

Maya Mountain Cacao

Growing prosperous farming communities through meaningful market access

A Monthly Update for our Chocolate Making Partners

October 2012

Seedlings Delivered!

As part of its commitment to directly investing in cacao farmers and the Belizean cacao industry, MMC sold over 20,000 trees at a subsidized rate this summer and assisted farmers in growing 25,000 trees at their own nurseries across Toledo. The seedling project has come to a close this month, as farmers now begin to focus on the upcoming harvest.

Meet the team: Emeterio Sho

Village: Na Lum Ka

Role: Field Officer

Been with MMC since: March 2011

"When Maya Mountain Cacao came, it opened doors for me and for the farmers. Before, many farmers just used cacao for ceremonial celebrations and to drink at home. But now, cacao has turned into cash. I love my job. It opens my heart and my mind to work with more people, encourage them and educate them to plant and care for their cacao. Cacao is cash in their pocket. What they make from the sales of cacao, they are sending their kids to get higher education. So now it encourages me too. When I see a farmer with a smile who is happy to see me, we are all happy."



MMC at SOCAP

Maya Mountain Cacao was an active player in the recent Social Capital Markets conference in San Francisco, CA. Emily spoke at several conference events, including a breakfast focused on women entrepreneurs in Latin America hosted by Agora Partnerships and the Eleos Foundation, and a panel on Bio-Cultural Investing hosted by People & Planet Holdings.

Digging Deeper

There is excitement in the air as Maya Mountain Cacao prepares for a productive cacao harvest season in Belize. You can almost smell the theobromine!

Preparing for the 2012-2013 harvest

Belize is likely to produce an historically high volume of cacao during the 2012-2013 harvest.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Belize's best production year in recent history peaked at 110,515 lbs of dried cacao (2008), or 50 metric tonnes (MT). The 2011-2012 season was record-breaking, with Belizean farmers proudly producing over 60 MT of cacao. Maya Mountain Cacao played an important role in this industry growth through its dedication to helping farmers improve per-acre yields on their farms, access to better prices and marketing opportunities, and seedling distribution projects. This year, the annual production growth is expected to rise significantly, reaching at least 70 MT across southern Belize. This trend of growth is highly likely to continue each year for at least the next decade in Belize as a result of seedling projects and marked improvements in farmer motivation to maintain their cacao plots and improve yields.

While cacao ripens in some Belizean villages all year round, the "season" begins this month, in October. It starts slowly, with certain villages producing substantial quantities already this month and other villages not quite producing ripe cacao pods yet. The difference in seasonality of cacao



Farmer Fileon Choc, from the village of Pueblo Viejo, gives Maya Mountain Cacao the thumbs-up

production between neighboring villages can be striking! We think this is primarily due to microclimatic conditions that vary between the hilly regions of southern Belize.

New arrival in Punta Gorda

MMC's ranks grew last week with the arrival of Elma Paulauskaite, who will spend the coming six months focusing on furthering our social mission and communicating it to the global impact

investing community. Elma just completed her MA in international policy and development and brings field experience with social enterprise field building, food sovereignty and education programs from Brazil, Peru and Colombia. She's most excited to learn about cacao, local Maya culture and the opportunity to discover and contribute to the magic behind MMC's model.

Maya Mountain Cacao makes waves at the SHI-Belize Organic Fair

On Saturday MMC was happy to set up a booth as part of Punta Gorda's 4th annual organic fair put on by Sustainable Harvest International's (SHI) Belize chapter. We took the opportunity to spread the word about our work to visitors from around Belize, sell cacao pods and beans, raffle out MMC's new signature T-shirt and 2 hats, enjoy some Belize's scrumptious BBQ chicken and learn about the various fun organic initiatives in the region.

Thanks, as always, for your support of Belize's cacao farmers and their communities.

-Emily Stone, Managing Director

