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350 Gather in Accra for The ACA World Cashew Festival and Expo 2013

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On the 16-19th of September, 2013 cashew industry representatives from around the world convened in Accra, Ghana for the ACA World Cashew Festival and Expo 2013. The event was the African Cashew Alliance's 8th annual conference, and over 350 participants made it a success, once again.

At the Opening Ceremony, The President of ACA, Madame Taraf, welcomed a full room of participants at the Moevenpick Ambassador Hotel with excitement for the days to come: "I am sure that you will all once again be agents for change and growth in the cashew sector in Africa". Along side the ACA President, HE Haruna Iddrisu, the Minister of Trade and Industry, HE Dr Ahmed Yakubu Alhassan, the deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture and various foreign ministers welcomed participants. Their attendance alone displays their Government's belief that cashew can be a factor of development and poverty reduction in their respective countries, and their words reaffirmed their commitment. Honorable Haruna Iddrisu, said he is looking forward to working with cashew producers, processors, and announced a "Government stimulus program" for cashews in the country.

The plenary sessions took place on Tuesday, and focused on a variety of topics that are central to the cashew sector in Africa and on a global scale. Leaders from the private and public sector discussed Farmer-Processor Partnerships, Investment opportunities

along the Cashew Value Chain, Ghana's cashew market, and more. The day was capped off with an exploration of New Market Opportunities by Dr. Kantha Shelke of Corvus Blue LLC and Harry Sinclair of Kraft Foods. Kantha explained "Cashews



are poised to meet the growing global demand for healthy low-glycemic foods that can delight everyone". She continued by stating that "Contrary to popular myth, energy dense foods like cashews are useful in the diet for managing hunger, weight, and calories", adding "Functionality and versatility make cashews invaluable in practically every food category in all regions of the world". The two keynote speakers outlined the potential uses for cashew splits and the current position of cashews in the snack market, displaying a very hopeful future for the nut.

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Madame Taraf Honored as one of Africa's Most Influential Women in Business and Government



On the 5th of September, 2013, Madame Georgette Taraf, the ACA President, was honored as one of Africa's Most Influential Women in Business and Government in Accra, Ghana. The award ceremony is held each year by Celebrating Excellence in Organizations (CEO),

a South African organization. Through a lengthy nomination and judging process, CEO identifies women in top executive positions that are making a difference in the private and public sector.

Madame Taraf was selected as a finalist in the agriculture category for her work in the cashew industry in Benin and with the African Cashew Alliance. She was then chosen as one of five winners

for the agriculture category on the continent, the only one representing her home country of Benin. Even among an elite group of women working in Agriculture throughout Africa, Madame Taraf shined, eventually receiving the Agriculture award for the entire continent. Her hard work, dedication and drive have never gone unnoticed by the ACA, but we are glad that it has been recognized by CEO and the judges who sat on the panel. Madame Taraf is a true trailblazer, transforming the cashew industry in her country, Africa, and globally.

Madame Taraf hails from Benin, where she first became involved in cashew in 1996 as a buyer. A decade later, Madame Taraf entered the export side of the industry, establishing NAD&Co Industry in 2008, which opened a processing facility in 2011. She began working with ACA as head of the national committee in 2010, going on to serve as National Representative. She was elected as ACA's President in October 2012 by the ACA Executive Committee. Since then, she has helped guide ACA through two international conferences in Benin and Ghana and continues to drive the cashew sector in Benin.



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Conference Participants Explore Mim Cashew



35 conference participants rose before the sun on the 19th of September, 2013 to travel to the Accra airport and catch a 7 AM flight to Kumasi. The flight would commence an overnight trip of exploration in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana. The field trip followed the three day World Cashew Festival and Expo in Accra, Ghana, culminating various sessions and talks on cashews with a presentation of how “best practices” and farming techniques are being used by real cashew farmers and processors.

After a bus ride from Kumasi, the group had finally reached their destination, Mim, Ghana. A sign at the end of a long, narrow, but scenic road read “Mim Cashew and Agricultural Products, Ltd.”, welcoming the field trip participants to one of Ghana’s best processing facilities which they would tour for the next couple of hours. Mim Cashew served as the perfect location to discover the full cashew value chain, since they have their own nursery, farm, and processing facilities. Mim Cashew was the second ACA Member processing factory to be certified with the ACA Seal. This accomplishment represents the true care and pride that the Mim team puts into their processing operations, meeting both social and quality benchmarks. The ACA Seal is one of a few different certifications that Mim Cashew has received, among them certified organic and Free Trade. Field Trip participants witnessed how these certifications are withheld by the daily operations of the facility.

The Mim Team, including the owner, Mr. Lars Wallevik, Mr. Joseph

Another Factory Joins ACA’s Elite

The family of ACA Seal approved processors is growing. On Saturday, the 7th of September, 2013, Equatorial Nut Processors (ENP) became the 5th Kernel processor in Africa to finish the ACA Quality and Sustainability Seal Program. Located in Muranga, Kenya, ENP joins Jungle Nuts Ltd as the second East African processing factory to be ACA Seal approved.

Equatorial Nut Processors Ltd. joined the ACA community in 2010 after attending the ACA World Cashew Conference in Mozambique. They initially became members for ACA’s help with technical assistance and business linkages and then took the next step to take on the social and quality benchmarks that come with attaining the ACA Seal. Currently, ENP employs over 200 women and has a processing capacity of 1,400 MT. The company is eager to expand production; The team aims to double it’s processing capacity by 2014, reaching a total of 3,000 MT.

Jim Giles (ACA Food Safety Expert) and Peter Kojo Nyarko (ACA Seal Coordinator) completed the final Seal audit in early September, giving them a score which passed all of the benchmarks for approval. The Seal certificate was presented to the ENP team at the Gala Dinner of this year’s ACA World Cashew Festival and Expo in Accra, Ghana. ACA would like to congratulate Equatorial Nut Processors on being SEAL approved and adding their name to the growing list of SEAL approved factories, making Kernels processed in Africa more competitive on the international market

The ACA Business Advisor and the Seal Advisor have assisted a total of

Yeung, the General Manager, Mr. Kumaris Anil, the Factory’s production Manager, and Mr. Adusei Asante, the farm manager welcomed participants on the hot September day. The introduction gave a glimpse into the rich history of Mim Cashew, which was founded in the 1960s. The group then split in two, with one group first touring the farm and nursery, and the other starting with the processing facilities. Around 1 pm on a Thursday afternoon, the facilities were in full motion – with many of the facilities 1,000 employees transforming raw cashew nuts into high quality kernels.

Before entering various processing buildings, field trip participants had to get geared up. Watches with glass faces were removed first, to eliminate the risk of any glass entering into stores of processed cashew. After wrists were cleared, it was time for hand washing at sink stations. Next came the aprons which were to be wrapped over t-shirts and pants of field trip participants. For the lucky ladies in the bunch, hair nets came last, containing the risk of loose hairs mixing with cashew.

After preparation, field trip participants got to see both manual and automatic unshelling techniques which Mim Cashew utilizes. The processing operations span through many buildings, with yet another one currently under construction. Participants got to witness value addition in many different stages of the cashew processing operations; from drying, to unshelling, to sorting, to packaging.

In another area of the Mim Cashew grounds, the other group of participants was being led through the nursery and farm by Mr. Adusei Asante, the farm manager. Hundreds of baby cashew trees, more technically named as seedlings, were growing in the nursery. Just a short walk away, leaves grew on the branches of large trees which would eventually produce cashew fruit and their valuable seed, the cashew. The farm manager explained how it is important to the Mim Team that every resource from the tree is used; for example, the cashew fruit is distilled into Mim Cashew Brandy.

After a long travel and lots of walking, conference participants enjoyed a delicious lunch provided generously by the Mim team. Even after three days of cashew conversation, their tour at Mim Cashew had given them even more nutty things to talk about, from the processing technology that Mim is utilizing to the future ventures of the business. The next morning, field trip participants returned to Accra armed with knowledge and memories, beautiful results of a community in which inter-African knowledge sharing is central, The African Cashew Alliance.



13 companies since last April, including 3 ACA Seal approved processors, 4 processors that are currently implementing the ACA Seal Program, and 6 processors that receive technical support for capacity upgrades and new installations. All have been linked to international buyers through ACA’s market linkages: Contracts with international buyers can then be used to secure local financing as a means of business operation and expansion. The 13 companies have made significant improvements based on the recommendations made by ACA advisors. African cashew sales totaled \$38,147,746 with ACA Seal sales accounting for a total of \$6,021,855.

ACA World Cashew Festival and Expo Continued...

At the Business 2 Business Forum, traders, processors, farmers, and foreign businesses were matched in business meetings, tailored to their business interests. Throughout the conference, there was also the exhibition. 18 exhibitors presented their companies including three equipment exhibitors: Best Engineering, Buddhi Industries and Toximet. There were also four NGOs, one research institute, one processor, two government representatives, one trader, one project, five input and service suppliers. The participants had a chance to meet with the manufacturers and see the newest technology first-hand.

For some, the conference continued on Thursday in three different field trips throughout Ghana. Participants traveled to Mim Cashew Ltd or Agricultural Research Center. At Mim, participants got an in-depth look at the processing factory and plantation, while at Wenchi they learned from an agricultural expert. A third batch of participants travelled to the Kakum National Park in Cape Coast. Next year, the Conference will be held in Kenya on the 15-18 September 2014, see you on the road of cashew and safari!



Field trip to Wenchi Research Station (WRS)

After 3 days of talking cashew in Accra during the ACA's World Cashew Festival & Expo 2013, it was time to meet the product. The ACA as part of this year's conference event promised field trip participants an interior view into all aspects of Ghana and its improving cashew industry. 13 participants set-off from Accra on the 19th of September, the last day of the conference, on an exciting trip to the Wenchi Agricultural Research Station & Farmer's Field situated on the northern fringes of the forest-savannah transition zone in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana.



Established in 1952 in the then Gold Coast, the Wenchi Agricultural Institute, under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Ghana (MOFA), is one of five agricultural research stations in strategic locations in all the agro-ecological zones of Ghana. Main activities on the station are centered on cashew, maize, yam, cassava and tomatoes.

A Source of Information on Market Trend in Cashew-Producing Countries!

What is the ACA Market Information System?

The Market Information System (MIS) provides analysis and general information on the cashew market, updates on cashew prices, and the latest developments on cashew-industry related laws in producing countries.

Since 2010, the ACA Secretariat has disseminated the Market Information System through the ACA website and also via weekly emails called "AfricashewSplit". The AfricashewSplit is a weekly update on cashew prices, market trends and developments in the cashew industry from Africa, India, Brazil and Vietnam. Every week, subscribers to the MIS service also receive an SMS on kernel market prices from India, Vietnam.

The institute has 4 core mandates:

- Collaborate with relevant research institutions to develop appropriate technologies to meet challenges of farmers
- Conserve germ plasms in cashew
- Serve as a research centre and information hub for universities, students, farmers etc.
- Develop, produce and multiply best variety of crops including cashew through the Extension Service of MOFA.

Currently implementing the Cashew Development Project, initiated in 2002 and revamped in 2006, participants were afforded the chance to appreciate at first hand the basis of the success of Ghana's cashew sector. Participants were taken round the impressive facility by the very knowledgeable Mr. Seth Osei Akoto of MOFA, Michael Banini, Research Officer at the Cocoa Research Institute and Aaron Achia, the Station Manager.

Mr Akoto indicated that as a result of extensive research, Scion banks, germ plasms and nurseries were created, where the best varieties were developed for planting in specific areas of the country. The guided tour also took participants round farms where cashew from Benin and Brazil were on trial. There was also demonstration of best farming practices including grafting, top working and thinning. Participants had lots of opportunities to ask pertinent questions and sought advice as to how they may improve their own yields. Finally, participants visited a cashew farm about 15 minutes drive from the research station, belonging to a farmer who has benefited immensely from the research station's work and its resource personnel. It was a first hand practical experience of what a cashew farm should look like when all the station's recommendations are implemented.

All in all, it was a very adventurous, eye-opening and above all educational trip. Participants had fun, while learning from experts first-hand. There is no doubt the trip was indeed memorable and participants were left satisfied.

With the website the ACA members can be updated every week on Africa raw cashew nuts (RNC) prices and on Kernel prices from India, Vietnam and Brazil. They can also have access to a background of information for cashew producing in African, the production volumes since 2000 of all producing countries in Africa, basic ocean freight rate from Africa. Every month members can read the Africashew450 including an analysis of the cashew market and also be updated on African producing countries profiles.

Since June 2013, ACA has started building a new database on cashew commodities prices. It also includes other market data such as production, processing, export and socio-economical updates. While this database will help the ACA improve its understanding of the market and broaden the information included in the AfricashewSplit, it will also become



available to ACA members and subscribers in ACA's newest MIS tool: "AfricasheW210". "AfricasheW210" is ACA's first-ever mobile application, which will become available in the beginning of the year 2014. The application will bring the most up-to-date cashew prices, news, and market trends to your smartphone and tablets - for cashew industry representatives who are on the run. It will include the AfricasheW450, AfricasheWSplits, and an interactive commodities price trend tool which will allow users to compare cashew prices in various countries over time on tailor-made graphs.

Check out ACA's Market Information System at www.africancashewalliance.com/news-and-info, and stay tuned for the AfricasheW210 - the first smartphone application to focus on the African Cashew Market.

A Busy Man: Catching Up with ACA's Business Advisor

ACA's Business Advisor, Sunil Dahiya, has been very busy lately, traveling to cashew processing facilities throughout both West and East Africa and providing valuable on-site technical assistance. Since August, Dahiya has visited a total of six processing plants, two in Southern Nigeria, one in Senegal, one in Togo, and two in Kenya. Each ACA Member processing facility is in a different stage of development and operation, therefore Dahiya customizes his business advisory services.

Following a trip in Early July, Dahiya returned to Cajou Casamance, a cashew processing factory in Senegal, in the beginning of October. The ACA technical and strategic assistance from ACA was requested by Wellspring International, an ACA member from Senegal and an International NGO that currently supports the cashew processing



operations. With ACA assistance, Cajou Casamance is currently working towards upgrading their processing capacity to become the first export oriented cashew company in Senegal. Dahiya inspected the project's existing processing facility, further advised on facility layout and provided on-the-spot training. Dahiya also presented potential sites for further capacity expansion and provided recommendations to speed up the progress. Cajou Casamance is eager to expand their capacity by 1,000

MT/year and will be employing above 200 local women when they begin their processing operations at the end of this month.

In Southern Nigeria, Dahiya's business advisory efforts have been with Esteema Diamonds Global Inv. Ltd (EDGIL) and Valency Intl Ltd, two up and coming cashew businesses. Both companies have been active ACA members since 2011, and sought out ACA's help for technical assistance and business linkages following the ACA conference in Benin. ACA Business Advisor Sunil Dahiya visited these companies in early August, providing technical advice. In order to achieve their 2013 processing objectives, EDGIL has already commissioned the newly imported machinery and secured some RCN stock with their own funds. Dahiya assisted EDGIL in commissioning imported machinery, developed financial projections, and facilitated linkages with Financial Institution. Dahiya inspected the factory site of Valency, assessing the progress made on facility building and also inspecting newly imported machinery. Valency intends to establish a large-scale processing facility of 10,000 TPA that will create at least 500 jobs by the end of 2013.

On the 23rd-28th of September, 2013, Dahiya traveled to Cajou Espoir Ltd, a Togolese processor that is currently participating in the ACA Seal program. During the trip, Dahiya assessed the current facility in Tchamba, Togo, and reviewed plans for a new cashew processing facility in Blitta, Central Togo. Cajou Espoir hopes to open this second facility in 2015, enabling them to double their capacity.

On the other side of the continent, Dahiya took a trip to Kenya in early August to visit Jungle Cashews Ltd and Equatorial Nuts, both cashew processing facilities in the country. An ACA Member since 2010, Jungle Cashews Ltd. was recently certified with the ACA Seal after meeting comprehensive social and quality benchmarks. Dahiya assisted the team on skills and productivity evaluation and upgrading via best manufacturing practices. He also updated the processing staff on international cashew industry standards. In Central Kenya, Dahiya provided technical assistance to Equatorial Nut Processors Ltd. (ENP) an ACA member since 2010. The main topics on the business advisory agenda were facility layout, equipment commissioning, and trainings on best manufacturing, hygiene, and productivity.



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Cashew Calendar 2013 - 2014

November

28-29 Vietnam - Africa Cashew Development
 International Conference- Ho Chi Minh

January

17-20 PTNPA Convention
 Naples FL