

World peace threatened by loss of Chocolate

Description



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Loss of world's chocolate supply is no light matter

Wars over gold and territory may mark the history of mankind since Cain killed Abel but no one is arguably prepared for the carnage that could ensue when the world runs out of chocolate and holidays such as Valentine's Day, birthdays and anniversaries can't be met with ample supplies of the peace-keeping delicacy.

If Mars Inc., the world's largest producer of chocolate is right, we've got very little time to solve this problem or face severe civil unrest the likes of which no man is prepared to face.

[Bloomberg News reports](#) that demand for chocolate will continue to outstrip supply to the point that by 2030 the shortfall of cocoa needed for chocolate could be two million metric tons per year. This suggests that the current world price of cocoa at \$2,700 per ton will only grow until equilibrium between demand and supply is reached.

I see an idea for some opportunistic California farmers who love to be on the cutting edge of planting new crops and developing world markets for those products. Now is not the time to be planting flowers; we need to start planting cocoa, and fast.

What better way to augment the almond industry, for instance, than to have cocoa trees planted alongside so that in the end we can have an abundance of chocolate-covered almonds?

According to a [story in the Washington Post](#), global demand from China is gobbling up chocolate supplies, even though per-capita consumption there is reportedly 5 percent of what the average western European eats.

Still, if China wants a food product, what better nation than the United States to fill that need as other products grown here are in demand by an economy humming along at 7 percent growth?



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Alas, with all great stories comes a dark lining

The story suggests that cocoa has been displaced by more-productive crops such as corn and rubber due in part to disease and drought. Here's an opportunity for the University of California – the state's land grant institution – to develop a new farm advisor program: the cocoa production advisor.

Private enterprise could come along and develop cocoa trees that are resistant to disease and can better tolerate drought conditions.

One story talks about a fungal disease in cocoa called frosty pod, which was apparently found in 1978 along Costa Rica's Caribbean coast. The disease wound up decimating cocoa trees, forcing growers there to take chain saws to the trees and find other crops to plant.

Brazil's cocoa industry reportedly suffered from another fungus, which caused annual yields there to drop from 300,000 tons to 130,000 tons in the 1990s.

American agriculture has met challenges before. Here's one that could serve to keep relationships intact, marriages afloat and those that rely on holidays like Valentine's Day and Mother's Day in business.

With dire predictions such as the loss of the world's cocoa supply, and thus its chocolate looming in the near future the Nobel Prize committee might even be convinced that the person who solves this issue and can make growing cocoa trees profitable for commercial growers could truly be deserving of a new category of Nobel Peace Prize.

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