicated that the doors of COCOBOD are always opened to her and she should not hesitate to always come back when the need arises.

Mr. John Randolph Adei, Ag. Deputy Director of Human Resource also congratulated her on her successful exit from the Board and wished her well in her future endeavors.

Mrs. Young on her part, expressed appreciation to the Management of COCOBOD for the opportunity given her to harness her potentials and all the support she enjoyed during her stay in COCOBOD

# COOPERATE WITH COCOBOD IN OUR QUEST TO CURTAIL THE CSSVD: DR. DWOMMOH APPEALS TO COCOA FARMERS



The Deputy Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in charge of Agronomy and Quality Control (A&QC), Dr. Emmanuel Agyemang Dwomoh has expressed worry over the low cooperation cocoa farmers give to Cocoa extension officers in their quest to facilitate the rehabilitation of diseased and overaged farms.

According to him, the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Viral Disease (CSSVD) and moribund cocoa farms constitute about 40% of Ghana's cocoa trees tock with serious repercussions on productivity per hectare.

Dr. Agyemang Dwomoh was interacting with some cocoa farmers at Kumikrom, a farming community in Sefwi Bekwai District of the Western North Region. Dr. Dwomoh explained that the production yield in the Western Region, which hitherto stood at 30% of

Ghana's total production output, had lost this enviable position due to the devastating effect of the CSSVD.

'The Western North Region which contributed about 330,000 metric tonnes is now producing 140,000 tonnes due to the rampant nature of the CSSVD virus, this is not good for the region', he added.

According to Dr. Dwomoh, COCOBOD was implementing the National Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme as part of efforts to address the menace. The programme, he said, would help increase productivity as well as improve livelihoods of farmers.

'I want to implore you, our cherished farmers, to cooperate with COCOBOD to facilitate smooth implementation of all our Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) which include the

Rehabilitation Programme", he said.

Dr. Dwomoh also cautioned farmers to desist from the use of weedicides on cocoa farms since such practices affect the quality of Ghana's cocoa beans.

He assured the farmers that plans were underway to procure motorized slashers to weed and prune their cocoa farms. He also urged the farmers to form farmer co-operatives for easy identification and access to inputs, funds and other support services.

The farmers commended COCOBOD for the initiative and pledged their commitment to support the programmes.

Dr. Dwomoh and his team late visited the Western North and Brong Ahafo Regions to ascertain the state of affairs of the CSSVD Control Programme in the Regions.

# PRECISION AGRICULTURE: ENHANCING THE STATUS-QUO IN TRADITIONAL COCOA FARMING USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

By Abigail Ahorgba, Hohoe



Agriculture, over the years, has greatly evolved from traditional peasant practices to a technologically based commercial venture today. It is the largest employer in the world giving livelihood to over 40% of the world's population. In developing countries, agriculture has created many opportunities which have lifted people out of poverty. Farming, which is an aspect of agriculture, has also transitioned creating job opportunities ranging from farm equipment manufacturers, food processing, transportation, infrastructure development and manufacturing industries.

As agriculture evolves, farming is becoming more scientific and farmers are adopting new methods to make their farming more precise. Today, technology is at the forefront of innovation with precision agriculture being the current trend in farming.

Precision Farming is an approach to farm management that uses information technology (IT) to ensure that the crops and soil receive exactly what they need for optimum health and productivity. It is one of many modern farming practices that make production more efficient. Thus, with precision farming, farmers and soils work better, not harder.

Precision farming works hand-in-hand with digital technologies which are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data. The relationship between precision farming and technology is that precision

agriculture solely relies on specialized equipment, software and IT services which form part of digital technologies that generate, store or process data.

There is a lot of technology used to make modern agriculture more efficient. For example, some farmers use global positioning systems (GPS) and GPS-computer guided tractors and harvesters. Other geo-referenced site-specific practices may include: electromagnetic soil mapping, soil sample collection, crop yield data collection, aerial imagery, crop or soil colour index maps, soil types, soil characteristics, drainage level and potential yields, among others.

Each of these geo-referenced data layers helps subdivide a large field area into smaller management zones. Using small management zones reduces waste while increasing production potential.

Many countries are using precision farming to improve their agriculture. In some parts of Nigeria for example, farmers access soil data with electronic sensors which have in-built GPS. These sensors are placed in the soil to measure pH, nutrient content, moisture level and temperature. The data collected from different farms are collated and analyzed according to the location. Appropriate advice is then provided to the farmers via a 'smart farm web and mobile app.' The assessment also enables farmers to better manage their crop growth.

It is obvious that Ghana's cocoa industry is growing and becoming more sophisticated in every aspect. We have, for some time now, used digital technologies in some of our operations. For example, the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) employs the use of GPS devices to collect details of the farms, maps, crops etc, to measure cocoa farms. The data collected is then analyzed to produce farm sizes, age of the plant, type of the plant and many more.

We can therefore take advantage of the numerous benefits derived from precision farming to increase the successes that we have chalked over the years. We can employ the use of sensors to monitor the soil and plant physiochemical parameters. These sensors are placed in the soils to measure content and

temperature of the soil and surrounding air. The data collected from the sensors can be used to identify fields that require treatment and determine the optimum amount of water, fertilizer and pesticides to apply. This can help the farmers to avoid wasting resources and also ensure that the soil has just the right amount of additives for optimum health, while also reducing costs and controlling the farms' environmental impact.

Currently, COCOBOD has rolled out a number of Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) all geared towards increased productivity and increased income for our farmers in particular and the economy as a whole. We can therefore take steps to formulate plans and policies that will make the use of modern technology part of our farming practices. Farmer associations and cooperatives can be trained to help develop their skills for improved farming practices, knowledge transfer and maximization of the use of our scarce resource for maximum benefits. These will ultimately encourage innovation, facilitate job creation and ensure diversified sources of income for farmers.

In conclusion I wish to state that although digitalization is at its early stages in Africa and for that matter, Ghana, we can still derive more benefits from its use if we consider the fact that it has power to change lives. The potential transformative role of precision agriculture cannot be underestimated. Its adoption may appear insurmountable but with determination and optimism, we can get there sooner than expected. We can give it a try.

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# 2019 NASPAC MEMBERS EDUCATED ON THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF COCOA



The 2018/2019 batch of the National Service Personnel Association of COCOBOD (NASPAC) have been trained on the health and nutritional benefits of cocoa. The purpose of the training was to equip all service personnel within COCOBOD and its Divisions/ Subsidiaries with the requisite knowledge on cocoa and its health values to facilitate their effective contribution to the Board's cocoa consumption campaign.

The training which was facilitated by Public Affairs, in collaboration with the Human Resource Department, focused on the history of cocoa, Ghana's cocoa story, cocoa and Ghana's economy, why the National Cocoa Consumption Campaign, health and nutritional benefits of cocoa, the NASPAC 2019 cocoa consumption campaign, business opportunities in the cocoa sector, among others.

Mr. Benjamin Larweh, Principal Public

Affairs Officer, informed participants that Ghana's total installed processing capacity stood at 465,000 metric tonnes per annum, but less than 30% of cocoa produced in the country was processed locally. He said per capita cocoa consumption hovered around 0.52kg compared to the large volumes consumed by countries in Europe and other parts of the world.

"Therefore if Government has plans to ensure that not less than 50% of Ghana's cocoa is processed locally, the burden lies on staff of the Board, including the national service personnel to sensitize the populace on the health values of cocoa to increase consumption", he said.

He said cocoa contains Polyphenols and Theobromine (plant-derived compounds) and other essential minerals which are all very important in overall health and body function.

Mr. Larweh, together with his

colleague, Mr. David Oduro Asare, took the participants through the numerous health and nutritional benefits of cocoa consumption and urged them to, in the course of the campaign, discuss the health benefits relating to the audiences condition as they may notice.

"Before you can convince anyone to consume cocoa, you must first be convinced that cocoa has health benefits and have basic knowledge of these health benefits", he said, urging the participants to make it a point to continue to sensitize people on the good virtues of cocoa everywhere they find themselves.

The service personnel who were from the Accra and Kumasi offices of COCOBOD were also urged to consider the numerous business opportunities in the cocoa sector and take advantage of them to better their lives.



# FORMALISED COOPERATIVES, A CATALYST TO 1M TONNE COCOA TARGET

By Maxwell Akalaare Adombila

IN SPITE of being the second largest producer of cocoa and the only supplier of premium beans in the world, Ghana's cocoa output per acre leaves much to be desired.

At an average of 450 kilograms (kg) per hectare, equivalent to about three bags per hectare, Ghanaian cocoa farmers labour more to reap half of what their counterparts in Indonesia, the third largest cocoa producer, earn from the same piece of land. There, yields per hectare average 800kg, according to TechnoServe, a non-governmental organisation (NGO).

Beyond limiting the value that the country derives from the golden pod, low yields per hectare are a credible threat to the existence of the cocoa industry in Ghana:

It makes cocoa farming an expensive venture. This becomes a push factor that can drive cocoa farmers into comparatively higher earning ventures such as rubber and cashew farming, which utilise the same land as cocoa, to the neglect of cocoa production.

Low yields also discourage youth from engaging in cocoa farming and that elevates the risk that the high numbers of aged farmers in the business pose to the sustenance of the industry.

## Inception of PEPs

Conscious of these, the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has, over the years, undertaken various initiatives to help raise output per hectare to appreciable levels, attract youth into cocoa farming and boost the incomes of farmers.

Its cocoa extension services have been praised by private sector stakeholders as a unique farmer support scheme that helps to boost yields and maintain Ghana's bean as premium quality.

In 2017, the Board also rolled out the Productivity Enhancing Programmes (PEPs), a bouquet of initiatives that aimed to increase yield, reduce cost of operations and make cocoa farming more attractive.

However, for PEPs to succeed and deliver its intended objective, farmers needed to embrace it and become the medium through which the programme's initiatives were delivered.

This is where cocoa farmer groups and cooperatives came in handy.

## From groups to cooperatives

A part of the Ghanaian culture, cocoa farmer groups or associations are a collection of farmers who unite to advance the course of their businesses.



The groups are born by friendship but mostly expand to comprise farmers in the same catchment area who share a common interest and see the wisdom in forging together to achieve same.

Given the power that groups and associations provide in the area of effective mobilisation, dissemination and utilisation of information, COCOBOD saw the need to empower and formalise them into cooperatives to be able to effectively utilise them.

Consequently, its Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) started a training programme for the active groups while encouraging their leaderships to register with the Department of Cooperatives.

The registration was necessary to ensure that the groups became legally recognised entities of farmers working to improve the economic status of their members.

As of June, this year, COCOBOD data showed that 512 of such cooperatives were registered with total membership of 101,796 farmers.

## July 11 official launch

Now, after almost two years of ground work, COCOBOD is set to give formal recognition to these cooperatives through a national launch of the Farmer Cooperatives in the Cocoa Sector on July 11.

A recognition by COCOBOD is key for various reasons; it makes them a critical part of the board's PEPs and other initiatives through which inputs can be distributed to help avoid the recurrent issues of theft and diversion.

In the area of agronomy, COCOBOD could easily outsource its cocoa swollen shoot virus disease (CSSVD) control and replanting programmes to the cooperatives to execute at a fee.

Financial institutions will also be comfortable dealing with the cooperatives. Through this, the bureaucracies that individual farmers face when accessing funds could be a thing of the past.

Moreover, a robust cocoa farmers' cooperative scheme is a prerequisite to a successful migration of COCOBOD's inputs supply value chain to the private sector; an initiative that the Board is at the verge of implementing.

## Sefwi Bekwai Youth

Already, the Board has outsourced its replanting programme to the Sefwi Bekwai Youth in Cocoa Association, one of the cooperatives in the Western North cocoa region, the Head of the Public Affairs Department of COCOBOD, Mr. Stephen Boafo, said in an interview.

'Instead of outsourcing the replanting aspect of the rehabilitation to some agriculture institution, management decided to outsource that to this group and they are doing marvelously well,' he said.

This serves as income generation for the group and its members. It is also an avenue for knowledge sharing to the benefit of the farmers.

In spite of the enormous benefits that cooperatives offer the farmers and the industry in general, not all the groups and associations have transitioned into this novelty.

COCOBOD's data further showed that about 830 groups and associations, comprising about 45,068 farmers, were yet to be registered as cooperatives.

At a time when COCOBOD and its Ivorian counterpart are fighting to protect farmers' incomes through the historic institution of a floor price and the living income differential, it behoves farmers to be strategic by joining the board to boost yields in their farms.

Higher yields mean higher income and that goes a long way to improving the livelihoods of their families.

It is, therefore, hoped that the national launch of the Farmer Cooperatives in the Cocoa Sector in the Ashanti Region would encourage the remaining groups to also register to be able to enjoy the benefits that await them.

Through that we could be inching to the one million tonnes, which has eluded us after we chalked it up in the 2010/11 cocoa season.

## Number crunch 101,796 farmers

As of June, this year, COCOBOD data showed that 512 of cocoa farmer cooperatives were registered with total membership of 101,796 farmers

## Pull quote

COCOBOD is set to give formal recognition to these cooperatives through a national launch of the Farmer Cooperatives in the Cocoa Sector.

## Regional distribution of Farmer Cooperatives in Cocoa Sector

Eastern Cocoa Region	133
Western South Cocoa Region	102
Ashanti Cocoa Region	84
Central Cocoa Region	83
Western North Cocoa Region	75
Brong Ahafo Cocoa Region	32
Volta Cocoa Region	2
TOTAL	512



## MADAM MARTHA ADDAI (2016 MOST ENTERPRISING FEMALE FARMER)

Madam Martha Addai is the 2016 Most Enterprising Female Farmer. She is a 48-year old cocoa farmer who lives at Techiman but farms at Wenchi-Ayigbe in the Sunyani Cocoa District of the Brong Ahafo Region. She has five children and holds Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC).

She has two different cocoa farms measuring 10.13 hectares altogether at Wenchi-Ayigbe. Her current production per hectare is 1,729.9kg.

She obtains her planting materials from Goaso Cocoa Station and her farms are graded in the 'A' and 'B' classes.

She has two permanent farm hands but engages more when the need arises. She sells her produce to only PBC, a licensed buying company.

She follows good agronomic practices and participates in farmer business school programmes. This, she has been doing for the past 12 years.

She also keeps poultry birds and manages 4 ha citrus and 12 ha maize farm. She is a petty trader.

In 2008, she won the district best cocoa farmer at Wenchi, Brong Ahafo. She has been able to encourage more youth to go into cocoa farming.

Her support for her community is enormous. She has been able to register 5 aged members in her community unto the National Health Insurance scheme (NHIS).

Last year, she used proceeds from her cocoa to buy 50 bags of cement to support a community bridge Project.

She is optimistic of expanding her farm and to boost her production per hectare through the adoption of modern farming technologies.

## PROFILE OF SOME WOMEN IN THE COCOA FRATERNITY

In this edition of COCOBOD News, we bring you profiles of some women who are contributing significantly to the growth and sustainability of Ghana's cocoa sector.



## LUCY ADDAI-POKU

Mrs. Lucy Addai - Poku is a professional teacher who holds Bachelor of Education Degree in Home Economics from the University of Cape Coast, and also Master of Arts Degree in Leadership from the University of Education, Winneba.

She is a female cocoa farmer who has made significant impact in cocoa communities across the country. She has a 10-acre young cocoa farm at Asakranka, a cocoa growing community in the Nkawie District of the Ashanti Region.

She resolved to apply only organic fertilizer (mainly droppings from her poultry farm) on her farm due to her quest to maintain the soil structure and protect the eco-system. She therefore applies mainly natural fertilizers and adheres to good agronomic practices which in turn enhance her farm significantly.

Mrs. Lucy Addai-Poku has had the opportunity of joining government delegation to London for the 2015 Cocoa Loan Syndication Road Show. Again, she has had the privilege of addressing the sidelines meeting of the United Nations (UN) in New York in 2017 on how to empower women in the Agricultural value chain in West Africa in general and Ghana in particular.

She has worked with other women cocoa farmers within her catchment area to form the Asakranka Women Cocoa Farmers Association.

She is currently the Associate Executive Director of Salve Regina School, Kumasi.



## MS. SUSAN HERMINA YEMIDI

Ms. Susan Hermina Yemidi is the Country Representative of Solidaridad, Ghana and the International Programme Coordinator (IPC) for Cocoa, Solidaridad Network.

She is a Ghanaian Development Practitioner with a passion for total human development. She has over 20 years' experience in Development Management, Social Development and partnership building having worked extensively with government agencies, civil society organizations, bilateral/multilateral development agencies in multicultural environments.

She holds a Masters' degree in International Development (Development Management) from the University of Manchester (England) and a Bachelor of Arts in Management Studies, from the University of Cape Coast (Ghana).

Solidaridad is an international solution-oriented civil society organization working through eight regional expertise centers on transforming markets to make them more inclusive and sustainable.

In West Africa, Solidaridad runs programmes on sustainable cocoa and oil palm and responsible for gold mining with operational offices in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Ms. Yemidi in collaboration with Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in 2016, mobilized women in the cocoa sector globally to establish the Women in Cocoa and Chocolate Network (WINCC) as part of its inclusive sector transformation agenda. The Network provided a platform for women in the sector to connect, engage, share, create and achieve more within the cocoa and chocolate supply chain. It is a professional networking and leadership development platform.

She has also partnered with COCOBOD on various platforms to roll out innovative solutions in the cocoa sector through various programmes most especially gender and social inclusion one of which gave birth to the Women in Cocoa and Chocolate Network in Ghana in 2018.

***COCOBOD News wishes them and all hardworking women in the cocoa industry well in their endeavours***

# FERMENTATION OF COCOA AS A PIVOT OF COCOA QUALITY MANAGEMENT; IS IT AN ART OR SCIENCE?

By M. S. Karikari Addo (Nana), QCC



Curing of cocoa is very important in enhancing cocoa quality and the shelf life of cocoa beans. Curing is the process by which cocoa beans are prepared for the market, which requires beans of good flavour potential and good keeping qualities.

Chocolate flavour is developed in two stages, curing by the farmer and roasting by the manufacturer. Therefore, cocoa beans with good flavour, cannot be obtained by one of these processes alone, but both.

The cocoa curing process is in two parts:

1. Cocoa fermentation.
2. Drying of cocoa beans.

However, some schools of thought have indicated that cocoa fermentation which is very essential in cocoa quality management is an art not science. (Tagoe Bruce, 2010).

## What is fermentation?

Generally, fermentation is:

a). A chemical change or breakdown of a substance by bacteria, yeast or microorganism with effervescence.

b). An enzymatically controlled anaerobic and aerobic breakdown of an energy rich compound i.e. Carbohydrate to alcohol and carbon dioxide or to an organic acid (wikipedia).

## What happens to the cocoa beans during fermentation?

When cocoa beans remain intact in the pods they are sterile, and therefore, contain no yeasts or bacteria. However, during the pod-breaking and bean-scooping stages, the pulp is inoculated with yeasts and bacteria. Most of the micro organisms are transferred from the skin of the pods to the beans, via the bean-scoopers' hands and fruit flies which hover on the beans in the fermentary.

In the presence of the heat in the fermenting mass, the yeast converts the pulp's sugar (ie.sucrose) into alcohol and carbon dioxide.

This initial phase, takes place in the absence of oxygen - hence, it is known as, anaerobic fermentation.

## Phase 1 of cocoa fermentation (anaerobic);

Sugar + yeast --> alcohol (ethanol) + carbon dioxide + heat

After the yeasts have done their work, bacteria begin to take over the fermentation process, converting the alcohol into acetic acid. This acid slowly penetrates the beans and makes them appear plumb.

The bacterial phase of fermentation takes place in the presence of oxygen - hence, the beans are **typically** turned, at least, **twice** during the fermentation process, in order to introduce enough oxygen into the heap and also to ensure that all the beans are fermented evenly.

Usually, the beans are turned at between 48 and 72 hours after the commencement of fermentation.

The bacteria population peaks roughly 72 hours after fermentation first begins, and decreases rapidly over the following 72 hours. Hence, the entire fermentation process usually takes about 144 hours or six days (Takrama,J.S; Addo, S.K; 2008).

## Phase 2 of cocoa fermentation (aerobic):

Alcohol (ethanol) + bacteria + oxygen --> acid (acetic) + water + heat

It must be emphasized that, both phase 1 and phase 2 reactions are exothermic which accounts for the build up of heat in the fermenting cocoa mass at any particular moment.

The cells of the pulp start to break down soon after the fermentation process begins either by mechanical pressure or through an enzymatic change. The pulp liquefies and runs off as 'sweatings', which amount to 12-15 per cent of the weight of wet beans. The flow of sweatings is normally completed by the end of the first 24-36 hours of fermentation (Schwam,R.F; 1998).

## CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF COCOA (PULP)

Composition of the pulp	(Percent fresh weight)
Water	84.5
Pentosan	2.7
Sucrose	0.7
Glucose	10.0
Protein	0.6
Acids	0.7
Inorganic salts	0.8
	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Hardy (1960)

## CHANGES IN THE COTYLEDON

The major changes inside the beans are the death of the beans followed by the numerous chemical changes that are vital to the development of chocolate flavor.

The beans lose viability during the second day, by which time the temperature of the beans would have risen above 40 °C and the pH of the cotyledons would have fallen from 6.6 to about 5.0.

The increasing acidity is due to acetic acid which is formed in the pulp and passes through the testa into the cotyledons.

The cause of death of the beans has been ascribed to heat, ethanol and acetic acid, but detailed studies have shown that acetic acid is the prime cause of death, although heat may be a contributory factor where the temperature rises quickly as in small heaps of cocoa fermentation or in trays (Quesnel 1965).

In the fresh beans, the cotyledons contain a small proportion of intensely coloured cells dispersed among colourless cells. The coloured cells contain most, if not all, the polyphenolic compounds which play a significant part in the internal changes. When the beans die, cells disruption occurs, allowing various enzymes and their substrates to react together resulting in the bleaching and later, oxidation of the anthocyanins which give purple colouration of cocoa beans into dark colors of fermented beans (Hansen, et al; 1998).

### In summary;

Three major changes happen inside the cocoa bean during fermentation:

**1.** Acid penetrates the bean. The acetic acid kills the bean, lowers its pH, and produces a sour, acidic taste.

Most of the acid evaporates from the bean during the drying process.

**2.** Bitter and astringent flavonoids are converted into milder-tasting substances. The flavonoids (ie. water soluble antioxidants) undergo series of enzymatic browning and change to the classic chocolate brown pigment called melanin which is water insoluble.

a) Anthocynin(purple) + enzyme =

Anthocynidin(purple),

b) Anthocynidin + enzyme = condensed tannins.

c) Tannins + amino acids = Melanin(brown pigment).  
(Hansen et al; 1998).

**3.** Aroma precursors (amino acids) are produced during fermentation. These aroma precursors are transformed into aromas during roasting through the process called caramelization (Schwan, R.F; 1980).

## DRYING OF COCOA BEANS

After fermentation, the cocoa beans are dried. Drying reduces the moisture content in the bean from about 55% to about 7.5%. With a moisture content of 7.5%, cocoa beans can be kept for many years (in ideal storage conditions).

### When does fermentation of cocoa become an Art?

For cocoa fermentation to be adopted by farmers, the whole complex scientific processes involved in the fermentation need to be packaged in simple steps by innovators or change agents and extended to the cocoa farmers using;

1) Simple but effective communication skills.

2) Appropriate extension teaching methods, not forgetting, the principles of adult learning.

It's only when all cocoa farmers (ie, innovators, early adopters (minority), late adopters (majority), and laggards) **have fully adopted and practiced** cocoa fermentation for a very long period of time, such that, it becomes a matter of routine, for all cocoa farmers to ferment their cocoa beans for **six days with two turnings**, that fermentation can be said to be an art.

Fermentation of cocoa becomes an art at this point, simply because, the farmers do not need to be told the scientific reasons why they should;

- Spread and perforate plant leaves on the ground with gradual gradient.

- Heap about at least ten basket full of wet cocoa beans on the leaves as a fermenting mass.

- Cover the heap with more leaves and secure the leaves.

- Open the heap and turn or mix the

beans thoroughly on 2nd and 4th days and cover the heap with more leaves.

- Remove beans from fermentary for drying on mats on raised platforms on the 6th or 7th day.

The crucial question is; How many cocoa farmers in Ghana today, are prepared to ferment their produce, without any prompting whatsoever, for six days with two turnings, for it to become an art?

Indeed, if cocoa fermentation has become an art, then what business do we have, in spending several resources in organizing radio programmes and rallies to constantly remind cocoa farmers about the proper fermentation practices?

Considering the numerous challenges cocoa farmers face in fermenting their produce properly (which includes the immense LBCs' competition for farmers' produce) there is the absolute need for us (as quality assurers), to move away from the radio programmes and farmers' rallies, to other innovational methods like; **farm visits focus group discussions, method demonstrations, result demonstrations**, (among others), to enable us achieve an enhanced results in the adoption of the proper fermentation practices by cherished cocoa farmers.

In using all or some of the above mentioned extension methods, it is important for us to be guided by our communication skills, the principles of adult learning and the teachable moments of the farmers.

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# 2018 NATIONAL BEST COCOA FARMER URGES YOUTH TO GO INTO COCOA FARMING

Mr. Charles Gyamfi, 2018 National Best Cocoa Farmer, has urged the youth to go into cocoa farming because it is a lucrative business. This, he said, would help improve their livelihood and significantly reduce unemployment in the country.

According to him, any individual who ventures into cocoa farming with at least an acre of land and adheres to Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs) is better off than one that travels to the city in search of non-existent greener pastures.

Mr. Gyamfi made these observations in an interview with COCOBOD News upon his return from a week-long COCOBOD sponsored familiarization tour of Ecuador. The tour which included other award winning cocoa farmers; Mr Paul Osei Tufour, 2018 Most Promising Young Cocoa Farmer and Ms. Debora Osei Mensah, Most Enterprising Cocoa Farmer, was aimed at exposing the farmers to modern farming practices in other parts of the world which they could emulate back home.

Mr Gyamfi expressed gratitude to COCOBOD for the opportunity given them to travel and interact with colleague farmers in other parts of the world. 'There was power, water, good feeder roads and access to communication networks in the farming areas irrespective of the remoteness, and I believe with the



Mr. Charles Gyamfi, 2018 National Best Cocoa Farmer

current interventions going on in Ghana's cocoa industry, we will soon get there", he added.

He said making such amenities available in cocoa communities across the country has the potential of attracting especially the youth into cocoa cultivation.

Ms. Debora Osei Mensah, 2018 Most Enterprising Cocoa Farmer suggested that government should create a special loan scheme for cocoa farming to boost cocoa cultivation. 'Ghanaian banks are unwilling to offer loans to farmers

on long term basis, meanwhile, cocoa farming is a long term venture which requires long term financing", she said adding that with easy access to financing, cocoa farmers could do better than they are currently doing.

Mr Paul Osei Kuffuor, 2018 Most Promising Young Cocoa Farmer disclosed that strict adherence to Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs) and proper land management systems, Ghana could increase production levels to about 50 bags per acre or 5 tonnes per hectare.



# 2019 NASPAC MEMBERS EMBARK ON COCOA CONSUMPTION CAMPAIGN



Members of the 2018/19 batch of the National Service Personnel Association of COCOBOD (NASPAC) have embarked on a campaign to promote cocoa consumption in Accra and Kumasi. The campaign was aimed at sensitizing traders within the central business districts of the two cities on the health and nutritional benefits of cocoa and promote its consumption among Ghanaians.

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, at the launch of the campaign in Accra, reiterated his call on Ghanaians to consume cocoa regularly for a healthy life.

Hon Aidoo commended the personnel for their initiatives which, according to him, was in conformity with the Board's policy of creating awareness on the health and nutritional benefits of cocoa and its regular intake.

He explained that the cocoa consumption campaign, which was introduced some 2 years ago, has significantly helped Ghanaians to appreciate cocoa as a health-food with increased consumption rate. He observed that the per capita consumption of cocoa which hitherto stood at 0.5kg has significantly improved to about 0.52kg as a result of the support stakeholders have given to the campaign.

'Ghana as a cocoa producing country consumes less; we produce for other countries to consume and take advantage of the countless health benefits of cocoa. It is about time we as Ghanaian consumed all our cocoa', he added.

He said COCOBOD would support every effort aimed at ensuring that at least 50% of the cocoa produced annually in Ghana is processed locally.

In a solidarity message, the Deputy Executive Director of the National Service Scheme, Dr. Gifty Oware Aboagye lauded the 2019 NASPAC group and their predecessors for the support they have given to the cocoa consumption drive. She advised the personnel to take advantage of the business opportunities in the cocoa consumption campaign to make a

good living after their Service. Dr. Oware Aboagye encouraged the service personnel to embark upon the outreach with zeal and passion.

Chief Executive of the Ghana Tourism Authority, Mr. Akwasi Agyemang urged members in the hospitality industry to consider serving cocoa as part of their menu. Mr. Agyemang endorsed the call to use 'Cocoa Break' for corporate meetings and other gatherings instead of 'Tea/Coffee Break'.

The Managing Director of the Cocoa Processing Company, Nana Agyenim Boateng said CPC was poised to make cocoa products available on the market for consumption. He observed that over the past few years that NASPAC had embarked on the campaign, patronage of cocoa products had gone up.

For the past two years, National Service Personnel Association of COCOBOD (NASPAC) has been embarking on annual outreach to the central business district of Accra and its environs in support of the Cocoa Consumption Campaign of the Board. The initiative has helped to increase awareness on the health and nutritional benefits of cocoa among Ghanaians.

The campaign was extended to the Ashanti Regional capital, Kumasi this year in an effort to reach out to more people.



# THE “TEN COMMANDMENTS” OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

By Dr. Kojo Cobba Essel



Last year a statement really caught my attention and I will share it now; “the sphygmomanometer (the instrument for measuring blood pressure) measures two things. Your blood pressure and your common sense.” Ouch!! That is profound and painful at the same time. It will take less than ten minutes to check ones blood pressure and get a tonne of information.

I am checking mine after typing out this. The fight against High Blood Pressure is simply one that we can’t afford to lose.

I do not plan to raise hypertension specialists this weekend but the ten (10) points below may change the way you think about this disease.

## 1. IT IS MOST OFTEN SILENT

a. The ONLY way to determine your blood pressure is to have it checked. Do not rely on headaches, chest pain etc. very often it is “silent”; your BP can be dangerously high but you may feel perfectly well.

b. If you have not checked your blood pressure recently kindly have it checked IMMEDIATELY!!

## 2. EXERCISE HAS TO BE REGULAR AND APPROPRIATE

a. Exercise is great for preventing and managing high blood pressure BUT the benefits last for 72 hours per an appropriate session. This essentially means we should exercise regularly to reap the benefits exercise or physical activity has on blood pressure.

b. So if you are a once a week “health walk activist” kindly increase the frequency and if you are still toying with the idea of starting to exercise then get out of the couch now. No one is too busy to put in a few minutes of physical activity daily.

c. Find out which exercises are not appropriate for people living with high blood pressure.

## 3. IT MAY “PARTNER” WITH OTHER LIFESTYLE DISEASES

a. Hypertension belongs to that group of obnoxious diseases we refer to as LIFESTYLE DISEASES. Since our inappropriate way of life predispose us to such diseases they often attack not in singles or twos as in Noah’s Ark but sometimes even threes and fours: diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and mild depression

may all be struggling for top spot in a single human.

b. They all have lack of physical activity, diet high in fats and oils, sugar and salt but low in vegetables, fruits and nuts as focal points. They may also show affection for alcohol and smoking.

## 4. YOUR PREVENTION OR MANAGEMENT OF THIS DISEASE MUST INCLUDE LIFESTYLE CHANGES

a. This stage has already been set by the third point. If you plan to prevent or manage hypertension or any other lifestyle disease without lifestyle changes including diet and exercising I am sorry to announce to you today that you SHALL FAIL!!!

## 5. UNCONTROLLED HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE CAN LEAD TO ORGAN DAMAGE AND DEATH

a. We hear of many people dying suddenly and that includes very young lives. Organs such as the brain, eye, heart and kidneys among several others can be damaged by this SILENT KILLER.

## 6. YOUR DOCTOR WILL REQUEST SEVERAL TESTS TO ESTABLISH PROBABLE CAUSE OR EFFECT ON ORGANS

a. In over 90% of cases of high blood pressure, we do not find a direct cause even though we will see the obvious risk factors. For a small percentage there may be a condition that once treated will reverse your high blood pressure.

b. It is important that once you are diagnosed with high blood pressure, your doctor will carry out several tests to determine if your hypertension is “partnering” with other disease conditions or whether there has been organ damage.

## 7. DO NOT PLAY DOCTOR WITH YOUR HEALTH

a. Keep appointments with a medical doctor. It is criminal to just go to a pharmacy shop and refill your BP lowering medication.

b. Your doctor may sometimes need to carry out tests or modify your medication; make time to see a doctor as advised.

## 8. DO NOT STOP PRESCRIBED MEDICATION AND PLACE YOUR

## TRUST IN SUPPLEMENTS ETC

a. This in my opinion is the 8th DEADLY SIN!!!

b. Supplements or fruits and vegetables do exactly what their name implies; they supplement our state. They do NOT replace medication.

## 9. YOUR FAMILY COULD BE AT RISK

a. High blood pressure’s risk factors include your genetic make-up that means it may run in families (you have the power to modify your circumstances to a large extent though). It is also related to poor eating habits and a lack of physical activity. Whichever way you look at it family members have a similar risk profile; we often eat similar meals and most times we are all exercise freaks or do not go anywhere near sweat.

b. You need to know the health status of your family members so that you may also take the necessary precautions.

## 10. UNCONTROLLED BLOOD PRESSURE MAY CAUSE ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

a. If you are scared of BP medication because you have heard at a bar what effects it may have had on another man then read carefully. In addition to the dangers such as heart attack and stroke that hypertension may cause, uncontrolled hypertension WILL eventually lead to impotence (erectile dysfunction) as well.

Let us always strive for “Heart Choices NOT Hard Choices”

## WE CAN WIN THIS BATTLE AGAINST HYPERTENSION!!

AS ALWAYS LAUGH OFTEN, ENSURE HYGIENE, WALK AND PRAY EVERYDAY AND REMEMBER IT’S A PRICELESS GIFT TO KNOW YOUR NUMBERS (blood sugar, blood pressure, blood cholesterol, BMI)  
Dr. Kojo Cobba Essel  
Health Essentials Ltd/Mobissel  
([www.healthessentialsgh.com](http://www.healthessentialsgh.com))

\*Dr Essel is a medical doctor, holds an MBA and is ISSA certified in exercise therapy, fitness nutrition and corrective exercise.

### References:

- [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com); Hypertension
- [www.worldhypertensionleague.org](http://www.worldhypertensionleague.org)



**12** Provides energy and vitality

**13** Boosts fertility in both sexes.

**14** Inhibits dangerous clot formation within blood vessels.

Improves memory and general brain functions.

**15** Affords anti-cancer and cancer-prevention properties.

Promotes nourishment/health of brain cells.




**16** Promotes cleansing and detoxification of the body.

Supplies many essential dietary minerals.

**17** Minimizes worrisome changes that accompany menopause

Offers healthy levels of dietary fiber.

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An initiative of NCPCC-COCOBOD  
Endorsed by Prof. F.K. Addai  
(Head of Anatomy) UGMS



AD 1957

FREEDOM AND JUSTICE



over  
70 years

PROVIDING  
PREMIUM QUALITY  
COCOA

Cocoa from Ghana enjoys high premium on world commodities

From beverages to skin care, Ghana's cocoa has become the world's favourite ingredient for most cocoa based products, especially chocolate