The Cocommunity

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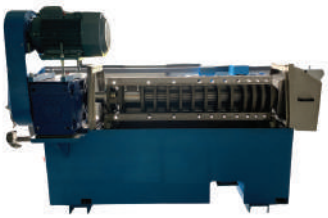

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THE DIRECTOR GENERAL SPEAKS

"Breaking the Bottleneck: Policy and Innovation for a Sustainable Coconut Industry"

A shortage of raw materials has emerged as a major bottleneck in the coconut supply chain. While demand for coconut-based products—ranging from food, eco-friendly products and cosmetics to biofuels—continues to surge, production has struggled to keep pace. At the heart of the problem lies a series of interconnected challenges, including insufficient raw materials, logistical inefficiencies, and intense market competition. Coconut is no longer just a staple food products; it is now a sought-after ingredient for cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, eco-friendly products, and biofuels. Countries with strong purchasing power, are securing vast quantities of raw materials, leaving smaller players struggling to compete.

Low production levels—caused by declining productivity due to extreme weather patterns, rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, typhoons, aging plantations, pests & diseases, low-quality of planting materials, poor agronomical practices, soil degradation, and unstructured replanting efforts—are exacerbated by fierce competition for raw materials. Many farmers continue to rely on traditional cultivation methods without access to improved seed varieties, modern agricultural techniques, or financial support to transition to more sustainable practices. These structural weaknesses limit production potential, making it harder for coconut-producing countries to meet market demand efficiently.

Logistical inefficiencies further complicate the supply chain. Coconuts are cultivated in widely dispersed areas, often on small islands with poor infrastructure and difficult access to processing facilities. This geographical fragmentation leads to high transportation costs, delays, and inconsistent supply. Additionally, monoculture farming practices in some regions have reduced soil fertility and increased vulnerability to pests and diseases.

Without immediate policy interventions and technological advancements, the coconut industry risks long-term instability and missed economic opportunities. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive long-term strategy centered on policy reforms and innovation-driven solutions. Three key areas of focus include research and development (R&D), export and import regulations, and farmer protection measures. Governments and industry leaders must prioritize R&D to drive innovation in coconut farming. Exploring high-yield coconut varieties and developing high-yield hybrid coconut varieties that are resistant to diseases and climate stress will help boost production. Additionally, research into diversified farming systems—such as intercropping with cacao, coffee, or bananas—can enhance soil health, increase farmer incomes, and reduce reliance on monoculture farming.

Implementing water conservation, irrigation systems, and precision agriculture technologies can be difficult for smallholder farmers, especially those with limited financial resources and technical knowledge. Financial incentives, farmer cooperatives for shared resources, farmer field schools, development of low-cost, simple irrigation systems, like rainwater harvesting ponds, and small scale solar-powered pumps SMS-based advisory services or mobile apps can help farmers invest in sustainable farming inputs. In addition to the government's supports, companies that rely on coconut raw materials should invest in farmer training and sustainability programs as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR)

The current imbalance between exports of raw materials and local industry needs must also be addressed. Many coconut-producing countries primarily export raw materials instead of value-added products, limiting their economic benefits. Governments must implement export policies that encourage local processing, ensuring that coconut-producing countries capture more of the value chain. At the same time, import regulations should be adjusted to protect local producers. Implementing tariffs or seasonal import restrictions can prevent market saturation and ensure stable prices for domestic farmers. Trade agreements should also be structured to support sustainable coconut farming while ensuring fair market access for producers.

Smallholder farmers are particularly vulnerable to price fluctuations. While they are currently benefiting from high prices, the volatility of global markets could lead to sharp price drops in the future. To address this, minimum price regulations should be established, ensuring farmers receive a fair share of market revenues while maintaining supply for local industries. Governments can also create price stabilization funds to support farmers during market downturns. Strengthening farmer cooperatives can enhance their bargaining power, and improve access to financial resources.

Solving the bottlenecks in the coconut industry requires strong collaboration among governments, industry leaders, and farmers. Policymakers must lead with forward-thinking regulations and investment in infrastructure. The private sector must commit to ethical sourcing practices and support local processing industries. Farmers, in turn, should be empowered with knowledge, technology, and financial tools to modernize their cultivation methods. By aligning policies with innovation, the coconut industry can transition from a fragmented and vulnerable sector into a globally competitive and sustainable powerhouse. The time to act is now—before these challenges escalate into a full-blown crisis.

DR. JELFINA C. ALOUW
Executive Director

PREVAILING MARKET PRICES OF SELECTED COCONUT PRODUCTS AND OILS

In January 2025, coconut oil prices demonstrated a synchronized upward trend across major producing countries, such as Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India. Price of desiccated coconut saw an increase in Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Sri Lanka, with the four countries reporting higher FOB prices.

COPRA: In January 2025, copra prices in Indonesia increased to USD 1,104 per metric ton, up from USD 1,064 per metric ton in December, marking a significant year-on-year rise of USD 453 per metric ton. Similarly, the Philippines experienced an upward trend, with prices rising from USD 1,060 per metric ton in December 2024 to USD 1,141 per metric ton in January, reflecting a year-on-year increase of USD 513 per metric ton, compared to USD 628 per metric ton during the same period last year. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka and India also recorded monthly price increases, with growth rates of 10.2% and 5.2%, respectively.

COCONUT OIL: In January 2025, coconut oil prices exhibited a synchronized upward trend across Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and India. In Europe (C.I.F. Rotterdam), the average price surged to USD 1,976 per metric ton, reflecting a substantial 75% year-on-year increase. The Philippines recorded a local market price of USD 2,118 per metric ton, marking a USD 994 increase from the previous year. Likewise, Indonesia saw a significant rise, with local prices reaching USD 2,097 per metric ton in January 2025, up from USD 1,935 per metric ton in December 2024, representing a USD 977 year-on-year gain. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka and India reported monthly price increases of 6.6% and 1.4%, respectively.

COPRA MEAL: In the Philippines, the average domestic copra meal price down to USD 217 per metric ton in January 2025, reflecting a decrease from the previous month. Likewise, this price represented a year-on-year decline of USD 32 per metric ton. Similarly, Indonesia reported an uptick in the average domestic copra meal price, reaching USD 271 per metric ton in January 2025, which was USD 14 per metric ton higher than the corresponding period in the previous year.

DESICCATED COCONUT: In January 2025, the average FOB (Free on Board) price of desiccated coconut (DC) from the Philippines to the USA rose to USD 2,315 per metric ton compared to the previous month. Meanwhile, the domestic price in the Philippines saw a slight increase, reaching USD 2,040 per metric ton. Indonesia's FOB price for DC remained stable at USD 3,200 per metric ton, significantly surpassing the previous year's level of USD 1,750 per metric ton. Similarly, Sri Lanka experienced a rise in the domestic price of desiccated coconut, reaching USD 3,760 per metric ton.

COCONUT SHELL CHARCOAL: In January 2025, the average price of coconut shell charcoal in India increased to USD 629 per metric ton, marking a significant rise of USD 78 per metric ton from the previous month. In contrast, Indonesia saw a decline, with prices falling to USD 616 per metric ton during the same period. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka experienced a moderate price increase, reaching USD 544 per metric ton.

COIR FIBRE: In January 2025, Sri Lanka's domestic trade of coir fiber showed that mixed fiber averaged USD 67 per metric ton, while bristle fiber ranged between USD 475 and USD 735 per metric ton. Meanwhile, Indonesia maintained the price of mixed raw fiber at USD 145 per metric ton, reflecting a moderate increase from the previous year's price of USD 110 per metric ton.

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

Products/Country	2025 Jan	2025 Dec	2024 Jan	2025 (Annual Ave.)
Dehusked Coconut				
Philippines (Domestic)	234	182	128	234
Indonesia (Domestic, Industry Use)	297	289	198	297
Sri Lanka (Domestic, Industry Use)	477	389	207	477
India (Domestic Kerala)	783	744	447	783
Copra				
Philippines (Dom. Manila)	1,141	1,060	628	1,141
Indonesia (Dom. Java)	1,104	1,064	651	1,104
Sri Lanka (Dom. Colombo)	1,774	1,610	1,047	1,774
India (Dom. Kochi)	1,763	1,676	1,102	1,763
Coconut Oil				
Philippines/Indonesia (CIF Rott.)	1,976	1,953	1,126	1,976
Philippines (Domestic)	2,118	1,958	1,124	2,118
Indonesia (Domestic)	2,097	1,935	1,120	2,097
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	2,898	2,719	1,982	2,898
India (Domestic, Kerala)	2,767	2,730	1,786	2,767
Desiccated Coconut				
Philippines FOB (US), Seller	2,315	2,296	1,764	2,315
Philippines (Domestic)	2,040	2,039	2,039	2,040
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	3,760	3,733	1,771	3,760
Indonesia (FOB)	3,200	3,200	1,750	3,200
India (Domestic)	2,996	2,827	1,822	2,996
Copra Meal Exp. Pel.				
Philippines (Domestic)	217	230	249	217
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	413	350	292	413
Indonesia (Domestic)	271	267	257	271
Coconut Shell Charcoal				
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	544	522	328	544
Indonesia (Domestic Java), Buyer	616	622	461	616
India (Domestic)	629	551	329	629
Coir Fibre				
Sri Lanka (Mattress/Short Fibre)	67	71	56	67
Sri Lanka (Bristle 1 tie)	475	484	397	475
Sri Lanka (Bristle 2 tie)	735	771	631	735
Indonesia (Mixed Raw Fibre)	145	140	110	145
Other Oil				
Palm Kernel Oil Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	1,962	2,099	978	1,962
Palm Oil Crude, Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	1,070	1,190	845	1,070
Soybean Oil (Europe FOB Ex Mill)	1,061	1,064	971	1,061

Exchange Rate

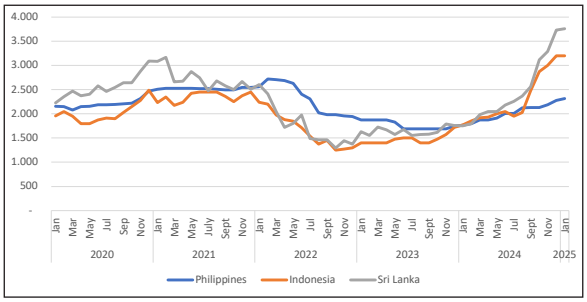
Jan 31, '25 1 US$ = P58.42 or Rp16,295 or India Rs86.56 or SL Rs297.86

1 Euro = US$1.04 n.q. = no quote

MARKET REVIEW OF DESICCATED COCONUT

In 2024, desiccated coconut prices experienced a significant upward trend across all three major producing countries, correlating with shifts in global supply and demand. The Philippines saw a steady increase from US$ 1,764/MT in January to US$ 2,315/MT in December. Indonesia's prices surged more dramatically, rising from US$ 1,771/MT in January to US$ 3,200/MT by the end of the year. Sri Lanka exhibited a similar pattern, with prices escalating from US$ 1,750/MT in January to US$ 3,760/MT in December. This sharp rise suggests heightened demand, potential supply constraints, and increased production costs. In contrast, 2023 was characterized by relative price stability, with only minor fluctuations. The Philippines maintained prices between US$ 1,690–1,874/MT, with a slight dip mid-year before recovering. Indonesia saw gradual increases from US$ 1,400/MT in early 2023 to US$ 1,720/MT by December, while Sri Lanka's prices ranged from US$ 1,552/MT in July to US$ 1,788/MT in November. The contrast between the two years highlights a shift in market dynamics, where the acceleration in 2024 suggests supply chain disruptions, rising input costs, or increased international demand, particularly impacting Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Figure 1. Monthly Price of Desiccated Coconut (US$/MT), January 2020- January 2025



Source: ICC

As the price increased, the total import value increased by 2.7%, reaching US$ 498.1 million during January-October 2024. Despite this increase, the global market for desiccated coconut experienced a 5.9% decline in import volume, dropping from 322,445 metric tons (MT) in January-October 2023 to 303,313 MT in the same period of 2024. This was most likely driven by supply constraints, higher production costs, or shifts in trade patterns. The overall decline in global volume could be attributed to factors such as reduced supply from key producing countries, increased competition from alternative products, or changing consumer demand in certain regions. However, the growth in value despite lower volume indicates that demand remains strong in certain key markets, sustaining higher prices.

Within this global context, the EU27 and US markets showed contrasting trends. The EU27 significantly increased its imports by 14.8%, from 80,272 MT to 92,192 MT, while the US saw a modest growth of 5.0%, reaching 34,544 MT. However, while the EU27's import value rose by 9.0%, the growth rate was lower than its volume increase, indicating a decline in the average price per ton. In contrast, the US market maintained a more balanced growth, with import value rising 4.5%, closely matching its volume increase. This suggests that prices remained stable in the US, while the EU27 may have benefited from lower-cost supplies. The overall trends highlight strong demand resilience in the EU and US, even as the global market faces supply challenges.

At the supply side, the export performance of desiccated coconut from the Philippines showed a notable recovery in 2024 after experiencing a decline in both volume and value in previous years. Export volumes dropped slightly from 165,069 MT in 2021 to 156,361 MT in 2023, but in 2024, shipments surged to 173,045 MT, marking a significant rebound. In terms of export value, there was a sharp decline from $400.1 million in 2021 to $247.2 million in 2023, indicating weaker prices in global markets. However, by 2024, export revenue improved to $296.0 million, reflecting both higher volumes and a partial recovery in prices. This resurgence aligns with the observed upward price trends in desiccated coconut markets during 2024, suggesting stronger global demand and possibly tighter supply conditions in other producing regions.

Table 1. Global Imports of Desiccated Coconut, January-October 2023/2024

Region	Volume (MT)		(%)	Volume (MT)		(%)
	Jan-Oct 2023	Jan-Oct 2024		Jan-Oct 2023	Jan-Oct 2024	
EU27	80,272	92,192	14.8	179,026	195,211	9.0
US	32,909	34,544	5.0	60,111	62,817	4.5
World	322,445	303,313	-5.9	484,911	498,071	2.7

Source: ITC and US Census Bureau

Table 2. Exports of Desiccated Coconut from Philippines, 2021-2024

Year	Volume (MT)	Value (US$'000)
2021	165,069	400,108
2022	156,588	369,361
2023	156,361	247,177
2024	173,045	296,011

Source: Philippines Statistics Authority

Table 3. Exports of Desiccated Coconut from Indonesia, 2020-2024

Year	Volume (MT)	Value (US$'000)
2020	128,087	178,794
2021	139,932	234,663
2022	110,147	148,837
2023	113,671	125,963
2024	119,231	176,624

Source: BPS-Statistics Indonesia

The Philippines saw an overall increase in desiccated coconut exports, with the United States (39,819 MT, +20.2%), Netherlands (29,552 MT, -1.6%), and China (10,819 MT, -3.8%) remaining the top destinations. Key growth markets included Paraguay (+20,400%), Brazil (+97%), Indonesia (+173%), and Turkey (+23%), while exports to France (-24.3%), Singapore (-87.5%), and Ireland (-71.8%) declined. Southeast Asia and South America showed increasing demand, with strong growth in Brazil and Indonesia, while Europe had mixed performance, with Germany and the Netherlands maintaining strong imports, but France and Ireland declining. New markets such as Bahrain and Iran emerged, while some destinations like Serbia, Qatar, and Georgia saw no imports. The data highlights the expansion into new markets while maintaining strong exports to key destinations, signaling a growing global demand for Philippine desiccated coconut.

Indonesia, one of the world's largest exporters of desiccated coconut, has shown a fluctuating trend in exports over the past five years. In 2024, export volume reached 119,231 MT, showing a slight recovery from 113,671 MT in 2023 but still lower than the 2021 peak of 139,932 MT. Interestingly, the export value in 2024 surged to $176.62 million, significantly higher than $125.96 million in 2023, suggesting that higher prices have helped offset the decline in volume. The 2022 drop in both volume and value aligned with a global slowdown, but the 2024 rebound in export value could indicate stronger pricing power or increased demand from alternative markets outside the US and EU. Indonesian exporters may need to continue diversifying their market reach and improving production efficiency to navigate the uncertainties in global demand.

Indonesia's desiccated coconut exports in 2023-2024 show significant shifts in key markets, reflecting evolving global demand. While major destinations like Singapore, Germany, and Russia saw an increase in imports, others such as China and Saudi Arabia experienced declines. Notably, Singapore remained the largest importer, rising from 32,593 metric tons in 2023 to 34,222 metric tons in 2024. European markets, including Germany (6,826 MT) and Poland (2,846 MT), maintained strong demand, while Russia recorded a sharp increase to 9,513 MT. In contrast, China's imports dropped by over 50% to 2,710 MT, possibly due to changing trade dynamics or domestic supply adjustments. Emerging markets such as Thailand (4,516 MT) and the Netherlands (5,204 MT) displayed strong growth, highlighting potential diversification in Indonesia's export strategy. These shifts underscore the importance of monitoring global trade patterns and market-specific factors influencing Indonesia's desiccated coconut industry.

COMMUNITY NEWS

SRI LANKA TO GROW 40,000 ACRES OF COCONUT IN THE NORTH

Sri Lanka expects to grow 40,000 acres of coconut in the North as part of the efforts for long term expansion of the crop and also give free fertilizer to small holders, Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure Samantha Viddyarathna said.

Sri Lanka's coconut prices have soared amid import controls and a crop shortfall.

"We have taken steps to grow 40,000 acres of coconut in the Northern coconut triangle," Minister Viddyarathna told parliament.

"We have asked 1,437 million rupees from the budget for that. This will have results in the long term."

Some of Sri Lanka's traditional coconut are located in areas which are fast developing and where the land has higher yielding uses.

Sri Lanka's then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa banned fertilizer following advice from the Government Medical Officers Association which was followed by a massive currency crises after macro-economists printed money on top of tax cuts to boost growth.

Fertilizer prices soared in the crisis while supplies were also short.

Sri Lanka also have 39,883 acres of coconut state plantations but they also have not got fertilizer for the past five years, Minister Viddyarathna said.

"Where there is no fertilizer the crops decline," he said. "There were also weather impacts."

Heavy rains tend to drench flowers and reduce pollination, according to some in the coconut sector.

Rains have continued this year.

Sri Lanka has obtained 55,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer from Russia of which 27,500 was reserved for coconut small holders.

"We have decided to give free fertilizer to coconut land owners with less than 5 acres."

Sri Lanka has a number of export industries including powdered milk, shell charcoal and coir which are also facing higher costs and raw material difficulties due to crop shortfall and import restrictions on raw coconuts. *(Economy Next)*

SUPREME COURT RULES COCONUT OIL AS EDIBLE, LOWERING GST RATES

Putting to rest a 15-yr old dispute, the Supreme Court held that coconut oil in small packages can be classified as edible oil, and will, therefore, attract lower taxes compared to non-edible ones.

However, the apex court clarified that if coconut oil is packaged in small bottles and labelled for use on hair, it would be then classified as hair oil under the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985. The erstwhile excise duty regime has now been subsumed under the Goods and Services Tax regime post 2017, and the GST on edible oil is 5%, whereas the rate of tax on hair oil is 18%.

The ruling comes as a huge relief for the FMCG players like Marico and Bajaj as the coconut oil manufacturers can now benefit from the lower GST rate of 5% for edible oils, compared to 18% for hair oils.

Rejecting the tax department's appeals to classify coconut oil sold in small packages as hair oil, a three-judge bench comprising chief justice Sanjiv Khanna and justices Sanjay Kumar and R. Mahadevan ruled that "…pure coconut oil sold in small quantities as 'edible oil' would be classifiable under Heading 1513 (edible oil) in Section III-Chapter 15 of the First Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act unless the packaging thereof

satisfies all the requirements set out in Chapter Note 3 in Section VI-Chapter 33 of the First Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985, read with the General/Explanatory Notes under the corresponding Chapter Note 3 in Chapter 33 of the Harmonized System of Nomenclature, whereupon it would be classifiable as 'hair oil' under Heading 3305 in Section VI Chapter 33 thereof."

The judgment noted that small-sized containers are a feature common to both 'edible oils' as well as 'hair oils'. Therefore, there must be something more to distinguish between them for classification of such oil, be it under Chapter 15 or under Chapter 33, other than the size of the packing.

According to the apex court, the mere fact that coconut oil is also capable of being put to use as a cosmetic or toilet preparation, by itself, would not be sufficient to exclude such oil from the ambit of 'coconut oil' and subject it to classification as 'hair oil' as 'coconut oil' is name- specific.

"Edible coconut oil requires to be packed in containers using edible grade plastic. The coconut oil sold must satisfy the requirements of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and be packaged in conformity with the Edible Oils Packaging (Regulations) Order, 1998. Further, edible oil would have a shorter shelf life than oil meant for cosmetic purposes and must meet the Indian Standards Specifications prescribed for edible oil which are different from the standards for hair oil. Significantly, the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977, provide that 'edible oil' can be packed in specified sizes of 50 ml, 100 ml, 200 ml, 500 ml, 1 litre or 2 litres," the judgment noted.

The Revenue had stressed that Shanti Coconut Oil was marketed in containers depicting a popular film actress with flowing tresses and thus in the light of such marketing, the oil sold was obviously meant for use as 'hair oil' and not as 'edible oil'. "However, such an advertisement is not conclusive, in itself, to classify the oil as 'hair oil,' the SC observed.

Eight appeals pertaining to the period February 2005 to February 2007 were filed by the department in the SC in 2009. Four of these appeals related to M/s Marico Ltd, which manufactures and markets pure coconut oil as 'edible oil' under the name 'Parachute.' The remaining four appeals related to its Puducherry-based job-workers M/s. Aishwarya Industries, M/s. Moreshwar Industries, M/s. Shivam Enterprises and M/s. Sowparnika Enterprises - who received its coconut oil in bulk and sold the same after packing in small containers, ranging from 50 ml to 2 litres. Show- cause notices were issued in July 2007 by the Central Excise authorities proposing to treat the coconut oil sold by them as 'hair oil.' In 2008, the orders were confirmed and excise duty with interest and penalty was levied on the four job- workers and Marico. On appeal, the Customs Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal had ruled in favour of the companies. The Revenue had then filed appeals in the top court.

A split verdict by a two-judge bench in 2018 led to the matter being referred to a three-judge bench. While Justice Ranjan Gogoi (retd) had then opined that coconut oil in small packings was more appropriately classifiable as edible oil, Justice R Banumathi (retd) had then concluded that coconut oil, packed in small sachets/ containers suitable for being used as hair oil, was classifiable as such under Heading 3305. *(Economic India Times)*

TETRA PAK UNVEILS UHT TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM COCONUT PRODUCT PROCESSING

Tetra Pak has announced the introduction of its Direct Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) technology, designed to revolutionize the processing and packaging of coconut products. This technology aims to preserve the natural flavor and nutritional value of coconut water, addressing the increasing global demand for coconut-based beverages.

In recent years, products such as fresh coconut water, coconut milk, and coconut cream have gained popularity worldwide, valued for their low cholesterol and calorie content, as well as essential nutrients. According to the Vietnam Coconut Association, eight of the top ten coconut-producing countries are in the Asia Pacific, with Vietnam ranking fourth in export value.

Processing coconuts poses challenges due to their perishable nature. Once opened, coconut water quickly loses its nutrients and flavor because of natural enzymatic activity. Rapid processing is essential to minimize food waste. Tetra Pak's UHT technology addresses these challenges by using high heat for a brief period to eliminate harmful microorganisms, followed by rapid cooling. This process can extend the shelf life of coconut products up to 12 months without requiring preservatives or refrigeration.

During the recent Coconext 2024 conference, Tetra Pak showcased its innovative solutions aimed at improving the quality and competitiveness of Vietnamese coconut products. Key benefits of Tetra Pak's Direct UHT technology include:

Customizability: The technology can adapt to various coconut products, including coconut water and coconut milk.

Nutrient Preservation: It maintains essential nutrients and natural flavors.

Enhanced Efficiency: The system reduces energy consumption and minimizes by-products.

Integrated Monitoring Systems: These provide comprehensive control over production processes.

Tetra PlantMaster and support for coconut producers

Additionally, Tetra Pak introduced the Tetra PlantMaster, an automation solution designed to optimize food production from raw material intake to final packaging. This intuitive system aims to help businesses streamline operations and reduce costs.

Ngo Thanh, Processing Director at Tetra Pak Vietnam, emphasized the company's commitment to sustainable processing solutions. Tetra Pak aims to support clients in optimizing operational costs, maintaining product quality, and ensuring traceability throughout the production process.

To further assist Vietnamese food and beverage companies, Tetra Pak invests in technologies that facilitate the development of innovative coconut-based products. The Bloom Centre in Binh Duong exemplifies this commitment by aiding companies in creating products that cater to diverse consumer needs. *(ScandAsia)*

COCONUT OUTPUT LIKELY FLAT NEXT YEAR AMID AGING TREES

Philippine coconut production growth is likely to be flat next year given low yields from the country's aging trees, an industry player said.

"We estimate coconut production to stay at the levels similar to previous years as efforts to improve productivity will take time to bear fruit," Romeo I. Chan, Axelum Resources Corp. chairman and chief executive officer, said in an e-mailed reply to questions.

Philippine coconut output has steadily decreased in recent years as most of the country's fruit-bearing trees are now too old. Coconut and its by-products remain the country's top agricultural export.

The volume of coconut production hit 14.89 million metric tons (MT) in 2023, slightly lower than 14.93 million MT a year earlier, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.

"At present, the most evident challenges are the low productivity of coconut trees and inadequate infrastructure support," Mr. Chan said. "Senile trees, weather disturbances and climate

change have led to declining harvest yields over the years."

Last year, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. ordered the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) to draft a plan to rehabilitate the coconut industry, including planting 100 million coconut trees by 2028.

Among the agency's rehabilitation plan seeks to address the advanced age of the nut-bearing trees. The agency is seeking to replant about 8.5 million coconut trees this year.

Under the Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan 2024-2034, the replanting project is expected to increase coconut output by 4.7 billion nuts annually worth P33.1 billion by 2034.

In 2025, the PCA aims to replant 15.3 million trees, followed by 25.4 million yearly between 2026 and 2028.

Mr. Chan said the government's replanting goal could be reached if the state and private sector work together.

"In addition, the absence or lack of development in coconut regions has increasingly contributed to it being one of the most marginalized sectors, with coconut farmers considered among the poorest in the country," he added.

Mr. Chan said the struggling industry could be boosted with the appropriate use of the coco levy fund.

In 2021, Republic Act No. 11524 or the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund Act signed by then President Rodrigo R. Duterte mandated the creation of a fund that places coconut levy assets to a trust fund that will finance the rehabilitation and modernization of the industry.

"The proper utilization of the coco levy fund will be critical to help modernize the coconut industry, reinforce capabilities of smallholder farms and uplift coconut farming communities," he said.

The law also calls on the Bureau of the Treasury to transfer P10 billion to the trust fund, another P10 billion in the second year, P15 billion in the third year, another P15 billion in the fourth year and P25 billion in the fifth year.

Axelum is a Philippine Stock Exchange-listed manufacturer and exporter of coconut products. *(Business World)*

VIETNAM'S COCONUT INDUSTRY EYES BILLION-DOLLAR MARKETS

Coconut has emerged as a key economic driver for the Mekong Delta and south-central coastal regions as it gains entry into billion-dollar markets such as the U.S. and China.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam currently boasts over 200,000 hectares of coconut cultivation. Coconut is now one of the six key crops included in the national program for industrial crop development by 2030. From generating US$180 million in export revenue in 2010, coconut exports reached $900 million in 2023, and the sector is expected to surpass the billion-dollar mark in 2024. With this trajectory, the ministry aims to enhance the scale and quality of the coconut industry for further global expansion.

On the global map of coconut production and exports, Vietnam ranks sixth among the top ten coconut-producing countries, with an annual output of nearly 2 million tons. The country's coconut quality and yield place it among the global leaders, with coconut meat making up 35% and coconut water 27%, both surpassing the global average by 5%. Dr. Tran Thi My Hanh, from the Southern Horticultural Research Institute (SOFRI), highlighted these exceptional figures.

In terms of coconut cultivation, the Mekong Delta province of Ben Tre is the largest producer,

with over 80,000 hectares dedicated to the crop. Huynh Quang Duc, Deputy Director of the Ben Tre Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, noted that the province is the coconut capital of the nation, accounting for 42% of Vietnam's total coconut area. Coconut farming is a vital source of income for over 200,000 rural households in the province. In recent years, many farmers have switched from less profitable rice farming to coconut cultivation, boosting incomes and providing a sustainable livelihood. Ben Tre's coconut products are expected to generate $500 million in export revenue in 2024, contributing over 50% of the nation's total coconut export value.

The Chinese market is seen as a significant opportunity for Vietnamese coconuts. China, with its large population, has a high demand for coconut-based products, including fresh coconuts, coconut water, coconut oil, and processed coconut products. With its proximity to Vietnam, the country enjoys a competitive advantage in shipping costs compared to Southeast Asian and African competitors. Additionally, free trade agreements between ASEAN and China have facilitated easier access to this lucrative market. Vietnam's large coconut production capacity, particularly from Ben Tre and the Mekong Delta, ensures a stable supply for China.

It is estimated that China consumes around 4 billion coconuts annually, with approximately 2.6 billion being fresh. Despite the high demand, China's domestic production is insufficient, presenting an opportunity for Vietnam's coconut exports to fill this gap.

Maximizing the value of coconut

While the Vietnamese coconut sector has several advantages, experts in the coconut processing industry warn that strict management of production and exports is crucial to sustaining growth. Nguyen Phong Phu, technical director of Vina T&T Group, emphasized that the approval of Vietnam's fresh coconut exports to China has opened up significant economic opportunities. However, to maintain this success, both government authorities and producers must work together to manage production standards and combat fraudulent practices. The government must implement digital systems for managing export regions and enforce strict penalties against fraudulent activities to protect the reputation of Vietnamese coconut products.

Coconuts offer high economic value not only through the export of fresh fruits to markets like the US, Australia, and China, but also through by-products such as coir, activated carbon, and coconut-based handicrafts. Nguyen Thi Kim Thanh, chairwoman of the Vietnam Coconut Association, pointed out that of the 200,000 hectares of coconut plantations across the country, 120,000 are dedicated to the processing industry. To increase coconut value, Vietnam must invest in quality coconut varieties while also focusing on maintaining a strong processing industry.

Currently, Vietnam is emerging as a supplier of raw coconut materials to global processing markets. However, infrastructure improvements are needed in rural coconut-growing areas to reduce intermediaries and shorten the supply chain. This would allow farmers to access the market more directly, enhancing their income and creating incentives to continue growing coconuts. *(VNExpress)*

IOTREE COCONUT AI SENSORS INSTALLED TO COMBAT PALM WEEVIL THREAT

The installation of the IoTree Coconut AI Sensors took place at the National Properties Limited Coconut Orchid in Orange Hill. This project introduces an innovative Early Detection Pest and Disease Management System utilizing IoTree sensors for the real-time digital monitoring of the South American Palm Weevil (SAPW), a major pest threatening coastal coconut palms.

The system provides early detection of SAPW in its larval stage, allowing for timely intervention

before infestation reaches advanced stages, which are typically associated with tree mortality and costly mitigation measures. The AI systems are being implemented by CARDI in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

The deployment of this technology will support effective monitoring and inform mitigation strategies to control SAPW, helping to reduce tree loss and the need for tree removal. The project is part of the HIT REST Caribbean initiative, funded by the ACP Innovative Fund, the OACPS Research and Innovation Program, and the European Union.

It is jointly implemented by the University of the West Indies, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Agency, and Anton de Kom University of Suriname.

At the Coconut Orchid in Orange Hill, Hon. Saboto Caesar, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry, and Labour, expressed thanks to CARDI for their dedicated efforts in protecting coconut production within the agricultural sector.

Minister Caesar shared that the sector could become more resilient, efficient, and better equipped to tackle emerging pests and diseases, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability and productivity with these technological advancements to ensure food nutrition and security.

Donawa Jackson, CARDI Representative for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, highlighted the vital role of coconut production supporting local economies through value-added products and the contribution to environmental sustainability.

Renato Gumbs, Chief Agricultural Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, emphasized the role of the technology in improving the agricultural sector, especially in the preservation and expansion of coconut tree populations. Chief Gumbs also thanked CARDI for their continued support in enhancing the sector.

Tameka Lavia of the National Properties Limited shared that the coconut orchid spans 15 acres. Lavia welcomed Mr. Jackson and the team for their efforts in tackling the SAPW issue.

Additionally, teachers and students of the Georgetown Secondary School were in attendance and were congratulated by Minister Caesar and Mr. Jackson for securing first place in the CARICOM High School Agriculture Competition. *(St. Vincent Times)*

COCONUT'S REMOVAL IN USFDA MAJOR FOOD ALLERGEN LIST TO BOOST PHILIPPINES EXPORT

The country's coconut industry got a big boost after the coconut was removed by the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) from the list of major food allergens, a trade official said.

"The delisting of coconut as a major food allergen can boost demand for these products and encourage more producers and consumers to support coconut-based/containing products. This, in turn, will benefit our coconut farmers and exporters," Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) - Export Marketing Bureau Director Bianca Pearl Sykimte said in a statement.

The DTI said the delisting would waive the requirement for coconut products, particularly coconut-containing packaged foods and supplements, to secure special allergen labeling under the US Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA).

This may cover an increased demand for coconut-based products such as refined and virgin coconut oil, coconut milk, desiccated coconut, coconut water, and coconut sugar, among others, it said.

Sykimte lauded the combined and continuous efforts of the DTI and the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Philippine Coconut

Authority (PCA), and the private stakeholders in addressing the industry's challenges.

"This progress underscores our commitment to support the development and growth of our coconut sector by addressing key market access and regulatory issues," she said.

Citing Mintel's global new product database from 2018 to 2023, the DTI official said over 20,000 coconut product variants are being used in the US as ingredients for food, drinks, and personal care products.

Meanwhile, coconut stakeholders welcomed the development and underscored the need for science-based information in global policymaking.

"It is a welcome development and great news for the coconut industry, not only in the Philippines but globally. The issue on food allergens has been running for decades. Finally removing coconut as a tree nut eliminates one issue against it. This is the result of a joint private-government sector effort," United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (UCAP) Executive Director Yvonne Agustin said.

Peter Paul Philippine Corporation Sales, Marketing and Export Vice President Dr. Rhoey Lee Dakis said the USFDA decision provides much-needed clarity for consumers, manufacturers, and the broader industry.

"It ensures that coconut products are no longer subject to unnecessary allergen labeling or misconceptions… We believe this progress will further strengthen the global coconut industry by removing barriers and offering consumers accurate, reliable information," Dakis said.

To date, coconut products remain the country's top export, amounting to USD524.92 million from January to October 2024, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority. *(Philippine News Agency)*

HERE'S HOW NEERA IS COLLECTED FROM COCONUT TREES AT THE FOOTHILLS OF THE WESTERN GHATS

The nectar falls drop by drop into a plastic cover secured to coconut trees in a grove near the Western Ghats in Anaimalai. In a few hours' time, it will start its journey to far off cities such as Chennai and Bengaluru, apart from nearby Coimbatore. Known as neera, this drink will be served chilled from dispensers at cafes, coffee shops and supermarkets.

It is almost 9am and Dhanabal Muthusamy is overseeing a fresh batch of neera being collected at a sprawling coconut grove at Anaimalai near Pollachi. It will be sold under the NectRaw brand of the Anaimalais Coconut Producer Company, a Farmer Producer Organization.

One of the directors of the organization, the 44-year-old looks on as tappers S Palanichamy and Kutti Raj climb up the trees to collect the boxes that hold the drink. "Neera is the nectar from thousands of coconut flowers," explains Dhanabal, adding that it is collected from unopened flower clusters of the trees. Coconut trees in the farm that the company had taken on lease, wear box-like structures on their spadix (a thick, spike-like inflorescence that holds the flowers within).

The nectar drips directly into a plastic cover inside through PVC pipes that is surrounded by ice. With a hand-woven petti secured at his hip by a leather belt, Palanichamy scales a coconut tree. Once at the top, he extracts the cover filled with the golden nectar, and drops it into a basket. He places a fresh plastic cover and ice, moving on to the next tree. Tappers climb trees twice a day to collect neera — at around 6am and 5pm, with each tree fetching around 1.5 litres a day.

In his younger years, Dhanabal, who is from Kaliyapuram village in the region, would drink neera the first thing in the morning. "Back then, the drink, which we call theluvu , was collected in mud pots," he recalls. "We also used to make karupatti at our farm; I can still remember the taste of the chewy karupatti jow mittai I would

keep popping in when it was bubbling on the stove." It is these memories that triggered an interest in him to offer the taste of neera from the Kongu belt to people in bigger cities.

After almost ten years in the banking industry, Dhanabal quit his job to make value-added agricultural products. He started with the initial research and pilot unit in 2013, finally getting the go-ahead from the Government to collect and sell coconut nectar in 2018. "There are 1.5 crores coconut trees in and around Pollachi," he points out, adding that the region's weather and abundant supply of water aid in the growth of the trees.

Tapping these trees for coconut nectar can be beneficial for farmers as well, he points out. "This process contributes to better yield," he says: "Our goal is to increase income for farmers as well as create job opportunities for locals in these small towns." NectRaw has a factory in Anaimalai where the drink is tested for quality before being packed. Neera, in order to be enjoyed at its best, has to be served chilled. Dhanabal and team ensure this cold chain is maintained from the time the drink is collected, till it reaches customers.

Dhanabal wants to popularize it as a healthy alternative to processed drinks. "I hope more people benefit from this natural drink about which there is not much of awareness," he says. He offers us a glass of neera at his office. It tastes of the terrain it is from — of mountains, early morning dew, and the sweetness of coconut that is yet to blossom. *(The Hindu)*

PCA EASTERN VISAYAS WELCOMES RISING COPRA PRICE

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) said higher copra prices will help improve the income of nearly 400,000 families in the Eastern Visayas region.

The average farm gate prices of copra, a major by-product of coconut, rose to PHP52.10 per kilogram as of Jan. 30 from PHP22.16 in the same period last year, according to PCA's price watch data.

The current copra trading price is also way better than the PHP20.17 per kilogram recorded two years ago.

PCA Regional Manager Joel Pilapil said their main office has yet to release the analysis on increasing copra prices, but this could be attributed to the rising demand of coconut oil in the global market as more consumers realize the nutritional value of the coco-based oil.

"This is good news as this will ensure higher income for our coconut farmers and their families. This will also encourage our whole nut buyers to get more produce from farmers," Pilapil told the Philippine News Agency.

Traditionally, whole nut buying also increases if copra trading prices go up.

Currently, the prevailing price of whole nut in Leyte province is PHP12 to PHP15 per piece.

Processing a kilogram of copra requires at least three to four pieces of coconut.

Copra is the dried meat or kernel of the coconut, from which premium oil is extracted. It also yields coconut cake after oil extraction, which is mainly used as feed for livestock.

PCA estimated that 1.83 million people or nearly half of the 4.4 million population of the region are dependent on coconuts.

The region is the fifth top coconut-producing region in the country with an average copra production of 320,000 metric tons every year. *(Philippine News Agency)*

PCA, PPSA, MONDE NISSIN EXPLORE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR COCONUT INDUSTRY GROWTH

A newfangled partnership is on the horizon for the country's coconut industry as the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) met with the Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (PPSA)

and Monde Nissin Corporation on January 9, 2025, to explore synergies in coconut farming and sustainability initiatives. The meeting was led by PCA Administrator and CEO Dexter R. Buted, PPSA Country Director Angel Bautista, and Monde Nissin representatives Head of Corporate and Government Affairs, Ms. Olive Misa and Mr. Marc Alejo.

Monde Nissin explored potential local partnerships for coconut growing to support the production of its new product, Goodnom Fresh Gata, headlining its commitment to local sourcing and sustainability. In response, ADRB assured that the PCA's comprehensive coconut planting, replanting, and fertilization programs, launched in 2024, aim to secure a sufficient supply of coconuts within the next five years. He also encouraged the use of healthier coconut by-products, such as coconut oil, sugar, and flour, to enhance food products' nutritional profiles, an area Monde Nissin plans to integrate into its product development strategies.

The dialogue extended to Monde Nissin's pursuit of sustainable energy sources, particularly biofuels derived from coconuts, wherein ADRB highlighted the agency's advancements in utilizing coconut-based biofuels, such as Coco-Methyl Ester (CME) and Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), pressing on their potential to drive innovation in renewable energy.

In a promising development, Monde Nissin shared its willingness to support PCA's community initiatives through shared value activities, including enhancing coconut farmers' livelihoods and developing sustainable practices. The agency chief welcomed this commitment and suggested involving other CFIDP implementing agencies to broaden the scope and impact of these efforts.

The PCA's flagship BAYANIyugan campaign was also introduced during the discussions. The campaign embodies a whole-of-nation approach, encouraging synergy across public and private sectors to fortify the coconut industry. The role of private partners like Monde Nissin is crucial in realizing transformative goals, such as increased production, innovation, and sustainable practices.

The meeting also served as an avenue to promote PCA's flagship BAYANIyugan campaign, which adopts a whole-of-nation approach by involving private industries as vital partners. BAYANIyugan aims to bolster the coconut industry through multi-stakeholder participation, encouraging synergy across public and private sectors to achieve transformative results.

"This is the start of our partnership," ADRB remarked, lauding the shared vision of PCA, PPSA, and Monde Nissin in promoting inclusive and sustainable agricultural value chains.

Both parties committed to a follow-up meeting involving Monde Nissin's Research and Development and procurement teams to deepen the collaboration. PPSA, a multi-stakeholder platform under Grow Asia, reiterated its dedication to advancing resilient food systems and empowering smallholder farmers through partnerships that drive innovation and inclusivity.

This collaboration underscores a collective commitment to transforming the coconut industry for the benefit of coconut farmers and their communities. It reaffirms PCA's unwavering mission to enhance farmers' livelihoods while ensuring the industry's long-term growth, sustainability, and resilience. *(Dept. of Agriculture PH News)*

DTI-DAVAO, DUTCH GROUP COLLABORATE ON COCONUT COIR, FIBER PRODUCTS

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) 11 (Davao Region) has partnered with PUM Netherlands, a volunteer business advisory group, to develop high-value products from coconut husks under the Coconut Farmers Industry Development Plan (CFIDP).

DTI-11 Director Romeo Castañaga said in a statement Wednesday that the collaboration aims to

support capacity-building and product development for 25 CFIDP-assisted coconut-based enterprises and farmers in the region.

Despite the abundance of coconuts in the region, the industry faces challenges, such as low farmer income, poor tree yield, outdated technologies, limited market use of coconut products, and a lack of innovation in items like coconut milk, cream, and water, Castañaga said.

He thanked PUM Netherlands for assisting regional farmers and enterprises in developing coconut husk-based products, such as substrates and growing media, which are in high demand in Europe.

"We have noted several challenges when venturing into producing and promoting coconut products for horticulture purposes. These range from market access and expansion to technology, innovation, and laboratory facilities," Castañaga said.

Recently, PUM expert Cees de Kreij, a Netherlands-based consultant with more than 20 years of experience in the coconut sector, conducted one-on-one sessions with coconut farmers and cooperatives involved in husk processing.

De Kreij shared technical expertise on processing coconut husks into substrates and growing media for fruits, vegetables, and plants through technology transfer interventions for coconut stakeholders.

Soilless agriculture is widely practiced in the Netherlands and the European Union, where fruits, vegetables, and flowers are grown without soil.

DTI-11 plans to conduct coconut husk mapping in 2025 to assess the region's capacity for large-scale husk supply and prepare a study on its market potential.

Davao Region ranks fourth nationwide in land area planted with coconuts and production volume but contributes 13 percent to the country's total coconut output, making it the top producer.

By December 2024, DTI-11 had assisted about 800 coconut farmers under CFIDP, focusing on research, marketing, and market promotion to support the sector's growth. *(Philippine News Agency)*

EXPORTERS VYING WITH BIODIESEL FOR DWINDLING COCONUT SUPPLY

The biodiesel industry is competing for the limited supply of coconuts, crowding out exporters of products like coconut oil and coconut water, industry officials said.

"The recent increase in the country's biodiesel requirement may possibly divert more coconuts for domestic consumption," said Romeo I. Chan, chairman and chief executive officer of Axelum Resources Corp.

He sees a possible erosion of volume available for export, while acknowledging "the positive benefits for the environment (from biodiesel use), better fuel efficiency and higher copra prices," Mr. Chan said.

"We also need to caution that this may potentially erode the competitiveness of the export sector, which produces high-value coconut products and generates dollar flows for the country," he added.

In October, the biodiesel fuel blend was raised to 3%, or B3, on order of the Department of Energy. The government plans to increase the biodiesel blend to B5 in the next three years.

"In the end, we believe this necessitates a delicate balancing act to manage its broader impacts," Mr. Chan said.

The US Department of Agriculture has 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.

Confederation of Coconut Farmers' Organizations of the Philippines, Executive Director Charles R. Avila said that the increased requirement for coco-diesel may not be adequately supplied by the industry, citing limited yields due to the age of Philippine coconut trees.

"The legally expected increase in biodiesel blend is one thing. Coconut production, however, is clearly on the decline by easily 15% year on year, so it cannot be expected to meet the demand without sacrificing exports," Mr. Avila told BusinessWorld via Viber.

Axelum's Mr. Chan expects coconut production to be flat this year.

Coconut production hit 14.89 million metric tons (MT) in 2023, against the 14.93 million MT posted a year earlier, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

"There is no substitute for a serious planting or replanting program," Mr. Avila said.

In 2023, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. ordered the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) to draft a plan to rehabilitate the coconut Industry, including planting 100 million coconut trees by 2028.

Under the Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan 2024-2034, the replanting project is expected to increase coconut output by 4.7 billion nuts annually, valued at P33.1 billion, by 2034.

This year, the PCA aims to plant 15.3 million trees, followed by 25.4 million yearly between 2026 and 2028.

Mr. Avila said that coconut farmers should have a bigger role in the government's replanting efforts.

"We can dream of greater exports and a thousand more uses of coconut products — but the evidence mounts that the only sure thing is the government denying the coconut farmers their constitutional right to participate in programs affecting their welfare and development, which, of course, is a sure formula for ultimate failure," he added. *(Business World)*

FOREIGN PESTS SUSPECTED IN COCONUT DECLINE: COCONUT BOARD CHAIRMAN

It is suspected that the collapse of the coconut industry in this country or the reduction in coconut yields has been due to the influence of foreign invasive insects or bacteria, Chairman of the Coconut Cultivation Board Dr. Sunimal Jayakody said.

He said that several reports have linked the decline in coconut yields to foreign invasive insects or bacteria.

"Importing coconuts carries the risk of introducing harmful insects or bacteria to the coconut industry. Therefore, the special committee appointed to investigate into the matter has decided to suspend coconut imports," he said.

As a result, the committee has decided to suspend coconut imports for re-export and is now focusing on importing only coconut kernel (endosperm).

Even though imported coconuts undergo a quarantine process, Jayakody pointed out that there is no technical method to completely eliminate insects or bacteria.

However, the government recently announced it was prepared to import coconuts, as 200 million nuts are needed to sustain the coconut export industry.

The special committee was appointed by the Secretary to the Ministry of Plantations and Community Infrastructure and the Secretary of the Ministry of Industries for this purpose.

Accordingly, the quantity of coconut kernel to be imported will be determined based on the recommendations of the relevant committee, he said. *(Daily Mirror Online)*

REVOLUTIONIZING AGRICULTURE: NORTH KARNATAKA FARMERS TO TAP INTO COCONUT POTENTIAL

To boost coconut farming in North Karnataka, the Dakshina Kannada Coconut Farmers Producers Association, with the support of the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), is preparing to unveil an innovative programme.

This initiative outlines a strategic approach that includes cultivating 24 coconut varieties, implementing competitive pricing models, and providing technical assistance to enable farmers to create over 32 premium products.

Association CEO Chetan points out the adaptability of coconut trees, noting their extensive utility. He views this as a viable source of income for the rain-fed areas in North Karnataka. "Therefore, we have resolved to provide franchises in each taluk and will conduct large-scale operations throughout North Karnataka," he states.

The DK Coconut Farmers Producers Association, initiated by farmers, not only procures coconuts directly from producers at competitive rates but also maximizes the value of all coconut components to manufacture premium products. President Kusumadhar SK states, "By utilising the technology endorsed by CPCRI, we aim to connect rural and urban communities, promoting a self-sustaining environment that naturally integrates both."

The initiative benefits farmers, cottage industries, and entrepreneurs alike. The association intends to establish distribution centres in every taluk to promote self-employment. Business consultant Yatheesha KS indicates that these centres will offer over 32 products, including coconut ice cream, milk juice, oil, fertilisers, tarpaulin items, furniture, and 24 coconut sapling varieties. The comprehensive strategy includes agricultural education and quality sapling distribution. Following thorough training, farmers and cottage industries will receive a 40% profit margin on coconut products, supported by robust business infrastructure, he said.

The programme includes training women to craft decorative items from coconut husks and wood. According to Kusumadhar SK, the initiative aims to train 1 lakh women, with potential monthly earnings of Rs 25,000 each.

The anticipated coconut boom is expected to serve as an alternative income source for the rain-fed districts of North Karnataka. By increasing local production of tender coconuts, the region could achieve self-sufficiency and position itself as a future supplier. *(The Times of India)*

CAPIZ FARMERS RECEIVE 2,600 COCONUT SEEDLINGS

A total of 2,600 coconut seedlings were distributed to 50 corn farmers from Pilar town, as part of the "Kalubihan sa Kamaisan (KSK) Project."

According to the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), the KSK project is a partnership between the PCA and the Capiz provincial government, underscoring their joint commitment to enhancing the province's agricultural sector and improving the quality of life for farming communities across Capiz.

The KSK project was successfully launched in other municipalities, and recently in Brgy. Monteflor in Pilar town, pursuant to Provincial Ordinance No. 208, series of 2023.

Capiz governor Fredenil Castro emphasized the KSK project as a crucial initiative for building a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector in Capiz.

"It improves farmers' livelihood and addresses environmental challenges, including erosion and flooding. Planting coconut is especially timely," Castro said.

Further, the Capiz Provincial Government Communications Group acknowledged in a Facebook post that the program seeks to improve the conditions of denuded mountainous areas in the province used for corn farming by providing farmers with alternative livelihoods.

To note, PCA information officer Engr. Erica Dorondon pointed out that as of Jan. 27, the PCA has distributed 23,165 coconut seedlings in the province as part of the Kalubihan sa Kamaisan project with the Capiz provincial government.

"We will visit all of the municipalities with corn farms that are already denuded," Dorondon said, noting that there are ongoing plans to launch the 'Kalubihan sa Kamaisan' Project in the municipalities of Tapaz and Dumarao. *(Philippine Information Agency)*

TRADE NEWS

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

The overall downward price action in the vegetable oils market was evident during the week, coming from steady to firmer opening values.

In Rotterdam, the coconut oil market exhibited firmness at the start of the week, influenced by palm oil, with opening quotations at $1,975.00-1,985.00/MT CIF for positions from January/February through to June/July. Levels mostly tracked lower after that on weaker vegetable oils prices though later during the week rebounded following the lead of palm oil to end the week at $1,971.25-1,980.00/MT CIF. Of note was the presence of a few buyers lately after hibernating for months.

The palm kernel oil market likewise opened in the upside with offers at $1,820-1,850/MT CIF for positions from January/February through to June/July. Prices trailed the coconut oil path for most of the week and closed at $1,785-1,845/MT CIF. Buying support though was still absent.

Coconut oil widened again its price premium against palm kernel oil this week with spreads per position substantially elevated from last week. The weekly average stood at $162.57/MT, expanding appreciably from $124.86 a week ago and $86.93 two weeks ago. Premium per position are shown following: January/February $128.00 ($106.25 last week); February/March $174.70 ($125.00); March/April $169.70 ($128.50); April/May $171.25 ($134.50); May/June $166.00 ($127.94); June/July $165.75 ($127.00).

At the CBOT soya complex market, soybean futures swayed up and down this week. The upside was supported by weak US dollar and lately by reports of dry weather pattern in Argentina, eliciting concerns over crop damage and yield loss in growing areas. On the other hand, the downside was dragged by renewed talks of the USA imposing tariffs on China by the start of February and reports Argentina was to reduce export taxes to aggressively sell products.

At the palm oil section, market was steadier at the start of the week, deriving spillover gain from soybean oil. The market thereafter eased with pressures coming from weak demand amid reports of increase in biodiesel consumption, and a strong Malaysian currency. The market, however, managed to close higher during the week, supported by higher crude oil and soybean oil prices.

Prices of tropical oils for nearest forward shipment continued mixed with coconut oil still in the positive zone, rising another $3.70 from $1,977.00 last week to $1,980.70/MT CIF in the current week. On the other hand, palm kernel oil fell again, losing $46.00 from $1,852.00 to $1,806.00/MT CIF. Similarly palm oil shed $45.50 from $1,270.50 to $1,225.00/MT CIF. Consequently, coconut oil

expanded its price premium over palm kernel oil and palm oil. The spread against palm kernel oil leaped from $125.00 last week to $174.70/MT currently, as well as against palm oil from $706.50 to $755.70/MT. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

MARKET ROUND-UP OF COCONUT OIL

The Rotterdam coconut oil market mirrored last week's trend, easing after a firmer start but closing in the upside. For this week, sellers closed at $1,980 for January/February and February/March; $1,975 for March/April; $1,976.25 for April/May; $1,975 for May/June; $1,971.25/MT CIF for June/July. Buying support was thin, showing up towards the weekend for February/March at $1,910 and June/July at $1,905/MT CIF; but neglected other positions. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

THAI COCONUT EXPECTS TO RECORD THB10 BILLION OF REVENUE IN 2025 WITH EXPANSION TO JAPAN

Worawat Chinpinkyo, CEO and Managing Director of Thai Coconut Public Company Limited (SET: COCOCO) has traveled to Japan with the company's high-ranking executives to research products under the Thaicoco brand. Thaicoco is a high-quality coconut product from Thailand. The product was sold in Gyomu Supermarket, a very popular nationwide supermarket chain.

The debut in Gyomu Supermarket delivered the signature taste of Thai coconut to Japanese consumers, satisfying the country's healthy lifestyle. Thai Coconut aims to continue expanding in Japan's market while bolstering the product's image to the global standard.

Gyomu Supermarket has more than 1,000 supermarkets in Japan in 47 prefectures. The supermarket will be an important opportunity to expand Thai Coconut's customer base and bring Thai products up to global standards while also being an important channel to connect Thai products to Japanese consumers.

Panumas Yaveera, Thai Coconut Investor Relations, revealed to "Kaohoon" that the company's performance in 4Q24 is estimated to slow down from a seasonal factor, and the company's Board of Directors will hold a meeting to discuss the company's budget on 20 February 2025.

Thai Coconut's forecast for 1Q25 is that the quarter would perform unremarkably, but it would recover much faster than the fourth quarter of every year prior.

The company's plan for 2025 is to maintain its THB 10,000 total income due to expansion into new markets, the release of new products, such as coconut juice for athletes, Thai tea, green tea, coconut mix-fruit soda, etc., and the pet food business, which recently had large customers from the United States and Australia reinforcing sales. Thai Coconut also plans to expand into more than 30 countries from the current 26 countries.

Yuanta (Thailand) Securities stated that Thai Coconut's net profit in 4Q24 is likely to be moderate, with normal income at around THB 170-190 million, contracting from the same period a year earlier and from last quarter, due to gross profit margin (GPM) decreasing from U-rate that shrinking from sales, combining with heighten average cost since 3Q24, and expanding selling, general and administrative expenses (SG&A) from product exhibitions abroad.

Meanwhile, revenue in 4Q24 is forecasted to decline from an earlier quarter, as it is a low season, but it has grown from the same period a year ago, bolstered by existing customers from last year continuously raising their orders, swelling customer base from revenue recognition for new customers in China and the U.S. since 2Q24, and full quarter production capacity recognition.

Furthermore, the securities company expected 1Q25's normal profit to return to growth from the same period a year prior, and an earlier quarter, as Asia gets closer to warmer seasons.

As such Yuanta maintains its "Buy" suggestion, with a target price increased to THB 15.50, as GPM

in 2025 is expected to be approximately 24-25%, a slump due to coconut price expected to amplify due to an increase in global Thai coconut juice demand, weighing down domestic coconut and coconut juice output, while soaring shipping cost also bringing coconut juice cost along with it.

However, the securities company sees that those factors could be compensated by continuously strengthening revenue. In conclusion, the broker forecasted a 2.8% or THB 1,114 million growth to 2025's normal profit, a 35.3% gain from 2024's expectation of THB 824 million. 2025's total revenue is estimated to be THB 9,729 million from 2024's expected THB 6,569 million. *(Kaohoon International)*

DESICCATED COCONUTS: MARKET REMAINS EXTREMELY VOLATILE

Stable exports in 2024

The experts at T.M. Duché ventured an outlook for the coconut market in 2025 at the beginning of the year. Market players at all stages of the value chain are likely to be confronted with various hurdles, including lower production volumes, a corresponding shortage of raw materials and geopolitical tensions.

Philippine desiccated coconut exports proved to be very resilient in 2024 and were 3.8% higher in the January-November period than in the same period of the previous year. Most producers were able to increase their exports, especially in the second half of the year, but then there was a big bang when a major producer in the Philippines shut down its largest production facility. It is currently uncertain whether and when this will be put back into operation in 2025.

Rains give hope

Exports of high-quality coconuts had already fallen in June, and buyers in Europe and the Middle East in particular are feeling the effects of this shortage and are desperate to find the right goods. T.M. Duché also reports that the situation in the USA is a little more relaxed and there are still some coconut stocks here, so the supply chain is much more stable. However, if the decline in exports from the Philippines continues, this could also change soon. Last year's drought significantly affected production and the quality of coconuts; however, current rainfall gives market players hope that this problem will be less pronounced in 2025.

Transportation costs could rise

According to the market experts, high competitive pressure and scarce supplies worldwide are likely to lead to unavoidable price increases, especially as demand continues to rise. Transportation costs could also rise, partly due to global economic uncertainties and partly due to the fact that detours still have to be made around the Red Sea. There are also other unpredictable factors such as inflation, longer transit times, customs changes (e.g. on the part of the USA), etc. In summary, the coconut market will continue to be extremely volatile in 2025 and it will be difficult for all market players to plan for the long term. *(Mundus Agri)*

SRI LANKA LOOKS TO TURN TO INDONESIA FOR COCONUT PRODUCT IMPORTS

To combat the current coconut shortage, Sri Lanka looks at importing coconut products from Indonesia, an official said.

The minister of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development Sunil Handunneththi and Minister of Plantation and Community Infrastructure K. V. Samantha Vidyarathna was to submit a joint cabinet paper this week which was delayed due to re-assessment of the current measures to import coconut products.

Chairman of the Coconut Development Authority Shantha Ranathunga said that the Cabinet paper was to include imports of coconut related products like kernels, coconut powder, and coconut milk which will mainly be imported from Indonesia as well as relevant authorities to conduct a study on conditions applicable for coconut imports without damaging the nut. However, after several

discussions the study on importing coconuts is to be abandoned in the cabinet paper as of now.

"As per the research, Indonesia is the most suitable country to import coconuts products from" Mr. Ranathunga said.

The Chairman also said that individual manufacturers will be allowed to import coconut related products as per the requirements. A total equivalent of 200 million nuts worth of coconut products is to be imported.

He said the new cabinet paper only inclusive of imports of coconut products is to be submitted next week, the cabinet paper is most likely to be approved. *(Daily Mirror LK)*

SRI LANKA COCONUT PRODUCT EXPORTERS SEEK URGENT IMPORTS TO BRIDGE CRISIS

Sri Lanka's coconut-based industries say they need imported raw material to avoid losing export markets to other countries, with a 250 million nut crop shortfall projected for the first half of 2025.

By 2023 the harvest was down to 2,950 million nuts from 3,350 million nuts. Sri Lanka Coconut Research Institute is now forecasting a 1,407 million nut harvest for the first half of 2025. In Sri Lanka around 60 percent of the harvest comes in the first half of the year.

The Ceylon Chamber of Coconut Industries say based on the first half projection Sri Lanka may see another 300 million fall in coconut harvest in 2025.

There will be at least a 200 million nut shortfall in the first four months, Jayantha Samarakoon, President of the chamber said.

Export Market Loss

"We have requested the government to grant us approval to import coconuts, dried coconut chip, or kernels for the first four months, so that industries can manage orders without cancellation," Samarakoon told reporters.

Sri Lanka has already lost the virgin coconut oil market to Vietnam and may lose the other markets also, unless imports are allowed to tide over the next few months, one exporter said.

Imports of raw material will not only help maintain export orders and prevent them from shifting to other countries, but also help moderate domestic prices, the chamber said.

Though Sri Lanka has banned imports of fresh nuts, due to fears of disease, there are well established protocols for importing coconut used in coconut producing countries including Thailand and Australia, chamber officials said.

Unlike Sri Lanka, which is wracked in import controls, Thailand is in East Asia, where export industries are based on global supply chains and free trade.

Sri Lanka exported around 782 million dollars of coconut products up to November 2024 of coir fibre pith, activated carbon, coconut milk cream, power and desiccated coconut and the full year estimate was 850 million dollars, the chamber said.

It is up from around 708 million dollars in 2023.

Fertilizer Crisis

Sri Lanka's coconut crisis is mainly the result of not fertilizing farms over the past five years, the Chamber said.

Fertilizer prices shot up over the past few year on top of import controls.

Sri Lanka's central bank went on an aggressive rate cutting (stimulus or accommodative monetary policy) drive from 2020 triggering forex shortages while the government at the time also banned chemical fertilizer to save foreign exchange.

The US Fed also printed money and triggered a commodity bubble further pushing up prices, especially up to 2022, but since it started to tighten policy, some easing of commodity prices is seen.

Before the stimulus crisis, a 50 kilo bag of coconut fertilizer cost only 1,500 rupees.

But now a 50 kilogram bag of coconut fertilizer costs 8,000 to 9,000 rupees compared to 1,500 rupees earlier.

At one time the cost of fertilizer was as much 12,000 rupees a bag, which made it too expensive for most coconut farmers, they said.

Related
Sri Lanka coconut auction postponed for second week due to lack of nuts.

Sri Lanka to grow 40,000 acres of coconut in the North.

The chamber is seeking state subsidies to give fertilizer to small farmers in particular at 4,000 rupees a bag.

Fertilizing could push yields per tree from around 56 to 86 within a year, the chamber said.

The long term solution was to expand the cultivation of coconut into new areas. *(Economy Next)*

OTHER VEGEOIL NEWS

USED COOKING OIL FUTURES CONTRACTS LAUNCHED

Commodity price reporting agency Fastmarkets and US financial services company Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) have launched a used cooking oil (UCO) futures contract to meet rising biofuel demand, the Oils & Fats International reported.

The US Gulf-based UCO assessment reflected the primary market region for UCO trade, Fastmarkets said. "With the increased volumes and diversity of stakeholders in the UCO market, now is the perfect time to introduce a futures contract that can aid in effective risk management," Fastmarkets' global head of market development Przemek Koralewski said. The ICE UCO futures contract has been designed to support participants across the biofuel supply chain, including feedstock suppliers, refiners, traders, financial institutions and biodiesel producers, Fastmarkets said.

Meanwhile, over at the Southeast Asia, futures and options exchange Bursa Malaysia launched a US dollar-denominated, Used Cooking Oil (UCO) FOB Straits (Platts) Futures Contract (FUCO) on 16 December, the Oils & Fats International also reported A total of 42 contracts, representing 1,050 tons of UCO, was traded at the close of the first trading day, with FatHopes Energy Sdn Bhd and Mitsusho Sdn Bhd among the first traders to participate, the report said.

"The rapid growth in UCO collection and refining capacity across Southeast Asia makes the launch of FUCO both timely and highly relevant," said Bursa Malaysia Derivatives director Mohd Saleem Kader Bakas. "Malaysia, with its strategic geographical location as a regional transshipment hub, is ideally positioned to become the focal point for UCO trading in the region. The FUCO contract, which uses FOB Straits pricing, is designed to reflect the market dynamics of Southeast Asia, aligning closely with the needs and trends of the regional biofuel industry." *(UCAP Bulletin)*

OILTEK SECURES CONTRACT FOR NEW 200 TONNES/DAY CRUDE PALM KERNEL OIL FRACTIONATION PLANT IN MALAYSIA

Vegetable oil process technology provider Oiltek International has secured new contracts for a new 200 tonnes/day crude palm kernel oil (CPKO) fractionation plant in Malaysia.

Secured through the company's wholly-owned subsidiary Oiltek Sdn Bhd, the contracts are

worth approximately MYR9.2M ((US$2M), Oiltek said.

They covered the engineering, procurement, construction and commissioning of a replacement membrane filter for the CPKO fractionation plant and the design, fabrication, delivery, testing and commissioning of the refinery plant, Oiltek said.

Oiltek operates three key businesses: edible & non-edible oil refineries; renewable energy and product sales & trading.

To date, the group has designed, built and commercialised plants in more than 35 countries across five continents. *(Oils & Fats International)*

INDIA'S PALM OIL IMPORTS DECLINE AS SOYBEAN OIL GAINS MARKET SHARE

India, the world's largest edible oil importing nation, saw a significant decline in palm oil imports in December 2024, as soybean oil from South America gained market share.

This shift, driven by more competitive pricing and changes in supply chains, reflects a broader change in the country's oil import preferences and is expected to have ripple effects on the chemical industry, especially in terms of raw material sourcing and production processes.

According to the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA), soybean oil imports surged to 420,000 tonnes in December 2024, up from just 152,650 tonnes the previous year. This remarkable rise can be attributed to the price disparity between palm oil and soybean oil, with soybean oil being offered at substantial discounts due to surplus supplies from South America. As Malaysian palm oil exports tightened, consumers turned to the more affordable soybean oil, easing the pressures on palm oil supplies, said SEA Executive Director B.V. Mehta.

In contrast, palm oil's market share in India fell significantly, dropping to 42% in December 2024, while refined oils, including soybean and sunflower oil, collectively captured 58% of the market. This shift marks a noticeable trend towards diversification in India's edible oil consumption patterns. Crude palm oil imports experienced a significant decline in December 2024, dropping by nearly half compared to the previous year. Similarly, imports of refined palm oil (RBD palm olein) and crude palm kernel oil also saw notable decreases. In contrast, sunflower oil imports showed a slight increase, maintaining steady demand. This shift highlights changing preferences in India's edible oil consumption and a growing reliance on alternative oils.

Despite this change in the market, Indonesia and Malaysia remain the primary suppliers of palm oil to India, while soybean oil is predominantly sourced from South American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Russia. Additionally, crude sunflower oil continues to be imported mainly from Russia, Ukraine, and Argentina.

The impact of this shift in India's edible oil imports extends beyond agriculture, with significant implications for the chemical industry. The reduction in palm oil imports may affect the availability of key raw materials for a variety of chemical products, including biodiesel, cosmetics, and food additives. Palm oil is an essential ingredient in numerous chemical processes due to its versatility and low cost. As demand for alternative oils like soybean oil rises, suppliers and manufacturers in the chemical industry will need to adjust to new sourcing practices and adapt to fluctuations in raw material costs. The increased use of soybean oil may also prompt changes in formulation and processing methods for chemical manufacturers, leading to potential innovation and adjustment in production strategies.

Overall, while India's changing edible oil consumption trends signal a shift toward more sustainable sourcing and cost-effective options, the chemical industry must stay agile to address

the evolving supply chain dynamics and its potential impact on product availability and pricing. *(ChemAnalyst)*

CHINA VEG OIL STOCKS EDGE DOWN AND RAPESEED OIL INVENTORY GROWTH OFF-SETS DROP IN PALM OIL

China's combined stocks of its major vegetable oils soybean oil, palm oil and rapeseed oil dropped in the week to Friday January 17, with an increase in rapeseed oil stocks outweighing a drop in palm oil volume while soybean oil stocks stayed flat, according to data from the China National Grain and Oils Information Centre (CNGOIC).

The combined inventories of the three vegoils totaled 1.85 million tonnes, down by 10,000 tonnes from 1.86 million tonnes a week earlier.

The figure is also down by 120,000 tonnes from 1.97 million tonnes in the same period a year ago.

Soybean oil stocks were estimated at 900,000 tonnes, flat week on week, with the level down by 50,000 tonnes from 950,000 tonnes a month earlier.

On a year-on-year basis, soybean oil stocks were up by 70,000 tonnes from the 830,000 tonnes recorded during the same period a year ago.

Meanwhile, palm oil stocks totaled 470,000 tonnes, down by 40,000 tonnes from 510,000 tonnes a week earlier.

The figure is also down by 60,000 tonnes from 410,000 tonnes a month ago.

Palm oil stocks totaled 470,000 tonnes, down by 320,000 tonnes from 790,000 tonnes a year earlier.

Meanwhile, rapeseed oil stocks rose by 20,000 tonnes on the week to reach 480,000 tonnes, with the level also 60,000 tonnes higher than 420,000 tonnes recorded in the previous month and 130,000 tonnes up on the 350,000 tonnes seen a year ago.

Chinese soybean oil futures are expected to strengthen in the first calendar quarter on slow harvesting amid persisting dry spell in southern Brazil and Argentina as domestic soybean oil stocks draw down in near-term, according to CNGOIC.

Chinese soybean oil futures and soybean meal prices edged up while on the Dalian Commodity Exchange.

The most-liquid May soybean oil contract rose by 1.0% on the day to 7,784 yuan ($1,063) per tonne, while the corresponding soybean meal contract increased 1.3% to 2,849 yuan per tonne. *(Fastmarkets)*

HEALTH NEWS

EXPERT SAYS HOW YOU CAN USE COCONUT MILK FOR HAIR GROWTH

For those who want to have a luscious, thick mane that turns heads everywhere, the secret to unlocking rapid hair growth lies in one of your kitchen ingredients, coconut milk. Dr Ipshita Chakraborty, HOD Dietetics at CMRI Kolkata, shared that incorporating coconut milk into your hair care routine can have a transformative impact on your locks. Let's dive into the details in this article.

Dr Ipshita said, "Coconut milk is a natural moisturiser with excellent emollient properties. It locks moisture into the hair, making it ideal for dry and frizzy hair."

Coconut Milk for Hair Growth

Coconut milk is a natural moisturiser with excellent emollient properties. Its ability to lock moisture into the hair makes coconut milk ideal for dry and frizzy hair. "The fatty acids in coconut milk penetrate deep into the hair shaft, hydrating and smoothing each strand. This results in

soft, shiny, and healthy-looking hair that's full of life," shared the expert.

Benefits Of Coconut Oil for Hair Growth

Dr Chakraborty said, "Coconut oil, derived from coconut milk, is widely used as hair oil due to its nourishing properties. It not only promotes hair growth but also moisturises and strengthens the hair. Using coconut milk or oil regularly can help maintain soft, shiny, and healthy hair."

How To Use Coconut Milk for Hair Growth?

Here are some tips to help you incorporate coconut milk into your hair care routine.

- You can use the coconut milk as a pre-shampoo treatment to nourish and moisturise your hair.
- Along with that, you should apply coconut oil to the ends of your hair to lock in moisture and prevent split ends.
- You can also mix coconut milk with other natural ingredients, such as olive oil and honey, to create a hydrating hair mask.

(Her Zindagi)

COCONUT WATER BENEFITS FROM NUTRITIONISTS

Known for its nutty and refreshing flavor, coconut water is a popular drink around the world. Beyond being delicious, coconut water also has some serious nutritional perks—especially for those searching for an electrolyte fix after breaking a sweat.

Here's what to know about the top health benefits of coconut water, and how it compares to the other bevs in your fridge.

Benefits of coconut water

Beyond its refreshing flavor and electrolyte profile, coconut water is a great source of antioxidants and can help you stay hydrated. Plus, it's also been associated with a few impressive health perks, especially for heart health and blood sugar levels:

1. It's rich in antioxidants

Coconut water is rich in antioxidants, which are compounds that help ease inflammation and neutralize harmful chemicals known as free radicals. Antioxidants also protect against oxidative stress, which can contribute to a long list of conditions, including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

Early research found that young coconut water could significantly reduce inflammation9, which could be partly due to its antioxidant content. Another preclinical study showed that coconut water derived from green dwarf coconuts possessed powerful antioxidant properties and was effective at protecting against oxidative damage. However, more research in humans is needed. It is also important to note that pasteurization may reduce the antioxidant capacity in coconut water.

2. It may lower blood pressure

According to Nielsen, coconut water supplies several important nutrients involved in regulating blood pressure levels, including potassium. Interestingly, one study found that getting enough potassium in your diet could be linked to lower blood pressure levels.

What's more, another preclinical animal study showed that coconut water could suppress a hormone system that regulates blood pressure, acting as a natural diuretic to increase urine output, which could potentially help decrease blood pressure.

3. It may help stabilize blood sugar

While more research in humans is needed, some animal studies suggest that sipping coconut water could help keep blood sugar levels in check. For instance, one animal study showed that coconut water reduced blood sugar level and decreased damage to the retina caused by diabetes. Another preclinical study found that coconut water could help lower blood sugar levels and oxidative stress.

Although it's not completely understood how it works, it's believed that coconut water might help

regulate carbohydrate metabolism and boost antioxidant levels, resulting in lower blood sugar levels. However, keep in mind that not all coconut water is created equal, and some varieties could actually cause blood sugar to skyrocket.

If better blood sugar control is your goal, be sure to choose an unsweetened brand of coconut water and enjoy it alongside a balanced diet.

4. It might help combat kidney stones
Coconut water could be beneficial against kidney stones, which are small, hard deposits that form in the kidneys, causing symptoms like pain, nausea, and vomiting. One small study found that coconut water could increase the excretion of potassium, chloride, and citrate in the urine, which could reduce the risk of developing kidney stones. Coconut water can also help you stay hydrated, which has been tied to a reduced risk of kidney stones. However, more high-quality research is still needed.

5. It may promote hydration
If drinking plain water doesn't sound super appetizing, coconut water might be a good alternative to help keep you hydrated. "Some people find it easier to drink beverages with a bit of flavor, so they may be more inclined to drink coconut water than plain water," says Nielsen.

However, whether or not coconut water holds any hydrating benefits over regular water has been called into question. According to one study, coconut water was not more effective at improving markers of hydration during exercise compared to plain water. Another study concluded that coconut water did not offer any additional benefits for rehydration over other drinks, including conventional sports drinks with sodium. *(Mind Body Green)*

COCONUT RECIPE

COCONUT LIME FISH SOUP

This coconut lime fish soup is a rich, flavorful soup of tender white cod in a creamy coconut milk and tomato base, brightened with tangy fresh lime.

Ingredients
- 1 ½ pounds cod filets, or other firm white fish
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lime, cut into wedges, or more as needed
- 2 tablespoons palm oil or olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, cut into bite-sized pieces
- ½ green bell pepper, cut into bite-sized pieces
- ½ yellow bell pepper, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon seafood seasoning, such as Old Bay®
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can roasted tomatoes
- ¼ cup chopped green onions, green part only
- 1 (14-ounce) can coconut milk

Directions
Step 1: Pat fish dry with a paper towel. Season fish with salt and pepper, squeeze lime juice over each fillet, and gently rub in. Set aside.

Step 2: Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions, red pepper, green pepper, yellow pepper, and celery; cook for 1 to 2 minutes.

Step 3: Add garlic, ginger, and Old Bay seasoning. Cook until bell peppers begin to soften, 3 to 5 minutes.

Step 4: Add tomatoes and green onions, bring to a simmer, and cook, uncovered, for 3 to 5 minutes. Place fish pieces on top of the vegetables and pour coconut milk over the mixture.

Step 5: Bring soup to a simmer, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Taste; adjust seasoning with salt and lime juice to taste.

(All Recipes)

STATISTICS

Table 1. Indonesia's Monthly Exports of Desiccated Coconut, 2022 – 2024

Month	2022		2023		2024	
	Volume (MT)	Value (FOB) US$'000	Volume (MT)	Value (FOB) US$'000	Volume (MT)	Value (FOB) US$'000
January	10,653	18,050	8,167	8,922	8,187	9,140
February	8,742	14,351	8,690	9,655	8,457	10,099
March	11,433	15,740	9,478	10,140	10,797	12,620
April	10,006	13,741	7,557	8,109	7,748	10,875
May	5,690	9,170	8,441	9,117	7,947	11,792
June	8,655	11,654	9,149	10,060	8,794	13,212
July	7,999	10,644	9,789	11,567	12,263	17,554
August	10,267	12,582	11,912	13,066	13,341	20,148
September	9,591	12,046	10,611	11,792	11,387	16,616
October	8,579	10,762	10,705	11,725	11,917	19,758
November	8,867	9,728	10,110	11,229	9,813	17,911
December	9,972	10,921	9,059	10,567	8,578	16,900
Total	**110,455**	**149,388**	**113,671**	**125,949**	**119,231**	**176,624**

Source: BPS-Statistics Indonesia

Table 2. Philippines' Monthly Exports of Desiccated Coconut (in MT), 2021 – 2024

Month	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	10,523	11,810	8,086	10,946
February	11,976	14,603	12,072	16,330
March	13,266	18,636	14,485	14,578
April	10,995	14,274	10,390	13,644
May	11,933	13,147	14,861	14,518
June	13,990	13,725	14,746	14,319
July	13,669	10,737	14,297	16,378
August	15,302	11,722	13,329	16,845
September	14,920	13,174	12,875	15,919
October	16,118	10,512	13,204	15,234
November	16,415	11,531	13,540	12,577
December	11,010	13,059	14389	11,758
Total	**160,117**	**156,930**	**156,274**	**173,045**

Source: UCAP & PSA

Table 3. Sri Lanka's Monthly Exports of Desiccated Coconut (MT), 2022 – 2024

Month	2022		2023		2024	
	Volume (MT)	Value (FOB) US$'000	Volume (MT)	Value (FOB) US$'000	Volume (MT)	Value (FOB) US$'000
January	3,049	8,334	2,359	4,418	2,957	5,894
February	2,988	8,049	2,658	5,168	3,402	6,915
March	3,822	8,900	2,759	5,677	3,592	7,780
April	3,197	7,954	2,110	4,295	2,983	6,211
May	3,692	8,533	2,986	6,115	3,473	7,496
June	4,118	9,753	2,573	5,058	3,402	8,393
July	3,315	7,374	3,003	6,138	4,294	9,988
August	4,121	8,987	3,879	7,388	4,231	10,686
September	3,543	7,026	4,116	7,588	3,366	8,732
October	3,795	6,910	3,929	7,113	4,203	11,681
November	4,111	7,163	4,179	7,882	2,167	7,545
December	4,040	7,128	3,438	6,846	2,180	8,161
Total	**43,791**	**96,109**	**37,989**	**73,687**	**40,250**	**99,480**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 4. Export Volume of Desiccated Coconut by Country of Origin, 2024 (MT)

Month	Malaysia	Thailand	India	Brazil
January	833	153	219	5
February	766	137	224	7
March	1,237	86	435	8
April	697	93	441	31
May	863	58	655	6
June	606	144	954	29
July	863	151	773	18
August	1,134	148	322	4
September	1,277	100	732	3
October	1,652	131	515	6
November		88	372	6
December		93		4
Total	**9,927**	**1,382**	**5,642**	**125**

Source: ITC, Thai Customs and Department of Commerce of India

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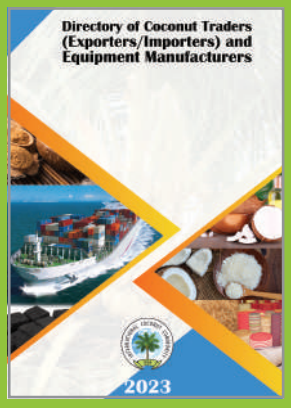

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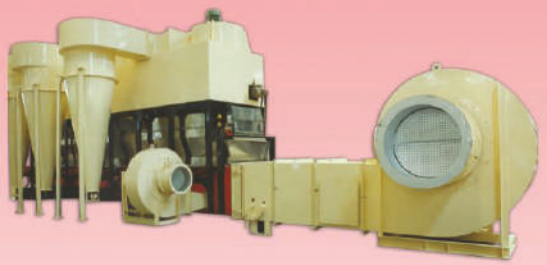

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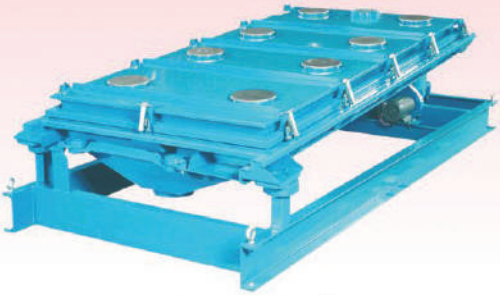

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INTERNATIONAL COCONUT COMMUNITY
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The ***COCOMMUNITY*** is the monthly Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL COCONUT COMMUNITY (ICC) incorporating current news, features, statistical data, business opportunities, and market information relating to the world coconut industry.

Established in 1969, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Commision for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), the ICC is an independent regional intergovernmental organization which consist of twenty one member countries and accounts for 85-90% of the world production of coconut. The ICC member countries are: Côte d'Ivoire, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Phillipines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Vietnam.

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