

A publication of the Market Information Service (MIS) - Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries  
*"Linking the market and Primary producers"*

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## Koko Samoa (Cocoa)



Cocoa production in the Pacific has a long history and was once a thriving industry, with Pacific cocoa sought for its fine flavors and unique qualities. Global competition, natural disasters, cocoa diseases and under-investment have led to progressive long-term decline of the industry. Cocoa has been grown in the Pacific for over 130 years, being introduced to the Solomon Islands and Fiji by the British in the

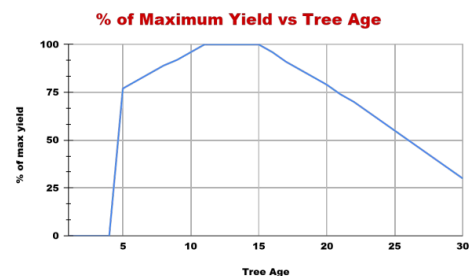
1880s, and to Samoa, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea by German missionaries and traders in the 1890s

### Samoa Cocoa Overview

'Koko in Samoa is one of the most preferred local beverages. However, the island nations were not producing merely a fraction of the world's 1% cocoa. Exports peaked from 1972 to 1977 at a level that was never to be achieved again. During the late 1980s, a significant falls in world prices led to a rapid decline in cocoa export values. Cocoa production continues to fall dramatically since Cyclones Ofa and Val in the early 1990's, both in area planted to cocoa and in yield per tree. More recently, Cyclone Evan in 2012 have also caused damage to cocoa plantations. Samoa was also hard hit by the food and fuel price shocks of 2008 and the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, the economic toll of which may be eclipsed by the COVID-19 outbreak

Figure 1: Age and productivity of Cocoa

### Cocoa Tree Cycle: Age & Productivity



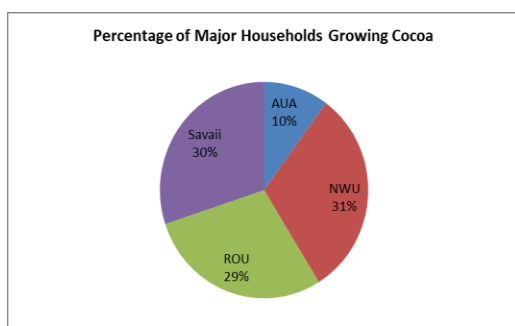
Source: Youth Cocoa Training 2020

It has been proven that Cocoa requires a lot of patience in terms of growth to be matured and produces a lot. As shown in the figure above

Cocoa reaches its 100% productivity when it reaches 11-15 years of growth.

The government has sought support to revive the industry, and a few key cocoa farmers have demonstrated that there is an opportunity to secure export markets. It is an ongoing activity through the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and many initiatives were taking place to address the issues.

**Figure 2: Percentage of Major Crop Households Growing Cocoa in Samoa by 2019**



Source: Agriculture Census Survey 2019

<sup>2</sup>The number of major crop households growing cocoa rose by 19 percent between 2009 and 2019. The estimated land area under cocoa in 2019 was 1,055 acres of which 400 acres were in Savaii, where 29 percent of all cocoa growers operate. According to the Agriculture Census Survey in 2019 there is an improvement to the production and farmers reviving the cocoa industry in Samoa.

### Domestic Market Situation

Cocoa is categorized under Tree Crops.

#### Recommended Varieties

- Trinitario
- Forastero/Amelonado
- Criollo

The number of major crops households growing cocoa according to the Agriculture Census in 2019 is 15189. Apia Urban Area consists of 1539, Norwest of Upolu is 4717, Rest of Upolu is 4362 and Savaii with 4571 households.

Much of the cocoa produced in Samoa is consumed domestically as koko Samoa, which is usually manufactured and sold by the farmers and their families in local markets and retailers.

There are different types of cocoa being sold in local markets, retails and roadsides. Farmers find it very easy for them to earn quick money leaving the export market hanging. As shown in the pictures below the farmers sold them as Cocoa Paste for \$10 each, basket for \$20 to \$30 depending on how big the basket is or dry cocoa beans in plastic bags for \$7 to \$10.

**Figure 3: Different ways Cocoa being sold in Flea markets, Retails and side roads.**



Pic 1: Cocoa paste Pic 2: Dry cocoa beans Pic 3: Basket of Cocoa

The number of farmers involved in planting cocoa is estimated to be increased because of the availability of foreign markets and planting materials given out. Not only that but the different perspectives given out by the Government such as the First Harvest Initiatives and projects providing support for the farmers. This is a great comeback in rebuilding Samoa's cocoa industry and sustaining the export industry.

**Figure 4: Koko Loa Production in Samoa**

<sup>2</sup> Agriculture Census Survey 2019

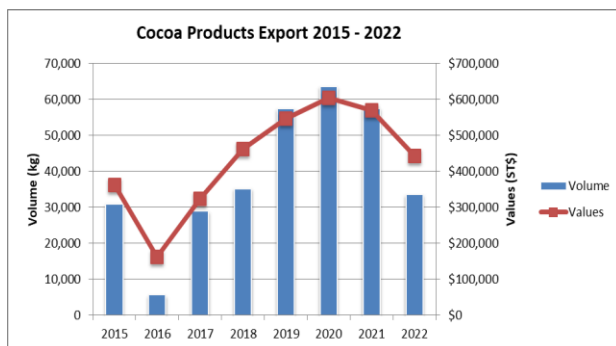


The Koko Loa European chocolates- are made from the best Samoa flavor beans – as well cocoa butter pressed from the rich butter varieties available in Samoa. Tagaloa Eddie Wilson.

### Export Market Situation

The future for Koko Samoa clearly lies in building a sustainable export industry, servicing the demand for fine flavor cocoa beans generated in the Pacific Rim economies, and possibly beyond. Mainstream New Zealand & Australian chocolate manufacturers as well as boutique chocolatiers are currently unable to gain sufficient, regular, and consistent supplies of Samoan cocoa. The demand for Koko Samoa is real, as are the prospects of our country rebuilding the export industry based on its heritage and inherent skill-sets in cocoa production.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 3: Cocoa Beans and Cocoa Paste Export from 2015-2022**



<sup>3</sup> Samoa Koko Industry Association

Source: MAF Stats Unit

Evidence has shown in Figure 3 of an improvement in Samoa’s cocoa export market trend since 2016 to 2019, then a slight decrease in 2021 and 2022 due to covid 19 restrictions that limited the number of shipments going out of the country and the suppliers preferred the domestic markets at that time as a second option for them.

### Way Forward

The government and private organizations as well as an interested group of farmers (Samoa Cocoa Industry Association) have worked together to develop pathways for commercialization of cocoa from smallholder farming systems and linking them to higher value global markets, set up programs and sought support for projects to revitalize the country’s koko industry. It is highly prioritized and progressing well with satisfied outcomes. A national cocoa standard is already in place to guide farmers in producing good quality and safe cocoa products. This is also the case with other Pacific countries in reviving their cocoa industry.

PHAMA (Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access) Program is well supported by the Pacific cocoa industries in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. Cocoa quality improvement is a key focus for the Program with a view to accessing price premiums from high end buyers, and assisting Pacific farmers and exporters to link with those buyers. To assist industry to better understand potential market opportunities and identify potential buyers for higher quality bean, a survey has been commissioned to examine the Australian, European, New Zealand and United States markets for boutique cocoa. Initial results from this survey show that significant price premiums are available for high quality cocoa, and that there is interest in buying single origin cocoa from Pacific countries.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> (PHAMA) <http://phama.com.au/where-we-work/commodities/cocoa/>

### Average Prices at the Fugalei Market

Commodities (SAT\$/kg)	Mar 2023	Apr 2023	Lowest Price for 2023 to date	Highest Price for 2023 to date
Taro	3.97	4.04	3.74	4.15
Banana	1.47	1.61	1.31	1.61
Ta'amu	16.51	20.11	5.04	22.6
Coconut	0.8	0.88	0.8	0.88
Breadfruit	1.72	2.07	1.06	2.07
Yam	6.34	6.41	6.34	6.65
Head Cabbage	13.23	17.02	13.16	17.02
Tomato	24.32	25.08	20.49	25.08
Chinese Cabbage	9.06	10.69	9.06	10.98
Cucumber	6.70	7.09	6.38	7.09
Pumpkin	4.55	4.5	3.91	4.55

Source: Samoa Bureau of Statistics-Local market survey

### Foreign Currency per Tala (SAT\$)

Mar-Apr 2023	USD\$	NZD\$	AUD\$	YEN\$	FJD\$	EURO
1 Samoan Tala SAT\$=	0.3790	0.6217	0.5668	59.0700	0.8752	0.3664

Source: Bank of South Pacific

### Market Link Newsletter

This newsletter is published bi-monthly and it seeks to assist stakeholders (farmers, consumers, wholesalers, policymakers) make informed market and marketing decisions based on credible, relevant price and supply information. Help us help you by providing constructive feedback on market information issues that will improve the service which will lead to growing a healthy and wealthy Samoa. For more information contact the Policy, Planning and Communication Division and ask for Suepasi Palatiso.

### Disclaimer

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