The Cocommunity

Monthly Newsletter of the International Coconut Community

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"COCOTECH 2024: A Milestone Hub for Coconut Industry Innovations, Sustainability, Technology Exchange, and Global Collaborations"

The COCOTECH Conference and Exhibition, a biennial gathering, organized by the International Coconut Community (ICC) and hosted by Indonesia through the Ministry of Trade's Directorate of International Trade Negotiations, has solidified its place as a landmark event in the global coconut industry. Under the theme "Harnessing Coconut Potential as the Tree of Life and Green Energy," COCOTECH 2024 showcased cutting-edge innovations, including an improved methodology to measure carbon sequestration in coconut plantations, the development of a new coconut variety called "White Cloud" through Marker-Assisted Selection (MAS), new food product formulations, and discussions on the potential of non-standard coconuts as feedstock for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). These developments are not only advancing the industry but also offering sustainable solutions that benefit millions of farmers, industries, and economies that depend on coconut production.

One of the event's key highlights was the introduction of an improved methodology for measuring carbon sequestration in coconut plantations. In the context of the growing climate crisis, this advancement is a significant step in understanding how coconut palms function as carbon sinks, positioning the coconut industry as a significant player in global carbon reduction efforts. The development aligns with global sustainability initiatives, enhancing the environmental credentials of coconut-producing countries, and attracting green investments, which will benefit even smallholder farmers.

Another remarkable innovation presented at COCOTECH 2024 was the introduction of the "White Cloud" coconut variety, the first coconut variety to be developed using Marker-Assisted Selection (MAS). This breeding technique has yielded a variety with two superior characteristics—100% Aromatic and 100% Macapuno. This opens new market opportunities, particularly in regions with a growing demand for high-quality coconut products. COCOTECH 2024 also highlighted the untapped potential of non-standard coconuts as feedstock for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), offering a promising solution for the aviation industry's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint.

A central focus of the COCOTECH Conference was sustainability, particularly in the context of the circular economy. The event emphasized the importance of utilizing every part of the coconut palm to create high-value products, promoting efficiencies that reduce waste and minimize the environmental footprint. With global demand for natural and sustainable products on the rise, the innovations and insights shared at COCOTECH provided producers and exporters with the tools to tap into expanding markets in sectors such as food and beverage, cosmetics, and bio-based materials.

Beyond technological innovation and knowledge-sharing, the COCOTECH Conference and Exhibition served as a critical platform for fostering collaboration and partnerships within the coconut industry. The dynamic environment led to new joint ventures, research projects, and policy initiatives that will benefit the entire coconut value chain. The event held in Surabaya, Indonesia, was inaugurated by His Excellency Joko Widodo, President of The Republic of Indonesia, and was accompanied by the Minister of Trade, H.E. Zulkifli Hasan, highlighting the essential role of government support in advancing the coconut sector.

DR. JELFINA C. ALOUW
Executive Director

PREVAILING MARKET PRICES OF SELECTED COCONUT PRODUCTS AND OILS

In June 2024, the prices of various coconut-related products displayed mixed trends across major producing countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Sri Lanka. Coconut Oil (CNO) prices rose in the Philippines and Sri Lanka, while it declined in Indonesia. Similarly, Desiccated Coconut (DC) prices increased in the Philippines and Sri Lanka but remained stable in Indonesia.

COPRA: In June 2024, Copra prices in Indonesia experienced a slight decline, falling to US$692 per metric ton from US$715 per metric ton in the previous month. However, this price still reflects a significant increase of US$97 per metric ton compared to the same period in the prior year. Similarly, the Copra market in the Philippines saw a modest decrease, with prices dropping from US$647 per metric ton in May 2024 to US$632 per metric ton in June 2024. Despite this reduction, the June 2024 price remained US$12 per metric ton higher than the same period in the previous year, which reported a price of US$620 per metric ton.

COCONUT OIL: In June 2024, the average price in Europe (C.I.F. Rotterdam) surged to US$1,400 per metric ton, marking a 41% increase compared to the previous year. Similarly, the Philippines saw local market prices rise to US$1,269 per metric ton, reflecting a US$192 increase from the previous year. In contrast, Indonesia experienced a slight decline, with local prices dropping to US$1,289 per metric ton in June 2024, down from US$1,309 per metric ton in May 2024. Despite this month-over-month decrease, the price still represented a significant increase of US$276 per metric ton compared to June 2023.

COPRA MEAL: A nuanced perspective emerges upon examination of Copra Meal prices. In the Philippines, the average domestic Copra Meal price was US$135 per metric ton in June 2024, reflecting a decrease from the previous month. Notably, this figure marked a decrease of US$134 per metric ton compared to the corresponding period last year. Similarly, Indonesia observed a downward in the average domestic Copra Meal price, reaching US$237 per metric ton in June 2024. Moreover, it represented a US$40 per metric ton decrease compared to the previous year.

DESICCATED COCONUT: In June 2024, the average price of DC (Desiccated Coconut) FOB (Free on Board) USA saw an uptick at US$2,006 per metric ton, marking an increased from the last month. Sri Lanka experienced an increase in the domestic price of Desiccated Coconut to US$2,180 per metric ton, while the Philippines maintained a steady DC price in the domestic market at US$2,039 per metric ton. Indonesia's FOB price for DC stabled to US$2,050 per metric ton, surpassing both the figures from the previous year, which were US$1,500 per metric ton.

COCONUT SHELL CHARCOAL: In June 2024, the average price of Coconut Shell Charcoal in the Philippines decreased slightly to US$363 per metric ton, a reduction of US$4 per metric ton from the previous month. In Indonesia, the average price experienced a modest increase, reaching US$452 per metric ton during the same period. Conversely, Sri Lanka saw a minor decline, with prices falling to US$369 per metric ton.

COIR FIBRE: In June 2024, coir fiber in Sri Lanka was traded at an average price of US$57 per metric ton, while bristle prices ranged between US$390 and US$645 per metric ton. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the price of mixed raw fiber remained steady at US$110 per metric ton, reflecting a slight increase from US$90 per metric ton in the previous year.

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

Products/Country	2024 Jun	2024 May	2023 Jun	2024 (Annual Ave.)
Dehusked Coconut				
Philippines (Domestic)	139	154	129	143
Indonesia (Domestic, Industry Use)	168	192	141	193
Sri Lanka (Domestic, Industry Use)	259	213	225	224
India (Domestic Kerala)	485	486	388	475
Copra				
Philippines (Dom. Manila)	632	647	620	646
Indonesia (Dom. Java)	692	715	595	692
Sri Lanka (Dom. Colombo)	1,253	1,139	1,129	1,126
India (Dom. Kochi)	1,193	1,234	971	1,175
Coconut Oil				
Philippines/Indonesia (CIF Rott.)	1,400	1,396	993	1,295
Philippines (Domestic)	1,269	1,248	1,077	1,216
Indonesia (Domestic)	1,289	1,309	1,013	1,232
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	2,171	1,993	2,104	1,986
India (Domestic, Kerala)	1,893	1,931	1,609	1,850
Desiccated Coconut				
Philippines FOB (US), Seller	2,006	1,911	1,690	1,871
Philippines (Domestic)	2,039	2,039	2,039	2,039
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	2,180	1,999	1,677	1,942
Indonesia (FOB)	2,050	2,050	1,500	1,947
India (Domestic)	1,650	1,746	1,343	1,747
Copra Meal Exp. Pel.				
Philippines (Domestic)	135	154	269	201
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	308	296	303	302
Indonesia (Domestic)	237	245	271	250
Coconut Shell Charcoal				
Philippines (Domestic), Buyer	363	367	342	363
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	369	379	389	367
Indonesia (Domestic Java), Buyer	452	449	469	455
India (Domestic)	443	444	338	388
Coir Fibre				
Sri Lanka (Mattress/Short Fibre)	57	65	46	63
Sri Lanka (Bristle 1 tie)	390	408	386	431
Sri Lanka (Bristle 2 tie)	645	628	582	640
Indonesia (Mixed Raw Fibre)	110	110	90	110
Other Oil				
Palm Kernel Oil Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	1,156	1,196	928	1,138
Palm Oil Crude, Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	874	859	817	886
Soybean Oil (Europe FOB Ex Mill)	1,011	988	1,007	968

Exchange Rate

Jun 30, '24 1 US$ = P58.48 or Rp16,415 or India Rs83.35 or SL Rs306.02
1 Euro = US$1.07 n.q. = no quote

MARKET REVIEW OF COIR

The price of coir fiber has remained stagnant in 2024, with consistently low levels observed throughout the year. Although prices were slightly higher than in 2023, they continued to be weak during the first half of 2024. In Indonesia, coir fiber prices stabilized at $110 per metric ton, while in Sri Lanka, they fluctuated between $56 and $68 per metric ton during the same period.

It's notable that the coir fiber market experienced prolonged price depression in 2023, following a downturn in the previous year. In Indonesia, the average price of coir fiber significantly dropped to $96 per metric ton, marking a 46% decline compared to the average price in 2022. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, the average price stood at $49 per metric ton from January to December 2023, reflecting a 34% decrease from the previous year.

Despite these market challenges since 2022, major exporters such as India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka have continued to play vital roles in global trade. According to the latest report from India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, total exports of coir and coir products reached 583,563 tons between January and May 2024, representing a 24% increase in volume compared to the same period in 2023 and generating $170 million in revenue. Coir pith and fiber remained the dominant products, accounting for over 98% of the total volume and 86% of export revenue. Key export destinations included China, European countries, and the USA, collectively accounting for more than 85% of global demand.

In Indonesia, the export volume of coir-based products from January to June 2024 totaled 9,579 metric tons, reflecting a 24% decline compared to the same period in the previous year. This decrease in volume was accompanied by a 29% drop in export value, indicating a downward trend in product prices. Over the past five years, Indonesian coir exports have consistently declined, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of -5% in quantity and -21% in value. Despite this decline, Indonesian coir products have expanded their global reach. In 2019, these products were exported to 13 countries, and by 2023, they reached 23 countries. Key export

Figure 1. Average Monthly Price of Coir Fibre, January 2018 – June 2024 (US$/MT)

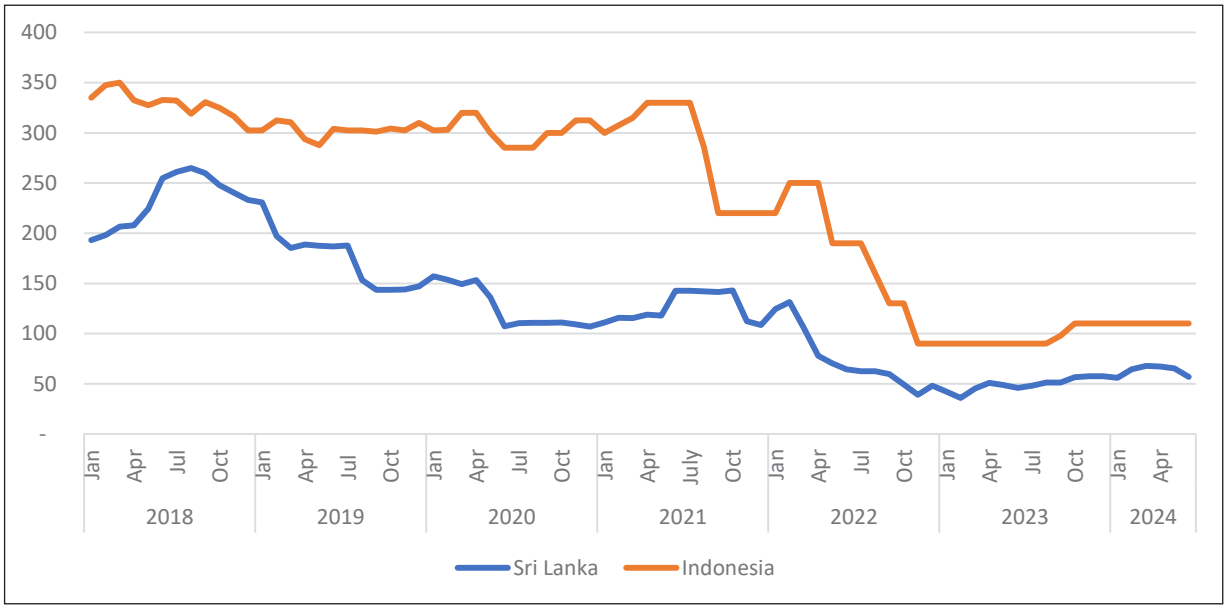


Figure 2. Export Destination of Coir Products from India, Jan-May 2024

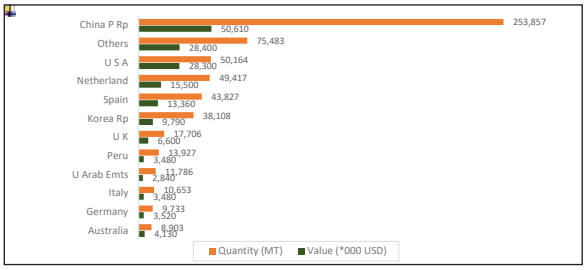
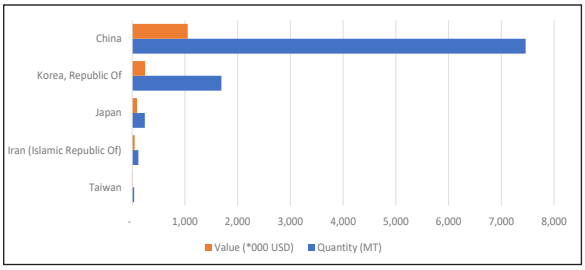


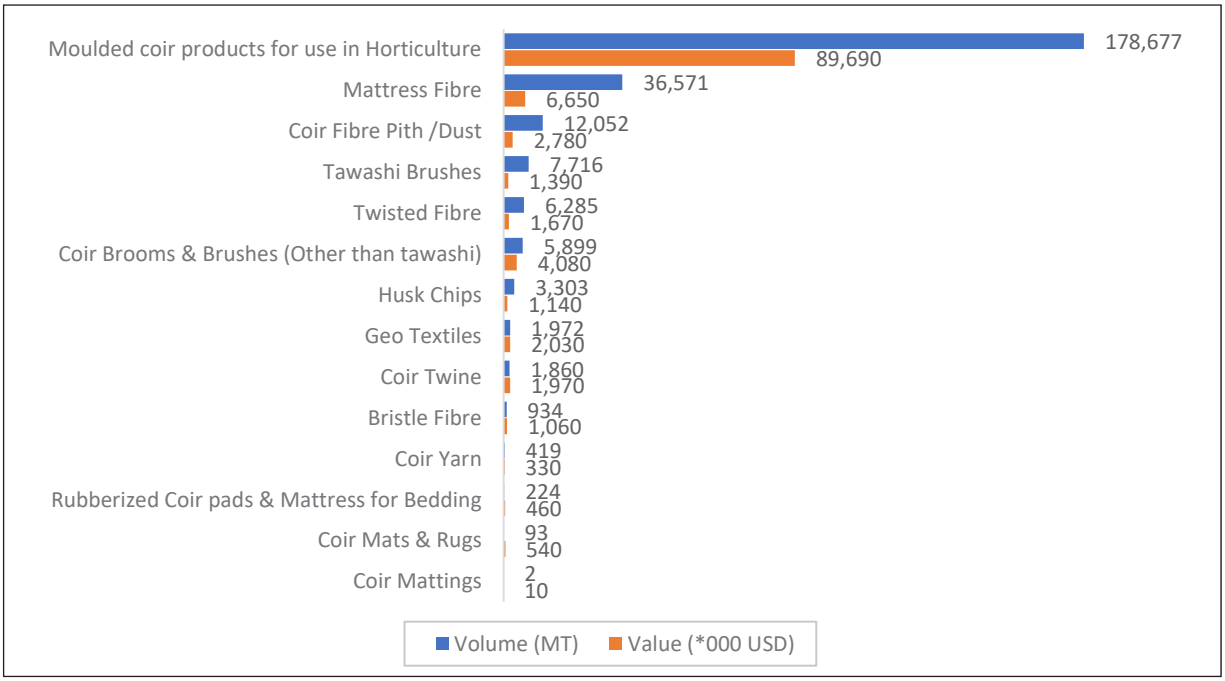
Figure 3. Export Destination of Coir Products from Indonesia, Jan-Jun 2024



destinations included China, South Korea, and Australia, which together accounted for over 95% of the exported volume. Coir fiber and coir pith remained the primary products exported from Indonesia to the global market.

In contrast, Sri Lanka experienced an upward trend in the export of coir products during the first half of 2024. During this period, coir product exports reached 256,007 metric tons, an 8.4% increase compared to the same period last year. Export revenue also increased by 10.27%, amounting to $113.8 million. It is worth noting that export revenue for coir-based products in 2023 had decreased by 15%. Moulded coir products used in horticulture emerged as the largest contributor to Sri Lanka's export revenue from coir-based products, generating $89.7 million, representing over 79% of the total export value in January-June 2024. Other significant contributors to export earnings included mattress fiber, coir pith/dust, tawashi brushes, and twisted brushes. Primary export destinations for moulded coir products for horticulture from Sri Lanka included Mexico, China, Morocco, Japan, South Korea, the USA, and Peru.

Figure 4. Export of Coir Products from Sri Lanka Jan-Jun 2024



COMMUNITY NEWS

ICC SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDES THE 51ST INTERNATIONAL COCOTECH CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

The 51st international COCOTECH Conference and Exhibition 2024 is the largest technical conference dedicated solely to showcasing the different development activities in the coconut sector. The conference is conducted once every two years. This year it is organized jointly by the International Coconut Community (ICC) and the Ministry of Trade, Republic of Indonesia, which provides hosting facilities. Many ICC member countries that have experienced hosting this event in earlier years are India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu, Vietnam, and Thailand. The major goal of this event is to provide a platform for sharing of experience, expertise, technology and also spark creative ideas among academic scientists, engineers, researchers and industry players that will encourage future cooperation among attendees.

The 51st COCOTECH Conference & Exhibition is held from 22–25 July 2024 at Westin Hotel, Surabaya, Indonesia. The 2024 theme is ***"Harnessing Coconut Potential as the Tree of Life and Green Energy"***. Recognizing the vast potential of coconut in driving sustainable development, this theme underscores the critical importance of leveraging coconuts not only as a food source but also as a cornerstone of renewable energy solutions to foster a more sustainable and resilient energy landscape.

The inaugural address was delivered by H. E. Ir. H. Joko Widodo, President, the Republic of Indonesia. The green economy in the coconut industry offers great opportunities for Indonesia. With a coconut plantation area of more than three million hectares and an annual production of 2.8 million tons, Indonesia has significant potential. To increase coconut production, it is important to ensure seed quality, maintenance, and effective harvesting methods. Down streaming is the key to increasing the added value of coconut products, supporting industry, and creating jobs. He invited the international coconut community to work together in advancing a sustainable coconut industry and supporting the global green economy.

The welcome address was delivered by H. E. Dr. (H.C). Zulkifli Hasan, S. E., M. M., Minister of Trade, Republic of Indonesia. He mentioned that downstreaming can increase the added value of commodities. We also must stop merely exporting raw coconut. Currently, we are exporting nata de coco, charcoal, and coconut shells. Therefore, this event offers participants opportunities to discuss innovations and share best practices in the coconut sector.

Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director, ICC, underlined that the International Coconut Community (ICC) is committed to supporting the development of technological and product innovations, comprehensive standards, capacity building and policy tools that enhance productivity, and maximizing the socio-economic and ecological benefits of coconuts. ICC's goal is to ensure that the coconut sector continues to thrive and contribute to global sustainability and food security efforts, providing a greener future for all.

The subjects covered in the eight Sessions during the Conference by 39 eminent resource speakers, will share their ideas, knowledge, and experience to assist in preparing farming communities to counter the challenges and maximize benefits from the opportunities that are presented. Mr. Jatmiko B. Witjaksono, Director General of Trade Negotiation, Ministry of Trade, Republic of Indonesia was Chair of the first session of the first day of COCOTECH, on policy frameworks and international support for the sustainable growth and development of the agriculture and coconut sectors. The second session is on promoting Technological Advances in Coconut-Based Industries.

An exhibition is also arranged in which the development departments, farmer organizations and industry stakeholders will showcase the latest technology development of food and non-food products, services, machinery, and build brand proximity. A daily business matching to connect companies and people with common business interests, create valuable business relationships, and strengthen business networks is also provided. There are 36 private sector and government booths from six member countries with around 600 participants from 31 countries. On the first day, COCOTECH also presented ICC awards to five inspiring coconut entrepreneurs, farmers, and manufacturers.

On the second day of the COCOTECH, there were 6 sessions wherein 15 eminent resource speakers shared their ideas, knowledge, and experiences with the latest technologies and development. The subjects covered during the Conference assisted in preparing farming communities to counter the challenges and maximize benefits from the opportunities that are presented.

Continuing the 1st and 2nd Session on the 1st day of the conference, topics discussed by five resource speakers in the 3rd Session was empowering sustainability: coconut-based renewable energy solutions for addressing global climate change, overcoming fossil fuel limitations, and enhancing Farmer's Welfare.

The topics discussed in Session 4th were on exploring the power of coconut: from culinary delight to functional food and curative solutions.

The 6th Session was on innovative programs and strategies to sustain coconut production and enhance income generation through carbon incentive.

Each session was followed by an open forum and discussion. The participants gained new insight into cutting-edge technology and scientific evidence on the usefulness of coconut, ranging from innovation in bioenergy, utilizing coconut waste for various products, including biofuel, synthetic gas, biochar, the use of non-standard coconuts for sustainable aviation fuel and the potential for coconut oil as a pathway to a carbon neutral society, to health benefits of coconut's probiotic and anti-inflammatory for gut health and brain function. The Sessions also covered the economic benefit of coconut in carbon sequestration and carbon credit for coconut producers. These diverse topics have demonstrated that the coconut as the tree of life is not merely a utopian platitude.

Moving on from the topic of the versatility of the coconut usefulness and benefits explored on the 2nd day of the COCOTECH, on the 3rd day 15 prominent speakers in 3 consecutive sessions shared their extensive knowledge and experience in the coconut sector.

Resource speakers in the 7th session discussed the global market trend and prospect, fair trade and market sustainability, empowering small farmers and women, social enterprises, opportunities and challenges.

The following 8th Session discussed the innovate to sustain coconut sector: advancing global coconut germplasm conservation and utilization, enhancing productivity, and fostering sustainable ecosystems.

The 9th Session was exclusively arranged as a parallel session wherein call for papers were invited from the researchers of universities and research institutes who are involved in the research on the coconut sector. Six such presenters presented their works at the conference.

In the closing session remarks, H. E. Reza Pahlevi Chairul, Director General of Interregional Trade Negotiation, Ministry of Trade, Republic of Indonesia, mentioned that the coming of the President of the Republic of Indonesia to open the COCOTECH has shown the government support to the community and coconut sector.

The three-day Conference concluded with the adoption of the policy recommendations crafted

from the presentations for implementation by the member countries, the announcement of the 52nd International Cocotech Conference in 2026 to be hosted by the Phillippines, and the Acceptance Speech by Host of the 52nd International COCOTECH Conference.

The conference adjourned with a vote of thanks by Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director, in which she expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all parties who have supported and contributed to the event. She concluded with a wisdom word that reflected the unity in the event: "Coming together is beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success. Coconut is the tree of life and a source of green energy, let us continue our journey together with unity and collaboration." (*ICC News*)

A COURTESY VISIT BY THE VIETNAM COCONUT ASSOCIATION TO THE ICC SECRETARIAT AND INDONESIAN COCONUT INDUSTRIES

A delegation from the Vietnam Coconut Association, led by Mr. Cao Ba Dang Khoa, Secretary General and Vice President of the Association, recently paid a courtesy visit to the ICC Secretariat. Mr. Cao is also the ICC National Liaison Officer for the Government of Vietnam, under the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The delegation, comprising five members from the Vietnam Coconut Association and Mr. Pham The Cuong, Counsellor (Trade Affairs) of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Indonesia, was warmly welcomed by Dr. Jelfina Alouw, Executive Director of the ICC.

During the visit, ED Dr. Jelfina appreciated and deeply acknowledged the efforts made by the Vietnam Coconut Association to strengthen relationships with ICC and its member countries. She highlighted Vietnam's significant contributions to the global coconut industry, noting that Vietnam ranks among the top three countries for coconut milk and coconut cream production. Dr. Jelfina also praised Vietnam for its high productivity in terms of nuts per hectare compared to other major coconut-producing countries. During the meeting, she provided an overview of ICC's vision, mission, and upcoming programs and activities, including the Ministerial Meeting and the 51st COCOTECH Conference. Dr. Jelfina also invited Vietnam to continue and further enhance its collaboration with ICC in the future.

Following their meeting at the ICC Secretariat, the Vietnamese delegation engaged with coconut farmers and members of the Indonesian Coconut Processing Industry Association. In the evening, they met with Dr. Steivie Karouw, Head of Palm Plant Instrument Standards Testing Center (BSIP Palma), and visited their coconut farms.

The delegation participated in a three-day field visit to coconut farms and industries in North Minahasa Regency. In Likupang, they met with the Regent and visited a coconut plantation in Marinso Village. The discussions with local farmers and collectors, which were not just informative, but also engaging, focused on plantation management, marketing strategies, and harvesting techniques. These interactions provided not just insights, but valuable and practical insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by coconut farmers in Indonesia, making the audience feel more informed and engaged.

Last month, the Vietnam Coconut Association also concluded a courtesy and industry visit to the Philippines, facilitated by the Philippines Coconut Authority (PCA), Government of the Philippines, with coordination from the ICC. This visit aimed to strengthen international cooperation further and share best practices within the coconut industry. (*ICC News*)

COCONUT PEST MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS HIGHLIGHTS COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND ACTION PLAN

July 5, 2024 – The "Towards an Action Plan to Minimise the Impacts of Coconut Rhinoceros

Beetle and Other Major Pests on Coconuts in the Pacific Islands" conference, organized by the Pacific Community (SPC), concluded successfully at the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) from July 2 to July 5, 2024.

The conference gathered experts and researchers to address the significant threats posed by coconut pests, particularly the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB). The event aimed to develop a comprehensive action plan to mitigate these pests' adverse impacts on the coconut industry, crucial to the economies and livelihoods in the Pacific Islands.

The conference was officially opened by the Vice Chancellor of the Solomon Islands National University, Dr. Ganesh Chand, with remarks from Karen Mapusua, SPC's Director of Land Resources Division, who emphasized the critical need for collaborative efforts in tackling coconut pests. Her opening remarks set the stage for productive discussions and strategic planning throughout the event.

Key sessions included discussions on emerging coconut pest threats, holistic biosecurity approaches, and developing an action plan for impactful research and effective management strategies. Dr. Jelfina C. Alouw, Executive Director of the International Coconut Community (ICC), contributed to the prioritization exercise on coconut pests and participated in group work to identify research topics and funding sources. In one of the sessions, "Overcoming Trade Barriers," chaired by Mr. Riten Gosai from the Pacific Community (SPC), Dr. Alouw emphasized the importance of international collaboration and shared her insights on biosecurity measures, drawing from the ICC's global experience.

The action plan developed during the conference focuses on enhancing regional coordination, advancing collaborative research, and implementing effective pest control measures. It includes a three-tier strategy of pre-border, border, and post-border measures to ensure comprehensive biosecurity. The plan also prioritizes the development of early detection systems, rapid response mechanisms, and sustainable management practices tailored to the unique challenges of the Pacific Islands.

The conference also included a field visit, providing participants with an overview of Solomon Islands' problem of coconut pest attacks at the field level and hands-on experience in the practical aspects of CRB pest management using cultural control, (sanitation and multicrops approaches) and biological control agent, Metarhizium anisopliae.

SPC played a pivotal role in coordinating these efforts, underscoring its commitment to safeguarding the coconut industry in the Pacific region. The action plan's implementation is expected to significantly improve the region's capacity to manage and mitigate the impacts of coconut pests, thereby protecting the livelihoods of millions of people dependent on coconut farming.

The International Coconut Community continues to be at the forefront of promoting sustainable coconut farming practices and addressing the challenges faced by coconut farmers worldwide.

Several organizations played key roles in the conference, including the Pacific Community (SPC), International Coconut Community (ICC), AgResearch NZ, University of Guam, KIK PNG, University of Hawaii, USDA, MFAT, CSIRO, the East-West Center, Nature Conservancy, Island Conservation, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. (*ICC News*)

INDONESIA CO-HOSTS 51ST COCOTECH TO PROMOTE GREEN COCONUT INDUSTRY

The Ministry of Trade and the International Coconut Community (ICC) co – hosted the 51st COCOTECH International Conference and Exhibition in Surabaya, East Java, from July 22-25, 2024.

This event, which was took place from July 22–25, 2024, in Surabaya, East Java, aimed to propel the development of a green economy for coconut commodities.

Director general of international trade negotiations, Djatmiko Bris Witjaksono, highlighted that the conference will address key global issues impacting the coconut industry.

In a statement released by the Ministry of Trade, DG menioned that the issues in concern will include international policies and support for the development of a sustainable coconut sector.

These include international policies and support for sustainable practices, alongside advancements in technology and the potential of coconut-based renewable energy solutions to combat climate change and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

According to Witjaksono, the activity will bring together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, including academics or researchers, government officials, private sector players, and coconut industry observers.

The goal is to collaboratively develop solutions and strengthen the industry's resilience and long-term sustainability.

Cocotech, a biannual flagship event, serves as a platform for decision-makers within and beyond the coconut sector. This year's theme is "Harnessing Coconut Potential as the Tree of Life and Green Energy", which prioritizes sustainable practices and the well-being of coconut farmers.

"As the host, Indonesia is expected to be a catalyst for positive change within the coconut industry," Witjaksono said.

The international conference and exhibition was declared open by H.E the President, Joko Widodo, accompanied by the Minister of Trade, Zulkifli Hasan.

Themed "Harnessing the Potential of Coconut as a Tree of Life and Green Energy," COCOTECH witnessed the participation of 400 participants, consisting of delegates from ICC member and non-member countries, as well as coconut commodity experts from across the world.

Indonesia is the second-largest coconut producer in the world after the Philippines, with total production reaching 2.83 million metric tons (MT) in 2023.

The same year, Indonesian coconut exports to the world were valued at US$1.55 billion, accounting for 38.3 percent of total global exports.

The main export destinations for Indonesian coconuts include China, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Indonesia's main export products in the coconut sector consist of coconut oil derivatives, coconut oil, coconut milk, coconut charcoal, and grated coconut. (*Antara*)

TO DRIVE COCONUT PRODUCTION, THE PRESIDENT OF INDONESIA HIGHLIGHTS THREE CRUCIAL ASPECTS

President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) outlined three important aspects of seed quality, maintenance, and harvesting methods to increase the production of coconut commodities.

"The quality of the seed is very important, followed by maintenance and harvest method," he stated at the 51st Cocotech Conference in Surabaya, East Java, on Monday.

Then, he exhorted coconut growers to consider the maintenance activities as well as the quality of the coconut seeds. Typically, seeds are sown and then replanted only after they produce fruit that may be harvested

Jokowi remarked that when properly cared for, superior seeds will produce quality coconuts in large quantities.

"Maintenance is also important. Usually, we plant and leave it without maintenance," he remarked.

In addition to the seed quality and maintenance effort, the president also drew attention to the harvesting method. This method covers the aspects of the quantity and quality of human resources (HR), including their skills.

The head of state claims that Indonesia has 3.8 million hectares of land and produces 2.8 million tons annually. As a result, it calls for the right harvesting techniques, such as calculating the quantity of labor needed to gather coconuts from towering trees

"If we have millions of coconut trees, we must prepare the people with the ability to pick the coconuts. If the coconut tree is 20 meters high with millions of coconut trees, then we must calculate the number of people to pick the coconuts," he remarked.

The president also pressed for innovation in picking coconuts from the ground, thereby annulling the need to climb tall trees for this task.

"It would be better to use technology to pick the coconuts from a tree with a height of 20 to 30 meters. Do not only pick a few. The amount should be larger," he remarked.

He also stated that Indonesia ranks second in the world in terms of coconut commodities, with the provinces of North Sulawesi and Riau being the regions with the highest coconut production potential. (*Antara*)

COCONUT BRIQUETTES AND OIL AS FUTURE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY POTENTIALS

On July 25th, during the 51st International Coconut Conference and Exhibition, COCOTECH, 150 participants embarked on a field trip to visit three prominent coconut-based product exporters in Gresik, East Java. The companies visited were PT Sarana Agro Indojaya (SAINDO), PT Sionchem Global Indo, and PT Surya Trimegah Wisesa. This visit was part of the comprehensive activities scheduled for COCOTECH's 51st event.

Reza Pahlevi Chairul, the Director of Inter Regional Negotiations and International Organizations at Indonesia's Ministry of Trade, who also serves as Indonesia's alternate National Liaison Officer (NLO) for the International Coconut Community (ICC), led the field trip along with ICC Executive Director Jelfina C. Alouw. Reza highlighted the importance of such visits, stating, "This exposure to coconut-based product companies is invaluable for participants to collaborate within the coconut sector community framework. It enables the exchange of insights and experiences concerning sustainable and value-added coconut processing practices."

The enthusiasm was mutual among both the visiting participants and the host companies. Reza added, "The coconut processing industry plays a crucial role as a source of economic growth. Therefore, it's vital to continue enhancing the value addition to the coconut sector through technological modernization, which can create a multiplier effect in the industry and benefit the community broadly."

Reza also extended his gratitude to the three companies for hosting the ICC delegates.

This visit provided participants with a comprehensive view of the coconut processing chain, from upstream to downstream, emphasizing on holistic and sustainable practices.

Jelfina, ICC's Executive Director, expressed appreciation for the role of Indonesia's Ministry of Trade and the participating companies in facilitating this educational field trip. She remarked on the broader impact of the coconut processing industry, not just on individual companies and the coconut community, but on the nation as a whole.

"Continually adding value to the coconut industry benefits the community. This is

achieved through capacity development initiatives provided by companies to farmers and the coconut community," Jelfina concluded.

PT Sarana Agro Indojaya (SAINDO), established in 2010, specializes in producing premium quality charcoal briquettes from coconut products and focuses on community empowerment through value addition to coconut farmers.

PT Sionchem Global Indo, operational since 2005, processes various coconut products and emphasizes responsible and efficient waste management systems. Their products, including crude coconut oil and other derivatives, are exported globally, backed by ISO and Halal certifications.

PT Surya Trimegah Wisesa, founded in 2015, is a private enterprise in Gresik that manufactures and trades vegetable oils, producing a range of coconut oil products and derivatives. (*Niaga Asia*)

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS VERSUS THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE

The coconut palm stands majestically in the Marshall Islands, where the vivid blue waters of the Pacific Ocean meet sporadic atolls, serving as both a crucial symbol of nourishment and a profound cultural symbol.

Known affectionately as "the tree of life," the coconut palm is deeply integrated into the Marshallese way of life, inspiring legends and serving a variety of practical purposes.

One such legend tells the tale of a huge coconut tree that rose from a respected chief's grave. Its roots are claimed to reach far into the underworld, while its fronds are thought to spread toward the skies, signifying a hallowed bridge between the worlds of the spiritual and the material.

This tale exemplifies the deep spiritual connection the Marshallese people have with nature.

Every element of the palm tree is utilized with great care in daily life: the trunks are fashioned into sturdy canoes, the fronds are woven into thatched roofs and mats, and the coconuts themselves serve as vital food.

Beyond these applications, the tree reminds the community of the interdependence of all living things by representing resiliency and continuance.

However, this critical cultural and ecological staple is now threatened by the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (Oryctes rhinoceros). Originally native to Asian countries, this pest has found its way to various parts of the Pacific, posing significant threats to local agriculture and ecosystems.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has responded by assessing the beetle's impact and spearheading strategic interventions to control its spread.

Adult rhinoceros beetles, distinguishable by the prominent horn on males used in mating battles, can measure between 35 to 50 millimeters in length.

At first, the pest was detected in the vicinity of Amata Kabua International Airport, located in the western part of Rairok on the south side of the atoll of Majuro, the capital of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The discovery was deemed so dangerous that the Government of the Marshall Islands declared a state of emergency in the country on 2 October 2023.

The life cycle of the rhinoceros beetle involves complete metamorphosis, progressing from egg to larva, to pupa and then to an adult beetle. Females lay eggs in decaying organic debris such as coconut logs and leaf piles, where the larvae—creamy white grubs with brown heads—feed and grow, potentially reaching up to 60 millimeters in length.

This stage can last several months, depending on environmental conditions, before they

pupate in earthen cells and emerge as adults in 20-25 days.

The adult beetles are particularly destructive as they burrow into unopened palm fronds to feed on essential tissues, causing damage to the spathes, which leads to loss of nut clusters. This damage reduces the yield of coconuts, which are crucial exports for the islands, valued at approximately USD 15 million annually and predominantly produced by smallholder farmers.

Given that coconut cultivation covers most of the land across the islands—except for the more urbanized atolls—the beetle infestation is not merely an agricultural issue but a crisis threatening the foundation of island culture.

At the request of the government, FAO led the efforts to manage these pests and control their spread. These efforts include sanitizing affected trees and implementing integrated pest management (IPM) solutions, specifically tailored to meet the islands' unique needs.

Shoki AlDobai, FAO's Team Leader for Locusts and Transboundary Plant Pests and Diseases, emphasized the critical nature of these measures, stating, "The urgent support is aimed at protecting the vital coconut resources and the well-being of the island communities and at strengthening the government's response to the rhinoceros beetle outbreak."

The FAO's broader IPM strategy aims to reduce reliance on pesticides, which can exacerbate pest issues and pose risks to environmental and human health.

This method integrates biological, physical, and cultural techniques to develop healthy crops while reducing the need for pesticides. It strikes a balance between pests and their natural adversaries. Promoting a sustainable ecosystem approach, supporting the growth of robust crops, promoting natural pest control mechanisms, and minimizing the use of chemical treatments are the objectives.

Maged Elkahky, FAO Agricultural Officer working on Locusts and Transboundary Plant Pests and Diseases, also highlighted the importance of enforcement of the phytosanitary measures, raising awareness and the regular monitoring of transboundary plant pests such as CRB to prevent their introduction. The early detection of CRB and similar pests allows for early action and enhances the chances of containment and even potential eradication.

Training sessions for field and plant protection officers have been crucial in enhancing local capacity to manage this pest effectively. Moreover, a national action plan has been developed to improve surveillance and coordination among stakeholders, prevent the beetle's spread to new areas, and raise awareness about effective pest management strategies across all islands.

Hemant Nitturkar, FAO Agriculture Officer in Samoa, stressed the importance of heightening community awareness and participation in preventing, containing and managing transboundary pests along with promoting accessible and context-appropriate technologies.

This coordinated effort has successfully limited the presence of the pest to the atoll of Majuro, reflecting a dynamic process rooted in ecological principles. It aims to sustain ecosystem functions while safeguarding the Marshallese heritage and their cherished "tree of life." (*FAO News*)

SCIENTISTS DEVISE A STRATEGY TO CREATE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY SUPERCAPACITORS BY UTILIZING ACTIVATED CARBON DERIVED FROM COCONUT HUSKS

The researchers from the Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram, have devised a method to produce activated carbon, suitable for supercapacitor fabrication, from coconut husks, a major agricultural residue in Kerala.

The coconut husk biowaste-derived activated carbon holds immense promise for sustainable and efficient green solutions for high-performance supercapacitors due to its availability, low cost, and eco-friendly nature.

Vital component

Supercapacitors, with significantly higher capacitance and energy storage capacity than conventional capacitors, have emerged as a vital component in the quest for sustainable energy storage solutions. But, the search for an ideal supercapacitor electrode material has been a significant challenge.

The research team, led by Xavier T. S., Assistant Professor, Department of Physics, and including Merin Tomy, Ganesh S. G., Anu M. A., and Sreelakshmi S. R., found the prototype supercapacitors made of coconut husk-derived activated carbon to be four-times more efficient than the existing supercapacitors.

The findings have been published in American Chemical Society's peer-reviewed Sustainable Resource Management Journal.

The team had leveraged the innovative microwave-assisted method designed at the Centralised Common Instrumentation Facility (CCIF) at the college.

'Inexpensive'

According to Dr. Xavier, activated carbon produced in this manner, utilising microwave technology, is relatively inexpensive and exhibits exceptional supercapacitor capability. The innovative microwave-assisted method has also opened new avenues for the production of activated carbon, which is under consideration for an Indian patent.

Using a state-of-the-art microwave pyrolysis reactor, the researchers produced high-quality carbon in five minutes while removing impurities such as ash and producing no waste.

This novel process produces activated carbon with a remarkable surface area of 1,200 $m^2 g^{-1}$ and highly porous structures, which makes it a perfect material for a variety of applications in addition to saving time. The researchers claimed that two LEDs could be powered for 20 minutes by the device's high-power output.

CCIF, funded by the State government, is equipped with world-class state-of-the-art facilities, including advanced instruments like Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) spectrometer, Brunauer-Emmett-Teller (BET) analyser, fluorometer, electrochemical workstation, and PCR machines. The facility has already catered to the needs of researchers from over 50 colleges, six universities, and six national institutes. (*The Hindu*)

KERALA: WOMEN INNOVATORS CRAFT TRIUMPH STORIES OUT OF COCONUTS

Kerala, known and promoted as "God's Own Country", is renowned for its lush landscapes and rich cultural heritage. Besides being blessed with scenic beauty, the state is also a powerhouse in coconut production, accounting for 61% of India's coconut output and 85% of coir products.

This abundance has paved the way for a wave of remarkable women entrepreneurs who are turning this natural bounty into thriving businesses. Over the past decade, hundreds of women in Kerala have leveraged the versatile coconut to create innovative products and sustainable enterprises, driving the state's economic growth and social change in their communities.

One standout initiative is Subicsha, a groundbreaking venture that epitomises the entrepreneurial spirit of Kerala's women. Developed jointly by the Perambra block panchayat and the Indian Institute of

Management Kozhikode, Subicsha aims to provide employment opportunities to members of 588 self-help groups (SHGs) and Kudumbashree units in the panchayat.

The project's main goal is to create microbusinesses run by women from families who make below the poverty line (BPL), utilizing the most plentiful resources in the area: veggies and coconuts.

Subicsha's innovative approach has led to the creation of around 24 coconut-based products, 20 of which have already been developed and marketed. The products range from the traditional coir mats and ropes to the more sophisticated coconut oil, coconut milk, desiccated coconut, and even beauty products made from coconut derivatives. This diversification not only adds value to raw coconut but also opens new markets, domestically and internationally.

There are entrepreneurs like Maria Kuriakose and Sumila Jayaraj, who turned their passion for coconuts into successful business ventures, benefiting not only themselves but also local communities.

Sensing the potential of the by-products of coconuts beyond the usual coconut oil and water, Maria, who hails from Palakkad, founded 'Thenga', a company dedicated to transforming coconut shells into attractive and practical items such as kitchenware, tableware, and décor, in 2019.

Her innovative approach and dedication helped Thenga achieve significant success, with the company now retailing across India and expanding into global markets. Thenga's products have caught the fancy of consumers, resulting in substantial monthly earnings exceeding Rs 7 lakh.

Then there is Sumila, a homemaker from Thrissur, who established Greenaura International in February 2012. Despite lacking formal business education or experience, Sumila turned her venture into a thriving enterprise through sheer determination.

Operating from a tiny hut close to her house, Greenaura first concentrated on making coconut oil. Thirteen coconut-based products—coconut milk and powder, virgin coconut oil, coconut water vinegar, desiccated coconut, coconut pickles, and even coconut laddu and cookies—were added to the lineup in less than two years. Her business has now not only prospered financially but also helps local farmers by guaranteeing fair pricing for their goods and creating jobs, particularly for women in the neighborhood.

"The impact of such initiatives extends beyond economic benefits," opined Ramesh Nair, a business analyst. "Women involved in these enterprises gain financial independence, which, in turn, boosts their confidence and social standing. It is evident in the improved living standards for their families and a stronger, more resilient rural economy," he said.

Latha Viswanatha, an entrepreneur from Koyilandy, has been creating several coconut by-products for the past five years with the support of Kudumbashree. According to her, the use of a coconut tree goes well beyond the fleshy white meat. "It's an extremely useful plant and every bit of it can be used. From its incredibly intricate and clever root systems designed for sandy soil in tropical climates to its leaves, trunk and the fruit itself, everything has a purpose," she said.

Copra, coconut fiber, coconut peat, coconut charcoal, coconut flesh and milk, coconut oil and sap, handicrafts out of its shell, coir and others are some of the extremely common by-products, said Latha.

Kerala's coconut industry has a rich and lengthy history, and for generations, coir products have played a vital role in the state's economy. Building on this heritage, the current generation of female entrepreneurs has elevated the common coconut to a symbol of empowerment

and long-term sustainable growth. The state's emphasis on assisting women-owned companies in this industry is fostering social inclusion and gender equality in addition to economic prosperity. (*The New Indian Express*)

BIODIESEL DEMAND MAY BUOY COCONUT INDUSTRY

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) expects demand for coconut products to be stimulated by its use in biodiesel blends and as a possible component in aviation fuel.

"With our projections and when we also talked with market stakeholders, they're positive that there will be an increase," PCA Administrator Dexter R. Buted told reporters.

"We committed to the Department of Energy (to raise the biofuel blend) from B1 to B3 this October. The contribution of the PCA is 1 billion coconuts for the increased use of Coconut Methyl Ester," he added.

Biofuel blends are numbered by the share of the non-diesel material in the fuel, with the B3 blend indicating 3% coconut content.

The DoE has ordered oil companies to increase their coco biodiesel blend by October. The government plans to increase the biodiesel blend to B5 in the next three years.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that El Niño could dampen coconut oil exports due to declining production.

Exports are projected to drop to 900,000 metric tons during the 2024 to 2025 market year, from 1.14 million MT the prior year.

However, Mr. Buted said that coconut production may increase 3% to 5% this year.

Last year coconut production fell to 14.89 million MT from 14.93 million MT in 2022, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

He added that the PCA's replanting project could revive production as old trees give way to new ones.

He said that the country's coconut trees are now 60 to 70 years old on average, "so we need to replace these trees."

The Palace has tasked the agency with planting 100 million coconut trees, with a target to plant about 8 million this year.

Mr. Buted said that the PCA is also seeking P2.4 billion to increase the productivity of coconut trees. (*Business World*)

PCA: COCONUT PRODUCTION TO MAINTAIN 3% TO 5% INCREASE IN 2024

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) said the country will maintain a three to five percent increase in coconut productivity despite the possible effects of the looming La Niña.

In an ambush interview on the sidelines of the 151st founding anniversary celebration of PCA in Quezon City, Administrator Dexter Respicio Buted expressed confidence in the resilience of coconut trees for the projected yield.

We are just increasing around three to five percent. So that's what we can promise based on the data on the market," he said.

We can see how resilient the coconut is. It will bear fruit despite typhoons. But we're confident that with all regions where our coconuts remain standing, we are confident in increasing our yield)," Buted added.

He also assured that PCA's Massive Coconut Planting and Replanting Project is ongoing nationwide, in line with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s commitment to f planting 100 million coconut trees by 2028.

We Last year we already planted, around 2 million coconut seedlings. For this year, we

are targeting 8.4 million," he said, adding that majority will be planted in the Visayas and Mindanao due to soil and climate suitability.

However, he underscored the need for an increased budget for the PCA's fertilization program to increase coconut production.

Buted said they are asking for a PHP2.4-billion budget for fertilization, which could increase nut productivity by 15 percent.

For our first year, we will have a 15 percent increase in yield. And then the following year, it's 20, and 25 percent increase yield," he said.

He said the massive planting and replanting effort, along with increased productivity will help the Philippines regain its place as the prime coconut exporter in the next five to 10 years.

If we work keeping this in our mind Philippines will be the number one producer in the coconut industry again," Buted said.

To the date, the Philippines is the second largest coconut exporter worldwide, next to Indonesia and ahead of India.

The country's production slightly contracted in 2023 due to the effects of El Niño phenomenon, at 14.89 million metric tons, lower than 2022's 14.93 MMT. (*Philippine News Agency*)

PNG TO HOST WORLD COCONUT DAY CELEBRATIONS

This prestigious event, celebrated globally, will be a vibrant showcase of the significant role that coconuts play in Papua New Guinea's economy, culture, and the daily lives of its people.

The theme for this year's World Coconut Day is "Coconut for a Circular Economy: Building Partnership for Maximum Value."

Every year on September 2, World Coconut Day is observed to promote the numerous uses and advantages of coconuts as well as to increase public awareness of their significance. The primary goals of the celebration are to draw attention to the health advantages of coconuts, emphasize their economic value, support sustainable farming methods, highlight the variety of coconuts, and raise public knowledge of issues pertaining to coconuts.

In 2023, PNG was privileged to be chosen as the host country for the 2024 celebrations, a decision endorsed by the International Coconut Community Secretariat (ICC).

The International Coconut Community (ICC), originally the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC), is an intergovernmental organization for coconut-producing countries established in 1969 under the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP).

ICC currently has 21 coconut producing member countries, including Papua New Guinea, accounting for over 90 percent of world coconut production and exports of coconut products.

The event will highlight the importance of the coconut industry, bringing together local farmers, producers, industry experts, coconut SME's and international delegates to share knowledge, innovations, and best practices.

KIK's Managing Director, Alan Aku, expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming event, "We are honoured to host the World Coconut Day celebrations in Port Moresby. This event provides an excellent platform to recognize the hard work of our coconut farmers and industry stakeholders. It also allows us to foster international cooperation and promote the many uses and benefits of this 'Tree of Life'."

The event will feature a range of activities, including:

- Displays of coconut advancements and products from both domestic and foreign exhibitors.

- Seminars on sustainable farming practices, value addition, and market opportunities.
- Competitions and awards for outstanding contributions to the coconut industry.
- Site visit for our international delegation to Kokopo ENB to showcase some of our key program activities.

KIK invites all stakeholders including the government, private sector, coconut farmers, researchers, business leaders, coconut MSME's and the general public, to join in the celebrations and contribute to the success of this significant event.

"Together, we can advance the coconut industry, ensuring its sustainability and prosperity for future generations," states KIK. (*Loop*)

MYANMAR SIGNS MOU WITH VIETNAM TO BOLSTER COCONUT SECTOR

Myanmar held a workshop for the "Potential Product (coconut) value chain" project under the ACEMESROK Fund at Pan Pacific Hotel on 29 May. Myanmar's Orchard Company Limited and Vietnam's Hoa Binh Hiep Agricultural Service Cooperative signed the MoU to provide coconut saplings and technical assistance for coconut plantations.

At the workshop, experts led by Mrs Nguyen Thi Kim Thanh, chairperson of the Vietnam Coconut Association, elaborated on coconut plantations and production methods, carbon credit and creating Macapuno – a new product.

Representatives from the Agriculture Department, Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporter Association, Myanmar Coconut Producer and Trader Association attended the workshop.

The delegation led by the chairperson of the Vietnam Coconut Association, experts and attendees also went on a study tour to coconut farms in Yinkadit village, Pantanaw Township, Ayeyawady Region on 30 May.

Under the ACEMES-ROK Fund, the "Potential Product (coconut) Value Chain" project also includes conducting coconut handicraft courses in Ayeyawady Region between May 2023 and April 2024.

These courses offered practical approaches to turning waste coconut shells into a craft that is commercially valued. The trainees learnt knowhow of choosing coconut shells, designing and cutting, polishing, drying, and decorating with the use of equipment step by step. A basic drawing subject was included as well.

The trainees had to make practically coconut crafts such as lamps, DIY lamp shades, curtains, necklaces, keychains and earnings. They received a completion certificate.

The three-day coconut-based products expo and competition was held in Pathein from 22 to 24 January 2024. (*Myanmar Ministry of Information News*)

A BURGEONING INDUSTRY'S OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE IN GHANA'S COCONUT GOLD RUSH

In the lush tropical landscapes of Ghana, a quiet revolution is taking place. Ghana, a country renowned for its rich gold deposits, is experiencing a new gold rush, this time in the coconut industry.

The burgeoning coconut sector presents immense opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development. However, this emerging industry also faces challenges that must be addressed to ensure its long-term viability.

Once an overlooked crop, coconut, is now experiencing a surge in popularity, which helps transforming the country's agricultural landscape.

From smallholder farmers to large-scale producers, Ghanaians are embracing the

versatile and lucrative potential of coconut, driving a boom that is expected to have far-reaching impacts on the nation's economy, environment, and food security.

Ghana is positioned to become a key player in the coconut business as the demand for coconut products worldwide continues to climb. The country takes use of its great climate and rich soil to produce high-quality coconuts that are already making their way into international markets.

Ghana is currently the leading producer of coconut in Africa and number 12 in the world with an annual production of 504,000 metric tonnes (FAO Statistical Database 2022).

According to the Vice President of the Coconut Federation of Ghana, Kwaku Boateng, about 1.8 million Ghanaians have gained employment in the coconut sector.

Beyond export revenue, the Ghanaian coconut boom aims to empower local communities, advance sustainable agriculture, and realize the full potential of a commodity that has long been ingrained in the country's culture.

Thousands of Ghanaians are finding work thanks to the manufacturing of coconuts, especially in rural areas. Because coconut growers invest in their families and communities, coconut cultivation fosters community development.

Smallholder farmers and large-scale producers are benefiting from training and support programs under the GEPA Coconut Revitalization Project and the Tree Crops Development Authority, enabling them to improve their yields and incomes.

According to Kwaku Boateng, the government of Ghana has made provision for coconut farmers to receive seedlings as well as training to help boost the coconut industry under the GEPA Coconut Revitalization Project and the Tree Crops Development Authority. Several sessions of distribution and training have taken place.

Notwithstanding its significance economically, Ghana's coconut industry has a number of difficulties. The rivalry between the domestic value chain and the export market is one of the main obstacles.

A lack of raw materials for local enterprises results from the preference of many farmers to sell their coconuts to export firms rather than to local processors. According to a farmer, selling to exporters is more profitable because they pay more and buy in larger numbers.

Technology and farming methods present additional difficulties for the sector. Rudimentary farming techniques are still widely used by farmers, which results in low yields and subpar coconuts.

It became clear from seeing several coconut plantations around the nation that most farmers still practice agriculture according to antiquated methods. To raise yields and enhance coconut quality, better agricultural techniques and technologies are required.

Mr. Kwaku Boateng stated that investing in the coconut industry is a sure way to make the coconut business in Ghana more appealing to Ghanaians. In that regard, the coconut festival, which is celebrated to showcase the numerous prospects of coconuts and to connect stakeholders, is one of the ways in which the investment is being made.

The festival has been organized by the African Coconut Group in collaboration with the Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA) in September every year since its inception, organizers assure Ghanaians this year will be no exception.

Ghana's coconut gold rush presents a unique opportunity for economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development. Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities in this burgeoning industry will require a collaborative effort from the government, private sector, and civil society.

By prioritizing sustainability, innovation, and market access, Ghana can establish itself as a significant player in the global coconut industry, contributing to economic prosperity and environmental stewardship. (*Citi Newsroom*)

TRADE NEWS

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Easier prices continued to prevail in the vegetable oils market this week.

Coconut oil in Rotterdam market has remained a dull affair for four months (16 weeks) with buyers still in silent mode. The market this week opened lower, continuing last week's weaker close, with offers at $1,387.50-1,405.00/MT CIF for positions from June/July through to November/December and extended losses the next day. By the middle of the week, however, the market recovered and headed higher but settled at close in the negative territory, mirroring palm oil, at $1,393.50-1,412.50/MT CIF.

Palm kernel oil by contrast resumed activity, after staying lackluster for two weeks, with turnover reported at $1,120/MT CIF. This is lower compared to the most recent traded price reported a fortnight ago at $1,125-1,150/MT. Opening quotes this week were likewise lower at $1,130-1,180/MT CIF for positions from June/July through to November/December and stayed barely touched the next day before tracking lower. However, at the close, palm kernel oil showed some firmness to end the week in the upside at $1,130-1,185/MT CIF, ignoring palm oil.

The price premium of coconut oil over palm kernel oil further narrowed this week from corresponding levels a week ago across most positions. The average spread this week further contracted to $238.40/MT from $242.28 a week before. Premium per position are as follows: June/July $252.35 ($262.00 last week); July/August $254.55 ($253.00); August/September $231.90 ($238.90); September/October $229.35 ($236.35); October/November $238.70 ($236.05); November/December $223.55 ($227.35).

At the CBOT soya complex market, soybean futures started the week in the downside dragged by strong US dollar, making the commodity more uncompetitive, but recovered the next day on forecasts calling for hot weather which should affect growing areas. After a midweek holiday break, the market returned to the downside amid players bearish on the forthcoming acreage report. Nevertheless, gains in soybean meal prices helped buoy the market to a higher close during the week.

At the palm oil section, when trading resumed after a long holiday weekend, market undertone was softer in response to cargo surveyors' projection of a 21.6% drop in Malaysian palm oil exports for the first half of June compared to a similar period a month ago. However, a quick turnaround ensued after that fueled by gains in CBOT soybean oil which in turn was linked to higher crude mineral oil prices. Seasonally weak production also supported gains. By the weekend, however, the market reversed course and closed in the downside along with declines in soybean oil and weak Malaysian June palm oil export data.

Prices of tropical oils for nearest forward shipment still showed mixed trends. Coconut oil dropped anew by $7.45 from $1,395.50 a week ago to $1,388.05/MT CIF this week. Palm kernel oil, however, maintained prior week price at $1,133.50/MT CIF. Palm oil declined by $16.50, capping weeks of rising prices, from $1,023.50 to $1,007.00/MT CIF. Consequently, the price premium of coconut oil over palm kernel oil declined from $262.00 last week to $254.55/MT currently. However, price premium over palm oil widened from $372.00 to $381.05/MT. (*UCAP Bulletin*)

MARKET ROUND-UP OF COCONUT OIL

The coconut oil market in Rotterdam was still a quiet affair. The market closed easier

with sellers at $1,395 for June/July; $1,393.50 for July/August and August/September; $1,396.75 for September/October; $1,401.75 for October/November; and $1,412.50/MT CIF for November/December.

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

HIGHER COCO OIL EXPORTS SEEN THIS YEAR

The country's coconut oil exports this year could post a slight uptick from the total shipments it made last year, driven by growing demand and higher world commodity prices, according to the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA).

PCA administrator and CEO Dexter Buted said the agency projects an increase in the country's coconut oil exports this year based on industry insights, noting that demand for coconut oil continues to grow in the world market.

"Coconut oil exports will increase especially coconut is being used in many products. There are people introducing coconut hamburger and coconut hotdog," he said.

"The market stakeholders we talked to are positive that (coconut oil exports this year) would increase," he added.

The average price of coconut oil in the world market in the first quarter grew by almost 10 percent year-on-year to $1,197 per metric ton from $1,093 per metric ton quotation in the same period last year, based on World Bank commodities data.

The United Coconut Association of the Philippines (UCAP) earlier said the country's coconut oil exports this year may dip slightly but would still remain at around one million metric tons due to lower coconut output caused by lack of rainfall.

UCAP attributed the foreseen decline in production to rainfall deficiencies in coconut-producing areas nationwide.

The country exported 1.129 million metric tons of coconut oil last year, down from the 1.252 million metric tons recorded in 2022, based on Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data.

Buted said local coconut production usually grows between three and five percent every year. He added that the recent hike in the coconut methyl ester component of diesel to five percent alone would require one billion nuts.

The PCA is requesting an additional P2.4 billion budget from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for the rollout of a fertilizer program aimed at improving the country's average yield by 15 percent.

"Our fertilization budget is just one percent of our total budget for the entire 340 million coconut trees in the country. From P158 million, we are asking government to give us a P2.4 billion budget," he said.

The PCA is targeting to plant 8.4 million coconut seedlings this year, bringing the total number of seedlings it planted to 10.4 million, about 10 percent of the government's goal of planting 100 million coconut trees. The agency planted about two million coconut seedlings last year.

One of the areas that the PCA is looking at to expand coconut plantation is in Ilocos region which has less than one million trees at present compared to the over 44 million trees in Region 4-A. (*Philstar Global*)

PNG COCONUT INDUSTRY TO EXPAND MARKET

Instead of throwing away the shells and husks of coconuts, PNG local coconut farmers can now use them to generate income by producing by-products.

The Coconut Industry in PNG is looking to expand the market of its product to allign with the global coconut production market that is continuing to be on the rising trend.

The Kokonas Industry Koporesen (KIK) Managing Director Mr. Alan Aku informed the media that they are expanding their market to include the processing of Coconut husks and coconut shells into byproducts.

Mr Aku said, "We are looking at two main products at the moment, which are the coconut husk and coconut shell."

He explained that the husk itself produces 2 separate products, the dust produced is used for seed germination and the fiber is used for mattresses and carpets, and other geotextiles.

"With the shell there is also 2 byproducts, charcoal for barbecues and also activated carbon which is used for purification purposes, such as water treatment and so on,

"We are pushing for this first, because in the rural areas they throw away the husks and shells and so we are looking forward to utilize those two products," said Mr Aku.

This initiative is also alisgned with the theme of the upcoming World Coconut Day – Coconut for circular economy. (*Post-Courier*)

SRI LANKA EXPECTS SHORTAGE OF COCONUT OIL IMPORT

The Coconut Development Authority (CDA) has confirmed that there can be no increase in the price of coconut oil. CDA Chairman Roshan Perera said that forty-two thousand metric tons of coconut oil have been imported this year, twice the amount from last year.

However, a shortage of imported coconut oil is still expected to persist until the end of June or the middle of July, according to the Consumer Affairs Authority. The shortage is attributed to factors such as a lack of coconut packaging containers and delays in cargo ships.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed Sri Lanka imported from the Philippines 4,535 MT of coconut oil in calendar year 2023, a massive rise from 322 MT at the same time in the prior year. (*UCAP Bulletin*)

VIETNAM COCONUT EXPORT SOON TO EXCEED USD1 BILLION WITH OPENING OF CHINESE MARKET

Vietnam is set to export fresh coconuts to China following the signing of a protocol on plant quarantine requirements, potentially generating over USD1.0 billion in revenue, according to a news report in WTO Center, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on June 10. In addition, this will also open 'successful' opportunities to numerous key coconut localities.

The Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) have consented to finalize procedures regarding the signing of a protocol on plant quarantine requirements for Vietnamese fresh coconuts and frozen durians exported to China. Both parties initiated the conclusion of negotiations particularly on the protocol regarding phytosanitary requirements for export of fresh coconuts from Vietnam to China.

Tran Van Duc, chairman of the Board of Directors of Ben Tre Coconut Investment Joint Stock Company, highlighted the huge demand for imported coconut of China which consumes about 2.6 billion fresh coconuts each year and 1.5 billion coconuts for processing, but the neighboring country's coconut output only meets 10%. Vietnam, however, has already currently penetrated high-end market such as Europe, the US and the Middle East, Duc said. (*UCAP Bulletin*)

OTHER VEGEOIL NEWS

CHINESE BIOFUEL COMPANIES TO INVEST MORE THAN USD1-BILLION FOR SAF PRODUCTION

Biofuel producers in China plan to invest more than USD1-billion in the country's start up plants to produce waste cooking oil into sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) for exports and local use once Beijing introduces mandates for its use.

China is the world's second largest aviation market accounting for about 11% of global jet fuel use. Hence the announcement of its policy of SAF use for 2030 could lead to billions of dollars in investments in the sector, industry executives said. Chinese biofuels firms are planning to start up plants over the next 18 months to produce 1 million MT/year of SAF, the six SAF investors were quoted as saying.

That volume would be equivalent to 2.5% of China's current annual demand for aviation fuel, Reuters said. Once operational, the projects would use up supplies of used cooking oil (UCO) feedstock that China currently exported, according to company executives. The companies included Junheng Industry Group Biotech, Zhejiang Jiaao Enprotech, and Tianzhou New Energy, the report said. Last year, China exported 2.05 million MT of UCO, mostly to the USA and Singapore, and likewise supplied feedstock to biofuel refineries such as Finnish firm Neste. (*UCAP Bulletin*)

INDONESIAN PALM OIL GROUP PROPOSES DEDICATED PLANTATIONS FOR BIODIESEL

The Indonesian Palm Oil Association (GAPKI) Chairman Eddy Martono has proposed to the government to use degraded lands for development of oil palm plantations, which will function as specially dedicated areas to supply crude palm oil (CPO) for production of biodiesel.

"Such specially dedicated palm plantation areas can become a solution to the problem of CPO supply shortage, if the government wants to upgrade the current manda tory biodiesel 35% (B35) program to mandatory B100 program," he said. He added that the dedicated plantations should be managed by the state-owned plantation companies (BUMN Perkebunan) and the smallholders. He noted that while demand for palm oil has been continually rising, oil palm hectarage are stagnant and tends to decline. Adding to that, the utilization of replanting program since 2017 is still very low until now.

It has been widely reported that President-elect Prabowo Subianto has planned to upgrade the biodiesel program to B50. The B50 is expected to be realized in 2029. Based on data from GAPKI, CPO production during the 2023 reached 50 million MT. If the B40 program is implemented, the total local need of CPO for food and energy will be around 24 million MT. (*UCAP Bulletin*)

USED COOKING OIL EXPORTS OF SELECTED ASIAN COUNTRIES UP IN Q1

Data from Oil World show combined exports of used cooking oil (UCO) from China, Indonesia, Japan and Thailand increased 25.6% to 693,000 MT in January-March this year from 539,000 MT at the same time last year. Shipment of respective countries have increased from corresponding year-ago period.

China was the primary exporter with delivery of 552,000 MT during the three-month period (434,000 MT year-ago) and was responsible for 79.7% of total. Of the remaining 20.3%, Indonesia shared 88,000 MT (55,000 MT), Japan 32,000 MT (31,000 MT) and Thailand 20,000 MT (19,000 MT).

On the other hand, key importers were the USA, EU-27, and Singapore. Strong demand from the USA and Singapore was reflected in the countries' rapid import growth. The USA more than doubled its uptake during the review period at 272,000 MT from 129,000

MT (+110.9%). Singapore hiked orders substantially by 61.4% at 213,000 MT from 132,000 MT. The EU-27, however, cut imports by 20.7% to 111,000 MT from 140,000 MT. Smaller loads were delivered to Malaysia at 59,000 MT (43,000 MT), Indonesia at 15,000 MT (43,000 MT), and South Korea at 14,000 MT (12,000 MT). (*UCAP Bulletin*)

HEALTH NEWS

IS COCONUT WATER THE KEY TO BEAT THE HEAT?

Parched throat, low energy and dehydration are common ailments during the summer season. In Singapore, where summer is basically one long infernal heatwave, it's easy to feel the heat, which is why we'd never say no to a delicious way of beating it. Fresh coconut water is a cooling and refreshing drink that's not only satiating but also helps replenish lost nutrients in the body, which is why the natural drink is often highly recommended by health experts.

Nutritional value of fresh coconut water

Water from tender coconut, which can be as old as six months, usually contains around 94 per cent water. A 240-millilitre cup contains 15 grams of carbohydrates, 8 grams of sugar and 60 calories, according to Healthline.

Rich in phosphorus, coconut water contains 15 per cent of the total daily value (DV). It is also high in calcium and magnesium, containing 4 per cent DV of each, 15 per cent DV of potassium, and 15 per cent DV of phosphorus. It is also a great source of vitamin C, containing 32 per cent DV for women and 27 per cent for men.

8 health benefits of coconut water, the perfect cooling summer drink

Keeps you hydrated

Drinking natural coconut water aids in hydration without being heavy on fats and sugar. Rich in electrolytes, it instantly replenishes and balances healthy fluids in our cells lost from the body because of excessive heat or rigorous exercise.

Packed with antioxidant properties

There are limited studies conducted on the effects of antioxidants in coconut water on humans and more research is required to prove these benefits.

However, a study conducted on insulin-resistant rats published in the Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) states that treatment with coconut water decreased blood pressure, triglycerides and insulin levels of the subjects. It also considerably decreased the free radical activity, causing oxidative stress in them.

Research conducted in 2014 and published in the Journal of Ethnopharmacology suggested that the treatment of coconut water given to rats with damaged livers had a positive effect on decreasing free radical activity.

May lower cholesterol

According to the report published in the Global Journal of Biology, Agriculture and Health Sciences, rats who were fed a high-fat diet were also given coconut water. The results in the reduction of their cholesterol levels were encouraging.

Reduces blood pressure levels

Healthline states that high levels of potassium in coconut water could be the reason why it is linked to a reduction in blood pressure levels. The West Indian Medical Journal published a report in 2005, stating that individuals with high blood pressure could include this beverage in their diet.

Prevents kidney stones
A 2018 BioMed Research International report hailed coconut water as a possible solution for removing urinary citrate. The report mentions that this drink is rich in nutrients that help in getting rid of potassium, chloride and citrate in urine which causes kidney stones.

Improves skin health
Antibacterial and anti-microbial properties in coconut water can help achieve clear skin and make it blemish-free, according to the 2017 report published in PubMed Central.

It also improves collagen synthesis, which makes the skin look young, fuller and supple.

Can help in weight management
Although coconut water is naturally sweet, it has comparatively much lower calories than other fizzy drinks or fruit juices, making it a great option to maintain weight.

Aids bone health
This wonder fruit water has a good amount of calcium and magnesium. Therefore, drinking it regularly is considered good for bone health as well. (*Prestige*)

COCONUT RECIPE

COCONUT MACAROONS

Ingredients:
- 2 large egg whites
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 ½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut (7 ounces)
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Whisk egg whites, sugar, vanilla and salt in a large bowl until foamy and lightened in color, 2 to 3 minutes. Using a rubber spatula, fold in coconut until combined.
3. Scoop the dough by heaping tablespoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheet, packing each to make a cohesive mound. Bake until lightly browned, 14 to 18 minutes. Let cool completely on the pan, about 20 minutes.
4. Place chocolate chips in a small microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on High in 30-second increments until melted and smooth, about 1 minute total. Gently dip the bottom of each macaroon into the chocolate; return to the baking sheet to set, about 15 minutes.
5. Refrigerate for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 3 months.

(EatingWell)

STATISTICS

Table 1. SRI LANKA: Exports of Mattress, Bristle and Twisted Fibers, 2022-2024 (In MT)

Month	Mattress Fiber			Bristle Fiber			Twisted Fiber		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
January	6,161	5,362	5,050	206	119	119	1,436	674	806
February	9,765	6,925	9,814	155	146	233	1,580	891	1,389
March	9,714	9,457	9,552	249	230	167	1,322	1,297	1,602
April	4,796	5,847	5,656	138	161	149	1,012	1,647	810
May	5,143	4,496		143	148		1,216	1,354	
June	6,648	6,771		181	98		966	1173	
July	5,189	7808		242	193		1,280	1301	
August	6,329	8209		230	222		1,066	1359	
September	5,232	4193		130	150		978	1002	
October	6,654	3700		146	124		1,374	710	
November	4,371	3313		96	129		1,022	1051	
December	3,340	2807		192	133		517	857	
Total	**73,342**	**68,888**	**30,072**	**2,108**	**1,853**	**668**	**13,769**	**13,316**	**4,607**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 2. SRI LANKA: Monthly Export Prices of Mattress, Bristle and Twisted Fibers, 2022-2024 (US$/MT, FOB Colombo)

Month	Mattress Fiber			Bristle Fiber			Twisted Fiber		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
January	270	196	180	1,380	1,512	1,447	432	345	253
February	277	160	172	1,288	1,362	888	353	300	312
March	255	171	186	1,310	1,291	1,154	393	260	231
April	255	169	180	1,434	1,167	1,392	387	338	285
May	243	173		1,160	689		364	254	
June	240	169		1,420	661		360	297	
July	222	152		859	1,015		514	289	
August	231	156		1,042	1,116		342	206	
September	212	155		1,067	1,057		399	234	
October	202	160		1,122	1,141		270	229	
November	182	160		1,179	953		309	217	
December	180	177		1,343	1,164		383	240	
Average	**231**	**167**	**180**	**1,217**	**1,094**	**1,220**	**375**	**267**	**270**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 3. SRI LANKA: Exports of Yarn, Twine and Pith, 2022-2024 (In MT)

Month	Coir Yarn			Coir Twine			Fiber Pith		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
January	82	27	63	800	742	625	3,119	2,175	2,275
February	76	97	150	609	461	331	3,411	2,561	2,511
March	172	58	103	625	249	275	3,360	2,237	2,005
April	57	42	26	1049	341	192	2,319	2,688	1,786
May	97	125		540	719		2,574	2,158	
June	87	63		945	763		3,784	1479	
July	75	59		561	519		3,035	1919	
August	52	90		628	566		3,324	1986	
September	91	49		1004	557		2,849	1722	
October	44	65		877	375		3,185	1952	
November	107	106		571	653		1,815	1392	
December	35	20		871	733		2,148	1645	
Total	**975**	**801**	**342**	**9,080**	**6,678**	**1,423**	**34,923**	**23,914**	**8,577**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 4. SRI LANKA: Monthly Export Prices of Yarn, Twine and Pith, 2022-2024 (US$/MT, FOB Colombo)

Month	Coir Yarn			Coir Twine			Fiber Pith		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
January	992	744	810	1,374	1,170	1,029	253	266	213
February	879	691	803	1,611	1,055	1,074	232	262	203
March	670	657	994	1,144	1,313	1,147	226	257	265
April	774	619	849	1,136	1,344	1,015	266	306	262
May	813	718		1,211	1,180		258	278	
June	951	748		1,337	1,294		249	255	
July	856	619		1,266	1,180		278	262	
August	775	590		1,317	1,203		244	220	
September	627	625		1,194	1,130		225	220	
October	613	678		1,287	1,041		227	209	
November	685	624		1,210	1,112		245	215	
December	383	488		1,115	1,079		253	206	
Average	**752**	**650**	**864**	**1,267**	**1,175**	**1,066**	**246**	**246**	**236**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

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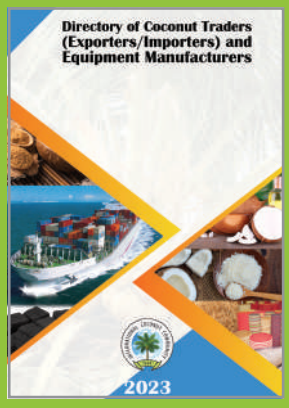

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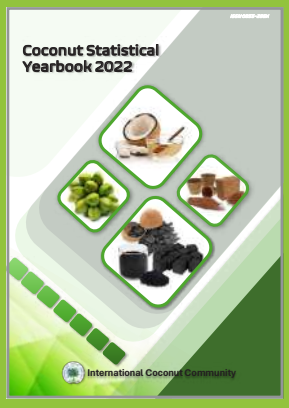

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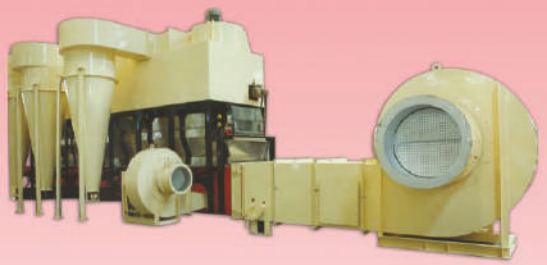

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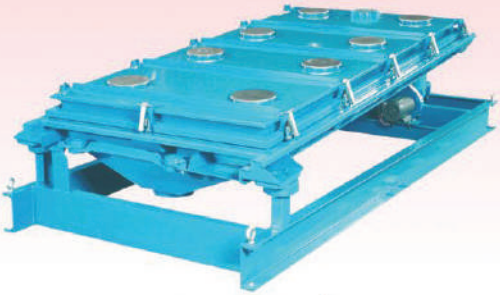

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