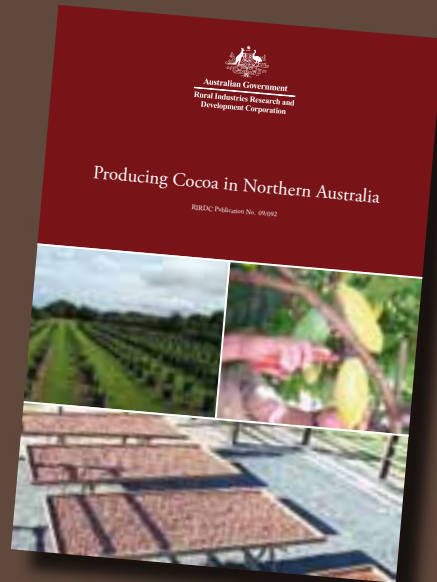




Australian Government
Rural Industries Research and
Development Corporation

Cocoa in northern Australia



Cocoa is a key ingredient in chocolate.

The production of Australian grown cocoa has moved one step closer with a new report *Producing Cocoa in Northern Australia* from RIRDC demonstrating the crop has commercial potential in northern Australia.

The report by Yan Diczbalis, Craig Lemin, Nick Richards and Chris Wicks is available from the RIRDC bookshop at www.rirdc.gov.au. (RIRDC pub. no. 09/092)

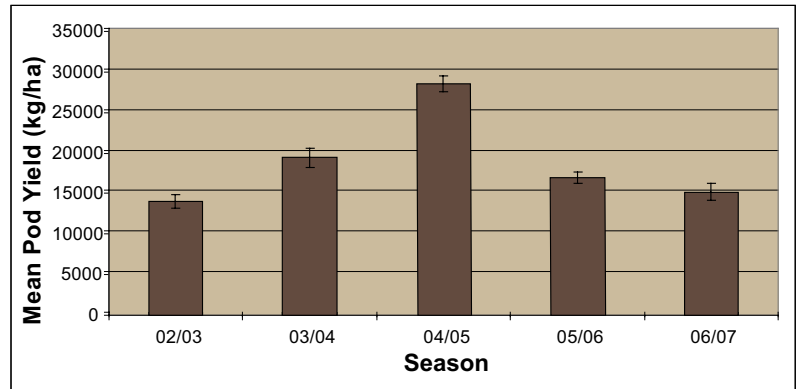
At a glance

- Globally, 3.7m tonnes of cocoa are produced with a value of approximately \$US8.5 billion.
- Researchers analysed the potential for cocoa to be grown in the north of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.
- The study, which was undertaken over eight years, confirms growing cocoa in Australia is a commercial reality. It demonstrates that it would be possible to produce good quality Australian grown cocoa for sale into the world market.
- Best results were achieved in North Queensland at Mossman where acceptable yields and quality were achieved. Growing performance in the Northern Territory and Western Australia were less successful than in Queensland due to a combination of climatic and pest conditions.
- The study also examined the economic viability of Australia based cocoa. It was found to depend on a number of key factors, namely good prices and high productivity of harvesting and processing.



Mossman

- Best results were achieved at Mossman, 100 kilometres north of Cairns.
- Approximately 1000 cocoa seeds, most from Papua New Guinea, were planted and analysed over five seasons as the graph shows.
- Researchers monitored tree establishment, growth and yields. Data on fertiliser, irrigation and pesticide use were also collected.
- Maximum mean yields were 27 tonnes per hectare of whole pods at Mossman. At a 10:1 ratio of whole pods to dry bean equivalent, the usual method of describing cocoa yields, this equates to maximum mean dry bean yields of 2.7 t/ha.



About cocoa

- Cocoa is the dried and fully fermented fatty seed of the cocoa tree from which chocolate is made.
- Trees take about two years to begin bearing. Pods take 5 to 6 months to ripen after pollination. As they ripen, they change colour from green or deep red to yellow or orange.

Cocoa production

- Australia's current cocoa industry is currently quite small, with approximately 35 hectares of plantings established and beginning to come into production.
- Cocoa trees generally grow in a limited geographical zone approximately 15 degrees to the north and south of the equator.
- Nearly 70% of the world crop is grown in West Africa.

Further information

This report is available for download or purchase on the RIRDC website www.rirdc.gov.au

This study has also promoted Agri-Science Queensland, a service of the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation to produce a Cocoa Growers manual to provide information to current and potential growers.

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