The Cocommunity

Monthly Newsletter of the International Coconut Community

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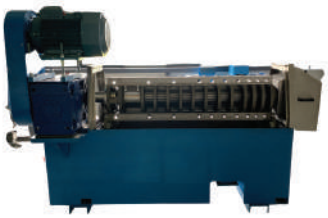

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THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPEAKS

"Can Growing More Coconuts Mitigate Global Environmental Issues?"

Rapid growth of human population, industrial and commercial activities has led to high demand of energy, which in turn increase CO^2 emission, environmental pollution, global warming, depletion of fossil fuels as non-renewable sources, and cause detrimental effects on health. The United Nation has recommended that all countries make remarkable attempts to minimize greenhouse gas emission levels as the emissions increase exponentially. These issues have catalyzed countries to secure energy system and seek alternative energy sources that are renewable, eco-friendly, and more affordable.

Like sunlight, wind and water, biomass and coconut oil are also considered as sustainable, renewable, and environmentally friendly source of energy. Coconut husks, shells and fronds are among the most abundant biomasses for energy sources. Biomass is carbon neutral and has low greenhouse gas emissions due to lower nitrogen and sulfur content. Coconut shell containing high lignin, low amount of complex heavy metals, superior in terms of energy and carbon content, and low nitrogen and sulfur content is a promising biomass to produce charcoal. In addition to its role as a source of biofuel, charcoal is also used for various purposes like in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, animal feed, and as raw material for processing of activated carbon that is very beneficial for water purification and filtration.

Another source of biofuel is coconut oil. Studies conducted by experts have revealed that coconut oil is a good feedstock of jet fuel due to the composition of fatty acid, the chain length distribution of the resulting biofuel fits perfectly with conventional jet fuels, so further steps that increase costs and reduce process yield are not required. Furthermore, the study showed that coconut oil could potentially be used as jet fuels at competitive costs and with relevant environmental and social benefits. Studies has also suggested that coconut-based biodiesel could be a good alternative fuel for those who live in remote areas, where fossil fuel is extremely expensive and not regularly available. A comprehensive analysis on the mass production of coconut-based fuels that are economical and profitable for producers, processing industries and the environment is needed.

Products from coconut husk, leaves and stems are also excellent sources of biodegradable products to address non-biodegradable products or plastics, which are also major contributors to climate change. Coco chips and coco peat are among the best natural organic growing media for various crops. Coconut fiber has diverse utility from plastic-free household products to the automobile industry. Promising results of the coconut-based biofuel and degradable products need to be supported by sustainable feedstock to the industry. Hence, it is advisable to planting more coconuts to mitigate global environmental issues and support food security.

Countries are now considering and taking definitive turning point toward more secure energy system that are cleaner, eco-friendly, and more affordable. They are also promoting environmentally friendly degradable products. Around 67 billion nuts are produced globally to yield various products for different purposes, as reported in 2021. Current production should be increased to save the nature from the environmental damage and climate change impacts.

DR. JELFINA C. ALOUW
Executive Director

PREVAILING MARKET PRICES OF SELECTED COCONUT PRODUCTS AND OILS

Price of Coconut Oil (CNO) increased in Philippines and Sri Lanka but decreased in Indonesia. Price of Desiccated Coconut (DC) remained the same in Philippines and Indonesia but decreased in Sri Lanka.

COPRA: The price of copra in Indonesia was US$588/MT in February 2023, which was lower than the previous month's price. However, compared to the same month of previous year, the price was US$482/MT lower. However, price of copra in Philippines domestic market showed an increase from US$621/MT in January 2023 to US$630/MT in February 2023 or an increase of US$9/MT. The price was US$513/MT lower than the price of US$1,143/MT in February 2022.

COCONUT OIL: The average price of coconut oil in Europe (C.I.F. Rotterdam) slightly increased to the level of US$1,107/MT in February 2023. However, this price was 49% lower than the price a year ago at US$2,153/MT. The average local price of coconut oil in the Philippines was US$1,123/MT in February 2023, which was slightly lower than the price in the previous month. However, the price was much lower than US$2,077/MT in February 2022. Meanwhile, Indonesia's average local price of coconut oil decreased to US$1,119/MT in February 2023 from US$1,136/MT in January 2023. However, the price was US$603/MT lower compared to the price in February 2022.

COPRA MEAL: The average domestic price of the commodity in the Philippines was quoted at US$299/MT. The price was slightly lower than the previous month's price and was US$67/MT higher than the price a year earlier. The average domestic price of copra meal in Indonesia remained the same at US$293/MT but was US$27/MT lower than last year's price.

DESICCATED COCONUT: The average price of desiccated coconut (DC) FOB USA in February 2023 was US$1,874/MT, which remained the same as the previous month's price and US$847/MT lower than the price of the same month last year. In Sri Lanka, the domestic price of desiccated coconut in February 2023 was US$1,554/MT or lower than in January 2023. Meanwhile, the price of DC in the domestic market of the Philippines in February 2023 remained the same at US$2,039/MT. The Indonesian price (FOB) of DC in February 2023 was US$1,400/MT, which also remained the same as the previous month's price and was lower compared to last year's price of US$2,200/MT.

COCONUT SHELL CHARCOAL: In the Philippines, the average price of the commodity in February 2023 was US$373/MT, which was higher than the price in January 2023. Indonesia's charcoal price slightly increased from US$461/MT in January 2023 to US$463/MT in February 2023. At the same time, Sri Lanka's price in February 2023 increased to US$354/MT as opposed to the last month's price.

COIR FIBRE: Coir fiber was traded in the domestic market in Sri Lanka at US$36/MT for mix fiber and US$414/MT-US$483/MT for bristle. The Indonesian price for mixed raw fiber was US$90/MT in February 2023 which was much lower than the price a year earlier at US$250/MT.

Price of Coconut Products and Selected Oils (US$/MT)

Products/Country	2023 Feb	2023 Jan	2022 Feb	2023 (Annual Ave.)
Dehusked Coconut				
Philippines (Domestic)	135	135	237	135
Indonesia (Domestic, Industry Use)	152	143	212	148
Sri Lanka (Domestic, Industry Use)	217	225	279	221
India (Domestic Kerala)	420	436	481	428
Copra				
Philippines (Dom. Manila)	630	621	1,143	626
Indonesia (Dom. Java)	588	590	1,070	589
Sri Lanka (Dom. Colombo)	1,168	1,128	1,610	1,148
India (Dom. Kochi)	1,043	1,071	1,232	1,057
Coconut Oil				
Philippines/Indonesia (CIF Rott.)	1,107	1,071	2,153	1,089
Philippines (Domestic)	1,123	1,140	2,077	1,131
Indonesia (Domestic)	1,119	1,136	1,722	1,128
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	2,017	2,011	3,103	2,014
India (Domestic, Kerala)	1,728	1,763	2,087	1,746
Desiccated Coconut				
Philippines FOB (US), Seller	1,874	1,874	2,721	1,874
Philippines (Domestic)	2,039	2,039	2,039	2,039
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	1,554	1,628	2,413	1,591
Indonesia (FOB)	1,400	1,400	2,200	1,400
India (Domestic)	1,416	1,455	1,855	1,435
Copra Meal Exp. Pel.				
Philippines (Domestic)	299	300	232	299
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	289	288	309	289
Indonesia (Domestic)	293	293	320	293
Coconut Shell Charcoal				
Philippines (Domestic), Buyer	373	370	407	372
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	354	328	530	341
Indonesia (Domestic Java), Buyer	463	461	592	462
India (Domestic)	375	434	533	404
Coir Fibre				
Sri Lanka (Mattress/Short Fibre)	36	42	131	39
Sri Lanka (Bristle 1 tie)	414	373	582	393
Sri Lanka (Bristle 2 tie)	483	455	756	469
Indonesia (Mixed Raw Fibre)	90	90	250	90
Other Oil				
Palm Kernel Oil Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	1,037	1,060	2,443	1,048
Palm Oil Crude, Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	950	942	1,522	946
Soybean Oil (Europe FOB Ex Mill)	1,243	1,352	1,596	1,297

Exchange Rate

Feb 28, '23 1 US$ = P55.42 or Rp15,253 or India Rs82.61 or SL Rs361.88

1 Euro = US$1.06 n.q. = no quote

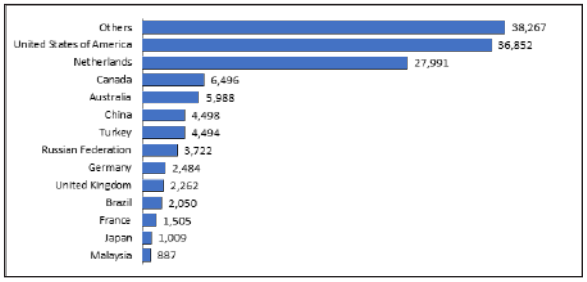
MARKET REVIEW OF DESICCATED COCONUT

The global demand for desiccated coconut is on the rise and the Philippines and Indonesia are two of the world's major producers and exporters of this commodity. According to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, the country's exports of desiccated coconut showed an upward trend from 2019 to 2022. In 2019, the country exported 147,594 metric tons of desiccated coconut, which declined slightly to 145,200 metric tons in 2020 but then rose to 160,117 metric tons in 2021. The latest data shows that the trend continues to climb, with estimated export volume of 163,169 metric tons in 2022.

In terms of export destinations, the data for the period of January-October 2022 shows that the top countries to which the Philippines exported desiccated coconut were the United States of America, with 36,852 metric tons, and the Netherlands, with 27,991 metric tons. Other major destinations included Canada, Australia, China, and Turkey which all imported over 4,000 metric tons each. This data suggests that the demand for desiccated coconut is strong in North America and Europe, as well as in Asia.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's exports of desiccated coconut saw a decline in 2019 but have since rebounded. In 2018, Indonesia exported 109,181 metric tons of desiccated coconut, which decreased to 98,742 metric tons in 2019 and

Figure 1. Export Destinations of Desiccated Coconut from Philippines, January-October 2022 (MT)



then increased to 128,087 metric tons in 2020. In 2021, Indonesia's exports of desiccated coconut continued to climb, reaching 139,932 metric tons. However, the latest data for 2022 shows a decline to 110,455 metric tons.

When looking at export destinations, Indonesia's main export markets for desiccated coconut are the European Union (EU27), followed by Singapore and Russia Federation. China and Brazil are also significant importers of Indonesian desiccated coconut. It is worth noting that in 2022, the volume of exports to all these major destinations has declined compared to 2021.

Overall, the data suggests that the demand for desiccated coconut remains strong in various regions of the world. While the pandemic has caused some fluctuations in the volume of

Table 1. Export Destinations of Desiccated Coconut from Indonesia, 2018-2022 (MT)

Destination	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Others	32,838	25,102	31,615	31,576	25,924
THAILAND	586	1,850	6,215	4,187	3,016
EGYPT	3,390	2,410	5,350	6,452	3,077
UNITED KINGDOM	3,401	3,017	2,795	3,583	3,120
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	4,526	4,527	4,166	5,861	3,211
CHINA	2,884	3,185	5,425	4,301	3,770
TURKEY	3,465	3,321	3,972	5,499	3,860
BRAZIL	4,676	5,169	4,730	4,512	5,049
RUSSIA FEDERATION	6,488	8,278	8,312	10,328	6,813
EU27	24,366	20,831	23,606	33,358	22,142
SINGAPORE	22,562	21,052	31,900	30,276	30,473
Total	**109,181**	**98,742**	**128,087**	**139,932**	**110,455**

exports, both the Philippines and Indonesia have seen an upward trend in their exports of desiccated coconut over the past few years. With the growing awareness of the health benefits of coconut products, it is likely that the demand for desiccated coconut will continue to increase, making it an important commodity for these two countries and their respective economies.

Examining the latest data on imports demand, it is expected that there has been a significant decrease in global imports of desiccated coconut in metric tons from 2021 to 2022, with a decrease of 29.7%. This decrease mostly driven by the declining demand in European countries. Imports of the product by EU27 dropped by 7.8% during CY2022. However, US imports was still increasing by 1.5%. This suggests that supply chain disruptions especially in European continent have significantly affected demand of the product worsened by expected global economic slowdown incoming years.

However, when we look at the overall trend for the last 10 years, there has been a slight increase in demand of desiccated coconut in EU27 and US. This suggests that while there may be short-term fluctuations in import levels, the overall demand for desiccated coconut has remained relatively stable over the long term. In fact, over the last decade, imports of desiccated coconut by the two major regions, UE27 and US, have increased with CAGR of 1.8% and 3.6% respectively.

Table 2. Import Volume (MT) of Desiccated Coconut, 2013-2022

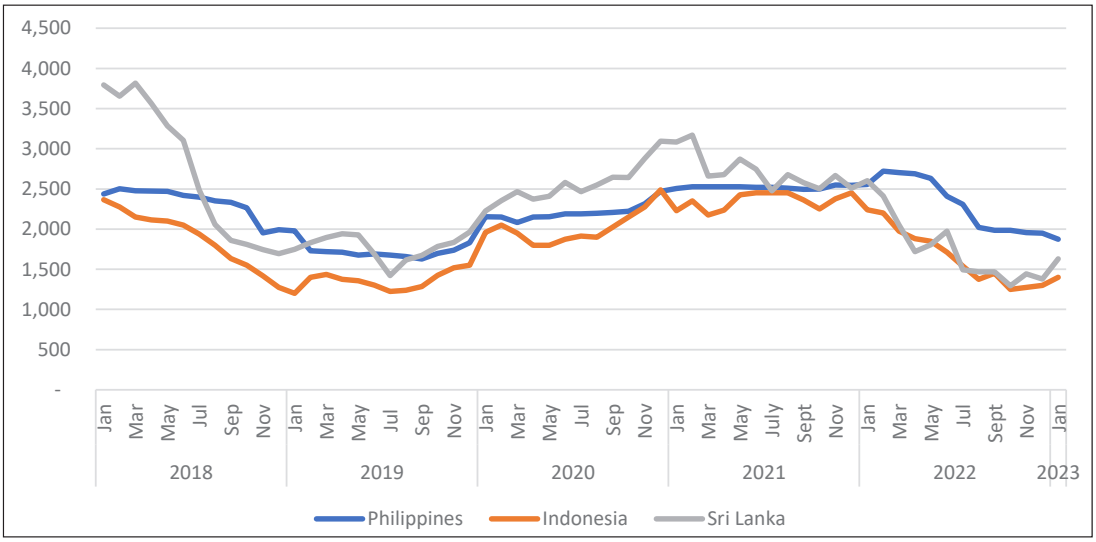
Year	World	EU27	US
2013	627,355	90,331	39,512
2014	420,373	103,376	52,259
2015	440,774	94,421	53,696
2016	423,896	104,508	48,107
2017	439,129	111,551	46,590
2018	458,789	108,320	48,067
2019	451,727	103,385	45,531
2020	483,005	100,657	41,056
2021	517,302	115,103	53,568
2022[e]	363,410	106,074	54,372

Source: ITC and US Census Bureau e: estimated figures

Desiccated coconut (DC) prices showed a decreasing trend throughout 2022, with prices in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka all experiencing drops. In February 2022, the price of DC in the Philippines was at its highest for the year, reaching US$2,721/MT, but by January 2023, it had decreased to US$1,874/MT. Similarly, in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, prices decreased by 29% and 21%, respectively, over the last twelve months.

One factor that may have contributed to the decreasing trend in DC prices is the high inflation rate in several European countries and the USA. This could have reduced consumer purchasing power, leading to a decrease in demand for coconut products, including desiccated coconut. Additionally, an expected economic slowdown in the coming year could also be a contributing factor.

Figure 2. Monthly Price of Desiccated Coconut (US$/MT), January 2018- January 2023



COMMUNITY NEWS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND MARKETING OF COCONUT PRODUCTS

International Coconut Community (ICC) in association with the Government of India through Coconut Development Board (CDB) organized a two day International Conference on Trade and Marketing of Coconut Products, at Le Meridian Hyderabad, Telangana, India from 27-28 February in a hybrid mode. The theme of the Conference was: *Global Coconut Industry – Cruising to the Pinnacle*.

The general objective of organizing the conference was to Sharing of perspectives of industry and global players on current market trends, challenges, areas requiring future research, market prospects, strategies to sustain the development of this sector, and dissemination of knowledge as well as innovative industry practices and working towards addressing the challenges and securing the opportunities.

The world renowned speakers, experts, entrepreneurs, policy makers and officials from the countries of India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, LMC International Malaysia, Oil World Germany, Fair Food Netherland and International Trade Centre, Genewa participated in the workshop and shared their experience and expertise. There were more than 125 participants joined physically as well as more than 400 participants joined virtually. This conference served as a venue for knowledge sharing amongst industry stakeholders, in the coconut community from across the globe joining hands to discuss on the international outlook for coconut products and the strategies and policies that will lead to the sustained development of the sector benefitting both the farmers and the industry.

The conference was inaugurated on 27th February formally by lighting the traditional lamp by the dignitaries present. The dignitaries present were Shri. Raghu Nandan Rao IAS, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Department of Agriculture, Government of Telangana, Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director, International Coconut Community, Dr. N. Vijaya Lakshmi, IAS, Chief Executive Officer, Coconut Development Board, Mr. Bernie Ferrer Cruz, ICC National Liaison Officer (NLO) & Administrator, Philippine Coconut Authority, Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), India, Dr. Ramesh Mittal, Director, National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM), Jaipur, India and Dr. Hanumanthe Gowda, Chief Coconut Development Officer, CDB. In her welcome address Dr. N. Vijaya Lakshmi, IAS mentioned that this conference is organized jointly by CDB and ICC. This conference would be an coalition of the ideas of market and trend in the global community. The market researchers, analyzer and experts will be sharing their experience and ideas. Coconut having nutritive and health aspects so sustainability in sourcing and development needs to be well attended. The coconut stakeholders, industry enterpreneurs and farmers should move hand in hand for the common development of the sector together to reach towards the pinnacle. The trade and market of the coconut products to be linked so as to lead the sunrise industry to a greater height.

Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director, ICC, in her address mentioned that India contributed significantly to the coconut sector specially to ICC (formally APCC) from its establishment since 1969 as an founder member. She expressed her gratefullness to all the speakers, and chairs who agreed to be part of this conference to provide invaluable inputs in responding to the current challenges of trade and marketing of coconut products. She mentioned about the key trends that could drive the industry to survive including increasing awareness of the positive nutritional, health and eco-friendly properties of coconut and its high value added products; Increasing consumer preference for eco-friendly

and organic products; The need for certification especially for big markets like the US and European Union. Traceability down to farm and production practices, and The growing concern for the environment and the quality life of our future generation, especially the campaign for a plastic waste free world, stop cutting down trees and carbon neutral. Therefore she encouraged to expand and strengthen global collaboration and multilateral coordination, and provide the necessary technical and policy supports.

Shri. Raghu Nandan Rao IAS, Agriculture Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Department of Agriculture, Government of Telangana, in his address thanked all for arranging this conference here in Hyderabad. He mentioned that in Telangana state the government is providing irrigation assistance and power supply to the agriculture sector. Cotton and Paddy is the main crop with tremendous growth. But now the farmers are shifting from field crops to plantation crops i.e., oil palm and coconut. He also mentioned about the importance of coconut including nutrition and health aspects and requested to priortise it in the discussions. He added that the climate change in recent years also affected the agriculture sector a lot which also needs to be addressed. He concluded that many international experts are sharing their experience in this platform so the participants can take benefit of this opportunity to take home the latest and updated knowledge with them.

Administrator Bernie Ferrer Cruz in his address extended very warm welcome to all who joined physically and virtually. He thanked the two great ladies of the two organization for arranging this conference. He stressed on the sustainable and resilient coconut sector and to strengthen the coconut value chain. He added that the market of coconut products are continuing to grow. The potential customers, business partners and experts will be going to share their experience in this conference. Administrator wished all a productive conference and requested to take advantage and develop networking scenario by coordinating with producers, consumers and exporters.

The dignitaries released the 75-year diamond jubilee issue of the Indian Coconut Journal (ICJ) of Coconut Development Board. The inaugural session concluded with the exchange of plaques of appreciation and memento to the dignitaries and the vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Hanumanthe Gowda, Chief Coconut Development Officer, CDB.

The two days workshop covered in four sessions. Session 1 International **Outlook For Coconut Products** was mainly focused on global outlook of prices of coconut products. The session was chaired by Mr. Asep Jembar Mulyana, CEO, PT. TOM COCOCHA Indonesia. The speakers joined physicaly were from Transgraph Consulting, Director General, MANAGE India and LMC International Malaysia. The speakers from UCAP Philippines and Oil World Germany joined virtually. The speakers presented the multiple factors weakening the price in the global market and related aspects.

The second session was on **Moving Towards Sustainable Coconut Sourcing** in which experts from Philippines Coconut Authority, Ministry of Agriculture, Indonesia and Apex Coco & Solar Energy Limited, India joined physically and presented the sustainable sourcing of coconut. The speaker from International Trade Centre (ITC), Geneva, joined virtually and presented the strategies for overcoming the Tariff and Non Tariff Barriers. The session was chaired by Dr. Ramesh Mittal, Director, NIAM, India.

The second day started with the third session on **Global Market Prospects and Growth Prospects for Coconut Products**, chaired by Dr. Julian Conway McGill, Head South East Asia, LMC International, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The speakers joined physically from TOM COCOCHA, Indonesia, Silver Mills, Sri Lanka and Director, NIAM, India. The speakers from Franklin Baker Co., Philippines and CDCOT, Thailand joined virtually. In this session the diferrent industry stakeholders shared their experience in the

global market and how collaborative action can be initiated for new market development among industries in ICC member countries.

The last and fourth session focussed on **Innovative Industry Practices and Application of Technology in Coconut Sector**, chaired by Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General, MANAGE, India. The Speakers from Quality Council of India and Marico India presented physically and speakers from Trace Fair Food, Netherland and Digital Marketing Association, Indonesia joined virtually. The speakers enlightened on developing coconut GAP bench marking with international prices; digital marketing in coconut, block chain technology and industry partnering with farmers for growing together.

There were open forum and discussions after each session in which the researchers, extension officers, stakeholders, industry representatives and farmers participated both physically and virtually. The main outcome and way forward of the conference was presented by Mrs. Deepthi Nair, Director (Marketing), Coconut Development Board.

The conference was conluded on 28th February with the formal valedictory session addressed by Dr. N. Vijaya Lakshmi, IAS, Chief Executive Officer CDB and Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director, ICC. The two days conference was moderated by Mrs. Deepthi Nair, Director (Marketing), Coconut Development Board. *(ICC News)*

VAIGA 2023 -DEVELOPING VALUE CHAIN IN AGRICULTURE

The Department of Agriculture, Government of Kerala, India, organized the 6th Edition of VAIGA-2023-Developing Value Chain in Agriculture from 25th February to 2nd March at Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala, India. VAIGA 2023 is a mega event of the Department of Agriculture and an initiative for Agri growth in the state. It is at the forefront of developing and modernising the agriculture sector since 1908. The department works at the grassroots through Krishi Bhavans, guiding and supporting farmers via institutions like Vegetable & Fruit Promotion Council Kerala (VFPCK), State Horticulture Mission (SHM) Kerala, and Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) Kerala, Kerala Agricultural University and PSUs in Agricultural Sector.

The week-long program was formally inaugurated on 25th February by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan. The program was presided by Sri. P. Prasad, Hon. Minister for Agriculture, Kerala. An exhibition was also arranged in which 250 stalls were erected and the FPOs, SHGs and farmers exhibited their produces. VAIGA 2023 promoted and encouraged the development of value chains in Kerala's agro sector, improving production levels and encouraging new technologies. The participants included the agriculturists, researchers, universities, Farmer Producer Companies, self-help groups, start-ups, agriculture students, commodity boards and other development and partner organizations.

During the week long program different competitions, B2B meetings, technical seminars and workshops were arranged. In the seminar altogether 18 sessions were organized in which one session was exclusively on Advances in Coconut Production Technologies conducted on 2nd March. International Coconut Community, Jakarta, Indonesia got an opportunity to being part of this big event of Govt of Kerala, India. Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director attended as a key note speaker of the session. She presented on Sustainable Coconut Industry-A Global Perspective & Scenario. The session was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister of Electricity, Government of Kerala Mr. K. Krishnan Kutty and chaired by Dr. K. B. Hebbar, Director, CPCRI, India and co-chaired by Dr. Hanumanthe Gowda, Chief Coconut Development Officer, CDB, India. Other speakers attended were from CFTRI Mysore, Kerala Agriculture University and private sector entrepreneur. Open discussion and interactive session were conducted in which the queries of the participants were addressed. The other dignitaries attended the session were Dr. B.

Ashok, IAS Principal Secretary & Agriculture Production Commissioner, Agriculture Department, Kerala, Dr. P. Rajashekaran, Chairman, State Agricultural Prices Board, Kerala and Chairman of the Seminar Committee and Mr. George Sebastian, Convener of the Seminar Committee. Ms. Mridula Kottekate, Assistant Director, ICC also attended the program.

Mr. P. Prasad, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Govt. of Kerala attended the seminar and distributed plaques of appreciation to the speakers. *(ICC News)*

COURTESY MEETING WITH HONORABLE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, GOVERNMENT OF KERALA, INDIA

Got an opportunity to have a courtesy meeting with Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Government of Kerala, India Mr. P. Prasad on 3rd March in his office at Assembly Building of Government of Kerala. The meeting was also attended by Dr. B. Ashok, IAS Principal Secretary & Agriculture Production Commissioner, Agriculture Department, Kerala and Dr. P. Rajashekaran, Chairman, State Agricultural Prices Board, Kerala.

There were in detail discussion on different aspects related to promotion of coconut and its value-added products in the state of Kerala. Hon'ble Minister informed about the "Kera Gramam" project of Government of Kerala implemented by the department of agriculture for the coconut development in the state and suggested to develop collaborative programs with ICC mainly on capacity building and exposure visit of the industry stakeholders and coconut entrepreneurs to major ICC coconut growing countries. He requested to Executive Director in exchanging global technology on processing of coconut milk and cream from the ICC member countries like Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. He also expressed his willingness to attend the next International COCOTECH Conference of ICC in 2024.

Dr. B. Ashok, IAS. Principal Secretary and Agriculture Production Commissioner suggested that ICC can be part of the future VAIGA program of department of agriculture, State of Kerala and in that way more international organizations and speakers can be invited to the program.

Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw , Executive Director, ICC expressed her gratefulness to Hon'ble Minister for inviting ICC to be part of the VAGIA program and also for the opportunity to have a courtesy meeting with him. She assured the full support of ICC for the sustainable development of the coconut sector in the state. She suggested if state of Kerala can adopt the one district one product program of government to promote the value-added products of coconut. She further added that ICC has provided the capacity building webinar series for the Caribbean countries in association with International Trade Centre (ITC) and similarly can plan for the coconut stakeholders of Kerala. Dr. Alouw invited Hon'ble Minister to attend the World Coconut Day celebration 2023 at Gorontalo regency of Indonesia in September. Ms. Mridula Kottekate, Assistant Director, ICC also accompanied the Executive Director.

The meeting concluded with exchange of mementos. *(ICC News)*

COURTESY VISIT TO NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (NIIST), THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, KERALA, INDIA

Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director and Ms. Mridula Kottekate, Assistant Director of ICC visited the National Institute of Interdisciplinary Science & Technology (NIIST), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India on 3rd March 2023 and met Dr. Anandharamakrishnan, Director, NIIST and his team of researchers.

Meeting was arranged with some researchers of NIIST from various scientific disciplines. Researchers from the Agro-Processing and Technology, and the Materials Science and

Technology divisions presented the different research activities and products developed that is conducted in collaboration with national and international institutions. Dr. Anandharamakrishnan introduced his team and informed that around 80 researchers and 300 Ph.D students are attached with the institute. The institute is providing capacity building to the start-ups and interested farmers and stakeholders and even to the vocational teachers of the schools. The institute has developed different products from the biodegradable wastes including coconut and coir and now looking forward to the commercialization of the products. The campus is maintained fully plastic free Eco-Campus.

The division of Agro-Processing and Technology division already developed the products from neera and virgin coconut oil. They are now working on vegan products developing from coconut milk, cream and MCT oil. Director added that the institute is moving from basic science to applied science and on waste utilisation. Atomization and nutritive aspects of coconut products are their future plan including processing of coconut milk and coconut water.

He expressed his willingness to collaborate with ICC in any capacity building and other research activities related to coconut and its value-added products.

Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, expressed her gratitude to Director for giving an opportunity to visit him and the institute and acknowledged all support and assistance rendered by Dr. Anandharamakrishnan as a resource speaker in many of the virtual webinar series organized by ICC in association with NAM-CSSTC and ITC. He was also a member of the committee and chaired the meeting called by ICC to finalise the ICC Quality Standards for the various coconut products. She requested the director to assist ICC and to become member of ICC-Scientific Advisory Committee on Health considering his expertise and experience.

There were in detail discussion on different aspects related to the coconut and its value-added products and how to make this sector more sustainable. Dr. Anandharamakrishnan appreciated the initiative taken by ICC in finalising and updating the quality standards of coconut products and assured that he and his team will fully support for the future programs of ICC. He also expressed his willingness to host any of ICC future program in India.

The meeting concluded with exchange of mementos. *(ICC News)*

MEETING WITH DELEGATIONS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES, NELSON TALKS ABOUT COPRA PRICE STABILIZATION STRATEGY

The Regent of Gorontalo, Nelson Pomalingo, met with various international delegations from different countries at the International Conference on Trade and Marketing of Coconut Products in Hyderabad, India. The conference was held for two days and divided into four sessions, which focused on sustainable coconut sourcing, global market prospects and growth of coconut products, innovative industry practices and technology applications in the coconut sector. Eighteen technical papers were presented at the conference, and more than 450 delegates from around the world registered for the event, with 26 international delegations attending in person.

As the Chairman of the Coconut-Producing Regencies Coalition (Kopek) in Indonesia, Nelson Pomalingo attended the International Conference and dsicussed about the prospects of coconut products. He met with international delegations from various countries during the event.

According to Rusthamrin H. Akuba, Special Staff to the Regent of Gorontalo, Bupati Nelson held a meeting with international delegations from various countries during the conference. First, he met with the non-aligned ambassador of South-South cooperation to discuss investment

and commodity trade opportunities, as well as human resource development. During the meeting, the Regent extended a verbal invitation for the delegation to attend the World Coconut Day 2023 in Gorontalo.

Secondly, a meeting was held with Dr. Julian Conway McGill, Head of South East Asia, LMC International, Kuala Lumpur. Dr. McGill was the resource speaker at the conference, discussing the issue of stabilizing copra/coconut oil prices.

The Regent Nelson also verbally extended an invitation to Dr. McGill to attend WCD 2023 in Gorontalo, as the keynote speaker. Dr. McGill expressed his willingness to attend.

Thirdly, a meeting was held with representatives of the Telangana Provincial Government, Hyderabad. The meeting discussed the possibility of forming a Sister City relationship between Limboto and Hyderabad.

Nelson also participated in a limited discussion with Philippine delegation led by the Administrator of the Philippines Coconut Authority (PCA), regarding strategies for stabilizing copra prices. The Philippine delegation stated that copra prices are highly dependent on international market prices. The Philippines focuses more on diversifying farmers' income by implementing an Integrated Coconut Farming System and Integrated Coconut Processing.

"From the meetings with several delegations and different Indian companies, who offered The Gorontalo Regent Nelson Pomalingo, the high-quality copra processing technology. Further meetings need to be conducted to discuss the investment cooperation with the companies," said Rusthamrin H. Akuba. *(Tatiye ID)*

TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF COCONUT UPGRADING STRATEGY IN LAGOS

The Lagos State Government has promised to upgrade the development of the Coconut value chain in the state. The Commissioner for Agriculture, Ms Abisola Olusanya, who disclosed this while receiving report on coconut value chain analysis from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), said the report was aimed at ensuring coconut contributes maximally to the economy by creating more employment and more wealth.

The 300-page report seeks to generate coconut planting awareness to ensure its sufficiency in Nigeria, create more jobs while increasing the state's Gross Domestic Products (GDP).

She said the implementation of coconut upgrading strategy as contained in the document would attract more than 20 times the present public and private investments.

"The creation of close to 500,000 employment opportunities and supporting their livelihood, contribute significantly to fighting the effects of climate change by curbing phenomenon such as coastal erosion among others in the next five years."

While noting that the report policies and investment around the coconut value chain, Olusanya said from the report, it is clear that more than 60 to 70 per cent of the coconut consumed in Nigeria passes through Lagos as the state contributes 16 per cent to actual production.

The FAO-UN Country Representative to Nigeria, Mr. Fred Kafeero, who said the report would form the basis for investment in the coconut value chain by both public and private sector, added that it would also help to foster the upgrading strategy for the development of the proposal in the state.

Represented by Head, North East Emergency Operations, Mr. AlHassan Cisse, "The official presentation of the Coconut Value Chain Analysis report today marks the beginning of a second phase partnership with Lagos state that will ensure sustainable food security,

improved livelihood,economic development in terms of revenue generation, improving the standard of living and local economy of Lagos people through employment and wealth creation opportunities as well as the overall environmental impact in mitigating against climate change and global warming.

"This is such a big progress that we should all celebrate about since the main objective is to make the coconut value chain in the State more feasible and cost effective with assurance of optimum return of the government's investment." He commended the state government for promoting agriculture and specifically developing the coconut value chain to create employment opportunities for the teeming youth's population, and in addition, make Nigeria among the top 10 coconut producing countries in the world by 2030.

"Once again, I would like to reiterate that FAO as a specialied agency of the United Nations with the mandate to ensure food security and nutrition will continue to strengthening its partnership with the Lagos State Government in the development of programmes, building of capacities and facilitation of policies on all matters relating to food security and nutrition."

In his remarks, the General Manager, Lagos State Coconut Development Authority (LASCODA), Mr. Dapo Olakulehin, who noted that the report would further help in the production, processing and commercialisation of coconut in the state, said Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu is highly interested in the coconut value chain.

He said a survey tagged Coconut Value Chain Analysis (VCA) designed an effective action plan that identified the necessary public and private investment, technical assistance, and policy implications for sustainable coconut chain development.

"The cost of the survey was jointly borne by the state government 75 per cent and FAO/ UNIDO 25 per cent. FAO jointly implemented the coconut value chain analysis and design, with the UNIDO under the FAO-UNIDO jointly managed Agrifood Systems Transformation Accelerator (ASTA), previously known as 3ADI+," he said. *(The Guardian)*

TWO-DAY CONFERENCE ON COCONUT PRODUCTS CONCLUDED

A two-day international conference on trade and marketing of coconut products was held.

More than 450 delegates joined virtually from across the globe and 26 international delegates are participating in person, the organisers said. The conference is being organised by the Coconut Development Board (CDB), Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in association with International Coconut Community (ICC).

CEO of the Board Vijayalakshmi Nadendla, who inaugurated the conference, said as per 2020 statistics of ICC, India is the largest coconut producing country with a 30.93% share of global production, followed by Indonesia and Philippines. India ranks second in terms of productivity - 9,346 nuts per ha next to Vietnam where the production is 10,547 nuts per ha. The coconut crop contributes around ₹30,795.6 crore to the country's GDP and earns export revenue of around ₹7,576.8 crore.

Exports of coconut products during 2021-22 were valued at ₹3,236.83 crore as against ₹ 2,294.81 crore in 2020-21.

Addressing the gathering, ICC Executive Director Jelfina C. Alouw stressed the significance of facilitating transfer of technical information on global market prospects in coconut, innovative industry in coconut sector and sustainability in coconut sector. *(The Hindu)*

COOLING SOLAR PANELS WITH BIO-INSPIRED COCONUT FIBER

Researchers at Universiti Malaysia Pahang have developed a novel passive cooling technique for solar modules that uses moist coconut fiber as the cooling agent.

"Our solution uses a bio-inspired coconut fiber for thermal regulation," researcher Sudhakar Kumarasamy told pv magazine. "It can be used for building-integrated photovoltaic (BIPV) rooftop systems, ground-mounted plants and agrivoltaics."

The researchers described their findings in "Thermal and Electrical Performance of Uncooled, Nature-Cooled, and Photovoltaic Thermal Module," which was recently published in the International Journal of Photoenergy. They said that the cooling system features a moist coconut pith encapsulated with a polyurethane sheet. It is placed on the back of surface of a PV module to act as a heat sink.

"Water molecules are directly in contact with the PV modules' back surface with the coconut fiber's help due to the coconut fiber's high water-holding capacity, lowering the back surface temperature of the module," the scientists said, noting that this helps to transfer heat from the front to the back surface via conduction. "Following this, the sensible heat will be absorbed by the water molecules present in the coconut fiber. Finally, when the water molecules have absorbed sufficient heat energy, they will act as a heat removal agent by evaporating through the perforations present on the polyethylene sheet encapsulation."

The researchers compared the temperature behavior and performance of a PV module equipped with the system to that of a photovoltaic-thermal module (PVT) with water-based cooling. They found that the passively cooled PV module had a maximum operational temperature of 44.6 C, while the PVT panel and a reference PV panel without cooling registered higher temperatures of 47.8 C, and 57.2 C, respectively.

"By integrating damp coconut, the temperature of the PV module surface was decreased by 22.03% and 23.46%, whereas the PVT system reduced the PV module surface temperature by 16.43%," the scientists explained. "The maximum power point (MPP) for the passively cooled PV module with coconut fiber, PVT system, and reference module is 24.21 W, 20.21 W, and 14.65 W, respectively."

They said that the passively cooled PV module's power output increased by 65.26%.

"The PVT system, however, only managed to increase the power output by 37.95%," the said. "The convection that carries water molecules away from the back of the PV module increases heat loss from the back surface and, as a result, from the front cover of the passively cooled PV module compared to the PVT system."

The same research group also published an extensive review of all passive and cooling techniques applied to photovoltaics in October 2021. The study looked at active techniques such as air-based cooling, liquid-based cooling, forced water circulation, liquid immersion cooling, water spraying. The also considered passive methods like PCM cooling, heat pipes, heat sink or fins and heat exchangers, microchannel heat exchangers, radiative sky cooling, nano-fluid based cooling, thermoelectric cooling, evaporative cooling, and spectrum filter cooling. *(PV Magazine)*

THE MAKING OF A COCONUT OIL TYCOON

From borrowing money by mortgaging his father-in-law's property to set up a coconut oil plant to earning trillions of dong (VND1 trillion = $42.19 million) a year, Cu Van Thanh has come a long way.

When Vietnam still had a command economy, Thanh and his wife worked at a state-owned coconut processing plant.

The plant simply took out the flesh, dried it and pressed it for oil to sell domestically and barter with Eastern European countries.

Then Thanh moved to the Dong Go Experimental Research Center (now Dong Go Coconut Center, part of the Research Institute for Oil and Oil Plants under the Ministry of Industry and Trade) and worked there for 10 years.

"In 1991, after the Soviet Union collapsed, it became impossible to sell large volumes [to the independent countries], and many small businesses had to close," Thanh recalls.

The general director of Luong Quoi Coconut Processing Company was born in the southern province of Ben Tre, Vietnam's main coconut growing area.

In 1995 he quit the center when life was difficult and Vietnam's coconut processing industry gradually fell behind that of neighboring countries such as Thailand and the Philippines.

He and his wife planned to join hands with some friends to hire a machine and place to press coconut oil, but had no money.

"My father-in-law said if I seriously wanted to do business, he would give me his land and house ownership certificate to pledge for a bank loan," Thanh says.

After getting a loan of VND40 million in the early 1990s, he and his wife and their friends quickly started a business.

In 1997 they established Luong Quoi Coconut firm with an annual pressing output of 2,000 tons of coconut oil.

Thanh had understood by then it would be difficult to achieve a breakthrough without innovation.

At that time older and larger plants in Vietnam still dried copra by burning rice husk or charcoal, which took up to four days.

He knew that in foreign countries they ground the coconut so that more of the surface was exposed to heat, helping it dry faster and make the oil pressing easier.

"I processed copra in that way, designing a roller drying system to increase productivity and reduce labor. Even today some small establishments use this method."

In 2000 his new generation desiccated coconut production line with an annual output of 1,000 tons was ready.

Over the next two decades, he constantly updated technologies. His production lines churn out a variety of products from canned coconut oil to juice and milk.

His company's coconut growing area has expanded to 6,100 hectares and an annual yield of 80 million fruits.

Luong Quoi has become one of the key coconut exporters in Ben Tre. Initially it sold its products domestically or exported them to China.

In 2008 a customer in the Middle East bought nearly 600 tons of desiccated coconut from the company. Thanh understood that to do big business he had to attend international fairs. "The first time I returned home empty-handed. But I tried a few more times and got customers."

He has invested in obtaining international quality certification including ISO, HACCP, BRC, and ISF. He believed customers would come to his company if it had the right management system and standardization.

In 2011 a Taiwanese customer suggested that his company should produce canned coconut juice and cream.

If a ton of desiccated coconut fetched $2,300, these fetched $5,000. Thanh decided to rent three hectares of land and build more plants to make the new products.

Soon he was exporting coconut juice and cream to Europe, the U.S., Canada, Japan, and South Korea and $20 million year.

In 2018 his revenues crossed VND1 trillion a year with exports going to more than 60 countries and territories.

In 2021 sales were worth VND1.6 trillion and the company was among the 500 largest in Vietnam.

Luong Quoi expects to double exports to $200 million by 2030. In Vietnam, its Vietcoco is the only coconut product recognized as a national brand.

There have been challenges in recent months as global demand decreased due to economic difficulties.

In early 2022 the company was exporting 250-300 containers a month, but by September it had fallen to below 100.

"Experts say 2023 will be very difficult and there may be recovery from 2024. It is easy to manage for a while, but will be a problem in the long term. But I have decided to keep all of my 2,000 employees."

Thanh is present from morning to 5p.m. every day at one of the plants in An Hiep Industrial Park in Chau Thanh District.

Employees see him going around in a conical hat, keeping an eye on the work.

He goes to work even on weekends to watch mechanics service machinery.

"I am in production and have to take care of both big and small things to be perfect. Creating a product is difficult, selling it is even harder." *(VN Express)*

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COCONUT FARMERS, PROCESSORS IN EDO

In its bid to improve the livelihood of coconut farmers and processors, the Federal Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (FMARD) has trained 50 farmers and processors on agro-forestry system-based plantation model in Edo State.

The Minister of Agriculture, Dr Mohammad Abubakar, said the training was one of the Federal Government's plans to attain food security and self-sufficiency in Nigeria.

Represented by a director in the ministry, Chukwuemeka Ukattah, the minister said: "In an effort to attain food security, self-sufficiency, as well as improve the livelihood of coconut farmers and processors, the government, through the coconut value chain, decided to provide you with the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain a successful plantation."

The minister said members of staff would be trained on nursery establishment, field development, harvesting and processing to meet local and international markets standard and demand.

The executive director of the Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR), Dr Celestine Ikuenobe, said the country's coconut production was far below the demand.

Said he: "I am sure that if the National Coconut Producers Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria (NACOPPMAN) worked with this agro-forestry based plantation model, the coconut value chain would be on a scale that could contribute very significantly to our economy.

"We suddenly got a huge demand for coconut seedlings in the last three to four years, but we were caught napping because we did not prepare for the fact that there was going to be an upsurge in the demand for coconut seedlings." *(The Guardian)*

TANZANIA'S COCONUT INDUSTRY AT RISK

A retarded supply of coconuts, fuelled by the falling number of coconut palms in major producing areas, is sending prices of the produce up across Tanzania, analysts say.

Coconuts are valued for their oil, which is said to have numerous health advantages, such as antibacterial and antioxidant characteristics that improve skin and mouth health and may help with weight loss.

However, with major growing areas in the coastal regions of Dar es Salaam, Coast, Mtwara, Lindi, Tanga and Zanzibar being turned into season crop farms and residential zones, coconut production does not receive the level of interest that it used to about a decade ago. Climate change and the rise in consumer demand for premature coconuts, commonly known as madafu, have seen production go down in recent years.

"Basically 90 percent of the coconut trees on which we currently depend have been there for a long time... Besides, the plants we have are not drought-tolerant, and as you know, climate change is a serious problem," said the chairman of the Mafia District Council, Mr Juma Ally.

As a result, a coconut now fetches between Sh700 and Sh800 in the Mafia. One year ago, he said, the product fetched between Sh400 and Sh300 depending on size.

"Currently, a farmer harvests five to seven coconuts per tree per season, while in previous seasons he could often harvest 25 to 30 per tree," he said.

Most coconut varieties grown in Mafia are not drought-resistant, which has put farmers in a precarious situation. They have to grapple with low harvests due to the island's decreased rainfall levels.

Mr Ally says Mafia District is now home to three coconut processing companies, with each having a daily production capacity of 3,000 coconuts.

"Traders from Zanzibar have also started purchasing the product in bigger amounts as compared to previous years. Given this trend, consumers shouldn't anticipate a drop in coconut prices any time soon, particularly as the holy month of Ramadan approaches," he said.

According to Mr Ally, it is in the best interests of both individual farmers and the country as a whole to phase out the current coconut varieties and introduce drought-resistant ones.

"Research institutions should conduct thorough research that will result in the development of new varieties, as other nations like Malaysia and Indonesia did," Mr Ally suggested.

The Mafia situation is the same as that in Zanzibar, where a survey at the Unguja Commodities Market shows that the product's price has increased to between Sh1,500 and Sh2,000, depending on size.

Mr Shamata Shaame Khamis, Zanzibar's Agriculture minister for the Islands, blamed the shortfall on the premature harvest of the fruit as well as the felling of coconut trees for the wood used to make furniture.

"Furniture made with palm wood is regarded as better, more comfortable, and more stylish. Therefore, the increase in hotel construction has escalated demand for furniture, hence increasing the felling of palms," he told KTV TZ Online last year.

Furthermore, according to Mr Khamis, the majority of coconut owners and growers in Unguja have been harvesting unripe produce to cater for the expanding market in major cities and towns.

However, he blamed citizens for the slow pace of replacing the trees by planting new ones.

According to him, the 2013/14 tree census in the Isles shows that the number of coconut trees has declined from 5.7 million in the 1990s to 3.4 million.

The Tanzania Agriculture Research Institute (Tari) manager at the Mikocheni Centre, Mr Fredy Tairo said the country has improved native coconut varieties that are moderately resistant to diseases and produce high yields in the presence of enough rainfall.

"The sole drawback is that the climate change continues to have an impact the yield of the improved varieties because they are not drought resistant," he said.

"We are challenged to carry out research to come up with new varieties that will withstand extended periods of drought," he added.

Furthermore, he said that currently, Tari is improving the native coconut varieties to deter the decline in production.

Mr Tairo suggested that the native varieties should be subjected to irrigation programmes in order to boost their yields.

"The increase in demand for coconut in recent years has collided with an upsurge in the consumption of coconut drink, which has made the situation worse," he said. However, a survey conducted by The Citizen found that in the city of Dar es Salaam, coconuts are traded for as much as Sh2500 and Sh3000, respectively, depending on their size.

Traders at Mabibo Market said the supply of coconuts started declining last year.

A resident of Ubungo, Ms Zaina Mgendi, said she was surprised to find a coconut being sold at Sh1,500 instead of the average Sh800 to Sh1,000 traded a few months ago. "I have chosen to switch to using groundnuts because they are somewhat more affordable," she said.

A trader at a market in Mbezi Beach, Mr Emmanuel Ngunge, said coconut prices have reached Sh2,500 to Sh3,000 per coconut.

"I'm thinking about closing the business because there aren't as many customers as there used to be," he said.

A reliable source at the Kariakoo Market said production has severely declined on Mafia Island, which accounts for about 90 percent of all the coconut traded at the market.

High coconut prices at the Kariakoo Market, traders say, have been caused by a sharp fall in coconut harvests from Mafia Island, which provides around 90 percent of all the coconut traded at the market. *(The Citizen)*

CIB GROWS COCONUT FARMING BEYOND EASTERN JAMAICA

According to general manager of the CIB Shaun Cameron, this is just one of the risk management and mitigation strategies that will improve the geographic diversification of the crop as well as the redundancy in supply.

"This is a personal goal. I believe in risk management and, based on our history, our mass of production for coconuts has been in the east [where] there is a lethal yellowing problem, especially in St Thomas. Our nursery is [now] in the west and we were able to sustain the industry because it's in a non-lethal yellowing area," Cameron told the Jamaica Observer in an interview.

"So logic would dictate now that I would look to grow out and develop the west, to expand the nursery capacity of the west, and expand seedling production in the west and plant out the west," he continued.

The west to which the Cameron referred is the CIB's nursery in St Elizabeth. It is one of the many nurseries the organisation uses as a distribution channel to propagate coconut farming

throughout the island to provide farmers with seedlings. The general manager believes it would be a good starting point to expand the country's coconut farming programme.

"It would be, because one of the reasons we ended up putting a farm in St Elizabeth is [because] we wanted an area not prone to lethal yellowing, and the research team had purchased/leased lands in Barton Isle and we have our nursery there," Cameron explained.

Based on the success of the nursery and farm in St Elizabeth the coconut industry has been able to withstand disease as well as natural disasters such as Hurricane Gilbert, Cameron said. To this end, he believes that should another wave of lethal yellowing or bud rot "devastation" occur in eastern Jamaica, the country would "have a constant support and supply" from outside that belt.

"So it would make sense that we increase the nursing capacity in St Elizabeth to facilitate increased production in the west. So there's redundancy in place so that if we do have a hurricane or lethal yellowing, at least we won't have a significant loss as we did in the past and we'd be able to sustain the industry based on that risk management implementation in the west," he expounded.

Of the 546 coconut farmers registered with the CIB up to 2021, a majority of those are from St Thomas, Portland, St Mary, and St Andrew. However, when asked about the location of the minority, Cameron said he did not have that data on hand.

As such, this data will be ascertained through the mapping of the coconut industry with the help of the Geographic Information Systems Department at the National Works Agency. A further survey of farmers would be done to determine the age of farmers in the subsector.

To expand the production of coconut even further across the island, Cameron said the CIB is looking to partner with farmers to develop nurseries and increase the number of seedlings.

"When we have more seedlings being distributed to our farmers we'd be able to increase the amount of coconut trees that we have planted in Jamaica [and] that would automatically increase production of coconut for our farmers," the CIB general manager informed.

He estimates that having another two nurseries measuring over two acres each would significantly improve the distribution of seedlings. Moreover, he said he has considered working with the Jamaica Agricultural Commodities Regulatory Authority on this initiative.

A coconut seedling takes three to five years to mature to the point of producing fruits. The CIB has engaged in research to find varieties that can produce within two to three years.

While the organisation has set a target of distributing 100,000 seedlings, in 2021 it provided approximately 40,000 to farmers.

"We usually set a target for 100,000 seedlings per year but we may have to revise that based on the nursery capacities and the risks that affect us," Cameron said, adding that "praedial larceny is a big risk that affects us and how we can increase our germination rate for our nurseries".

With the germination rate of seedlings now averaging between 40 per cent and 50 per cent at nurseries, the CIB has implemented measures to increase that rate to 70 per cent.

Another challenge that has beset the CIB is the cost to distribute seedlings. Whereas the organisation has distributed coconut seedlings at no cost to farmers in the past, it can no longer afford to do so, the CIB director told stakeholders at the Coconut Growers' Association's annual general meeting last August. Still, the CIB aims to provide seedlings at a subsidised cost.

"We do so for registered farmers — it's about $200 per seedling — and [for] non-registered farmers it's about $400 to $600 based on the variety," Cameron shared with Business Observer.

Quizzed about the take-up of seedlings, the general manager did not indicate a number but said that based on the CIB's town hall meetings there are a lot of people who have expressed interest. For those who have started the process of growing coconut plants and are waiting for them to mature, Cameron encourages them to do inter-cropping with produce such as bananas, plantains, pumpkins and pineapples.

In 2020 the local industry produced 108 million nuts. A year later that number increased by 11 per cent to 120 million.

"Our goal is to maintain our production level and increase it by five per cent to 10 per cent. However, we need to address our nursery issues and our germination issues," Cameron outlined, adding that doing so will allow the CIB to meet its projected targets.

Furthermore, the CIB's agronomists and botanists will be implementing climate-smart techniques such as water harvesting and using alternative sources of fertilisation to boost output. These solutions will be shared on the CIB's revamped website and social media pages in future. *(Jamaica Observer)*

GLOBAL HEALTH CRAZE FOR COCONUT OIL SPURS PHILIPPINE OUTPUT PUSH

THE Philippines, which vies with Indonesia as the top producer of coconut oil, is embarking on an ambitious programme to boost output, betting on booming demand for the commodity used in food, lipsticks and biofuels.

The government is helping farmers to plant hybrid coconut seeds that will bear fruit quicker and double yields, said Bernie Cruz, head of the Philippine Coconut Authority. The South-East Asian country wants to stay ahead of Indonesia, which is fast catching up, after typhoons and pests ravaged Philippine plantations.

The plan, which will be implemented during the term of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr through 2028, could push more of tropical oil into a well-supplied global market. Prices of coconut oil have tumbled about 60% since March, mirroring a slide in rival palm oil as Indonesia boosted exports. Coconut oil is the Philippines' top agricultural export with US$2 billion (RM8.76 billion) of sales last year.

Coconut oil, once considered exotic outside of the tropics, is showing up in supermarkets and health food stores everywhere. It has a variety of uses: As cooking oil for baking and frying, in personal care products such as lipstick and shampoo, or as biofuel when blended with diesel.

Cruz expects demand to continue surging, especially for products like virgin coconut oil. The growing popularity of plant-based food and cosmetics as consumers increasingly seek out vegan and organic products will also help.

Last year, the Philippines exported around 1.15 million tonnes of coconut oil, up 31% from 2021, according to Yvonne Agustin, ED of industry group United Coconut Associations of the Philippines. She expects exports to climb further this year. Most of the volume goes to the US and Europe.

Production and yields need to keep up. Each tree in the Philippines produces about 44 coconuts a year, less than half the amount in Indonesia and India, said Cruz. There are 365 million coconut trees planted across an area of 3.6 million ha in the country.

Super typhoons, as well as a major pest outbreak, destroyed millions of trees in the Philippines. The impact was particularly devastating in the southern Mindanao island, where more than half of the country's output is from. Oil is produced from copra or dried coconut meat.

"The biggest challenge is to improve the yield," said Cruz, who was an agrarian reform secretary before taking on his current job. "We really need to fix the industry. It's still our No 1 dollar earner of all agricultural products," he said in an interview.

The target is to double yields through replanting trees and producing coconuts in four to five years, from seven years currently. The industry is also focused on producing higher-value products, including a building board material from coconut husks, and "lambanog", a coconut liquor dubbed as the Philippine vodka.

Unilever Indonesia is also keen on buying Philippine coconut sugar for its soy sauce product, Cruz said. "We have to move up the value chain," he said. *(The Malaysian Reserve)*

LASG, FAO PARTNERS TO DEVELOP NIGERIA'S COCONUT VALUE CHAIN

The Lagos State Government has announced its partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) that would drive Nigeria's coconut value chain.

Lagos State is the leader in coconut production and is responsible for about 70 per cent of national output.

The Lagos State Commissioner for Agriculture, Ms. Abisola Olusanya, at a live television broadcast, stated that the move is in line with the state's five-year agric roadmap (2021-2025) that is meant to ensure food security and sufficiency.

According to her, the FAO is very heavy on technical expertise, capacity building and support.

Olusanya pointed out that coconut could be a major Gross Domestic Product (GDP) revenue enhancer for Lagos State and the entire country.

She said: "If you look at countries like Malaysia and India, coconut is actually one crop that gives them a lot of money. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, we do not give it the attention it deserves on the continent. When it comes to anything related to agriculture, particularly in Lagos, we tend to look at it as something for the illiterates, but agriculture is actually the backbone of most of the first world countries in the world.

"Technical and capacity building is vital to address most of the risks associated with agriculture investments and this is where the partnership with FAO comes in and that is what they are actually helping us with the coconut belt."

She stated that Lagos has 183 kilometres coastline that is supposed to be covered with coconuts, but has been hampered due to massive erosion and climate change.

"We have continued to see a decline in cocoa production and that is why we see lots of import coming from neighbouring countries. But with the FAO ensuring that the requirements to develop the coconut value chain and the coconut belt are properly in place, they have been able to help us with assessment and dovetailed into our five year road map to do a proper dissection in terms of the investment required and attracting investors into the space," she stressed.

The commissioner also stated that the critical role of the private sector in agriculture development. She said that the state is aggressively pushing for a Public Private Partnership (PPP) that would drive the agriculture value chain in the state. *(This Day)*

COCONUT INDUSTRY BOARD GM BANKS ON TECHNOLOGY

General manager of the CIB Shaun Cameron said the organisation has partnered with the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department at the National Works Agency to create a database that will provide information on the different species of coconuts in Jamaica

as well indicate where they can be found, the soil type needed to grow them, among other things.

"We're planning to have that hosted on their external platform," he told Jamaica Observer, adding that in the meantime the CIB will be "building out our ICT [information and communications technology] infrastructure here because my vision is to have a coconut database that maps the entire island".

The database the general manager has in mind is one by which farmers and anyone else interested in the coconut industry can "come on our website and click our geospatial map and be able to bring up the parish they're in", he explained. As such, it will facilitate access to information in a timely manner, irrespective of the device they use — smartphone, tablet, laptop, or personal computer.

Moreover, Cameron said the database should become a resource centre for both farmers based locally and those abroad. After completion of the database and the GIS mapping exercise, the GIS department will transfer the technology to the CIB, which will then become the host of the data.

"I believe in data-driven organisation and that's where I'm transforming the Coconut Industry Board to, because… my background is in information technology and I believe in working smarter, not harder," he told.

The general manager is also eyeing the development of an app, specifically for the coconut industry, which will be an extension of the database and allow coconut farmers to educate themselves and keep in contact with the CIB. In particular, the app should help farmers with proper coconut nursery management, instruct them in how to identify and treat with the lethal yellowing disease that has devasted the industry from the 1970s, and assist in identifying the various types of coconut trees.

When asked about the CIB's investment in this technological transformation initiative, Cameron noted that he has budgeted in excess of $10 million for the build out.

"We have spent $5 million already at the board, restructuring our infrastructure and recabling [our network], implementing a server room, and buying a brand new server to host our accounting functions," he shared.

His next move, he said, would be purchasing a server with a capacity for more than 12 terabytes to host the CIB's database, and then partnering with developers to create the app. However, at the time of the interview Cameron had yet to receive the cost for developing an app for the coconut industry.

What's more, the general manager said the CIB has been working with Yello Media to revamp its website.

Responding to a question about funding the infrastructure, Cameron said the CIB is a "self-funding entity so it will come from our internal funds". Pressed further about receiving financial support from the Government, he said the organisation has not received any subventions.

"I should point out that the Coconut Industry Board (since 1945) has been self-funding, and a lot of the research that we do is based on our local funds. How we supply the industry is from our local funds because we run as a business and we try to maintain, not necessarily our profitability but our relevance in the industry by supporting our farmers to grow," he outlined.

"As we move into agro-processing we have to be more stringent and fiscally prudent in how we manage our resources to grow the industry by adapting to technology and innovative ways in which we can reach our farmers," Cameron continued.

Commenting on the buy-in he has received from farmers in the coconut industry the general manager said that one of the decisions he made on taking up his current position was hosting town hall meetings with farmers to introduce

the CIB team, including researchers, to farmers and to get "feedback" on the direction in which they believe the board should head.

While noting that farmers are moving away from traditional agriculture, Cameron highlighted that farmers in the coconut industry are now coming from the business sector or are young people who are legacy farmers.

"…And they are much more tech-savvy and demand that Coconut Industry Board transform and be able to support technology and ease of access going forward," he explained further.

"So the farmers are more sophisticated now and want to know from a research standpoint how they benefi, and from the board's standpoint what we are doing for the industry to help them grow their business and venture into agro-processing," he added.

Based on Cameron's assessment, the coconut industry has benefited from the youthfulness of some of the farmers entering the profession, though he could not provide an estimate of the number of farmers under 40.

Notwithstanding, encouraged by the number of young farmers, he said the CIB has approached the Jamaica 4-H Clubs to partner in recruiting farmers in this age demograhic. *(Jamaica Observer)*

17 BELIZEAN TECHNICIANS ATTEND 3-DAY COCONUT CULTIVATION TRAINING PROGRAM IN TABASCO, MEXICO

Seventeen Belizean technicians are on a three-day training program in coconut cultivation in Tabasco, Mexico, according to a statement by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise (MAFSE).

The 17 technicians represent MAFSE, the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Sugar Industry Research and Development Institute (SIRDI), the Belize Agriculture Health Authority (BAHA), and private farms.

The training is offered by INIFAP, the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales, Agrícolas y Pecuarias (the National Institute for Forestry, Livestock, and Agricultural Research – Inifap) of Mexico.

"While in Tabasco the team will visit several farms, and do practical work in studying coconut diseases such as lethal yellowing, red ring disease and black beetle infestation," MAFSE said.

"They will also do DNA extraction training and laboratory work in coconut disease and pest analysis."

The Agriculture Ministry said the course seeks to train the Belizean coconut technicians in identifying coconut pests and diseases both in the field and laboratory.

Results from the bilateral agreement in agriculture cooperation between Belize and Mexico.

While this training is being conducted by Inifap in Mexico, Mexican experts in areas such as soybean, soursop, and coconut cultivation have been in Belize facilitating similar training. *(Breaking Belize News)*

PHILMECH TO TRAIN, FUND COOPERATIVES TO BOOST COCONUT INDUSTRY

The Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech) on Monday said it will train and fund cooperatives to further boost the coconut industry in the country.

In a statement, PhilMech executive director Dr. Dionisio Alvindia said the agency wants cooperatives to succeed in producing value-added coconut products.

Included in these "value-added products" are crude coconut oil, processed coconut oil, virgin coconut oil, desiccated coconut, coconut coir and coconut sap, the PhilMech said.

"We will provide three years of coaching and mentoring. We want these cooperatives to be successful," Alvindia said.

The PhilMech said the agency will be spearheading the establishment of shared processing facilities (SPFs) for qualified coconut farmer cooperatives which have a PHP500-million budget for the next 12 months.

The initial PHP500-million budget shall be divided into several regions, with CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) having the highest allocation with PHP58.61 million; followed by Northern Mindanao with PHP 53.84 million; Zamboanga Peninsula with PHP52.66 million; Davao region with PHP51.74 million; and Eastern Visayas with PHP50.15 million.

Other regions with below PHP50-million allocation include Bicol Region with PHP43.65 million; Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) with PHP40.84 million; SOCCKSARGEN with PHP32.51 million; Caraga with PHP29.74 million; Western Visayas with PHP27.13 million; MIMAROPA (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan) with PHP25.49 million; and Central Visayas with PHP25.01 million.

For Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon, the DA-PhilMech has allocated an initial fund of PHP8.63 million.

Meanwhile, cooperatives should be registered at the Cooperative Development Authority with over 100 members and 5,000 coconuts daily production to qualify as beneficiaries. *(Philippine News Agency)*

PCA CARAGA STARTS SHIPMENT OF 200K COCO SEEDNUTS FOR DINAGAT ISLANDS

The first batch of shipment of coconut seednuts for farmers in Dinagat Islands province with the loading made at the Zamboanga City port, the Philippines News Agency reported. According to Philip pine Coconut Authority in the Caraga Region (PCA-13) Manager Joel Oclarit, the shipment involved some 40,000 coconut seednuts composed of open-pollinated varieties

of Catigan Dwarf which came from PCA Research Center in Zamboanga City.

A total of 200,000 seednuts will be delivered to Dinagat Islands as per request by the provincial government but the navy ship which PCA is utilizing can only carry 40,000 seednuts, Oclarit said. Another round of deliveries will follow to complete the total order. The seednuts derived from the Research Center are free, Oclarit said, but the handling services will be for the account of the provincial government. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

TRADE NEWS

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Easier prices prevailed in vegetable oils market this week.

The coconut oil market in Rotterdam finally saw action after four weeks of lackluster dealings as prices tracked lower. Traded price range was $1,070-1,115/MT CIF for the five parcels that changed hands during the week. Market opened in the downside with offers at $1,090-1,175/MT CIF for positions from February/March through to August/September. Prices eased further although towards the weekend bounced back and settled at close $10-20 higher than opening rates depending on position, excepting the farthest deferred contract which was under opening values.

The palm kernel oil market was untraded for the second week running this week. Opening quotes likewise were easier at $1,020-1,070/MT CIF for positions from February/March through to August/September. Prices thereafter generally trended downward but ended the week in the positive territory with level at $1,010-1,070/MT CIF.

Coconut oil continued at premium over palm kernel oil. Average spread during the week narrowed at $78.31/MT from last week at $80.61. Premiums per position are shown following: January/February no data ($73.33 last week); February/March $77.00 ($71.50); March/April $85.00 ($78.90); April/May $81.00 ($82.50); May/June $76.00 ($75.50); June/July $70.00 ($76.00); July/August $72.50 ($72.13); August/September $86.67 ($115.00).

At the CBOT soya complex market, soybean futures showed improved opening values on support coming from gains in soybean meal prices. Afterwards, however, levels tracked lower following reports of beneficial rains in Argentina and harvest pressure from Brazil. A short-lived recovery ensued after midweek on expectations for reduced crop yields in Argentina but a strong US dollar ended the market in the negative territory.

At the palm oil section, market stayed mostly firmer during the week after starting in the downside dragged by 3.0% increase in Malaysia palm oil stocks due to weaker exports. The rebound was fueled by Indonesia's announcement the country was suspending a few palm oil export permits, which should curb supply availability for the export market. Moreover, the forthcoming Ramadan festivals is anticipated to improve demand for palm oil.

Prices of tropical oils for nearest forward shipment saw lauric oils falling while palm oil depicted extended gains. Coconut oil shed $12.50 from $1,112.50 last week to $1,100.00/MT CIF presently; palm kernel oil fell $26.00 from $1,041.00 to $1,015.00/MT CIF. On the other hand, palm oil advanced further by $4.12 from $966.88 to $971.00/MT CIF. Consequently, the price spread of coconut oil over palm kernel oil widened from $71.50 last week to $85.00/MT this week while margin over palm oil contracted from $145.62 to $129.00/MT. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

MARKET ROUND-UP OF COCONUT OIL

In Rotterdam, the coconut oil market finally reported activity. Turnovers included $1,090, $1,070 for March/April; $1,090, $1,075 for April/May; and $1,115/MT CIF for June/July. Market opened easier but closed higher as prices advanced towards the weekend. Closing sellers quoted $1,110 for February/March; $1,110 for March/April; $1,115 for April/May; $1,120 for May/June; $1,132.50 for June/July; $1,140 for July/August; and $1,150/MT CIF for August/September. Buyers at close neglected nearby positions and posted bids only at $1,070 for April/May, May/June, and June/July; $1,095 for July/August; and $1,105/MT CIF for August/September.

The FOB coconut oil market remained closed. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

SRI LANKA COCONUT PRICES EASE AT AUCTION

Sri Lanka's coconut auction prices fell in the last auction in January 2023, with average prices going down by 3.9 percent, data showed.

The average price for 1,000 nuts fell to 80.811.89 from 84,116.85 a week earlier at the weekly auction conducted by Sri Lanka's Coconut Development Authority.

The highest price was 87,300 rupees for 1,000 nuts down from the previous week's 90,200 rupees, while the lowest was 72,500 down from 73,000 rupees.

The auction offered 469,564 coconuts and 300,983 nuts were sold. *(Economy Next)*

VIETNAM TARGETS COCONUT PRODUCT EXPORTS OF $1B

Exports of coconut products were worth $900 million last year and are expected to top $1 billion this year, according to the Vietnam Coconut Association.

Cao Ba Dang Khoa, the association's acting general secretary, said the country has risen to fourth place in Asia in terms of coconut exports.

Every part of the coconut tree - fruits, wood, leaves - has a use, he said.

The processing industry has developed some 200 products like candy, fibre, shell charcoal, oil, coconut milk, and carpet, besides fresh coconut.

It has invested in production technologies to make products of international quality and export to many markets including demanding ones, he said.

Firms exported coconut wood last year, and many businesses now report large export orders for it and coconut shell for making handicrafts, he said.

The association is coordinating with several industries and localities to organise activities to expand production capacity and build brands for coconut products, he said.

With proper marketing, coconut products would gain traction in international markets, he said.

The association plans to set up offices in several provinces and cities, he said.

The industry faces challenges, including the lack of a standalone set of standards and rules for coconut varieties and wood origin traceability, he said.

Vietnam has 175,000 hectares under coconut, mainly in the Cuu Long (Mekong) Delta and the central coast, with the former accounting for nearly 80%. *(VN Express)*

HAINAN PROVINCE LOOKS TO BOOST COCONUT SUPPLIES FROM INDONESIA

Hainan Province has a long history of growing and processing coconuts for the Chinese market. But as domestic demand exceeds supply, local processing companies are looking to Indonesia to boost imports.

The southern province of Hainan is home to 99 per cent of land used to grow coconuts in China.

With around 400 processing companies, the industry is still relatively small and local demand for coconuts exceeds supply.

Indonesia is one of the main sources of imported coconuts to the province.

Karbon TioninSemesta, one of Indonesia's biggest coconut exporters, has been selling coconuts to Hainan's Chungguang Group since 2019.

Huang Yun General Manager, PT. Karbon TioninSemesta "Our company used to do business concerning activated carbons derived from coconut shell. Then, after we saw the opportunity brought by the Hainan FTP development, we established a cooperative relationship with Chunguang Group."

Huang Yun, originally from Lingshui in Hainan Province, says under the RCEP trade agreement, Indonesia has benefitted from preferential tariff and customs policies when it comes to agricultural exports to China.

According to the General Administration of Customs, the ASEAN group of nations in southeast Asia represented China's largest trading partner in 2022.

Through the development of a free trade port, Hainan aims to expand its presence on southeast Asian markets and strengthen trade ties with countries in the region.

At a meeting to promote the Hainan Free Trade Port project in Jakarta, Huang Yun's company signed a contract with Chunguang Group to increase the supply of coconut raw materials.

Zhang Lingling Manager of International Trade Department Hainan Chunguang Foodstuff "The most important part of our trip is to sign a purchase contract valued at 50 million yuan with Indonesian suppliers. Such a face-to-face meeting and signing can enhance our relationship, and we will also explore more possibilities for further cooperation."

Huang Yun General Manager, PT. Karbon TioninSemesta "By taking advantage of the Hainan FTP development, we will actively increase cooperation with Hainan. We also hope to export more fresh coconuts to the huge Chinese market through Hainan."

Indonesia has become Hainan's largest trading partner in recent years.

With the development of the Free Trade Port and the implementation of the RCEP agreement, trade between the two has tripled since 2020 to reach more than 10 billion yuan.

According to the local government's Five-Year Plan, Hainan plans to upgrade the region's coconut processing companies and lift industry output volume to 23 billion yuan. *(CGTN)*

OTHER VEGEOIL NEWS

INDONESIA TO SUSPEND SOME PALM OIL EXPORT PERMITS

Indonesia will suspend some existing palm oil export permits until the end of April, officials said, as exporters had accumulated large shipment quotas from late last year and they now had little incentive to supply the domestic market.

Palm oil companies that have already sold a portion of their products to the domestic market are issued export permits under a policy known as "Domestic Market Obligation " or DMO. Currently, DMO allows export volume that are six times what companies have sold locally. The government though will review the ratio of its palm oil export quota amid rising prices of domestic cooking oil, the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime and Investment Affairs said.

The government regulates the price for palm oil sold under the DMO scheme and the products are supplied for use in a cheap cooking oil program. Authorities will also review the price set for the DMO, said a statement issued early. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

MALAYSIA, INDONESIA TO SEND PALM OIL MISSION TO EUROPEAN UNION

Malaysia will formulate strategies with Indonesia for a mission to the European Union (EU) to find out and give feedback on the bloc's policy development on palm oil, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadilah Yusof said. Fadilah, who is also the Minister of Plantation and Commodities, said the mission will put forth scientific facts, economic interests in a social context and estate practices applied in both countries.

Malaysia has taken over the chair of the Council for Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC) for 2023 from Indonesia. Both countries agree on preserving the environment, including sustainable logging when clearing land for plantations. The minister said the CPOPC needs to help smallholders comply with plantation regulations and enhance their estate yields with the support of the government and the corporate sector. Smallholders comprise about 27% of plantations in Malaysia while in Indonesia it is 40%. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

SPANISH FOOD PRODUCER LAUNCHES VEGAN CHEESE PRODUCTS MADE WITH OLIVE OIL

Spanish food producer Vacka has launched two vegan cheese products, Mozza and Pumpkin Chxddar, made with Olive Oil. The use of extra virgin olive oil and melon seed milk as alternatives to coconut oil and fermented almond milk in the two new products led to a 73.6% reduction in saturated fats, the company said.

A patent for Vacka's non-dairy cheese production method, which involves the fermentation of melon seeds, was being evaluated by the US Patent and Trademark Office last month. While the health benefits of olive oil were well known, Vacka said that melon seeds milk was another healthy alternative to commonly used fats. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

PALM'S INFLUENCE ON VEG OIL MARKET NEUTRAL TO SUPPORTIVE

Palm oil production is expected to rise only a little this year and global use is rising, leading to expectations that year-end stocks will shrink.

That is usually a recipe for solid price support, but the market is also influenced by policy decisions and energy markets so pricing predictions are hard to make.

Palm oil, produced mainly in Indonesia and Malaysia, accounts for 35.5 percent of all the vegetable oil produced globally, making it the leader, topping soybean oil at 28.25 percent and rapeseed oil at 14.6 percent.

It usually trades at a discount to soy and rapeseed oil, but its price movements affect the other oils and occasionally it can go on a wild ride that shakes the global vegetable oil market.

In spring last year, palm oil soared to a record high.

Vegetable oils were already rising through the winter on production shortfalls, including the 2021 drought in Canada and dry weather in Argentina and southern Brazil, and on rising crude oil prices, sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Palm production was curtailed by a lack of workers as pandemic rules prevented imported labour from arriving in Malaysia.

As 2021 closed, soaring palm oil values in Indonesia caused public unrest.

The government sharply limited exports to control domestic prices, but that caused the international price to soar to a record. By March, the price on the Malaysian exchange, converted to U.S. dollars, was more than $1,800 per tonne and in a rare move was more expensive than soybean oil.

Indonesia banned exports for three weeks in April and May.

The price then declined quickly as Indonesia dropped the ban and slashed export taxes and levies. Also, the initial panic of Russia's invasion of Ukraine cooled, allowing crude oil's price to fall.

Palm was below $1,000 a tonne by August, while soybean oil remained near $1,700.

Palm oil remained in a range of about $900 to $1,000 to the end of the year, a level still considered high compared to a few years ago. Last week, it dipped below $900 on slower Malaysian exports and weakness in rival oils.

The palm production forecast is mixed.

The Malaysian Palm Oil Board expects 19 million tonnes in its country, up from 18.45 million last year. Labour shortages remain a concern. Exports are expected at 16.3 million tonnes, up about 550,000.

The board forecasts the price to average $940-$990 per tonne this year. That is a little more optimistic than the outlook private forecasters made in late 2022.

Indonesia's palm oil association expects a production there to dip to 50.82 million tonnes, down from 51.33 million last year.

Exports are also expected to decline as more palm oil is consumed domestically in its biodiesel program.

On Feb. 1, the country increased its biodiesel mandate to 35 percent from 30 percent. That means all diesel sold in the country must contain 35 percent palm-based fatty acid methyl ester.

An estimated 11.44 million tonnes of palm oil will go into diesel this year, up by 1.84 million over last year.

To continue to ensure there is adequate cooking oil at home, the government has also instituted a limit on exports.

The country's palm oil association forecasts exports will fall to 26.42 million tonnes, down by about six million tonnes from last year.

Foreign demand is expected to be solid. Palm's large discount to soy oil caused top-buyer India last year to sharply increase imports of the tropical oil. China is also expected to want more palm oil as its economy recovers now that Beijing has lifted its strict COVID controls.

Demand from Middle Eastern counties and Bangladesh has also been good.

These markets could become critical because exports to Europe are in doubt.

The European Union has for years discouraged palm oil imports, especially those bound for its biodiesel sector.

And in December it brought in regulations to ban the sale of palm oil and other commodities linked to forest destruction unless the imports are certified as not degrading forests.

Malaysia and Indonesia are fighting the biodiesel restrictions at the World Trade Organization and argue they have increased their sustainable palm oil certification standards and other environmental protections.

Saying it will not be bullied by the EU, Malaysia is threatening to cut off palm exports to the bloc. Last year it exported almost 1.5 million tonnes to that region.

It is talking to Indonesia to get agreement to take a united stand against EU policies.

If they follow through on the threat it would cause trade adjustments that would ripple through the oilseed market, but I would be surprised if anything happens quickly.

Barring a surprise on that front, it looks to me that palm market supply and demand is neutral to a little supportive for the global oilseed outlook.

Prices will be influenced more by the development of the South American soybean crop and by the crude oil market. *(The Western Producer)*

HEALTH NEWS

RESEARCH SHOWS COCONUT SUGAR MAY REDUCE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE RISK

Coconut sugar is a natural sweetener from the fluid or sap inside the coconut palm. Research shows that coconut sap contains high levels of vitamin C, antioxidants, and minerals and might be a healthier alternative to cane sugar. In addition, a 2021 study found that this novel sweetener enhanced exercise performance and increased antioxidant biomarkers in young men.

Now, a pilot study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology found that coconut sugar appears to reduce blood pressure and arterial stiffness in middle-aged and older adults.

To conduct the research, scientists recruited 19 participants aged 55 years and measured their heart rates, cholesterol levels, blood pressure, arterial stiffness, and inflammatory biomarkers. Then, the team divided the participants into two groups. One group consumed coconut sap powder, and the other took a placebo daily for eight weeks.

The team found that although inflammatory biomarkers did not change in either group, the participants who consumed the coconut sugar had less stiffness in the carotid artery and lower systolic blood pressure measurements.

However, the researchers only observed reduced blood pressure measurements when it was measured in the arm and not the carotid artery.

Still, because of the small number of participants, the scientists say more research is needed using a larger sample size. Also, the participants were all healthy adults, so further studies should include people diagnosed with high blood pressure to understand the blood pressure-lowering effects of coconut sugar fully.

Nonetheless, the scientists suggest that coconut sap powder could be a novel nutraceutical to potentially treat age-related cardiovascular disease. *(Health News)*

DISCOVER 5 HEALTH BENEFITS OF COCONUT WATER: A NATURAL SOLUTION FOR HYDRATION, WEIGHT LOSS AND MORE

Coconut water has been a popular drink for centuries, especially in tropical countries where it is widely available. This clear, sweet liquid that comes from the center of young green coconuts has gained a reputation as a natural alternative to sports drinks and other hydration beverages. But coconut water offers more than just hydration, as it is loaded with a wide range of health benefits.

1. Hydrates the body: Coconut water is an excellent source of hydration, especially after exercise. It is naturally low in sugar and contains electrolytes such as potassium, magnesium, calcium, and sodium, which help to replenish the body's fluids and minerals. In fact, coconut water has been shown to be as effective as sports drinks at rehydrating the body.

2. Supports cardiovascular health: The high levels of potassium in coconut water can help to regulate blood pressure and maintain heart health. Potassium is essential for maintaining a healthy heart rhythm and can help to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

3. Aids in weight loss: Coconut water is low in calories and fat and high in fiber, making it an excellent choice for people looking to lose weight. It can help to suppress appetite, reduce cravings, and increase feelings of fullness, which can all contribute to weight loss.

4. Promotes healthy skin: Coconut water is rich in antioxidants, which can help to protect the skin from damage caused by free radicals. Additionally, its high hydration levels can help to keep the skin looking healthy and hydrated.

5. Boosts immune system: Coconut water is rich in vitamins, minerals, and amino acids that can help to boost the immune system. These nutrients can help to protect the body against illness and disease and promote overall health. *(DNA India)*

COCONUT RECIPE

COCONUT SHRIMP

Coconut shrimp is a delicious dish where shrimp is coated in a mixture of shredded coconut and breadcrumbs and then deep-fried to crispy perfection. The combination of the sweet and

nutty flavor of coconut with the savory taste of shrimp is simply irresistible. It makes for a great appetizer or main course and is perfect for a tropical-themed meal or party. Here is how to make:

Ingredients

1. 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
2. 1 cup shredded coconut
3. 1 cup panko bread crumbs
4. 1/2 teaspoon salt
5. 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
6. 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
7. 2 eggs, lightly beaten
8. Oil for frying

Instruction

1. In a large bowl, combine shredded coconut, panko bread crumbs, salt, and black pepper.
2. In a separate bowl, place the all-purpose flour.
3. In a third bowl, beat the eggs lightly.
4. Dredge each shrimp in the flour, then dip it in the eggs, and then coat it in the coconut mixture.
5. Heat oil in a deep fryer or skillet over medium-high heat.
6. Fry the coated shrimp in hot oil until golden brown and crispy, about 2-3 minutes.
7. Remove the shrimp from the oil with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.
8. Serve with sweet chili sauce or your favorite dipping sauce.

STATISTICS

Table 1. SRI LANKA: Exports of Mattress, Bristle and Twisted Fibers, 2020-2022 (In MT)

Month	Mattress Fiber			Bristle Fiber			Twisted Fiber		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
January	7,141	4,832	6,161	127	112	206	3,225	3,475	1,436
February	2,812	6,810	9,765	61	232	155	2,164	2,359	1,580
March	3,794	10,169	9,714	103	135	249	1,259	2,125	1,322
April	4,640	5,475	4,796	68	88	138	1,894	1,415	1,012
May	4,947	6,432	5,143	157	113	143	2,366	1,404	1,216
June	6,402	6,333	6,648	99	157	181	2,979	1,608	966
July	8,202	6,953	5,189	84	204	242	3,440	1,855	1,280
August	7,129	5,111	6,329	103	185	230	2,814	1,230	1,066
September	6,443	6,757	5,232	115	126	130	2,643	1,631	978
October	7,514	5,674	6,654	121	151	146	2,997	1,181	1,374
November	6,355	4,416	4,371	105	107	96	2,605	1,325	1,022
December	6,225	4,530	3,340	87	175	192	2,347	1,112	517
Total	**71,604**	**73,492**	**73,342**	**1,231**	**1,785**	**2,108**	**30,733**	**20,720**	**13,769**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 2. SRI LANKA: Monthly Export Prices of Mattress, Bristle and Twisted Fibers, 2020-2022 (US$/MT, FOB Colombo)

Month	Mattress Fiber			Bristle Fiber			Twisted Fiber		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
January	244	253	270	1,421	1,308	1,380	317	305	432
February	259	250	277	1,240	1,398	1,288	306	301	353
March	228	251	255	1,467	1,263	1,310	337	359	393
April	244	254	255	1,369	1,125	1,434	273	359	387
May	248	256	243	1,379	1,119	1,160	297	376	364
June	244	265	240	1,377	1,432	1,420	313	362	360
July	239	282	222	1,586	1,197	859	306	381	514
August	236	268	231	1,529	1,446	1,042	304	398	342
September	235	256	212	1,266	1,271	1,067	329	432	399
October	243	258	202	1,450	1,315	1,122	302	396	270
November	242	281	182	1,441	1,666	1,179	315	439	309
December	249	265	180	1,395	1,432	1,343	336	395	383
Average	**243**	**262**	**231**	**1,410**	**1,331**	**1,217**	**311**	**375**	**375**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 3. SRI LANKA: Exports of Yarn, Twine and Pith, 2020-2022 (In MT)

Month	Coir Yarn			Coir Twine			Fiber Pith		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
January	65	115	82	1,000	909	800	3,069	4,000	3,119
February	114	112	76	463	603	609	3,326	4,011	3,411
March	56	117	172	181	682	625	2,694	5,569	3,360
April	38	146	57	97	194	1049	1,904	3,027	2,319
May	78	74	97	461	652	540	3,914	3,796	2,574
June	83	111	87	625	517	945	4,367	3,052	3,784
July	124	137	75	806	540	561	4,225	3,108	3,035
August	96	55	52	722	874	628	2,873	2,870	3,324
September	113	89	91	842	583	1004	2,758	2,816	2,849
October	83	69	44	935	809	877	3,604	3,871	3,185
November	111	23	107	647	728	571	2,864	3,197	1,815
December	32	61	35	489	1,100	871	2,928	3,250	2,148
Total	**993**	**1,109**	**975**	**7,268**	**8,191**	**9,080**	**38,526**	**42,567**	**34,923**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 4. SRI LANKA: Monthly Export Prices of Yarn, Twine and Pith, 2020-2022 (US$/MT, FOB Colombo)

Month	Coir Yarn			Coir Twine			Fiber Pith		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
January	1,025	990	992	1,325	1,231	1,374	227	251	253
February	913	797	879	1,331	1,263	1,611	225	328	232
March	881	790	670	1,308	1,363	1,144	241	265	226
April	882	1,022	774	1,223	1,216	1,136	252	259	266
May	819	796	813	1,230	1,221	1,211	252	245	258
June	832	841	951	1,326	1,304	1,337	266	277	249
July	874	796	856	1,353	1,352	1,266	249	248	278
August	656	777	775	1,342	1,309	1,317	279	280	244
September	678	807	627	1,352	1,394	1,194	259	336	225
October	713	751	613	1,272	1,216	1,287	238	300	227
November	932	804	685	1,318	1,518	1,210	253	273	245
December	774	750	383	1,296	1,420	1,115	252	235	253
Average	**832**	**827**	**752**	**1,306**	**1,317**	**1,267**	**249**	**275**	**246**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

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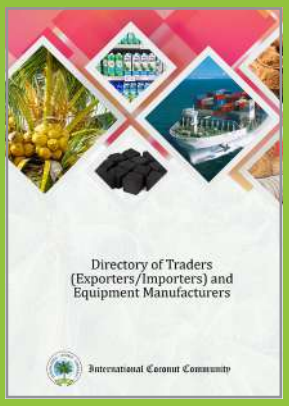

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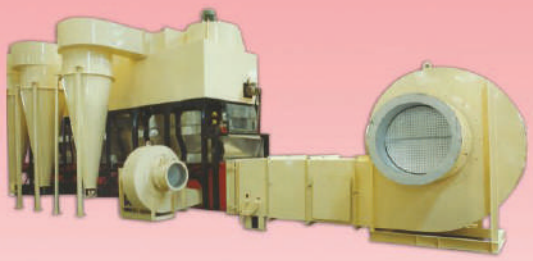

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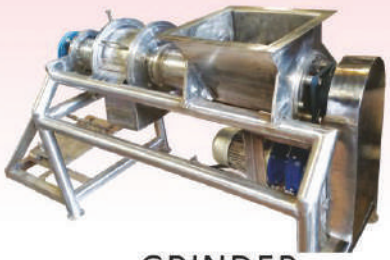

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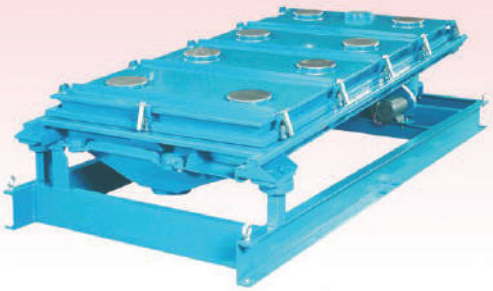

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