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Revolution of Cocoa Beans in Malaysia: Bulk to Specialty Beans

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The Malaysian cocoa industry needs a sustainable and consistent supply of cocoa beans with the quality attributes of specialty cocoa beans to meet the diverse and increasing requirements of the world prospect. It is aimed to transform and implement a specialty cocoa value chain in Malaysia, to help small-scale cocoa growers gain access to high value markets. The efforts towards developing Malaysia as a fine flavour cocoa producing country involve a range of activities at all levels of the cocoa value chain. Promising varieties recognised through the Cocoa Excellence programme with unique characteristics have been identified and adapting high-yield growing techniques to increase productivity is the next challenge in order to get sufficient volume, with proper post-harvest processing and rigorous quality control and traceability. As the world demand for fine flavour cocoa has been growing, initiatives should be taken on several key research components, including identifying clones with specialty beans and suitable regions for growing cocoa, determine flavour evaluation not only sensory but DNA fingerprinting of selected materials, selecting potential specialty cocoa varieties among genetic collection and train growers especially smallholders, to follow the recommended practices. Also, a more in-depth market study will be necessary to give and guide the industry with more detailed recommendations on fine or flavour cocoa investments such as price, quality and volumes. Certification is another requirement by specialty cocoa buyers and retailers as an important proof of commitment to sustainability. The demand for certification of cocoa and chocolate is growing strongly in the European and global cocoa market.

Keywords: Specialty beans, fine flavour cocoa, cocoa varieties, bean quality, post-harvest technique, sustainable cocoa industry.

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