
Sustainable Cocoa Program

Carol Knight, PhD
American Cocoa Research Institute

The sustainable cocoa program is a new research initiative for the American Cocoa Research Institute (ACRI) that builds on more than 50 years of experience in basic and applied cocoa research. Sustainable cocoa agriculture refers to cocoa production in which the farmer increases or maintains productivity at levels that are economically viable, ecologically sound and culturally acceptable, through the efficient management of resources. By promoting this research, the chocolate industry can play a major role in securing the economics of small-scale farms in cocoa-growing countries.

Growing cocoa within a sustainable, biologically diverse agricultural system can provide benefits to society outside the farm boundary. Sustainable shade cocoa agriculture provides habitat to important forest and migratory bird and mammal species. It can also play a role in the strategic preservation of forest remnants and the development of forest corridors linking isolated forest islands. Thus, the sustainable cocoa program will not only help assure a continuing and diverse supply of world cocoa, but it will also contribute to

global goals of conserving tropical forest ecosystems and moving rural farm families out of poverty.

VISION OF THE SUSTAINABLE COCOA PROGRAM

The vision of the sustainable cocoa program is to have a sustainable and geographically diverse supply of cocoa within 10 years by developing a comprehensive, integrated approach to cocoa research. The worldwide chocolate industry must work in partnership to identify, develop, implement and seek sponsorship and funding of programs and projects aligned with the vision. Potential partners identified by the U.S. industry include the Smithsonian Institute, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Winrock International, Conservation International, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations' Development Program (UNDP).

The first international conference on sustainable cocoa growing was held in Panama by the Smithsonian Institute. This conference brought together for the first time key scientists conducting research on

Knights is vice president of scientific and regulatory affairs for the Chocolate Manufacturers Association, the American Cocoa Research Institute and the National Confectioners Association (NCA).



Carol Knight, PhD