

Coffee cooperative wins cupping competition



WINNERS of the 2016 National Coffee Cupping Competition, Timuza Coffee Cooperative Group from Timuza village, Eastern Highlands, received their prize, a four-wheel drive vehicle, last week from the Coffee Industry Corporation.

The national competition, held in Lae from Aug 15-19, brought 127 coffee producers from 12 provinces. The beans were assessed by eight international Q-graders from Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Costa Rica.

Timuza Coffee Cooperative won first place at the national event this year with a score of 85.75 points, just 2.25 points

above the 2015 winners.

Coffee Industry Corporation (CIC) CEO Charles Dambui told the Timuza community that their win was a challenge for other co-operatives to work hard and produce quality coffee.

“This vehicle that you received today is not change but a tool for you to bring change into your community.”

Dambui said that it was pleasing to see that a group like Timuza who had been cultivating and group marketing coffee in the last 12 years excel to the next level through the coffee competition.

He said the competition looked at opening avenues for farmers to participate in the specialty market

to fetch higher prices apart from the conventional local markets.

Coffee competition coordinator, Sam Menanga said the specialty market was a difficult market to participate in as it needed one to consistently supply the same quality coffee every time it was requested by the buyer or party overseas.

“I congratulate Timuza for your achievement in this year’s competition and urge you to strive for the best when you produce and process your coffee,” Dambui said.

He also acknowledged CIC provincial extension coordinator for Eastern Highlands, Samson Jack, who was instrumental in grooming this group.

“We want to work with and see groups who are ready to do group marketing and are committed to producing quality coffee.”

The PNG Coffee Cupping Competition started in 2014 through a directive by the Government through the Tree to Cup Policy to enable farmers to go into SMEs.

The competition aims to identify and profile good quality coffee from progressive cooperative groups in major coffee growing provinces and expose the intrinsic value of coffee grown and produced in PNG to the outside world.

Since its inception, over 150 farmer groups have participated, receiving more than K450,000 in export receipts from coffee sales.

PNG cocoa “some of the best cocoa in the world”

By SAMANTHA RINA – Communications Officer, PHAMA Programme

A GROUP of international cocoa buyers from the United States of America and Europe currently visiting Papua New Guinea have expressed a strong interest in sourcing locally produced cocoa for their chocolate and bean-to-bar businesses.

The delegation arrived in the country early this month and has visited several cocoa farms, plantations, fermentaries and traders/exporters in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Madang and Morobe.

Organised by the Australian and New Zealand Government-funded Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) programme, the trade visit is part of PHAMA’s wider programme to promote PNG cocoa in new markets.

PHAMA undertook a market study in May 2016 to better understand future opportunities for differentiated cocoa in PNG and to outline clear export pathways for suppliers. This included opportunities for Fair-trade and Rainforest Alliance certified beans, plantation cocoa and high quality smoke-free cocoa.

Among other recommendations, the study recommended a trade visit to link prospective international buyers to farmers, traders and exporters.

Buyers’ observations and remarks

Chocolate Wave owner Martyn O’Dare, who has over 35 years of experience in the UK chocolate industry, said the visit was important to find out the story behind PNG cocoa.

“I’ve seen tremendous enthusiasm from people growing cocoa, the farmers, the fermenters and the exporters – everybody’s got the will to make this work so that’s the most important thing. What we’ll do after this trip is a deep assessment on the samples so we can select the best taste,” he said.

“It’s (cocoa) grown in paradise, has a unique taste, really powerful fruity notes, tobacco notes and lots of other flavours which, as chocolatiers, we can tease out but we can’t tease out unless the farmer has grown, harvested, fermented and dried (the cocoa) correctly,” he added.

Brad Kintzer, head chocolate maker of TCHO in San Francisco, USA, has previously purchased cocoa from the Pacific.

“There’s a lot of different ways I could use PNG cocoa so I’d love to start looking at a way to buy and test it,” he said.

He said what sets PNG apart from other cocoa-producing countries was the cocoa itself.

“If the cocoa is processed properly, it is some of the best cocoa in the world. Not all countries can say that. PNG really has a unique flavour pro-

file that could be very much sought-after in the developing specialty chocolate market.

“There’s a lot of potential for PNG to focus on quality and branding itself as one of the top flavour countries in the world.”

Mathieu Bours, a cocoa buyer for Cercle du Cacao in Belgium, said while the aromatic profile of PNG cocoa was stunning, some fermentaries and drying systems lacked proper methods to prevent cocoa from being tainted by smoke during the drying process.

“There is a huge potential for PNG bean but given that every single process post-harvest can harm the aromatics we have to make sure that every step is correct so that the potential is actually developed. Some of them lack evacuation for the smoke so we’ve got to help the fermentaries develop a new way of doing it or at least better off the evacuation of smoke.”

French chocolatier Raoul Boulanger and Bours have not previously sourced cocoa from Pacific origins but are keen to explore possibilities with cocoa farmers and exporters from PNG and the Solomon Islands.

“As part of the study conducted in May, we received some samples that we really liked but the problem is the smoke taint. We are here to see if we can get some well processed cocoa



and see how we can develop better processing procedures.”

The problem with smoke taint in cocoa beans is well documented across the Pacific. In Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa, PHAMA has been trialling low cost “solar driers” to address this problem.

Traders and exporters’ take on the trade visit

Finan Romaso, field service manager for Agmark NGIP, one of PNG’s major exporters, said they would like to see how they could help farmers access the specialty market.

“It’s a new market and we’re trying to access these markets for the farmers. Unfortunately, what we’re finding is because PNG cocoa is high premium cocoa, it fetches a high price but a lot of buyers are hesitant to give a little extra (as premium) for the farmers.”

Romaso said the premiums were an incentive for farmers who used it for community development, such as construction of classrooms and housing quarters for teachers as a

means of securing better education for their children.

Kulili Estates’ (Karkar Island, Madang) co-owner Brett Middleton said while they did not export directly, they were interested in maximising returns.






“Having small buyers here opens up a door that may lead to more profitable cocoa exports in the future,” he said.

He said Kulili Estates had previously exported directly to international buyers but the challenges of logistic arrangements and costs of doing business from Karkar Island had deterred their efforts. With the current high price of cocoa, Middleton said the idea of exporting was worth revisiting.

“The future is in high-end quality cocoa and we’d like to get some benefit from producing high quality cocoa so I’m hoping it works out.”

Head chocolate maker of TCHO in San Francisco, Brad Kintzer, with cocoa farmers in Madang.

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