

CONFECTIONERY

PRODUCTION

chocolate, sweets, snacks & bakery

JULY/AUGUST 2020

Inside

Forming and extrusion
Packaging technology
Special focus – To'ak Chocolate



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Handelsweg 3 - 1521 NH Wormerveer - The Netherlands
phone +31 75 640 43 13 - info@caotech.com - www.caotech.com



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EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Sarah McRitchie
sarah@bellpublishing.com

EDITOR

Neill Barston
nbarston@bellpublishing.com

ART EDITOR

Sue Burke
prepress@bellpublishing.com

DIGITAL EDITOR

Alex Rivers
arivers@bellpublishing.com

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Keith Nuthall
Graham Godfrey
Daisy Phillipson

ADVERTISEMENT SALES MANAGER

Katie Healy
katie@bellpublishing.com

GROUP SALES MANAGER

Mark Neilson
mark@bellpublishing.com

ACCOUNTS

Yee Yau
accounts@bellpublishing.com

PUBLISHER

Neil McRitchie
neil@bellpublishing.com

EDITORIAL & SALES OFFICE

The Maltings, 57 Bath Street,
Gravesend Kent DA11 0DF, UK
Tel: +44 1474 532 202
Fax: +44 1474 532 203
bellpublishing.com

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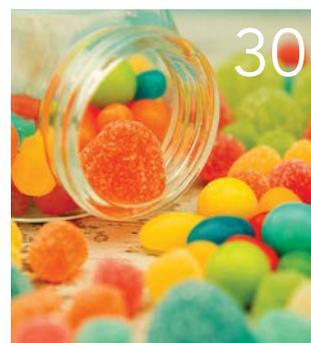
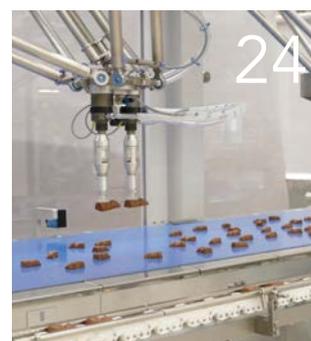
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Restoring ancient cacao traditions

For this month's edition, we have an exclusive interview with To'ak Chocolate, which has worked exceptionally hard over the past few years to help revive one of the world's most rare strains of cacao for its range of products. The company's rise in Ecuador offers an especially welcome uplifting story amid a wider global backdrop of business uncertainty and major challenges ahead.

As noted last month, it's been impressive to see how markets are continuing to adjust to a new landscape of operating amid the coronavirus pandemic.

While there has been commendable progress in tackling the disease, it remains a key disruption to many aspects of industry, including the events sector.

A number of major showcases around the world set for the remainder of this year are being either cancelled or postponed on health and safety grounds.

With this in mind, we are rescheduling our World Confectionery Conference due this September in Brussels, to the nearest practical date, of 26 March 2021. By this time, we very much hope that some level of normality will have returned to business conditions.

So we look forward to welcoming you for the revised date – please keep on registering for the event, as well as continue with entries for the accompanying World

Confectionery Awards, which can be done through our dedicated website www.confectioneryconference.com

As for the remainder of this issue, we have plenty of important topics on our radar this month. We return to the key theme of packaging systems to assess major ranges that are emerging, which are being released with sustainability as a core consideration.

In addition, we also have features on forming and extrusion, glazing and coating as well as cocoa processing developments, underlining that our sector is far from standing still in challenging times. Lastly, we catch up with editorial board member Sara Jayne Stanes who offers a note of hope for the industry as we move rapidly through 2020.

Neill Barston, editor,
Confectionery Production magazine

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Editorial Advisory Board



Mary Barnard
of Caobisco, the association for the chocolate, biscuits and confectionery industries of Europe.

Mary has extensive experience in the food and drink sector at a senior level, including her present role as president of the European chocolate division of Mondelez International. She has a special interest in the company's Cocoa Life programme.



Andreas Bertram
Managing director of the Central College of the German Confectionery Industry (ZDS)

Andreas has a background in product and market development. He is now responsible for the day to day running of ZDS as well as managing the seminar department.



Andy Baxendale
Chocolate consultant

Andy has worked for some of the largest names in the UK confectionery market, advising on everything from recipes to staff training and production techniques. He has nearly 25 years industry experience and has extensive knowledge of regulation and legislation within the confectionery sector.



Sara Jayne Stanes OBE
Chairman of the Academy of Chocolate

Sara Jayne is chief executive at the Academy of Culinary Arts, an ambassador for 'real' chocolate, and author of *Chocolate: Discovering, Exploring, Enjoying* and co-author of *Chocolate: The Definitive Guide*.



Graham Godfrey
Confectionery consultant

Graham is a technical and manufacturing consultant with expertise in the technologies of cocoa, chocolate, sugar confectionery and chewing gum, and experience in process development, factory design and commissioning, operations development and manufacturing reconfiguration.



Claudio Zanão
CEO of Brazilian Manufacturers Association of Biscuit, Pasta and Industrialised Bread & Cakes (ABIMAPI)

With a background in mechanical engineering, administration, marketing, finance and business management, Claudio has experience of working with FMCG companies including Coca-Cola, Danone and Bunge.

IVORY COAST FARMERS EXPRESS CONCERN AS NESTLÉ ENDS FAIRTRADE DEAL

Fairtrade cocoa producers in Ivory Coast have expressed key concerns over a Nestlé UK and Ireland decision to switch from buying cocoa and sugar on Fairtrade terms, as the multinational company moves to a new deal with Rainforest Alliance.

In an open letter to the Swiss-headquartered business, the Ivorian Fairtrade Network (RICE), said the decision represented a 'devastating blow' to its group of 16,000 small-scale farmers who had operated as part of the present agreement, which formed a significant supply chain for KitKat and other major products over the past decade.

However, Nestlé stated it intends to continue supporting farming communities, and had factored mitigation plans into its decision – which it says was necessary as part of its drive to ensure 100% sustainably sourced



Ivory Coast farmers will lose the premium paid by Fairtrade for the deal they had with Nestlé

cocoa by 2025. Responding to the company's latest decision, the Ivorian network highlighted a study from Fairtrade International that showed 58% of cocoa producers in Côte d'Ivoire live below the poverty line. They claimed the research demonstrated that collective

efforts to support farmers are now needed more than ever. In addition, it noted that the present Fairtrade agreement with Nestlé has enabled access to education and healthcare for children, electricity, as well as wider improved living standards for remote communities.

Explaining its decision, Nestlé said it already had a longstanding partnership with Rainforest Alliance, and that it will continue to work together to build farmer resiliency, tackle key social and environmental issues such as child labour, and empower farmers with the knowledge and skills to negotiate for themselves in the global marketplace.

Simon Billington, global technical manager for Nestlé Confectionery, said: "Our expanded partnership with the Rainforest Alliance underlines our commitment to sustainable cocoa sourcing throughout our global supply chain.

"We are aware that the move will have an impact on some farmers, and we are working hard to mitigate this.

"Nestlé will be maintaining the same level of cocoa spend for the 2020-21 season. We will be investing in a series of initiatives to support farmers and our cocoa growing communities over the next two years, including £1million to develop an industry-first living income pilot and a further £500,000 on community projects."

JB Cocoa enhances its Indonesian facilities

Malaysian-based business JB Cocoa, based in Jahor, has reported an upturn in the efficiency of its processing, as it reveals in this insight into its operations within the region, which includes a facility in Indonesia.

Starting out in the 1980s,

JB Foods began as a processor of wet cocoa beans to dry cocoa beans in the 1980s.

As the business explained, it has now grown into an enterprise with a total processing capacity of 180,000 metric tonnes of cocoa

beans equivalent per year.

The international group's principal activities comprise the production and sale of cocoa ingredient products, namely cocoa butter, cocoa powder and cocoa mass under its JB Cocoa branding.

To increase efficiency of the cocoa powder line, the plant installed a Flexicon bulk-out BFC-C-X bulk bag discharger to handle loose cocoa presscake being put in storage before being reduced to powder and packaged for customers.

The discharger is configured with an electric hoist and trolley that ride on a cantilevered I-beam, allowing bulk bags to be loaded into the frame without the need for a forklift.

JB Cocoa's Indonesian facilities have gained equipment upgrades



RESCHEDULED DATE FOR WORLD CONFECTIONERY CONFERENCE

The World Confectionery Conference is set to be rescheduled for Friday 26 March 2021, in response to the ongoing international situation surrounding coronavirus.

Moving the event from its original date of 11 September this year will enable us to deliver it to its full potential, as businesses continue to adapt amid challenging trading conditions during the next few months.

To date, we have had an encouragingly strong response to plans for our key sector showcase. It is due to feature leading enterprises across confectionery, snacks and bakery markets from around the globe.

So, it is with safety measures for participants and visitors in mind, as well as providing the means for us to hold the conference in its physical format as we originally envisaged, that our decision has been made.

A note of thanks is owed to event sponsor Cargill, plus our keynote speakers



including Caobisco trade association, Fairtrade, Innova Market Insights and confectionery specialist Andy Baxendale, and all others taking part, for their continued support as we progress with our renewed plans for 2021.

The conference venue remains the same, the Brussels Marriott Hotel, Grand Place, Belgium, so we very much hope that you will all be able to join with us to celebrate some of the many key achievements within our industry through our

event programme including the accompanying World Confectionery Awards. The deadline for entries regarding this element has now been extended to 10 January, 2021.

For further details regarding sponsorship and the final available event speaking opportunities, contact events manager Kyra O'Sheen at kyraosheen@bellpublishing.com as well as registration for the conference remaining open through www.confectionery-conference.com

Expansion sees Cargill gain first Asian chocolate processing site in India

Cargill has confirmed a deal with a local chocolate manufacturer in Western India, as it responds to market growth in the region through creating its first manufacturing site within Asia.

As the global agricultural and confectionery company confirmed to *Confectionery Production*, its latest facility will create 100 jobs and is set to be fully operational by mid-2021 and will initially produce 10,000 tonnes of chocolate compounds.

The site will offer manufacturers in the region

access to a range of confectionery, bakery and ice cream applications, with the key project following on the heels of major investment for its chocolate processing facilities in Belgium.

According to the business, consumer preference for chocolate has increased for the region with a shift from traditional sweets to chocolate gifting and year-round consumption of ice cream besides baked goods, as well as within premium chocolate products.

The company noted that



these trends have driven an average annual growth of 13-14% within the domestic market, making India the world's fastest growing chocolate market, according to Cargill's latest research on regional growth factors.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Innovation lab developed
US-based Malt Products Corporation (MPC), a specialist manufacturer of malted barley extract and other natural sweeteners, has designed an Innovations Lab to help firms in the sector, including confectionery markets with ingredients testing.

As the company noted, its new facilities at its Minneapolis site will allow customers to experiment with new formulations and gain insight into critical flavour and stability properties, which remain key aspects of new product development. The lab will be used for a wide variety of products, including baked goods, creamers, nut butters, chocolates, confections, dressings and marinades, and plant-based proteins.

President steps down

Messe Düsseldorf, which is set to host next year's Interpack, has confirmed president and CEO Werner Dornscheidt will be leaving his role at the end of this month, after nearly 17 years in his present position.

He has served the business for 37 years, with the organisation praising him for leaving a legacy of profitable, subsidy-free management, digitally-transformed operations, as well as financial stability. Wolfram N. Diener, Messe Düsseldorf's managing director operative business, will take over as chief executive from next month, after three years in post.

Ipack-Ima postponed

The organisers of the Italian Ipack-Ima packaging and processing event have confirmed it is to be rescheduled until 3-6 May 2022, in light of ongoing concerns over the coronavirus pandemic.

Staged every three years, the industry showcase, which includes a number of systems and equipment applicable for the confectionery and bakery sectors, had been due to be staged in May 2021, just two months after the postponed Interpack packaging event taking place in Düsseldorf, Germany.

HOPING FOR A SWEET SUGAR REDUCTION SUCCESS

Netherlands-based group Bunge Loders Croklaan has claimed a major industry breakthrough for the confectionery sector in developing a system offering up to 50% sugar reduction in product ranges.

According to the company, its latest solution, Sweetolin, has been devised without compromising on taste, which is a patent-pending total fat system with solutions in coatings for sweets and fillings applications.

Speaking to *Confectionery Production* on the creation of the new system devised for chocolate ranges including pralines, as well as chocolate spreads, the team revealed its range took several years of development.

Rafael Zegarra, global marketing director, said: "Sugar reduction is a very big topic right now, which has been seen with the UK government move for beverages tax, as well as other places in the world.

"Nutritionists and the World Health Organisation have also given this focus, and customers have seen the need for us to go into sugar reduced markets. But this is just as much being driven by consumers.

"People love to eat confectionery, but there is a lot of attention on trying to limit your sugar intake with levels of obesity in the world. So we wanted to address this topic with in confectionery through looking at fat content," he explained, stressing that solutions would be tailor-made for individual companies, with a high priority on ensuring that taste profiles of product ranges are not compromised.

Reducing sugar within chocolate has been a major industry issue over the past few years – but results in the sector have been mixed. Neill Barston speaks to Bunge Loders Croklaan on its latest solution that it believes could have a notable impact for the confectionery industry



Bunge Loders Croklaan has spent several years developing its Sweetolin sugar reduction system

As the company noted, oils and fats play an instrumental role in retaining the consumer's taste experience in sugar-reduced products. Sweetolin is a total fat system that processes unique combinations of ingredients to preserve the overall taste and mouthfeel that sugar brings to a final product.

The integrated formula of ingredients support each other in unlocking natural flavours for an optimal sweet taste experience. According to the company, with Sweetolin, the melting property of the final product is optimised, resulting in a higher sweet perception and experience without any lingering off-taste while maintaining the texture and product performance.

"This is a unique opportunity to co-create a tailor-made, ready-to-implement solution together with and for our customers.

This is a specialised fat system that can be integrated seamlessly into our customers' fat processing operations with our R&D support," explained Imro 't Zand, global innovation lead, who revealed that the system has made full use of its sensory and applications specialists.

He revealed one of the key elements to the new solution came in direct replacement of sugar content with fibres, which also had the effect of reducing calories, according to its tests conducted so far.

He added: "It's been very challenging to develop, as you need to look at the fat content and other ingredients that you incorporate into it, as well as doing sensory evaluations, and exploring shelf life and stability of the product.

"So there are many different factors that we had

to look into to make the final product, which include bars and pralines, as well as spread applications."

As the company's product development team enthused, the science behind Sweetolin is backed by longstanding expertise and commitment to deliver tailor-made specialty fat solutions to global food manufacturers.

Zegarra concluded that he hoped the first commercial products using its solution would be available from the start of 2021.

"We are already finding a lot of traction with this system and there seems to be a lot of excitement around it, and we are developing solutions with customers.

"This is a big launch for us and lots of people in the company have been really proud of its development, and we hope it will make a positive impact."

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A new world of cocoa processing opportunities

A major cocoa processing breakthrough in Ivory Coast is set to be delivered through Bühler's creation of its Agroindustrial and training facility (C.F.I.A.) in Abidjan.

The site, which is believed to be the first of its kind in Africa, has been developed as a key industry hub supporting one of the region's most significant export commodities. Speaking to *Confectionery Production* about its development, Désiré N'zi, project director, explains that a core driver for its creation has been to tackle a production imbalance for the sector.

Consequently, as he noted, Ivory Coast and neighbouring Ghana presently account for around 70% of cocoa production, yet only 25% is actually processed in the country.

As has been previously reported, the Ivory Coast government, which is backing the new site, has aspirations to double this figure to 50% in terms of local production levels.

With the new facilities which have been developed over the past two years, Bühler is set to offer manufacturers, students and sector researchers facilities to optimize their processes, develop new semi-finished product recipes such



Kevin Katy, head of technology, and project director and Désiré N'zi at the new site

Bühler's recent virtual world presentations offered an online impression of technology set for Interpack, which was postponed due to coronavirus.

One of the key stories to emerge was its new cocoa competence centre in Ivory Coast. Neill Barston speaks to the project's director Désiré N'Zi



The centre's team leads a tour of the facilities

as cocoa liquor, powder, and butter. They will be able to train the current and future cocoa processing workforce on state-of-the-art technology.

"Within the cocoa industry, there's always been an issue of how do we keep more value in the origin countries. It's a question that is on everyone's mind, and there are different ways that people can contribute towards that.

"For Bühler, as a technology provider, and with very good experience in this field with the success of the African milling school in Kenya, we felt this was a model that could be adapted for the cocoa industry," explained the project director, who said the site's creation addresses several of the company's key strategic sustainable development goals including providing quality education, delivering economic growth and forging new partnerships.

He revealed its original inspiration stemmed from discussions emerging from the last Interpack in 2017 that identified a clear need for such a site within the region. Describing the new facility, he said it has proved greatly rewarding to play a part in bringing the facility to fruition in adapting what was a former IT centre for its own unique industry testing purposes.

The site includes two core production halls, which N'zi revealed will initially focus on primary cocoa processing stages in terms of its pilot-testing, which is hoped to be extended within two years to include chocolate testing equipment to enable finished product development. Its full range of equipment includes a winnowers, grinders, pre-refiners and a lab press, that will offer valuable practical experience for those using the site, which also has classroom

The site's lab press, courtesy of GSR, is used for producing cocoa butter and cake



may eventually broaden out in terms of offering additional technical expertise for roasting possibilities within the coffee sector for the region.

Optimistic of its success, he felt it has been an exciting challenge so far, with plenty of potential ahead to make the most of the nation's cocoa assets.

"I would like to make it one of the major building blocks in strengthening the cocoa industry in the region, not only in the training, but with its innovation capabilities and the service platform that we are offering, as we have experts in our centre that can support the industry growth. One of the next steps will be to become accredited by the ministry of technical and professional education." ♦

facilities. "When we first started to talk about the initiative, it was received with a lot of enthusiasm from all stakeholders, including young students from the "Institut National Polytechnique – Houphouët Boigny" de Yamoussoukro, that we are now hoping to form a partnership with.

"They all seemed super excited that we are here, as cocoa is an important crop in the regional agricultural value chain. The government and customers were also very enthusiastic, so it has just been a question of making it a reality," he said of the site that was due to open in March, and has been postponed to the fourth quarter of 2020 due to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The facility's first students are now expected to take up initial courses at the centre once health and safety conditions allow for this to be possible.

According to N'zi, the company's target is that more than 100 students a year will benefit from its technical training, with capacity for further development as the centre grows. It is hoped that those engaging with its courses will prove an inspiration in becoming the next generation of cocoa specialists, technicians and engineers based within the region.

As *Confectionery Production* has recently highlighted, major global manufacturers such as Mars are seeking to develop chocolate confectionery that has greater resistance to heat levels found in countries such as Ivory Coast and Ghana, which could prove a driver for regional demand.

With local manufacturers increasingly showing signs of developing a market for

the industry amid a growing middle-class society, these factors may also influence the pace of developments within its new cocoa competence centre.

N'zi added: "This is not only a training centre, but a service platform and application facility as well, meaning that with the equipment at our disposal we can support grinders, and prospective grinders to run tests and recipes with small batches, as well as looking at process optimisation.

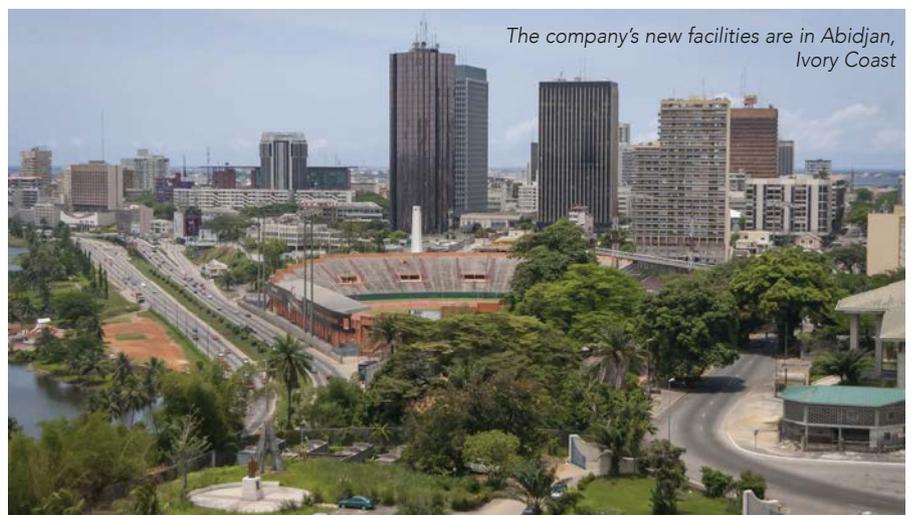
"I think it will make a big difference to the region. It's about confidence that entrepreneurs have to make things happen, so having a global company such as Bühler there to help you actually gives people that confidence to explore the sector," enthused the director, who felt one of its key challenges will be communicating the range of potential services that its site offers.

He said one of the centre's major aims is to ensure smaller enterprises gain access to its facilities, which he said

Ivory Coast cocoa beans will be put to the test locally at the new facility



The company's new facilities are in Abidjan, Ivory Coast



Pandemic leads to short-term sharp growth of Russian market

Despite recent market growth in Russia, this is not likely to be sustained, with analysts noting an economic recession in the country, caused by the outbreak of the disease, and rouble devaluation.

This has led to a significant increase of prices for raw materials (primarily cocoa, 100 per cent of which is still imported to Russia from abroad) and has also put serious pressure on producers.

However, it also had some positive effects for the market, and has led to the short-term sharp growth in the demand and sales of chocolate and confectionery in the regional market (being equivalent to almost three times the year-on-year basis), which was observed during the period of strict quarantine measures in Russia.

The increase of sales was observed in all segments of the market including chocolate wafers, chocolate paste, and bars and was the highest during the past 20 years.

According to analysts at the Russian Ministry of Agriculture, in the case of maintaining at least part of these growth rates, the per capita confectionery consumption in Russia may set a new, historic record during this year.

Furthermore, the Russian Association of Confectionery Industry Enterprises (Askond), confirmed that last year the per capita confectionery consumption in Russia amounted to 25.2kg, of which 5kg accounted for chocolate.

In general, according to its assessment, for this year the overall confectionery output in Russia will barely exceed four million tonnes.

That will be broadly comparable to the figures seen in 2019, as despite the increase of consumer demand, most local producers have no plans to expand capacities until at least the end of the current year.

In the case of exports, it is predicted this year they will remain on the level of 2019, and will vary in the range of 630,000 to 640,000 tonnes.

The coronavirus pandemic and its quarantine measures in Russia have resulted in a significant increase of the demand and sales of confectionery products within the local market. Eugene Gerden reports



Confectionery producers in Moscow and throughout the country are facing major challenges ahead

As for imports, according to analysts at Askond, they will not exceed 360,000 tonnes this year.

Significantly, the current structure of the Russian confectionery market radically differs from patterns seen observed several years ago, when imports exceeded the volume of export supplies by several times. According to analysts, at present the Russian confectionery market remains highly saturated, with an annual growth rate of two to three per cent.

Still, there is a possibility that additional pressure on the market may be put by the state in the case of a final introduction of a practice of mandatory labelling for all confectionery products available in the domestic market.

Such an initiative, according to state plans, will provide an opportunity for regulators to better fight counterfeit products and to contribute to the growth of profits of legal producers.

However, the potential effects of labelling on the domestic market have already been criticised by representatives of some of Russia's leading confectionery producers.

Sergei Nosenko, president of Askond, commented: "Labelling is a very difficult topic. So far, the confectionery industry in Russia has not become a subject of mandatory labelling, as some other industries, however the Russian government is still considering such a possibility, taking into account the size of the industry and its revenue."

According to Askond, the introduction of such measure will result in the increase of the average prices for confectionery in Russia by seven to 10 percent and will lead to their additional costs on the sum of RUB 42 billion (\$591 million), most of which will be allocated for the purchase of necessary equipment designed for producing the required labelling. ♦

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The coronavirus pandemic has affected supply chains for confectionery

Warnings over slow progress on UK-EU trade talks

European sugar users' association CIUS has warned about slow progress within the talks between the European Union (EU) and the UK over a permanent relationship after the current transitional Brexit period expires on December 31. The CIUS wants this period extended – a step that the British government is currently refusing to take.

Noting “the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 crisis”, the CIUS said: “We cannot afford the additional uncertainty, costs and disruption that the introduction of customs and trade barriers between the UK and EU on 1 January, 2021, will cause.”

It wants a guarantee that free trade will continue between Britain and the EU for the next two years while governments deal with the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian government has banned imports of raw and white sugar until September 4, except for use by the pharmaceutical industry.

Keith Nuthall rounds-up the latest key issues within international regulations for the confectionery and bakery sector

The aim is protecting Egypt's sugar industry from a 30 per cent fall in sugar prices during the Covid-19 crisis. The government says that local food manufacturers have been increasing imports and stockpiling cheap foreign sugar, prompting concerns about future domestic purchases of Egypt-made product.

The health crisis has strained the supply chain feeding the EU confectionery and sweet bakery sector. Actions taken by the EU to ease these problems, include additional support for the fruit and dairy sectors.

Covid-19 also delayed the release of the EU's planned new ‘farm to fork strategy’, but when released in May, it included plans to introduce nutrient profile rules to restrict promotion of food high in sugars, salt and fats.

The Mexican government has agreed to remove import duties of between 10 per cent and 20 per cent on cocoa and chocolate products – which were first popularised in Mexico – when these are exported from the European Union (EU).

It and Mexico have finalised a trade agreement between them, which will now be translated into formal versions for ratification by Mexican and EU parliaments. Under the deal, Mexico will also phase out duties on EU exports of chewing gum, maple syrup, glucose, sweet biscuits, jellies and other confectionery and sweet bakery products.

As for the EU, it will open its confectionery markets to Mexican exporters in return – for instance scrapping a €16.5/100kg duty on white chocolate; a 15.4 per cent tariff on

chocolate milk crumb; and 8.3 per cent on Mexican sugar confectionery.

Furthermore, sugar production and sales have been falling fast during the Covid-19 crisis, noted the International Sugar Organisation (ISO).

Mexico production, for instance, to April 25, sank to 4.50 million tonnes, down from 5.37 million tonnes the same time in 2019. In the week to April 21, New York sugar futures prices were \$0.0975 cents/lb, the lowest daily close since June 2008.

European cocoa bean processing has held firm initially during the Covid-19 crisis according to data from the European Cocoa Association – with grindings in the first quarter at 373,625 tonnes, up slightly (100.9 per cent) over the same period in 2019.

This stability has been confirmed by the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO), which has released revised cocoa output forecasts for 2019-20, predicting global production will be 4.75 million tonnes, down just 0.63 per cent from earlier estimates of 4.82 million tonnes.

The International Sweeteners Association has recommended that consumers under lockdown who are eating more meals at home consider eating low/no calorie sweetened products to control food cravings, for instance in rice pudding, chocolate mousse, sorbet or home-made yogurt ice-cream.

In other developments, the European Association of Sugar Manufacturers (CEFS) has welcomed the launch of a tender by European Commission for a study on strategies undertaken by the EU sugar sector to cope with the 2017

abolition of production quotas.

Regarding investments, the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD) has lent Turkish confectionery producer Ülker Bisküvi Sanayi €75 million to fund expansion in Turkey and overseas, while continuing operations during the Covid-19 crisis. The EBRD has also helped arrange a syndicated financing facility of \$374 million for the company, which makes biscuits, cakes, wafers, chocolate bars and chocolate-covered biscuits.

The EBRD has also lent \$D8 million to IE Datly Sherbet, a leading confectionery producer in Turkmenistan, helping it expand its product range, and explore export markets in China and Kyrgyzstan. Consequently, the company wants confectionery and pastry exports to comprise a total of 20 per cent of its output by 2023.

The EU has welcomed the lifting of 100 per cent duties imposed by Kosovo since November 2018 of all goods, including confectionery and sweet bakery, imported from Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, in retaliation for these governments blocking Kosovan accession to Interpol.

A German MEP fears for Germany's sugar beet industry, expected to generate 4.26 million tonnes of refined sugar in 2019-20, claiming rival EU member states have unfair derogations from standard EU controls on neonicotinoids, insecticides linked to bee deaths, and excessive national production subsidies.

David McAllister (whose father was Scottish) wants a common EU sugar beet policy, arguing unfair competition



Sugar production and sales have slumped in the first quarter of 2020 amid covid-19

is harming "German sugar beet farmers and could lead to massive cutbacks in production".

The EU's food safety reporting network RASFF has alerted EU member states to a recall in the UK (which will participate in the organisation until 31 December) of chocolate-covered wafers imported from Germany because a wrapper did not declare potentially allergic ingredients – hazelnuts, eggs, milk, soya and wheat.

RASFF has also reported the recall of Hungary-made ice cream from shops in Ireland and the UK over concerns that the products' labels did not list milk as an ingredient, also over concerns it is a potential allergen.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has called for new studies into concerns that human honey consumers and bees could be harmed by beeswax being adulterated with paraffin or stearin/stearic acid.

Texas, USA-based ice cream manufacturer Blue Bell Creameries has agreed to pay \$19.35 million, pleading guilty to allegations it shipped contaminated products linked to a 2015 listeriosis outbreak, according to the US department of justice.

The Pakistan government has ordered law enforcement agencies to act against the country's sugar sector, following a damning report by an interior ministry commission alleging mills illicitly inflated prices through under reporting sales, black-market sales, over- and under-invoicing.

Forensic audits have been ordered of sugar industry books, with charges being laid against industry officials suspected of breaking laws. ♦



Mexico has agreed a deal for reducing import duty on confectionery

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Confectionery groups backing due diligence

The global chocolate industry has been making all the right noises about practising due diligence over supply chains, so that brands ensure their cocoa is grown and processed responsibly – environmentally and socially.

But doubts persist among NGOs that enough checks are made by companies and supplier country partners (including governments) and when wrongdoing is discovered it is contested effectively, in the confectionery and other sectors. So much so that regulators are mulling making supply chain due diligence mandatory.

A study released by the European Union (EU) executive, the European Commission, in February, flagged up a range of policy options, from doing nothing, releasing new voluntary guidelines, a new EU regulation requiring due diligence reporting and a tougher law that would make such reporting a legal duty of care, with potential judicial remedies if such due diligence was not undertaken.

The report stated there is “widespread use of child labour in cocoa farms in Ivory Coast and Ghana to produce goods, including chocolate, for the European market”, but also that “several major chocolate companies have publicly called for an EU level regulation on mandatory human rights due diligence.”

The issue of due diligence within confectionery supply chains is particularly topical, as Keith Nuthall reports for *Confectionery Production*

The two country’s account for about two thirds of the world’s cocoa supply, and pressure keeps coming from NGOs for more due diligence action.

A recent briefing paper from Mighty Earth on cocoa and African deforestation argued that despite in late 2017, the governments of Ghana and Ivory Coast both signing a Cocoa and Forest Initiative ‘Joint Framework for Action’ working with 34 of the world’s leading cocoa and chocolate companies, “deforestation linked to cocoa production in the top two cocoa producing nations of Ghana and Ivory Coast has increased – not decreased” in the two following years.

Industry action

The international confectionery industry does want action but is keen to stress this should be pre-competitive and not affect free markets.

A joint paper issued at the end of 2019 by Barry Callebaut, Mars Wrigley, Mondelez International, along with Fairtrade International, the Rainforest Alliance and the VOICE Network, stressed: “Most cocoa growers live in poverty, and the cocoa poverty trap has led to the widespread use of

child labour and other human rights problems,” and that “cocoa is a major driver of deforestation, particularly in Ivory Coast and Ghana” – comprising two-thirds of global production.

The paper noted the value of a robust EU regulation that will force all companies sourcing cocoa for the EU market to comply with legal obligations to proactively improve the social and environmental impact of cocoa production – preventing them being undercut by companies avoiding such responsibilities.

The logic behind this approach is the dominance of the European market on global confectionery sales, with 49 per cent of chocolate receipts being earned in Europe in 2017, according to Dutch government figures.

Even with the UK now outside the EU, such a regulation would inevitably be influential, telling chocolate companies to help local governments to apply social and environmental rules.

For such a system to work, accurate information on social and environmental practice linked to cocoa production would be needed via national producer country traceability systems for cocoa beans, with the joint paper asking the ▶

EU to help establish them. The paper called for consultation to deliver a draft EU regulation by December 2020.

A spokesperson for Mars said the company's support of sustainability regulation "to create the desired state of having a supply chain where human rights are respected, the environment is protected, and everyone has the opportunity to thrive".

A key benefit of good supply chain regulation, said Mars, is helping businesses, governments and civil society work together "to effectively address the systemic human rights and environmental challenges in the cocoa supply chain". National governments, said Mars, need to enforce and strengthen their own labour and environmental laws, while companies conduct due diligence to identify and respond to human rights and environmental risks, with "mutually beneficial results for cocoa farming families and their communities".

The company welcomed pre-competitive collaboration with other brands and suppliers to spread knowledge on supply chain improvements via industry forums including the World Cocoa Foundation and the International Cocoa Initiative, which promotes child protection in cocoa-growing communities.

Mars also said it would proactively spread sustainability information through messages on packs, social media, brand publicity and its annual Cocoa for Generations report.

Greater regulation

Meanwhile, Francesco Tramontin, director global public affairs, Mondelez International, agreed that regulation

The EU commission, operating from Brussels, has presented a range of due diligence options



would help: "A harmonised due diligence regulatory approach will provide legal certainty, level-playing field and more importantly more aligned impact of various programmes on the ground."

The company presently operates its \$400 million Cocoa Life programme, which involves monitoring of farmers and liaising with local authorities to report child labour on cocoa farms and work to ensure such children are instead sent to school. The system also alerts the company if cocoa farming is being undertaken in protected conservation areas, providing "appropriate due diligence...to address social and environmental risk", said Tramontin.

"We've achieved transparency in our cocoa supply chain that was unthinkable just few years ago," said the Mondelez director, who added, however, that while online information was useful, labelling such data on products was not: "We do not think that overloading packs with a lot of information will necessarily resonate with consumers."

He hoped the EU would continue

focusing on sustainability goals during and after the Covid-19 crisis, stressing that "alignment and improvements are needed" on due diligence policy, saying this was "a more logical starting point than other approaches (eg mandatory labelling)".

Researchers are certainly pushing for proactivity on the topic. For example, a master's thesis released last year (2019) by the EU-funded Global Campus of Human Rights, a global network of universities focusing on human rights and democracy education, called for set EU mandatory standards for companies to undertake cocoa supply chain due diligence to root out child labour.

A policy paper released last March (2019) by Dutch sustainable forestry NGO Tropenbos International and the Dutch national committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN NL) called for mandatory cocoa sector due diligence for commodities companies.

Ultimately, however, a key issue is how much cocoa farmers earn – where they cannot afford paid help, children are drafted in, especially during harvest times. Despite efforts by the Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire cocoa boards to insist last July (2019) on a \$2,600 per tonne floor for their exports, and commitments by cocoa buyers to pay a \$400/tonne supplement should prices fall, global cocoa prices have been tumbling of late.

The International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO) said that in March they were \$2,338/tonne on average, down from \$2,716/tonne in February. How that impacts buying in a globally competitive market disrupted by a global pandemic remains to be seen. ♦



Mars is among major companies seeking solutions for key supply chain improvements

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NATURAL FOOD INGREDIENTS

Reviving the ancient food of the gods

Over the past five years, Ecuador-based To'ak Chocolate has successfully served up some of the rarest and costliest cacao in the world.

Neill Barston speaks to company CEO James Le Compte on navigating the pandemic and prospects for its future development



“Our mission is to transform the way the world experiences dark chocolate,” explains the team behind Ecuador-based luxury confectionery business To'ak.

From making its initial bold entry into the market five years ago, the company's elegantly packaged chocolate is continuing to gain an enviable global media spotlight.

Its unique selling point amid a crowded field of premium products is its

use of an incredibly rare strain of cacao, ancient Nacional, which was thought to have been extinct, until the company contributed to its revival.

Significantly, its founding principle stems from being environmentally aware across its operations in offering a core commitment to ethical trading.

This extends to the fact that its team not only manufactures high grade chocolate, it is also actively involved in its harvest and ensuring that the small band of regional farmers it is engaged

with, are rewarded fairly.

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, its prized products, which include locally hand crafted wooden boxes for its signature chocolate range, were seized upon as being the 'world's most expensive' luxury confectionery.

Costing around US\$260 at the time of launch per item, the company certainly set its stall out to make an impact – but as the business explains, product pricing reflects the extreme rarity of its superior sourced cacao.

As the company's CEO James Le Compte explains to *Confectionery Production*, having previously worked in a number of sectors including setting up a peer-to-peer lending venture in his native Australia, he was "drawn to the magical story" of To'ak, which continues to gather attention across the world for its sustainability principles.

"With our chocolate we try to recreate some of that ancient wonder and value that it has always had, in a contemporary sense, and in doing so, we can also do justice to the farmers of this incredible plant, and ensure they get a fair share. We pay them between four and eight times the normal farm gate price of what they would normally be getting."

He reveals that despite the major challenges of trying to operate a global business during a pandemic, it remains a rewarding industry to work in.

In terms of his recently adopted new home, he describes Ecuador as 'a complex and beautiful country' that offers incredibly diverse conditions, which are perfect for growing cacao.

Its territory, encompassing areas of Amazon rainforest, Andes mountains at 5,000 metres, and access to the Pacific ocean make it a rich and fertile land.

As he enthuses, his fascination in the origins of chocolate are particularly deep-rooted, and were at the core of making the decision to uproot with his family and make a major move to South America.

"My interest in cacao and fine chocolate has been lifelong, as it was pretty much the only treat that we had in our household when I was a child.



CEO James Le Compte has helped drive the business over the past few years

"We are aiming to push the boundaries of what sustainable chocolate means" – James Le Compte, To'ak Chocolate

"So I grew a liking for it from an early age, and by coincidence, my wife Rita is from Ecuador, so when we visited her family, my father-in-law had run a cacao farm for 20 years. Whenever we were over there, we used to spend as much time as we could at his place.

"It was a real privilege to learn how the industry all starts on a farm level, to hold those cacao pods and the fruit. From there, I grew even more obsessed by the world of fine chocolate and

the special place Ecuador has in that universe," he adds, noting that the country's rich history is intrinsically linked with the development of cacao, which traces its origin in the region back over the past 5,000 years.

From its revered roots reserved for ancient tribal nobility, through to its modern day status as a globally consumed luxury treat, its cultural significance continues to resonate and prove globally significant.

This is underlined by the fact the chocolate market segment in the region is, by some market reports, set to be worth over \$20 billion by 2023.

He notes that the catalyst for the company's development came from a cacao conservation project in Ecuador involving founding business partner Jerry Toth.

Thankfully for the confectionery world, the success of his mission gave rise to the business, which continues to carve out its place amid a highly competitive global market.

Handling a pandemic

Delivering the next chapter of the company is certainly proving something ►



Harvest time in Ecuador, with To'ak team members assisting local farmers

of an adventure, despite facing considerable tests amid the coronavirus pandemic.

While every aspect of the business is under pressure as the world moves to adapt to an altered landscape, the CEO says its team is working extremely hard to continue its core activities.

“Like every other company or person on the planet, we are doing our best in adjusting around the new reality. It’s the day-to-day matters like being able to get into our office here in Quito, or not being able to have face-to-face meetings, that you notice.

“Also, we are not sure whether we will have a harvest this year. If we do, it’s likely to be very late and we are not sure what that will mean in terms of its quality and quantity. With the pandemic conditions, our main bricks and mortar sales channels in retail have also not been open, which is another real issue,” explains the CEO.

However, he says the business is keeping in close contact with the small co-operative of farmers that handle its highly valued crops.

Significantly, he concedes it is a question of having to rapidly enhance its digital communications and online strategy to ensure To’ak remains as visible as possible during the unprecedented global conditions.

Clearly, in an age when consumers have instant access to a host of products from around the world, the premium segment of the market is particularly competitive.

Intriguingly, within the brand’s range,



each batch of chocolate displays the year of harvest, lending each series a level of prestige aiming to mark it out from the crowd.

Among its luxury range is a bar sourced from two Galapagos island cacao farms, which has extremely distinctive properties that lends it a fudge-like quality.

Another especially notable focus of the company has been in adopting an ageing process for some of its series, based on that used for products such as whisky.

Presently, this includes its tequila cask aged variety, and Islay whisky series, which have both spent three years in barrels to mature and intensify

their flavour profiles. Its portfolio is further bolstered by a drinking cacao, as it seeks to broaden the scope of its product offering.

However, it’s the range-topping Origin series that has gained a key spotlight, with its award-winning packaging centred upon a hand crafted wooden box, with individual bar numbers engraved upon it.

Besides its chocolate, the company has made creative ventures with an enterprise of art prints from renowned local Ecuadorian artists focusing on traditional themes.

Perfecting the process

As Le Compte notes, its comparatively high price point is a deliberate strategy that reflects its rarity and the costs of production that the small group of local farmers they work with have invested to revive the ancient strain of cacao.

However, he says the company is continuing to evolve to a point where it is becoming available at a more accessible cost to consumers (with some of its bars starting from around \$25), as its production processes increase.

As the business continues to expand, it is finding a growing fanbase of chocolate lovers around the world.

Another key to its success, he says, has been the fact that the business is one of the few that actually goes to the extent of genetically testing its prized cacao supply sources.

“We also have a unique approach to



making the chocolate, we harvest cacao with the farmers, which undergoes six stages of handling. After it has been fermented and dried, and removed those beans that have any imperfection, we then sort them by size so we can roast according to size to get an even roasting profile.

"We have also tried to create an experience around chocolate, as we want consumers to be guided on something of a journey when they receive it.

"That starts with the first impressions of the packaging for our Origin collection, which come in hand crafted boxes, wrapped in gold foil, with a set of bamboo tasting utensils that comes with its own 60-page colour book, so it's really a visual and tactile experience that primes them for getting to this special bar of chocolate."

Sustainability matters

While some manufacturers talk about sustainability and of improving the lives of farmers on the frontline of the industry, To'ak specialises in taking this to the next level.

This is achieved in pledging payments significantly above average prices within the sector, as well as taking a direct involvement in cacao harvests. The company is fiercely proud of its trading on an entirely ethical basis.

As Le Compte adds, the business is at heart a social enterprise, and it is endeavouring to refine its overall activities to be as environmentally responsible as possible.

Earlier this year, *Confectionery Production* reported on one of its most notable joint initiatives, Orijin, which was unveiled at the Chocoo confectionery event in Amsterdam.

This ambitious digital storytelling and traceability scheme for the speciality food sector uses an Android-based web app mapping cacao farms.

Its tracking activities examine harvests, fermentation, drying and sale of cacao, passing the data up the supply chain in order to improve the raw value of the crop. This will be accessible by small and medium-sized companies that will now have access to such systems that were previously only available for large corporations.

According to Le Compte, it's an issue close to the hearts of many within the business, through going further than existing industry benchmarks to help set new standards of operating.

"For us, it's the only way of doing things. Everything we do we look at through a sustainability perspective, and from the perspective of not being satisfied with the status quo.

"From a farmer's view, there are a lot of systems and value chains that are tired and unequal, so having built relationships with them and being cacao farmers ourselves, as well as chocolate makers, we have more empathy with them.

"When we talk about sustainability, it's not just about sustainability of our businesses or our small slice of the supply chain, it's much more of a holistic approach, and we are aiming to push

To'ak's chocolate is considered among the most expensive due to its rarity



To'ak factfile

- To'ak was founded by Jerry Toth and Carl Schweizer, with the business emerging from a rainforest conservation project led by Toth in Ecuador in 2007.
- After working on reviving nacional cacao, To'ak, meaning earth and tree, gained its launch in 2015
- With headquarters in Quito, Ecuador, the company both makes its own chocolate and assists with harvesting
- The business is pioneering varieties of aged dark chocolate, which significantly enhances flavour, and now exports around the world.

the boundaries of what sustainable chocolate means," explains the CEO, stating that the company's chocolate remains both Fairtrade and certified as being organic, which is central to its involvement with the Orijin traceability scheme in the region.

Despite the numerous tests ahead amid uncertain markets, he remains optimistic about the company's fortunes, as it continues to enhance its highly distinctive range.

"We are really excited to connect with a wider community of chocolate connoisseurs, so to do that we need products that they can enjoy more easily and frequently, which we are working on to do this in a way that won't compromise the raw materials.

"We are also fascinated by the products' functional benefits, which has seen us develop a range of drinking chocolate, as well as a 100 per cent cacao powder. So those are the key things on the horizon over the next two years," he says, mindful of keeping an eye on an ever-changing industry that he feels is showing encouraging signs of progressing in delivering on fundamental sustainability targets to ensure the sector's future. ♦



Forest conditions in Ecuador are ideal for cacao cultivation

Syntegon has developed a broad range of packaging systems, including for forming specialised paper ranges



Devising digital solutions fit for the 21st century

Advanced technology used within packaging machinery ranges continues to drive equipment development within the sector, as Neill Barston reports

Whatever sphere of industry in which you're operating, the effects of coronavirus have had far reaching effects upon business continuity.

From disrupting supply chain timelines for supplies of specialised parts for machinery, engineering staff having to down tools due to pandemic conditions, through to wider issues such as companies holding off investing in developing new lines amid market uncertainty.

These are certainly some of the most challenging times faced by economies

around the world, yet there have been a diverse range of companies determined to continue with delivering latest innovations to market.

According to one recent forecast from Grand View Research the global packaging equipment market is set to continue rising to a value of \$65 billion by 2025, and annual growth at a projected 5.2 per cent.

One thing is certain, the seemingly unstoppable rise of automation, robotic, and web-based industry 4.0 features for machinery is showing no signs of diminishing – with confectionery and

bakery sectors fast catching up with other manufacturing market segments.

Despite May's major Interpack showcase in Germany being postponed until next February, many businesses took the internet to display their latest innovations, in a largely successful bid staging a virtual alternative to the physical event.

German-based Syntegon Technology was among those engaging customers with its digital representation of its planned live event.

One of its key highlights was a new TPU paper form, fill and seal machine

using BillerudKorsnäs natural 3D formable FibreForm paper within shaped paper pods for product samples, portion packs and inserts.

As the company reveals, its latest sustainably developed system has been devised to offer snacks, biscuits and other manufacturers operating within the confectionery sector uniquely shaped and right-sized packaging, with a tactile feeling reflecting the brand and product content, delivered in an environmentally mindful manner.

According to Syntegon, in addition to confectionery uses for sweets and jellies, concepts are also being developed for applications within the gum market, with the machine being capable of modification for modified atmosphere packaging technology for increased product freshness.

The new TPU paper form, fill and seal machine forms environmentally friendly Shaped Paper Pods with a filling volume of just a few and up to 100 millilitres.

Furthermore, the FibreForm paper is shaped by air pressure and embossed by press force. Using heat-sealing technology, the Shaped Paper Pod can be sealed with any heat-sealable lidding materials; barriers will be completely customised to customer needs.

For its part, Italian firm also devised its very own online experience to replicate

Syntegon's paper-based packaging system offers versatile and environmentally sustainable solutions



Interpack, including equipment lines from the company's long established Carle & Montanari confectionery equipment brand.

In terms of its packaging systems, the company has devised a total solution through a gondola buffer feeding the new HY7 (image below), an hybrid wrapping machine and the flow-wrapping machine connected to a new trifunctional packaging cell, that will be demonstrated this autumn at Pack Expo in Chicago, US.

As the company noted, this latest line, which represents a new generation of

high speed wrapping systems with its Hybrid Drive concept (patent pending), has been created with electronics and mechanics inside the machines are used in combination in order to maximise their benefits.

Vision picking systems

Meanwhile, Germany's Theegarten-Pactec is releasing a key new Vision Picker line developed for fast handling of products including moulded chocolate figures. The Dresden business explained its latest robot feeding system with camera recognition ensures an even more flexible, streamlined and more cost-effective processing of ranges, placing machine speed and efficiency as key factors in its design.

With the Vision Picker, the company demonstrates how even highly sensitive products can be packaged flexibly and by means of a lean process using a bundling system, as shown by its existing CWM2 packaging machine. This has been further optimised to enhance production results.

As the company notes, using an integrated image processing system, individual products are now detected within the product flow.

Each product is individually sucked in by the robot and placed in the correct position in the infeed chain of the packaging machine to ensure secure and reliable packaging as usual. The advantages of the new development are obvious: thanks to the Vision Picker, different product formats can be packed even more flexibly and therefore more quickly and cost-effectively. The new



Cama is continuing to add a greater level of automation to its packaging systems



Theegarten-Pactec has released a key new Vision Picker line with advanced robotic features

development is clearly demonstrated in the packaging process of small, cast chocolate teddies, for example. At a speed of 400 products per minute, the CWM2 gently wraps the delicate chocolate figures in bundles.

Digital investment

Having placed significant investment into robotics and modular designs, Italy's Cama Group is also demonstrating a key focus for digital solutions for its equipment. From initial design, through simulation and testing and onto optimum in-field operation, the company's machines will help deliver better, faster, more focused packaging solutions, while enabling customers to increase throughput, shorten time to market, slash downtime and quickly and easily undertake format changes.

"These new digital technologies will enable us to truly exploit Industry 4.0 capabilities, to create added value at every stage of our machines' life cycle," explains Massimo Monguzzi, R&D manager at Cama Group.

"Indeed, we are now capable of defining a machine's value proposition even at the design stage, thanks to simulation-based design and engineering and virtual commissioning.

"As well as making our conceptualisation more realistic and the design and test phase a lot more robust, accurate and application specific," he continues, "these digital technologies will deliver immense value to our end-user customers, thanks to core platforms upon which our machines are based."

As the company notes, it has demonstrated such with a delta-robot-equipped loading unit, running – in real time – alongside its own digital twin. This highlighted how product flows can be simulated and then integrated into other upstream machines, also running in a virtual environment.



Lareka has released its personalised chocolate concept, as shown with a special Confectionery Production design

Augmented reality (AR) is among another key technology, with two machines highlighting its power and flexibility; one for a product-changeover cycle and the other for maintenance. In both cases, augmented reality removes the need for line operators to have intimate knowledge of the machines. Instead, clear, easy-to-understand overlaid 3D renders will allow them to perform even complex tasks quickly and easily. Cama's AR solution is also vital for training, giving operators concise and realistic experience of the machine before it has even left the factory.

Solving the puzzle

Another business showing clear creativity in spotting major opportunities within the confectionery machinery sector is Netherlands-based Lareka.

The business specialises in machinery for the low-volume, luxury product market, and is launching its 'personalised chocolate concept' (PCC) – an end-to-end solution using its established BTB25 wrapping machine. Its latest breakthrough enables businesses to offer smaller runs of customisable chocolate puzzles, single chocolates, as well as in bar format.

Creating luxury packaging in such small series allows companies to make optimal use of the added value of this packaging trend. As the firm notes, personalised chocolate packaging creates multiple marketing opportunities as it turns a regular chocolate tablet in an exclusive treat, personal/corporate gift or memorable souvenir.

Its latest packaging concept is designed to appeal to a number of businesses; chocolate museums, experience centres and brand stores, theme parks, producers of personalised chocolate wanting to reduce their minimum batch size, online gift shops.

The concept in its initial format has been devised for chocolate tablets in a batch of six, as has been demonstrated with a special demonstration produced for *Confectionery Production*, featuring one of our front covers (pictured left).

Significantly, the company's chocolate concept contains all that is needed to take advantage of the added-value of customisable packaging: a web-based application, high-quality industrial printer, precision cutter and its own BTB25 wrapper line. The entire process,



tna's Robag3e has been claimed as one of the world's fastest vertical form fill and seal packaging lines

"Manufacturers are finding themselves under ever-increasing pressure to improve the operational efficiency of their packaging processes,"

Steven Wolfe, general manager, US, tna

from uploading a design online to the wrapping of the tablets, has been designed to be possible within three minutes.

Another business continuing to show new innovations is Australian-headquartered tna.

The company had been due to showcase its latest vertical form, fill and seal packaging system at Snaxpo in the US back in March, but the event was just one of many that was subject to coronavirus postponement.

The tna robag 3e is fully integrated real-time communication software and smart diagnostics, which the company

believes takes control sophistication to an unprecedented level.

"The food packaging industry is evolving at a rapid pace, with manufacturers finding themselves under ever-increasing pressure to improve the operational efficiency of their packaging processes," notes Steven Wolfe, general manager at tna North America, on key trends within the market.

"In an industry where the real and virtual worlds are increasingly converging, digital control systems must become more sophisticated to deliver the levels of automation and performance expected. ♦

Forming the perfect premium products



Extrufood made a key breakthrough with a range of 100 per cent fruit snacks using its extruders

As buying behaviour among consumers continues to evolve on a global scale, optimised forming and extrusion technology is being increasingly used by snack manufacturers. Daisy Phillipson reports

The global demand for indulgent snacks with a healthy twist has been increasing steadily over the past decade, with premium confectionery set to drive market growth between now and 2026.

There are infinite NPD opportunities associated with the premium segment, as it encompasses so many overarching trends such as convenience, protein, better-for-you options and healthful eating. Since the confectionery and snack sectors are among the most competitive in FMCG manufacturing, new product development remains an invaluable weapon for

suppliers in their battle to hold onto their share. In order to do so, a heavier reliance on efficient and flexible machinery offering more than its intended function is paramount.

The forming and machinery market is no exception, with automation and smart technology helping to drive down manufacturing costs and ensure productivity at these critical steps of the production process.

The real fruit deal

One company that is evolving and adapting in accordance with customer requirements is leading expert in extrusion and co-extrusion technology, Extrufood. The premiumisation of snack products, driven by an increased interest in health, nutrition and food ethics, is fuelling the need for more flexible equipment capable of handling shorter runs and faster changeovers.

The same rule applies in the context of confectionery products.

By applying these market shifts to development strategies,

Extrufood made a breakthrough in creating a range of 100 per cent fruit snacks using its cooking and forming extruders.

As the company explains, the most important aspect of extrusion is a more homogenous and consistent cooking process, which leads to a final product of a consistently higher quality. When this process is combined with the use of real fruit juices and purees with natural colours and flavours, the result is a wide range of premium, healthier confectionery products.

Within its present range of continuous production equipment options, Extrufood is able to supply new and upgraded versions of existing equipment in order to help meet customers' requirements. Addressing the need for greater flexibility and unique candy designs, the firm revealed it has been developing an innovative eight-colour extrusion system, adding that further details will be released 'very soon'.

Tastes and textures

A growing demand for organic and natural candies is expected to aid market growth within the confectionery segment. A strong perception among consumers is that these products provide health benefits while also being of a higher quality to traditional



Fruit snack developed by Extrufood

sweets. Of course, there is room for confectionery from both ends of the spectrum, and this is precisely where BCH comes in.

The company offers everything from turnkey lines to standalone systems, as well as bespoke and tailor made solutions. Its flexible extruders are primarily designed for liquorice, starch gels, fruit twists and sugar pastes, and are manufactured with 75, 130 or 200mm diameter screws to produce a broad range of throughputs of between 50 and 1500kg an hour through a side flow die configuration. These can be designed to extrude sheets, ropes and twisted ropes in solid, hollow or co-extruded form.

Addressing the surge of healthy snack ranges, a highlight in the company's recent achievements arrived with the development of a 100 per cent fruit cooking and extrusion system. Utilising BCH's large surface area MaxiVap Evaporator technology, users are able to achieve evaporation of high moisture fruit mixes to typically 85 per cent solids, at which point they have a consistency of a soft dough that can be extruded using BCH extrusion technology.

The wheel fits

Other than creating products using just fruit ingredients, another technique that encompasses so many trends is the use of fruit and nut inclusions. While this idea has been around for some

time, in recent years, suppliers have increasingly placed these components on the surface of a snack product or in conjunction with functional ingredients and superfoods. Even the ice cream category – traditionally associated with high fat, dairy and sugar content – has been stepping up its innovation game to raise both the health and visual profile of indulgent desserts.

A challenge that arises when adding large and uneven fruit and nut pieces to stick-based ice cream is that conventional processing methods can often result in misplaced sticks or inclusions, leading to costly waste and downtime. To overcome these roadblocks, food processing and packaging solutions firm Tetra Pak launched an extrusion system capable of producing stick ice cream products with large-sized inclusions at high capacity.

The Tetra Pak extrusion wheel, which can be added to existing lines, reverses the traditional method of stick ice cream production. Rather than inserting the stick at the end of the processing line, it is there from the start, so the ice cream containing large pieces is then filled around it.

This maintains the position of the stick and the integrity of the inclusions, which can be up to 25mm in diameter. The wheel design includes moulding cavities ensuring uniform product shapes and a smooth surface.

Raising the bar

As well as candy and desserts, forming and extrusion systems are integral to the overall efficiency of many snack manufacturing plants. Snacking occasions have been steadily rising in recent years. In fact, snacking is preferred to eating meals for 59 per cent of adults worldwide.

Common interests in health and wellbeing, alternative diets and unique flavour profiles have driven a rise in premium products hitting the market. By ticking all of the boxes, as well as the added benefit of convenience, the snack bar segment is one of the fastest-growing. In the context of bar forming, confectionery and snack machinery specialist Sollich KG's Conbar range is proving popular with manufacturers due to its flexibility.

Different styles such as cereal, nutrition, brittle, candy and fruit bars are made possible by the forming lines. Then there are the styles: single- and multi-layer products with an additional layer of yogurt, cream, caramel, fruit mass or filling can be produced, as well as rectangle cuts and stamped bars with a variety of cross-sections. "If required, a following chocolate enrobing line, either for only bottom or full enrobing, including the possibility of a decoration increases the range of products which can be produced on the Conbar lines," adds Sollich's Ralf Schäffer.

From visuals to edibles

Accommodating such a wide range of choice leaves plenty of room for NPD in the snack bar department. Although the protein bar market is established, the range of variants continues to soar alongside sales. Vegan bars, for example, contain plant-based alternatives to dairy protein such as pea derivatives and peanut powder. Functional ingredients such as CBD oil, reishi mushrooms and chia seeds present additional consumer benefits.

Mike Sherd, project manager at Egan Food Technologies, explains: "Many of our customers are looking to expose the more beneficial and premium inclusions, for example by sprinkling dried fruit onto the top of their products." In addition, cannabis-infused snack bars are now popular in regions where the psychoactive plant has been legalised for medicinal or recreational use. ♦



The Tetra Pak extrusion wheel, which can be added to existing lines

It's safe to assume that conscious consumerism is no fad. In fact, in its food and drink trends for 2030, global research group Mintel predicts that the most successful companies over the next ten years will be those that improve the health of the planet and its population.

"Tomorrow's conscious consumers will be looking for eco-friendly packaging and products, while also seeking guidance on how to make their diets more sustainable," explained Alex Beckett, associate director, Mintel Food & Drink. The more transparent a product is the better. When specifying ingredients, consumer trust can be won with the use of recognisable ingredients and provenance visibility. Beyond the more high-profile components such as cocoa, fats and oils and sugar, edible surface coatings and glazing agents are integral inclusions for the production of candy and snacks. Sourcing advanced additives that are both functional and sustainable shows a commitment to addressing the needs of the conscious consumer.

Sustainable sourcing

Dr. Isabelle Jaouen, head of R&D at Alland & Robert, a company that focuses primarily on the supply of acacia gum, discussed the move towards ethical products. "We've noticed an increasing interest for ethical and sustainable consumer products," explains Dr. Jaouen. "This is where the sourcing of acacia gum is very important: we work on explaining why acacia gum is



Acacia gum is multi-functional and used widely across confectionery applications

Coatings for the conscious consumer



Coating and glazing for confectionery and bakery ranges has become a major industry over the past decade

From the adoption of plant-based lifestyles to reducing food waste, conscious consumerism is on the rise and has significant implications for brands within the confectionery market. Daisy Phillipson explores the latest innovations in coating, polishing and glazing agents

a sustainable ingredient and that it is ethical with no negative environmental impact. On the contrary, acacia trees contribute to the prevention of desertification of the Sahel in Africa and the trees where the ingredient is harvested play an important role to tackle climate change."

Acacia gum is multi-functional in confectionery applications. Traditionally used in sugar-free chewing gums for coating, it is also widely applied to coat candies that require a gumming operation of their centres and chocolate panning, as well as gumdrops, gummies

and boiled or medicated candies. The benefits are varied, forming a protective barrier between layers, improving textures, providing thickness and acting as an anti-crystallisation agent.

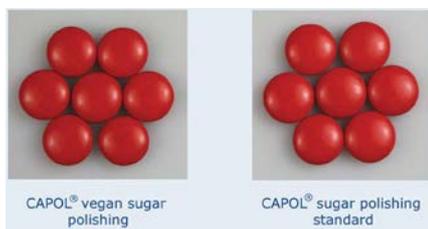
Although acacia gum is a versatile component, to reap the benefits it's important to understand how best to apply it to an existing or new recipe. Challenges may arise along the way when using it in place of less sustainable or synthetic ingredients, which is why Alland & Robert's research and development team works closely with clients so they can use it to develop

healthier and safer products. "Our main challenge has been the communication about our natural gums," Dr. Jaouen concludes. "An 'E' label doesn't mean that the additive is chemical or synthetic, but that it is a molecule (which can be 100 per cent natural) that fulfils a technological role in the finished product. As such, transparency, naturalness and technical support are key for us; we strongly believe that it is essential to educate the consumer."

Vegan alternatives

Increasing consumer awareness for the environment, health and animal welfare has helped the vegan movement gain momentum, encompassing all of the requirements of the conscious consumer. As a result of the upsurge in demand for the removal of animal products from recipes, candy and chocolate manufacturers are increasingly turning to ingredient suppliers such as Capol to provide a solution.

As the company pointed out, while moving away from animal-derived ingredients, confectionery manufacturers still need to preserve the texture of their products and make sure they look as good as their non-vegan equivalents. Plant-based anti-sticking, glazing and polishing solutions play their part in achieving this goal. "We see an increasing number of requests for vegan surface treatment solutions, especially in middle and western European countries," says Thomas Mücklich, regional sales manager at Capol. Although a major part of the ingredients



Confectionery manufacturers still need to preserve the texture of their products, says Capol



Glazing products have remained a key area of focus for Capol

used for surface treatment agents are derived from plants, commonly used functional components like beeswax or shellac are not vegan – and omitting them can lead to challenges.

For gummies with a firmer texture, beeswax is commonly used to provide shine on the surface and protect the gummies from sticking together. To create the same function for vegan applications, Capol developed vegan anti-sticking agents with carnauba wax, which is a plant-derived wax that provides the ideal gloss and protection properties manufacturers are looking for.

Consequently, the business developed two-in-one glazing solutions which do not need additional shellac sealing, providing quick drying time and less stickiness. However, to reap the benefits of Capol's plant-based derivatives depends on the product environments and the right adjustment of parameters.

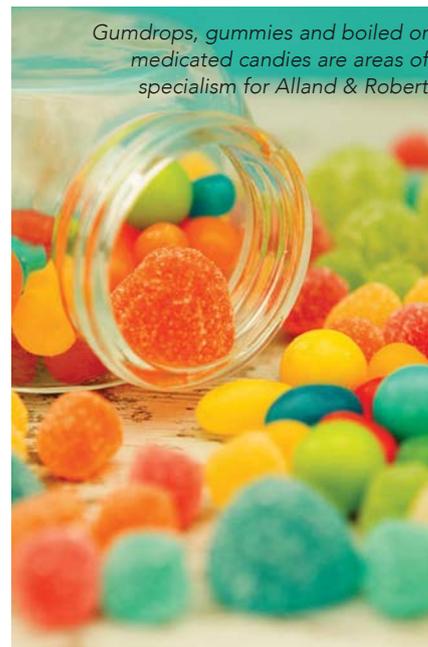
Product and application know-how are integral to the process, which is why the company's application technicians are ready to help with sample testing and technical advice, offering consultancy from the beginning to end so that product developers are able to recreate the functionality of traditional ingredients in products that meet the requirements of the conscious consumer.

Tackling food waste

Another company to provide alternative solutions for confectionery products is Thew Arnott. "In today's world we are being increasingly asked to use ingredients which fulfil a larger number of criteria," explains Paul Jupp, commercial director, Thew Arnott. "Non-GMO, Kosher, Halal, vegan, sugar free, responsibly sourced, gluten-free, clean or clear label, allergen free to name but a few, and all this has to be done at a reasonable price."

In addition to standard ingredients used in its AraTAs range of confectionery coatings blends such as gum arabic, starches, vegetable oils, sugar, glucose syrup and shellac, the company is continually looking for new ingredients to increase the flexibility of its bespoke solutions and expand where the products can be used.

An example is the use of Zein, a water-insoluble protein extracted from maize that is vegan, sustainable, digestible and biodegradable, and is available as non-



GMO. Its functionality can replace shellac as a glazing agent, and being extracted from corn, is a cleaner ingredient with a wider range of uses. "Zein has proven to be an excellent way to both glaze and seal the confectionery surface and also adhere pearlescent colours in one application," adds Jupp.

But beyond technical advantages and plant-based credentials, Zein addresses the issue of food waste by extending the shelf-life of confectionery products and its components. An estimated 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted globally each year – one third of all food produced for human consumption. The manufacturing sector plays a big part in this overall figure, with many suppliers placing focus on reducing its waste using a circular economy approach.

In the case of confectionery, new processes are being developed to help manufacturers address the issue of food loss by extending product shelf-life – this is where Zein comes in. Despite comprising one aspect of a more complex, comprehensive recipe checklist, coating, glazing and polishing agents are integral components.

Choosing the right ingredient from a supplier that offers technical support can result in increased product quality as well as a host of other functional benefits. Furthermore, they can be used by food firms to develop natural, quality products that meet the requirements set out by consumers who are seeking peace of mind and a cleaner supply chain with their food choices. ♦

Championing chocolate *excellence*

While this year is proving one of the most exceptionally challenging on record amid the coronavirus pandemic, there remains a spirit of determination from many within the confectionery sector.

Sara Jayne Stanes, chair of the Academy of Chocolate, is certainly among those approaching present conditions with a 'glass half full rather than half empty' philosophy.

In her view, though there may well be multiple challenges brought about by an unprecedented shutdown of the economy over the past few months, she believes the industry will return to its former fortunes before too long.

As market analysts note, the confectionery sector is weathering the sharp economic storm relatively well, as millions of Brits seek comfort food and a few luxury treats to get them through an unprecedented moment in our history.

Perhaps one of the most striking features of recent months has been

Since its creation 15 years ago, the UK's Academy of Chocolate has hailed some of the world's finest artisan producers. Neill Barston speaks to its founder and *Confectionery Production* editorial board member Sara Jayne Stanes on challenges facing the sector, plans for the academy's annual awards and her undimmed love for the industry

an unwelcome sight of barren high streets, as stores temporarily pull their collective shutters down under lockdown rules, which has impacted considerably on trading potential.

Furthermore, key events, such as the annual Academy of Chocolate Awards have been affected, with judging for this year's event (for which *Confectionery Production* is a part), is suspended until the relinquishing of quarantine measures that have radically altered the shape of everyone's lives.

Despite the surreal circumstances, Sara Jayne Stanes, believes that hope is genuinely on the horizon.

"So much has been put on hold

in the chocolate world, it's been a process of just trying to make sure we do as much as we can to keep the profile of high quality chocolate up to all our followers at the academy. "We've had to postpone the second part of our awards due to the pandemic, but we're hoping to be able to do that again in September when things have settled, as I am an eternal optimist," explains the expert, who says that under crisis conditions, keeping a resolute attitude is of significant importance.

As she notes, prior to the unprecedented lockdown, there were plenty of encouraging signs that inventiveness and creativity within the sector are alive and well. According to Stanes, there are already some exceptional entries that have been placed for the latest round of judging.

"When we started back in 2004/5, I really didn't think there were enough people that were interested in chocolate to the level that I was in order to make it work, but it was through the likes of chef Michel Roux, and Egon Ronay (critic and food writer), who made me realise that maybe it is all worthwhile.

"We had a maximum of 20 entries for the first time we held the awards in 2005, but 15 years later we're looking at a total of 1,800 people entering, which is absolutely amazing. I would never have dreamt it in a million years," she enthuses.

Sara Jayne Stanes has seen the Academy of Chocolate Grow immensely over the past 15 years



While she concedes that her own preference is very much for tasting products physically in a store, there's notable scope for online trading, which savvy entrepreneurs are continuing to make the most of, before the 'green light' was recently given to start once again opening up our high street shops.

"I think it has posed a considerable problem with stores having been closed, but I know people like William Curly, Paul A Young, Duffy Sheardown and Pump Street Bakery are doing really well at getting products out there through delivery and are doing a roaring trade, which is great to see," adds Sara, who is also the chief executive of the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, Britain's leading association of head chefs and restaurant managers.

While she acknowledges there have been some key logistical hurdles to overcome, such as coping with delivery demands and transporting chocolate amid peak summer temperatures, companies are exhibiting some inventive solutions. Notably, she says there continues to be a number of individuals and global businesses pushing creative boundaries, which in turn is driving the industry forward.

"I believe there has to be a degree of optimism about the present situation, or people won't have an incentive to continue, but it is going to be very bumpy over the next few months, with those who have developed good products likely to survive in present climate," says the academy's chair. Significantly, Sara reveals she remains as passionate



Academy of Chocolate patron Michel Roux (below, right) passed away in March and will be greatly missed

about the industry as ever, adding that there's a considerable debt of gratitude owed to the academy's former patron Michel Roux, who sadly passed away in March. The Michelin starred chef became known as the 'godfather of British cuisine' and as a media personality, whose expertise very much extended into luxury confectionery.

"His contribution to the academy was enormous, as he made sure that quality was at the forefront of everything that we've done. I knew him very well, and it was he who actually got me into chocolate in the first place. "A friend of mine had some tickets for a tasting event back in the mid 80s, and we went along to it in Richmond, and he gave a fantastic cooking demonstration. I can't remember the first two courses, but the third was a chocolate truffle gateau.

"I tasted it reluctantly as, only familiar with chocolate confectionery,

I thought it would just be too sweet, but it was bliss. I said I'd never tasted anything like it before and he told me that I'd obviously never tasted real chocolate, and that's what started the whole thing off for me – from making chocolate truffles for 25 years to writing *Chocolate the Definitive Guide* (the complete history of chocolate from bean to bar). It is extraordinary to think in the mid 1980s, the term bean to bar was rarely heard.

"Michel played a big part in many peoples' culinary lives and will be enormously missed," adds Sara, who says her own adventures in the industry were sparked as a child, fascinated by the stories behind differing foods. As the academy chair adds, she retains a high degree of respect for the diverse range of pastry chefs and chocolatiers now operating in the business.

One such example is last year's 'Golden Bean' award winner, Denise Castronovo, of US-based Castronovo Chocolates, whom she describes as a 'beacon for the industry' having entered the sector a relatively short time ago, to evolve her skills in delivering acclaimed confectionery series. Ever eager to champion new chocolate makers, Sara adds that she 'would love for people to have the chance to learn as much as I've been able to about it over the years,' which goes to the heart of the academy's ongoing mission in enlightening consumers about the wealth of fine chocolate confectionery emerging from around the world. ♦



The Academy of Chocolate Award winners from 2019, with the event set to resume again shortly



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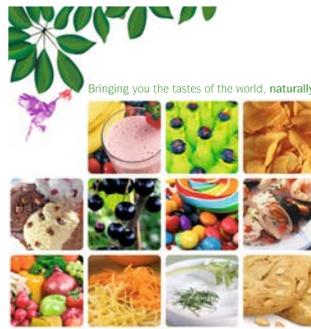
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