



Building a competitive African cashew industry!

Issue 17

www.africancashewalliance.com

November 2011

The Cashew World Gathers in The Gambia for the 6th ACA Annual Conference

The 6th ACA Annual Conference, held 19-22 September 2011 in Banjul, The Gambia, was a record-setting event, exceeding even the most optimistic expectations. The conference was one of the largest gatherings of cashew industry players ever held, with **more than 360 participants from 34 countries**. This represents a 75% increase in attendance from last year's conference. All stakeholders from along the cashew value chain were represented, from smallholder farmers to industry-leading cashew processors and buyers from the United States, Europe, Brazil, India, and Vietnam. The Conference more than lived up to its visionary theme: "Bringing the Cashew World Together."

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Farmers participate in role play activities during the World Cashew Forum

The conference featured **presentations by 60 international experts** on the latest trends in the global cashew industry. "The Plenary Session was outstanding!" said a farmer from The Gambia. "It brought together people from so many countries and backgrounds to learn from." The World Cashew Forum allowed participants to actively engage in discussions, demonstrations and role plays in small groups. Topics included innovative farming techniques to improve production volume and quality, new market opportunities for African cashew, the latest innovations in cashew processing technology, and strategies to increase access to finance.

More than 300 Business2Business meetings were also organized, matching potential business partners and facilitating deals that span continents.

The networking opportunities provided by the conference were invaluable for many participants. A trader from Ghana said, "I have met manufacturers of equipment and importers of both raw and processed cashew. Because of this my business will definitely enter more into the cashew sector."

ACA looks forward to expanding on this year's highly successful event at the 7th ACA Annual Conference in Cotonou, Benin, 18-20 September 2012. Mark your calendar!



International networking opportunities at the ACA Annual Conference, September 2011

"I came to the ACA Conference with an open mind and no preset expectations. I leave in a state of utter amazement. The breadth of topics and depth of knowledge is amazing!"

Intersnack Thrilled by Launch of ACA Quality and Sustainability Seal

By Jacqueline van Laarhoven, Intersnack Origin Development Manager Africa

In a monumental moment for the African cashew industry, the ACA Seal was launched on 20 September, 2011 at the ACA Conference in Banjul. During this event a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Intersnack and Kraft Foods supporting the development of the Seal.

Intersnack is a leading European manufacturer of savoury snacks with 25 production plants across Europe of which eight are nut processing plants. Intersnack markets nuts under various brand names like ulti and Felix and is the leading supplier of nuts for private label brands in Europe.



ACA President Idrissa Kilangi, Kraft Director of Nut Procurement Chris Nubern, and Intersnack Purchasing Director Arie Endendijk sign a Memorandum of Understanding in support of the ACA Seal

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Supported by



ACA Quality and Sustainability Seal Launched with Support of Kraft and Intersnack

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Cashews are the second most important nut for Intersnack in terms of volume. We source our cashews from Brazil, India, Vietnam and so far only to a limited extent from Africa. From a sustainability point of view, we consider it very important to buy cashew kernels as close to the source of raw seeds as possible. Intersnack is thus very motivated to promote the African cashews as origin of choice. But, of course, such products should comply with the requirements of the customers in Europe in terms of food safety but also social responsibility.

The ACA Seal will help to ensure that this is the case. The ACA Seal was developed with input from, amongst others, Intersnack's vendor assurance team who provided insight on the quality standards, food safety standards and social/labour standards as required by European customers. The strict requirements to become eligible for Seal approval are also meant to prevent customer complaints or rejections arising from infestation and grade compliance.

In Intersnack's opinion the development of the Seal and its implementation by an increasing number of African processors is an excellent step in the direction of a sustainable, efficient and high quality industry in Africa. We are pleased to support this exciting program and look forward to receiving our first shipment of ACA Seal cashew.

First World Cashew Expo generates huge sales of processing machinery



Cao Than Phat Company of Vietnam demonstrates their state-of-the-art cashew processing equipment

A large and diverse group gathers around a small piece of equipment, chattering excitedly over the noise. The object of their collective attention? A cashew shelling machine produced by Buddhi Industries. This Sri Lankan company has traveled to Africa for the first time to exhibit their cost effective and easy-to-use machine to the African market. After the demonstration, company representatives are surrounded by interested customers. By the end of the exhibition, the company will be so overwhelmed by demand that they stop taking orders.

For the first time, the ACA Annual Conference featured the World Cashew Expo, an exhibition of 30 cashew service providers, national cashew associations, and equipment manufacturers, including industry leader Oltremare from Italy. Participants enjoyed sampling a wide variety of cashew products and learning about government policies and programs supporting the cashew industry. Three machinery exhibitors displayed and sold cutting-edge technology for shelling, peeling, grading, and packing, boosting investments in processing upgrades and expansions in Africa.

“The World Cashew Expo is a great occasion for cashew processors and investors from all parts of the world to meet and do business with manufacturers of equipment and input and service suppliers”

“The World Cashew Expo is a great occasion for cashew processors and investors from all parts of the world to meet and do business with manufacturers of equipment and input and service suppliers,” said a processor attending the conference. Equipment suppliers were impressed with the demand for their products. One exhibitor, Cao Thanh Phat Company from Vietnam, described the expo as “an opportunity to introduce to valued customers our solutions for cashew processing... We believe our experience will help us to play a role in the development of cashew processing in general, and in Africa in particular.”



Expo attendees sample cashew at one of the many country booths

Gillian Epule Joins ACA as ACA Seal Advisor

An Interview with the “Face of the ACA Seal”



What is your background in food safety?

I received a Post Graduate diploma in Food Safety and Quality Control from London South Bank University. Since then I have worked in the UK food manufacturing industry for over ten years, from management training programs to several positions as a Quality Assurance Manager covering chilled foods, ready meals and ambient products. Just before joining ACA I completed a Higher Certification in Food

Premises Inspection at Middlesex University in London.

What attracted you to the position of ACA Seal Advisor for ACA?

I see Africa as somewhere where skills like mine are greatly needed. It is a wonderful opportunity to use my training in a way that could have a real effect to educate people and shape thinking. Overall I thought the position was an excellent fit for my experiences, training, and qualifications. Additionally, I was very drawn to ACA as an African based organization that empowers African industry stakeholders, which fits into my personal philosophy of development.

What role will you play in the ACA Seal program?

I am the face of the ACA Seal, so I will primarily work very closely with cashew processors to help them understand the many ways the Seal program adds value to their business. I see myself as an educator, advocator, and implementer.

As you begin implementing the Seal, what are your impressions of the current state of food safety/quality in the African cashew industry?

I'm very hopeful. I see a lot of commitment from management which is extremely important in improving quality and sustainability. This motivation is a positive sign that we will be able to work together to make it happen for African cashew.

What do you believe will be the most significant impact of the ACA Seal on the cashew sector in Africa and internationally?

My goal with the ACA Seal is ultimately to change behavior among all those working in the cashew industry, which will impact how food safety and quality is viewed. From that many other things will flow naturally: quality improvements, increased efficiency, and greater global competitiveness.

Worldwide cashew industry unites through Global Cashew Task Force

Interview: Pino Calcagni, INC Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Scientific and Government Affairs Committee



Pino Calcagni presents the GCTF at the ACA Annual Conference in Banjul

How did you become involved in the creation of the Global Cashew Task Force?

The INC (International Nut and Dried Fruit Council Foundation) was requested by the major cashew nut players in the producing countries to contemplate a harmonization of clinical and nutritional research as well as quality standards worldwide. Since the 2007 crisis we have been working actively on this task.

In your opinion why is there a need for a worldwide industry group such as the GCTF?

Very simple: Cashew nuts are the third most important tree nut product in terms of quantity and value (over 500.000 mt kernel-base) after almonds and walnuts. They are spread over four continents and have a high appreciation by consumers. They further represent ideal plantations and forests to protect the natural environment.

The steering committee of the GCTF just had its first meeting alongside the ACA Conference in Banjul, The Gambia. What were your impressions of this meeting? Were your expectations met?

The meeting was very profitable and constructive. There was a general consensus on the actions to be done and a very friendly atmosphere among producing and consuming countries: the 2 poles for a successful project!

What will the first priorities be for the task force over the next year?

1. To evaluate world-wide trends in production and consumption of cashews and to promote growth with a good balance between supply and demand.
 2. To design and manage a common logo for cashews for use in publicity, advertising and promotions.
 3. To study and promote the usage and consumption of cashews using appropriate platforms throughout the world.
 4. To research the nutritional profile of cashews, to determine appropriate health platforms and possible health-claims and to validate these benefits with scientific research including clinical trials.
 5. To launch a program of activities to disseminate and publicize health messages related to cashews around the world.
- All points are very important, and INC has the human resources and the instruments to effectively address these tasks.

What specific impact on the global cashew industry do you hope the GCTF will have?

To assist the industry to grow gradually and improve in production in order to meet the increasing worldwide demand for cashew and to improve added value. The social impact is also important as the cashew sector represents the major dedicated human resources out of the global tree nuts industry.

What role do you foresee ACA playing in this group? Why is it important that Africa is represented?

ACA is a very important player as it represents the main African producing countries in the West and the East. Africa itself is the largest growing area in the world. In addition there is the social necessity for the entire African continent to improve quality and facilitate free trade.

ACA strengthens presence in Tanzania through partnerships with national industry bodies



Representatives of ACA, the Cashew Nut Board of Tanzania, and the Cashewnut Processors Association of Tanzania after signing an MOU

At a Press and Stakeholder Conference in Tanzania on 23 August, ACA Managing Director Christian Dahm signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cashew Nut Board of Tanzania and the Cashew Nut Processors Association of Tanzania. Through this public-private partnership ACA will further its efforts to develop the cashew sector in Tanzania.

The three associations agreed to collaborate to promote investment in the cashew industry and to host at least one stakeholder meeting per year.

In particular, the MOU focuses on the sharing of knowledge among partners and the exchange of best practices between East and West Africa. Eastern and Southern Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique) process about 30% of their region's cashew, much more than West Africa which processes only between 5 and 8% of its crop. Thus there is much potential for lessons learned in this region to be transferred to West Africa. On the other hand, East Africa, which has experienced small and stagnating crop volumes in recent years, can benefit greatly from knowledge about West Africa's rapidly increasing production.

Minata Kone elected onto ACA Executive Committee

At the 6th ACA Annual Conference in Banjul, elections were held to fill the vacant seat on the ACA Executive Committee left by Mr. Cherif Hibraima, the former ACA President who passed away in March 2011. The ACA core members elected Madame Minata Kone to fill this seat.

Madame Kone, a cashew processor from Burkina Faso, has been an active member of ACA since its creation. After receiving a DUT in Documentation from the University of Dakar in Senegal, she spent 15 years as an Officer at the Ministry of Agriculture of Burkina Faso. Since 1995, she has been an entrepreneur, working on several projects related to raw cashew nuts, transportation, and metalwork before deciding to return to her village to contribute to its development.

In 2003, she created SOTRIA-B, a cashew processing firm. The factory opened in 2006 in Banfora and now exports its products to the U.S. market.

Madame Kone has been the President of the ACA National Committee of Burkina Faso since its inception and through this position has greatly contributed to the organization of the cashew sector in the country. She is excited to help guide the overall strategy of the ACA through her new position on the Executive Committee.



Minata Kone at the 6th ACA Annual Conference

African cashew farmers gain voice in international press: Press trip to African Cashew initiative in Ghana

Claudia Schuelein, ACi

In September 2011 the African Cashew initiative (ACi) was visited by a group of 10 international correspondents and reporters from several well-respected international print and online media houses. The press trip was logistically supported by SAP and ACi and was the result of strong interest and demand for information about the project from media circles. During the one week trip to Accra and the cashew producing regions in the north of Ghana, the journalists gained insight into the colorful world of cashew production and processing in West Africa. One of the main points of interest involved the cooperation between the German International Cooperation (GIZ) and SAP, one of the leading German software companies. Through this pilot project Ghanaian cashew farmers use smartphone applications to scan filled sacks. This gives them better control over the production and delivery of the cashew nut which results in an improved bargaining position and increased income. (Please see ACA 's August 2011 newsletter for more information on SAP project). The trip resulted in various articles - links can be found in the section "Newspaper Articles on ACi" at: <http://aci.africancashewalliance.com/eng/downloads.html>



International journalists visited cashew farmers and processors in Ghana

Cashew apple processing creates additional income and nutrition for farmers groups:

ACi releases cashew by-product study

Claudia Schuelein, ACi

Two local women are bustling about in a concrete hall near Bobo Dioulasso in the cashew growing region of Burkina Faso. They wear protective gloves and hair nets while they cut small yellow cashew apples, process them in a juice grinder and operate an extractor machine. These women are members of a local farmers' cooperative which not only sells cashew nuts to local processors but also produces juice from the cashew apples. The cooperative provides training and equipment for selected women and shares the profit amongst the cashew apple delivering members. "Until last year we had not been using the cashew apples. After the harvesting season they were piling up in the cashew plantations and only the goats were eating them," one of the women explains. Almost



Cashew apples ready to be processed into juice

all of the 10 billion kilograms of cashew apples produced annually in Africa go to waste although their processing is not too costly and local demand is given: "Whenever we bring a couple of bottles of our juice to the local stores they are sold out the same day," reports one of the chairmen of the cooperative. However the number of processors who pursue viable by-product processing is very limited. Farmers have neither knowledge about how to properly collect, store and transport the rapidly decomposing apples nor any funds to establish collectively owned processing units. Farmers' lack of awareness about the value of the apple and its ability to be processed into a wide variety of products such as wine, juice, and bakery products results in the loss of a great opportunity.

The situation is different in Brazil where farmers and processors have already recognized the huge potential of cashew apples and exploit the possibilities of processing the fruit. At least around 15% of cashew apples are used for a variety of value-added products. Clear procedures for collecting and handling cashew apples post-harvest are established and farmers trained. The cashew apple juice – locally known as cajuina– is famous as a healthy and tasty drink for millions of Brazilians.

Following the example of Brazil, the ACi also wants to increase the use of cashew by-products, especially of cashew apples for juice processing which will have considerable advantages for different population groups. There are large income increasing opportunities: the farmers and cooperatives (made up of at least 50% women) will benefit from higher incomes and profitability levels as well as from opportunities to invest in new specialized markets with higher profit margins. The regional economy will be strengthened and new employment opportunities can be generated. In addition, cashew apple juice, due to its richness in vitamin C and other

antioxidants, has the potential to become a healthy part of the African diet, preventing malnutrition especially in children.

To highlight the opportunity that cashew apples can bring for cashew farmers in Africa, TechnoServe on behalf of the African Cashew initiative conducted two studies focusing on cashew by-products that have now been made available.

With a strong belief in the huge potential of cashew apple processing, ACi will continue raising awareness to encourage African cashew farmers to invest in this future market. For this reason, ACi is completing a feasibility study to up-scale apple processing in Burkina Faso and Benin. Moreover, farmers as well as cooperatives will be trained on good practices for cashew apple processing. Commercial processing centers are planned to be established close to plantations in order to create location advantages.

"What we gave to the animals just a short time ago now allows me to repair the roof of our house after the rainy season – I am absolutely convinced by the production of cashew apple juice," says a worker before focusing on the extractor machine once again.

Please download the byproduct study at

<http://aci.africancashewalliance.com/eng/downloads.html>

Cashew Calendar 2011/2012

Please contact the ACA Secretariat to participate in any events, contribute ideas, or add an event to the cashew calendar.

December 2011

- 1-2 Nigeria National Cashew Summit
Lagos, Nigeria
- 1-2 China Tree Nuts Importation Conference
Guangzhou, China

January 2012

- 13-16 PTNPA (Peanut and Tree Nut Processors Association) Annual Convention
Orlando, FL



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