

## THE SWEET TASTE OF SUSTAINABILITY

# The Rainforest Alliance's Sustainable Cocoa Program

Farmed on over 18 million acres (7.5 million hectares) of tropical land, cocoa (*theobroma cacao*) provides a means of livelihood for some 5 million farmers — 90 percent of whom are smallholders — as well as millions of laborers and processing factory employees. Like coffee, cocoa can be cultivated under the shade of native canopy trees in a landscape similar to a natural forest, expanding the habitat of threatened plant and animal species, creating biological corridors and conserving natural pollinators and predators of cocoa pests.

When grown in harmony with nature, cocoa thrives beneath the forest canopy and is integral to a healthy ecosystem. Unfortunately, many farmers have cut down forest to open up new fields and grow cocoa more intensively, without shade. Though this approach can increase yields, it requires the use of hybrid plants and the application of agrochemicals. And because these hybrids grow in open fields, their cultivation contributes to erosion and run-off, reduced soil fertility, water contamination and health problems.

In collaboration with cocoa companies, government agencies, local organizations and farmer associations, the Rainforest Alliance is improving the environmental, social and economic conditions on cocoa farms around the globe. Together, we are training farmers to meet comprehensive standards for sustainability and working to increase business and consumer demand for Rainforest Alliance Certified™ sustainable products.

### The Rainforest Alliance Certified Program

Rainforest Alliance certification measures sustainability according to a standard developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), a coalition of nonprofit conservation organizations based in the tropics. The SAN Standard ensures that forests are protected; rivers, soils and wildlife are conserved; workers are treated with respect, paid just wages and provided with proper equipment; and their families given access to education and medical care.

Since its launch in 1997, the Rainforest Alliance Certified cocoa program has grown to cover more than 185,329 acres (75,901 hectares) of land in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa.



*Like coffee, cocoa can be cultivated under the shade of native canopy trees in a landscape similar to a natural forest.*

**Latin America & the Caribbean:** The Rainforest Alliance's cocoa program started in Ecuador with the help of our SAN partner Conservación y Desarrollo. Together, we have worked to restore Ecuador's native cocoa heritage, providing technical assistance to farmers and offering training to producers and processors. With support from the German government agency GTZ and Kraft Foods, since 2006 some 2,300 Ecuadorian cocoa growers (members of nine producer groups) have improved their farming practices, drying and fermenting technology, and market opportunities.

The volume of Rainforest Alliance Certified cocoa farms is on the rise elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, there are steadily increasing numbers of certified cocoa farms in Brazil,



### OUR MISSION

*The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior.*

[www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)

Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru. In the Dominican Republic, more than 4,000 producers have achieved Rainforest Alliance certification, and all of the country's major exporters are enthusiastically promoting the SAN Standard.

**West Africa:** In 2006, the Rainforest Alliance began working in Côte d'Ivoire — the world's top cocoa-producing country — in collaboration with Kraft, GTZ and USAID. With the help of local partner organizations, 2,000 Ivorian farmers were initially trained in sustainable agriculture practices, enabling them to achieve Rainforest Alliance certification and improve conditions on their farms. "When you enter a certified plantation, you instantly realize the difference," says Allah Yao Bernard, owner of a 29-acre (12-hectare) certified farm in Côte d'Ivoire. "The cleanliness, the trees and the housing area — everything has improved." Because of increased demand for certified cocoa, nearly 20,000 cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire are now participating in the training process.

After two years of working in Côte d'Ivoire, the Rainforest Alliance expanded into Ghana, the second-largest cocoa producer in the world. Through an alliance with Mars, Inc. — a global leader in chocolate manufacturing — and local partners, we have trained 1,000 Ghanaian farm owners (as well as local auditors) in the SAN Standard. In 2009, the first of these farms were audited for compliance with the SAN's strict social, environmental and economic criteria.

In both countries, the Rainforest Alliance has brought stakeholders together to review the SAN Standard and identify 'local indicators.' These indicators are guidelines to ensure that the Standard is being properly interpreted, taking into account local conditions, law, culture and traditions.

*Sustainable cocoa production creates lasting social and economic benefits for local communities.*



*Photos: C. Watson, R. Goodier, C. Trewick*

*For more information about the Rainforest Alliance's sustainable agriculture program, please visit [www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/agriculture](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/agriculture)*

*To view a complete list of certified crops and farms, see [www.sustainablefarmcert.com/certified\\_farms.cfm](http://www.sustainablefarmcert.com/certified_farms.cfm)*



*Encouraging sustainable cocoa farming in tropical countries is an effective way of combating environmental damage and creating some of the world's finest-tasting chocolate.*

## Certified Chocolate Sells

Made from native Ecuadorian cocoa, *Plantations Arriba* Chocolate was the first cocoa product to carry the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal. Since the chocolate's launch in 2004, the list of companies offering certified cocoa products (ranging from chocolate-peanut butter cups to hot cocoa mix) has grown considerably. The latest — and largest — brand to bear the seal is Kraft's Côte d'Or, launched in Europe in October 2009. The same year, certified chocolate from Newman's Own Organics hit the shelves in the United States and Lotte introduced Eco Choco in Japan. Other brands carrying the green frog seal include, L'Artisan du Chocolat, Kallari, Nature's Treasures, Sibú Chocolate and The Chocolate Truffle Company. Sales of certified cocoa products have grown in response to this market interest — up from an estimated \$4.5 million in 2007 to some \$16.75 million in 2008.

The expansion in certified cocoa will continue as we build new collaborations with major chocolate companies. In April 2009, Mars, Inc. committed to sourcing its entire cocoa supply from sustainable farms by 2020. Their commitment has reverberated throughout the supply chain, with several traders and processors now promoting Rainforest Alliance certification. Blommer — North America's largest chocolate processor — announced that it would offer a line of chocolate from certified farms by 2010. In October 2009, Kraft Foods committed to using cocoa beans from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms across its entire Côte d'Or and Marabou lines by 2012. And stay tuned: the list of major companies collaborating with the Rainforest Alliance is getting longer every day.

