

CATEGORY NEWS

WCF Assesses Sustainability Progress, Challenges

NEW YORK — Achieving a sustainable cocoa supply on a global level will involve increased attentiveness to the issues confronting farmers, establishing a common standard for measuring progress and correcting problems, strengthening certification systems and increasing stakeholder involvement across the board, according to a report issued by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF).

Although progress has been made, “it’s time to move from individual approaches toward collaborative actions that improve farmer well-being,” President Bill Guyton writes, noting participants must begin translating strategies into actions.

Based on discussions during the group’s October partnership meeting and sustainability trade fair in Copenhagen, the report, “Connecting Sustainability, Standards and Certification,” highlights five core findings:

First, a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) for the CocoaAction strategy in West Africa has been agreed upon. The next step is designing measurement systems that consider and integrate local conditions and context, involve the full range of stakeholders, are transparent and inclusive in their reporting process, are cost effective and provide direct value to farmers.

Second, stakeholders concur that structuring KPIs to benchmark continual improvement will deliver significantly greater benefits to farmers and help them gauge progress. Further, certification must be more effective in reaching and involving growers.

Third, the success of certification depends on farmer groups’ management of certification systems; supply chain partners providing quality services and channeling investment; governments in cocoa-growing regions setting compliance criteria in local origin context and ensuring availability of inputs, credit, fair cocoa prices and child labor monitoring and remediation.

Fourth, as the International Organization for Standardization and European Committee on Standardization formulate elements of a standards system for cocoa, CocoaAction’s development of KPIs can contribute to the process.

Fifth, the cocoa industry, WCF, governments and stakeholders in producer countries should align goals and programs to deliver on industry KPIs and national cocoa sector strategies, and engage with major global voluntary standards systems.

State Of The Industry Conference Registration Opens

WASHINGTON — Registration is open for next year’s NCA State of the Industry Conference, being held February 16 to 19 in Miami, and featuring a lineup of speakers that includes NBC News’ Dr. Nancy Snyderman and ABC’s *Shark Tank* investor Lori Greiner.

Other speakers sharing insights on consumer trends, shopper behavior, health and wellness, supply chain efficiency and leadership are Hank Armour, of NACS; Marc Mathieu, of Unilever; former U.S. Air Force pilot Col. Ken Rizer; Paul Begala, of CNN; Fox News host Tucker Carlson; Jeremy Gutsche, of TrendHunter.com; Steve Loehr, of Kwik Trip, Inc.; Mike Weinstein, of INOV8 Beverage Co.; Nicko Debenham, of Barry Callebaut AG; retail insights thought leader Todd Hale; John Spelich, of Alibaba Group; and Jim Glassman, of JPMorgan Chase & Co.

The annual meeting draws more than 600 industry leaders and key retailers, offering presentations on category insights, ideas to improve business and networking opportunities. Among the highlights is the presentation of the Confectionery Leadership Awards to industry members who have excelled in business collaboration, category management and in-store innovation in confectionery merchandising.

For more information and registration, visit candyusa.com/2015conference.



Most Consumers Research Online, Buy In Store

ATLANTA — While 85 percent of U.S. consumers research products online, but make purchases in stores, the rise in e-commerce is establishing new expectations among omni-channel shoppers, according to research by digital merchandiser provider Displaydata.

The poll indicates disconnects between online and brick-and-mortar shopping; 44 percent of respondents claim retailers offer different prices online and offline; 52 percent complain of in-store stock availabilities compared with online retailers; and 26 percent report store personnel are poorly informed.



Electronic shelf labels (ESL) are helping bridge the divide by delivering time-of-day pricing, supporting accurate pricing across the retail chain, displaying richer product data and engaging shoppers in aisles. Displaydata reports that stores using the ESL technology have seen improved sales conversions, increased operational efficiency and better margins.

Sheetz Joins PHA; Will Offer Healthier Choices

LAS VEGAS — C-store chain Sheetz, Inc. has joined the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), pledging that during the next two years it will offer more nutritious, affordable foods at its 475 outlets.

To achieve this goal, Sheetz will carry a minimum of eight categories of fruits and vegetables, four whole grain products and 15 packaged items that meet PHA’s definition of healthier foods. The retailer indicates healthier packaged foods will be priced less than or equal to comparable items.

Nearly 1,000 c-stores have committed to PHA pledges to date, according to the group.



NBC News Chief Medical Editor Nancy Snyderman, MD, is among the key presenters at the 2015 State of the Industry Conference.