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Planet A Foods Launches Cocoa Powder Replacer Amid Rising Cocoa Prices

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Munich-based food technology company Planet A Foods has introduced Cocoa Booster, a functional cocoa powder replacer designed to help food manufacturers reduce their dependence on conventional cocoa amid rising prices and supply volatility.

The launch comes as cocoa markets face renewed supply pressures, with prices reportedly increasing by more than 70 per cent since February 2026 and futures markets pricing cocoa above $6,000 per metric tonne into 2027. While the previous supply crisis primarily affected cocoa butter, the current pressure is increasingly extending to cocoa powder, a key ingredient in products such as biscuits, cakes, breakfast cereals and beverages.

Planet A Foods, the company behind the cocoa-free chocolate alternative ChoViva, has developed Cocoa Booster as a single-ingredient solution that allows manufacturers to partially or completely replace cocoa powder in selected food applications.

The 2026/27 cocoa season is expected to remain challenging, with forecasts indicating a greater than 90 per cent probability of a strong El Niño event. This could affect cocoa harvests in Ghana and Ivory Coast, which together account for approximately 60 per cent of global cocoa production.

For manufacturers of bakery products, confectionery, cereals, fillings and beverages, the volatility has made cocoa powder sourcing and production planning increasingly challenging.

Cocoa Booster is designed to reduce the proportion of conventional cocoa powder used in formulations, helping manufacturers manage exposure to commodity price fluctuations. Sourced and manufactured in the European Union (EU), the ingredient offers an alternative supply chain independent of West African cocoa harvests, with the potential for long-term volume and price agreements.

Cocoa Booster is available in three profiles – natural, alkalised and dark – developed to replicate the taste and colour characteristics of corresponding cocoa powder varieties.

The ingredient is designed to work with existing formulations without requiring changes to manufacturing processes. Depending on the application, it can partially or fully replace cocoa powder in products such as cookies, muffins, sponge cakes, puddings, fat-based cream fillings and beverages.

Unlike consumer-facing brands, Cocoa Booster is positioned as a functional ingredient for food manufacturers and is incorporated directly into product formulations without requiring on-pack branding. It is made from an EU-sourced raw material, produced in the EU and is allergen-free.

The company also highlighted the ingredient's fibre contribution, positioning it as an option for manufacturers looking to improve the nutritional profile of cocoa-based formulations.

“When we spoke to R&D teams, the message was consistent: they had tested alternatives, but existing powder extenders either brought an off-taste, matched only the colour but not the taste, or came with added sugars and flavours. We set out to solve this with one ingredient that works in the recipe they already have – and adds fibre at the same time,” said Dr Sara Marquart, Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Planet A Foods.

With Cocoa Booster, the company aims to provide food manufacturers with greater formulation flexibility and supply-chain resilience as cocoa price volatility and changing consumer preferences reshape the food ingredients market.