



COCOASOILS LAUNCHED IN GHANA



Participants at the CocoaSoils Program Launch, Ghana

As part of its four in-country launches, the CocoaSoils program has been launched in Ghana. The program dubbed, "Sustainable intensification of cocoa production through the development and dissemination of integrated soil fertility management" took place at the forecourt of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, New Tafo on June 19, 2018. The program launch attracted about 90 experts and representatives from COCOBOD, the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, universities, fertilizer companies, chocolate producing companies, farmers as well as the press and media. Dr. Ofori Frimpong, the National Coordinator for CODAPEC and chairperson for the launch, commenced the program at about 9:00 am. In his introductory speech, the chairperson remarked *"I am therefore excited to know the project is a public-private sector partnership aimed at improving soil fertility using integrated soil fertility management approach. The government alone cannot take the burden. We in the cocoa industry believe that all efforts aimed at ensuring greater improvement in the development of the cocoa sector will require the collective efforts of both the government and the private sector. We are therefore delighted by the concerted efforts of all stakeholders in the implementation of the CocoaSoils Project."* The program was characterized by speeches from other dignitaries present including, Dr. Adu Ampomah, the Deputy Chief Executive (A&QC) of COCOBOD, Dr. F.M. Amoah, the Executive Director of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, Dr. Richard Asare, the program Coordinator of CocoaSoils and

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Dr. Amos Quaye, the CRIG facilitator for CocoaSoils. The program was also interjected with cultural displays and poetry recitals. The premier session of the launch ended with lunch at the CRIG Clubhouse and continued with a technical session which commenced with a presentation by Dr. Richard Asare. The program ended with a question and answer session, where participants debated on varying scientific questions with regards to the project protocol design, the CocoaSoils Partnership as well as its extension and dissemination tools.



Dignitaries present at the CocoaSoils Program Launch in Ghana

CocoaSoils Radio Interviews

As part of the program launch of CocoaSoils in Ghana, Dr. Richard Asare, the program Coordinator honored invitations to take part of two radio interviews at Onua Fm and 3Fm at the TV3 premises in Accra. The first interview which was conducted prior to the launch on June 18, 2018 was conducted by Bright Asempa in the Akan language due to Onua FM's target listeners who are mainly Akan speakers. The interview bordered on questions concerning how cocoa farming could be improved to benefit the Ghanaian economy, as well as the steps being taken by the current



The coordinator at 3Fm and Onua Fm, in Accra Ghana

government to improve the cocoa sector. Dr. Asare in his concluding remarks, threw an invitation to interested stakeholders as well as the general public to the program launch the following day.

The post launch interview was conducted in English on 3Fm, on June 25, 2018 by 3Fm's Winston Amoah. Questions included the impact of previous research studies on cocoa productivity and how the CocoaSoils project differed from these research studies. He also discussed the collaboration between the partners and used the opportunity to thank COCOBOD and the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana for joining the partnership in Ghana.

Nestle and Barry Callebaut trials confirmed

At a meeting at the Nestle headquarters in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, Nestle and Barry Callebaut agreed to set up their trials this year. The CocoaSoils program therefore has 8 potential trials underway at the moment in West Africa with 3 in Côte d'Ivoire, 3 in Nigeria and Cameroon and Ghana respectively. There are also discussions for two trials to start in Ecuador and Indonesia by the industry partners.



The coordinator meeting with representatives from Barry Callebaut, Nestle and CNRA in Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire

CocoaSoils Technical Meeting Wageningen

The maiden technical meeting for the CocoaSoils program was held at the WICC, in Wageningen, the Netherlands from May 29 to June 1, 2018. The three-day program convened experts and representatives from all the core partners who deliberated on varying subjects under the framework of the proposal to come develop concrete next steps for efficient implementation of the program.

The meeting had presentations from the various partners on what had been done and the way forward. Focus group meetings were also held to discuss pertinent issues with regards to the core and satellite trials, the M&E plan, the dissemination tools and well as the work of the PhD students recruited under the project framework.

Participants were very reactive in their various discussions, questions, inputs and comments. They were reminded not to lose sight of the fact that the CocoaSoils program is a global program with a focus on western and central Africa.



Partners at the Technical Meeting in Wageningen

CocoaSoils at the International Cocoa Conference 2018



The CocoaSoils coordinator, Dr. Richard Asare, was a guest speaker at the just ended International Cocoa Conference organized by the International Cocoa Organization in Berlin, where he made presentations at two sessions of the conference on the topics; *What are the opportunities in diversification and the alternative methods to generate*

additional income? And How do we bring about good production management policies and what are the effects in producing countries? He argued that West African Smallholder cocoa farmers have sustained the cocoa industry despite fluctuating world market prices by diversification in their cocoa production. He also highlighted the importance of a comprehensive policy innovation in the cocoa sector in Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon.

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