

How Cargill is Advancing Sustainable Cocoa Farming in Indonesia

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As global demand for sustainably sourced cocoa continues to rise, Indonesia is emerging as an increasingly important player in the Asia-Pacific cocoa value chain. In this exclusive interaction with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Brook Chang, Sustainability Director ??? Food APAC at Cargill, discusses how the company is strengthening sustainable cocoa sourcing in Indonesia through farmer partnerships, Rainforest Alliance certification, traceability systems, and productivity-focused initiatives.

From premium payment programs and farmer training to demonstration farms and digital traceability tools, Chang shares insights into how Cargill is supporting cocoa-growing communities in regions such as Central Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara while building a more resilient and transparent supply chain. He also highlights Indonesiaâ??s growing strategic importance within Cargillâ??s broader cocoa sourcing, processing, and innovation network for regional and global markets.

What measurable impact has the premium payment program had on farmer incomes, cocoa yields, and bean quality in Indonesia since its inception?

Cargill has supported cocoa farmers in Indonesia through training and capability-building programs since 2014. Premium distribution to farmers is linking farmer support with certification requirements and our customersâ?? demand for certified cocoa ingredients.

Premiums are paid on top of cocoa bean sales and are intended to provide participating farmers with additional income linked to certified cocoa sourcing requirements. The income benefit varies depending on production volume and participation level.

In Central Sulawesi, higher volume participating farmers may receive larger premium payments, reflecting the certified cocoa volumes supplied under the program.

Beyond the premium payments, Cargill's certified cocoa sourcing work includes Good Agricultural Practices training, certification preparation support, and a traceability structure. These activities are designed to support farmers in improving farm management, better understand buyer and certification requirements, support more consistent bean quality and strengthen productivity potential over time, while contributing to the availability of certified cocoa volumes.

How does Rainforest Alliance certification strengthen traceability and supply chain resilience for Cargill's operations in Indonesia?

Rainforest Alliance certification supports the connection between sourcing certified cocoa beans from farmers in Indonesia and supplying certified cocoa ingredient volumes to customers.

Certification provides participating farmers with a recognised framework for responsible farming practices, farm records and traceability requirements. In Indonesia, Cargill works with local partners, such as farmer cooperatives, to support farmer readiness, monitor certification status and manage certified cocoa volumes. Cargill also operates a cocoa processing facility in Gresik, producing cocoa powders, cocoa liquor and cocoa butter for customers in Asia and other markets.

To support certification requirements, Cargill uses digital systems to record and manage information across the cocoa supply chain, including cocoa bean transactions, warehouse and processing records, and customer reporting. Data collection and processing are conducted in accordance with applicable laws and certification requirements. This creates greater visibility into where certified cocoa comes from and how it is produced, helping connect farmer supply with customer demand for certified ingredients.

What are the primary challenges cocoa farmers in regions like Central Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara face in meeting sustainability requirements, and how is Cargill assisting them?

Cocoa farmers in regions such as Central Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara can face challenges, including changing weather patterns, ageing trees, limited access to agricultural inputs and technical knowledge, and increasing requirements around certification and responsible farming practices. For farmers, meeting these requirements is a gradual process that requires practical and ongoing support. Cargill supports local farmer cooperatives in organising peer activities on knowledge exchange, such as farmer field schools, one-on-one coaching, demonstration farms (demo-plot), and other activities.

Beyond premium payments and training, are there plans for additional investments or technological solutions to support farm productivity and climate resilience?

Through our cocoa sourcing activities in Indonesia, we continue to invest in farmer capability by supporting farming knowledge, traceability, better farm management and productivity potential.

For example, in Central Sulawesi, we work with PT Rayner Anugrah Kemurahan, a local cocoa cooperative led by Ferdy Wongkar. The cooperative works through cocoa traders, who each work with groups of farmer members. Through this network, farmer and farm information is recorded as part of the certification and sourcing process, including farm location, certification status, cocoa volumes and quality-related data. This helps enable farmers, traders and Cargill to have clearer information on certified cocoa production and better understand where support may be needed, whether related to farm practices, replanting, quality improvement or certification readiness.

The cooperative also manages six demonstration farms and five nurseries in Central Sulawesi. The demonstration farms serve as hands-on learning sites for Good Agricultural Practices and knowledge exchange, while the nurseries provide seedlings to support farm rehabilitation and replanting. Together, the activities are designed to support farmers in strengthening their productivity potential, developing more consistent bean quality and building greater resilience over time.

How does Cargill assess the long-term success of partnerships like the one with PT Rayner Anugrah Kemurahan, and is there potential to expand this model globally?

Cargill works with farmer organisations and local partners across cocoa origins, adapting activities to local farmer needs, market structures and sourcing requirements. In Indonesia, the value of partnerships with local farmer organisations such as PT Rayner Anugrah Kemurahan is in bringing farmer engagement, certification support and certified cocoa sourcing closer together. Through this partnership, participating farmers receive technical support to meet certification requirements, achieve more consistent bean quality, and receive premiums linked to certified sourcing.

Given the growing global demand for sustainable cocoa, how central is Indonesia to Cargill's broader supply chain strategy for the Asia-Pacific region?

Indonesia is important to Cargill's cocoa business not only as a cocoa-sourcing origin but also as a processing and innovation hub for customers in the Asia-Pacific and other markets.

Indonesia is one of Cargill's cocoa sourcing regions and supports customer demand for certified cocoa volumes in regional and global markets. Cargill's work in Indonesia brings together farmer engagement, certification requirements and premium mechanisms as part of Cargill's broader global cocoa sourcing network.

Beyond sourcing, Indonesia also plays an important role in Cargill's cocoa processing and innovation capabilities. Cargill's cocoa processing plant in Gresik has been operating for more than a decade, producing cocoa powders, cocoa liquor and cocoa butter for customers in Asia and other markets. Cargill continues to enhance the facility's capabilities, including through the launch of a new cocoa production line in 2024, to support evolving customer needs and consumer demand for more tailored cocoa solutions.

Together with the Cocoa Development Centre in Gresik, these capabilities strengthen Indonesia's role as an important part of Cargill's regional and global cocoa sourcing, production and innovation network.

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