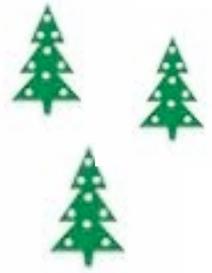


Happy  
Holidays



MAYA MOUNTAIN CACAO LTD



Connecting farmers with meaningful market access

December 2012

#### Gearing up for harvest season

MMC is preparing for the launch of the 2013 harvest in January by investing to expand fermenting and drying capacity. We've replaced the original loose plastic roof on our first drying deck with hard plastic for better protection from the rain, and are installing a cement patio and roll-out drawers under the decks to increase drying space and make the most of Belize's sunny days.

#### New farmer microloan program in partnership with Kiva

MMC is thrilled to become the first Belizean company to partner with Kiva - the world's largest online microlending platform that facilitates small loans to underserved microentrepreneurs around the world. A 0% interest, risk-free credit line through Kiva enables MMC to provide necessary small loans to our 200-strong and growing cacao farmer network. Given the seasonality of income from cacao farms, and knowing that most of our farmers depend on cacao as a sole source of income, microloans will be instrumental in enabling farmers to focus on improving yields and making the most of their harvest as opposed to seeking short-term employment to offset living costs. Farmer profiles will be up for fundraising on [Kiva.org](http://Kiva.org) by January. We are very excited to share their stories with you!



#### World Wildlife Fund endorses MMC

Maya Mountain Cacao was [endorsed](#) by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Ennovent as a top start-up conserving tropical forest. We're honored to be listed alongside inspirational agroforestry-based companies like Runa and Chicza that also make delicious, sustainable foods.

#### Organic Certification

In November, MMC hosted its annual organic inspection by the IMO (Institute for MarketEcology), renewing organic certification for the 119 farmers certified last year and introducing new certified farmers to our now 201-strong network. The organic certification is a key element in MMC's work as it guarantees a market and a premium price for our farmers' cacao. An interesting fact is that Mayan cacao farmers traditionally don't use agrochemicals in cacao cultivation, because of cultural values and high costs. The key to meeting certification standards is for farmers to have separate tools, processing, and storing for organically and non-organically grown crops, with adequate buffer zones between crops. A big Thank You to our Field Director Gabriel Pop for getting us ready for the inspection and to the field team for helping farmers keep their cacao organic.



#### MMC rocks local Belize media

Our continued efforts toward developing the Toledo cacao industry haven't gone unnoticed, and November marked three different occasions in which we appeared on local media.

Listen to our Managing Director Emily Stone's [interview](#) by correspondent Paul Mahung for LoveFM radio.

Read [story](#) in Belize's national paper Amandala on prospects for the Toledo cacao industry in the 2012-13 harvest season featuring MMC's Emily Stone.

See our management duo, Emily Stone and Field Director Gabriel Pop, in a blast-from-the-past [interview](#) for PGTV's Developing Toledo show.

#### Meet the staff: Toribio Coc

Village: San Felipe

Role: Quality Control Specialist

Toribio has been with MMC since inception in 2010, and played an instrumental role in setting up our drying and fermenting processes and quality controls -- the magic sauce for our business model. Toribio grew up farming in Toledo, so working the land is Toribio's turf and cacao his most prized crop. Colleagues see Toribio as attentive to detail, a hard worker, and a true cacao guru. "It's part of who he is, his background is so deeply into farming and caring for his family. MMC has provided him a way to use his knowledge to also benefit the broader community of Belize," says Alexis from our Cacao House. See Toribio in action in Mast Brothers' recently released video [The Harvest](#).



#### It's intern season at MMC!

We are happy to present you the latest addition to our team and our second intern for the 2013 harvest season - Alexis Grossman. Alexis hails from Brooklyn, NY, where she has been working in the growing specialty coffee field with a direct trade coffee importer. For the past four years, Alexis has honed her skills in specialty coffee and sensorial evaluation and plans to apply that expert knowledge to cacao with MMC. Alexis, who arrived in Belize mid November, will spend the next six months working with the processing team on improving quality and transparency at our Cacao House, a jungle-based fermentation and drying center near the village of San Felipe.



Want to find out more about what we do? Follow our profile on [Facebook](#), our blog on [Tumblr](#), and our [Twitter](#) feed!

