



Issue 39

May 2015

Inside this issue

Nigerian Export Promotion Council Joins ACA Advisory Board 2

ACA Governing Bodies Convene in Accra for Bi-Annual Meeting 2

ACA Quality and Sustainability Seal Highlight: Tolaro Global 2-4

The Recipe Room: Cashew Ginger Chicken 4

Announcing the ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo 2015



Setting Sustainable Standards



ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo 2015
Maputo, Mozambique
21-24 September 2015



We are thrilled to announce that the 9th annual ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo 2015 will occur on 21-24, September 2015 at the Joachim Chissano International Conference Centre (JCICC) in Maputo, Mozambique! This year's conference is held in partnership with the national governmental body overseeing cashew-related policies in Mozambique (INCAJU), as well as the Mozambican cashew processing association (AICAJU). The four-day program will bring together various local and international stakeholders within the cashew value chain to ensure that the African cashew industry remains a visible contributor within the sector.

the African cashew industry is to remain globally competitive, given that it is the largest regional producer of cashew in the world – growing approximately 49% of the world's supply! As the African cashew industry continues to rapidly grow, sustainability will play a key role in improving the quality of cashew production, social and labor conditions, and implementing good agricultural practices in order to create new market opportunities and foster new business relations.

In past years, Mozambique has successfully hosted two ACA annual conference events, the first in 2007 and the second in 2010. This year, the ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo, will once again return to Mozambique, a country reputed as the second-largest producer of raw cashew nut in East and Southern Africa. Certainly, Mozambique is well-positioned to become a leading cashew competitor in the industry, thus making it an appropriate locale for a diverse array of stakeholders in the value chain to discuss the progression of global cashew standards.

For more information on conference registration, sponsorship, or exposition of your equipment and services at our Expo 2015, please visit the ACA conference webpage (<http://www.africashewalliance.com/en/world-cashew-festival>).

For inquiries, please contact the ACA Secretariat at aca@afriacashewalliance.com.

Since 2011, the ACA conference has been the largest cashew industry event in the world – a core of the industry which is filled with market linkages and knowledge sharing! Over 350 stakeholders will be in attendance, including government officials, equipment manufacturers, farmers, service providers, international buyers, exporters, and processors. The ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo 2015 is a unique platform offering a wide variety of networking opportunities, as well as exciting excursions to processing facilities, cashew farms, and cultural attractions.

The theme for this year's conference, "Setting Sustainable Standards," will focus on important topics such as: food safety and quality, waste management, transparency and traceability, as well as finance and investment. Undeniably, sustainability is a pertinent issue to consider if



Your partner for a sustainable African cashew sector



Intersnack

Contact us at cashews@intersnack-procurement.com
www.intersnack.com

Nigerian Export Promotion Council Joins ACA Advisory Board

The African Cashew Alliance Secretariat is delighted to welcome the newest member of its Advisory Board: the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), represented by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Olusegun Awolowo.

The NEPC, whose mission is to make Nigeria's non-oil export a significant contributor to the country's GDP and to sustainable economic development, is a strong supporter of the cashew industry. Ultimately, it seeks to diversify the productive base of the economy away from oil and to foster a market-oriented, private sector-driven economy. We look forward to benefiting from NEPC's and Mr. Awolowo's experience in export promotion as we work together to further strengthen the African cashew sector in the years to come.

The ACA Advisory Board consists of delegates from organizations providing more than USD \$50,000 of funding per year. The Advisory Board has voting rights regarding the use of the ACA funds and provides guidance on ACA programming. The NEPC is the second African member of ACA's Advisory Board, alongside Kenya's Equatorial Nut Processors (ENP), which joined in 2014. We are excited about this shift in governance to include more African-owned companies, as the



ACA exists to strengthen the African cashew industry. Other members of the 2015 Advisory Board include Intersnack, Kraft Foods, Olam International, and USAID.

ACA Governing Bodies Convene in Accra for Bi-Annual Meeting

On February 26, 2015, ACA's Executive Committee (EC) convened with the Secretariat in Accra, Ghana for the first of its bi-annual meetings of the year. Due to the unfortunate cancellation of the 2014 World



Cashew Festival & Expo, at which the EC had planned to meet, the governing body had not met for one year. Therefore, this meeting was a vital reunion for both the EC and the Secretariat to reconnect with one another in person. Participants at this meeting hailed from Benin, Cote

d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania, representing diverse perspectives and priorities across the African cashew industry.

These bi-annual meetings are a foundational component to maintaining transparency within the organization and to ensure that the EC's vision is carried out through the Secretariat's projects and activities. At this particular meeting, key personnel within the Secretariat presented successes accomplished and challenges faced throughout the past year, soliciting feedback and suggestions from all members of the EC. This type of dialogue is very constructive and ensures that the EC is entirely informed of the activities occurring on-the-ground and provides the opportunity for both affirmation and alteration, as necessary.

The meeting continued on February 27 and was held jointly with ACA's Advisory Board (AB). It is important for all of these governing bodies to convene regularly so that the priorities for the organization are clearly articulated and ideas can be shared openly.

The largest outcome of this meeting was the selection of Maputo, Mozambique to be the location of ACA's 9th World Cashew Festival & Expo, to be held in September 2015.

ACA Quality and Sustainability Seal Highlight: Tolaro Global

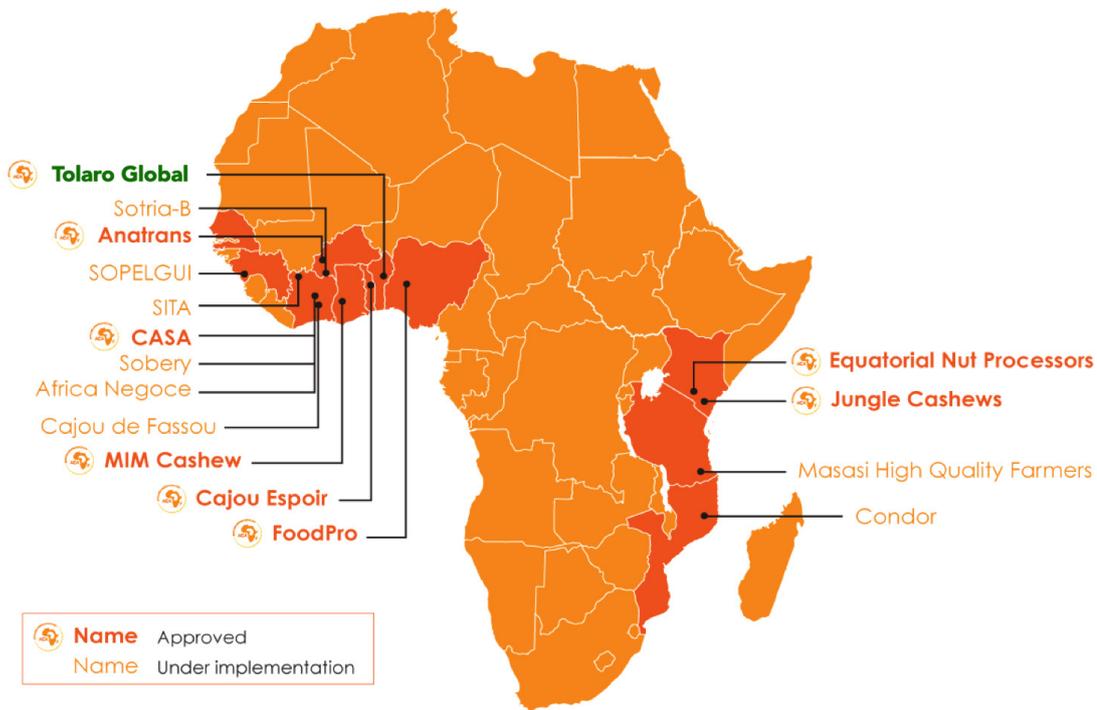
Launched in 2012, the ACA Seal Program was created to standardize and enhance the food safety, quality, and social/labor components of cashew processing on the African continent. To date, eight cashew processing factories from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Togo have earned the approval of the ACA Seal, and several more in the implementation phase of the program, hoping to become approved in the coming years.

The first cashew processing facility to achieve ACA Seal approval is located in Parakou, Benin. Tolaro Global was first awarded the ACA Seal in May of 2012, and has since been re-approved twice, in 2013 and 2014. As a company which only officially began processing cashews in December of 2011, Tolaro's quick adherence to the tenets of the ACA Seal Program certainly demonstrates its commitment to follow the highest standards in its operations.



Continued on next page...

ACA ACTIVITIES



Program is designed to be a benchmark for the cashew industry, setting the standards to which the best processors hold themselves. However, these standards are not always easy to achieve and are even more difficult to maintain.

For Tolaro, these standards are ingrained within the company's fundamental framework. In fact, commitment to excellence is so integral to the company that it is painted upon the walls in the form of two mottos: "Each processed kernel is a step in the direction of the development of Africa" and "Our raison d'être is to produce the best cashew kernel in the world." Clearly, Tolaro supports the greater purpose of developing the cashew processing industry in Africa as a whole, rather than

Since its inception, Tolaro has steadily increased its production year after year. Having processed 557 MT of raw cashew in its first year, Tolaro now expects to increase this figure five-fold during the 2015 season, amounting to 2,500 MT. The factory has also increased its staff from just under 400 employees in 2012 to its current 600, providing much-needed jobs for people from the surrounding community. Nearly 50% of these workers are women; however, of the company's five executive-level managers, three are women. Tolaro's intentional inclusion of women in its top management serves as a motivating force for more junior-level female employees to follow their ambitions and break the glass ceiling that has dominated the industry for so long.

simply advancing itself. Therefore, the company's Quality Control Manager and his team work ceaselessly to ensure that all quality control systems in place are functioning and adhering to the measures required by the ACA Seal Program.

The largest obstacle facing the company is the assumption that it operates in the same way as many other businesses in West Africa; that is, a business which serves the company's leadership and largely disregards the contributions and needs of its subordinates. Rabe, originally hailing from the United States, indicates that Tolaro has worked very hard to be an exception to this model.

Prior to subscribing to the ACA Seal Program, Tolaro had already begun implementing its own quality control programs, particularly in terms of hygiene and removal of foreign material from the processing areas. This dedication to quality was ultimately what drove the desire to become ACA Seal-certified. Facing the widespread perception that African cashews are of lower quality than their Indian and Vietnamese counterparts, Tolaro sought to defy this stereotype by attaining every quality standard it could.

Mr. Jace Rabe, Tolaro's CEO, remarks that Tolaro "prides itself as a top-tier packer" that is competitive with every other facility in the world. "The ACA Seal has been a great foundational program to give us the confidence and ability to earn other internationally recognized certificates."

While achieving ACA Seal approval is a momentous accomplishment, perhaps even more impressive is the fact that Tolaro has earned it three times. The ACA Seal



Continued on next page...

“We often say that we are neither a Beninese culture or an American culture company; we are a Tolaro culture company, taking the best from both cultures.” The company’s Director General, Mr. Serge Kponou, has been described as a natural leader who strives to be different and break the mold to change the industry. “You rarely find him in an office,” says Rabe, “You can just as easily find him in the kitchen serving the employee meals when the kitchen is short-staffed as in the grading section sorting cashews.”

This “Tolaro culture” is what sets this processor apart. While the company aims to grow and increase its capacity, its ultimate priority is to foster an environment of respect and trust while producing the best cashew kernels on the planet.



NEWS AND INFO

The Recipe Room: Cashew Ginger Chicken



INGREDIENTS

- 4 diced chicken breasts
- 1 chopped sweet pepper
- 1 sliced onion
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ¼ cup cashew nuts
- ¼ cup water
- 1 lemon
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tbsp minced fresh ginger
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- Salt & pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

Serves 4-6

In a bowl, mix ginger, water, lemon juice, honey, salt, and pepper. Set aside. Lightly brown chicken breast in olive oil. Add sweet pepper and onion and sauté until tender. Add cashew nuts. Pour the ginger mixture on chicken in the pan. Bring to a boil until sauce thickens. Serve with basmati or texmati rice.

Cashew Calendar 2015

May

11 - 15 Master Training Program in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso

September

21 - 24 ACA World Cashew Festival & Expo in Maputo, Mozambique



Contact us
aca@africancashewalliance.com
or call +233 302 77 41 62