

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Report Highlights:

The Ghana Gist is a monthly roundup of local and regional developments relevant to U.S. food and agricultural trade, covering Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Highlights in the March 2019 edition include Ghana's tree crop policy, retail expansion in Côte d'Ivoire, and a growing debate in the region on trade and food security.

The Ghana Gist

March 2019

Disclaimer: This monthly update provides a summary of the region's fast-changing agricultural trade landscape through information gained from field travel, various media sources, host-country contacts, and analysis of agricultural trends. Links are provided where appropriate. Inclusion in this report does not reflect USDA's, the U.S. Embassy's, or any other U.S. government agency's point of view or policy.

GHANA:

FIELD TRIALS FOR GENETICALLY-ENGINEERED RICE CONTINUE IN GHANA: As genetically engineered (GE) cowpea nears commercialization, local field trials for nitrogen-efficient, water-efficient, salt-tolerant (NEWEST) rice are progressing. The first variety undergoing trial focuses on nitrogen efficiency, while varieties that combine the additional traits await field trials. Prior to commercialization, estimated to be at least four years away, the national authorities will conduct environmental and food safety assessments. ([Joy News](#))

FIRST CLOSED FISHING SEASON APPROACHES: The Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD) reiterated Ghana's 2019 closed seasons for the various fishing sectors. In addition to the January-February closed season observed by the tuna fleet, a closed season for inshore and artisanal fleets will run May 15 to June 15. A separate closed season for industrial trawlers will run August 1 to September 30. A closed season was originally planned in 2018, but ultimately pushed to 2019 ([GhanaWeb](#)). FAS Accra recently published a [2019 Fish and Seafood Report](#), which explores the state of the country's aquaculture and capture fisheries.

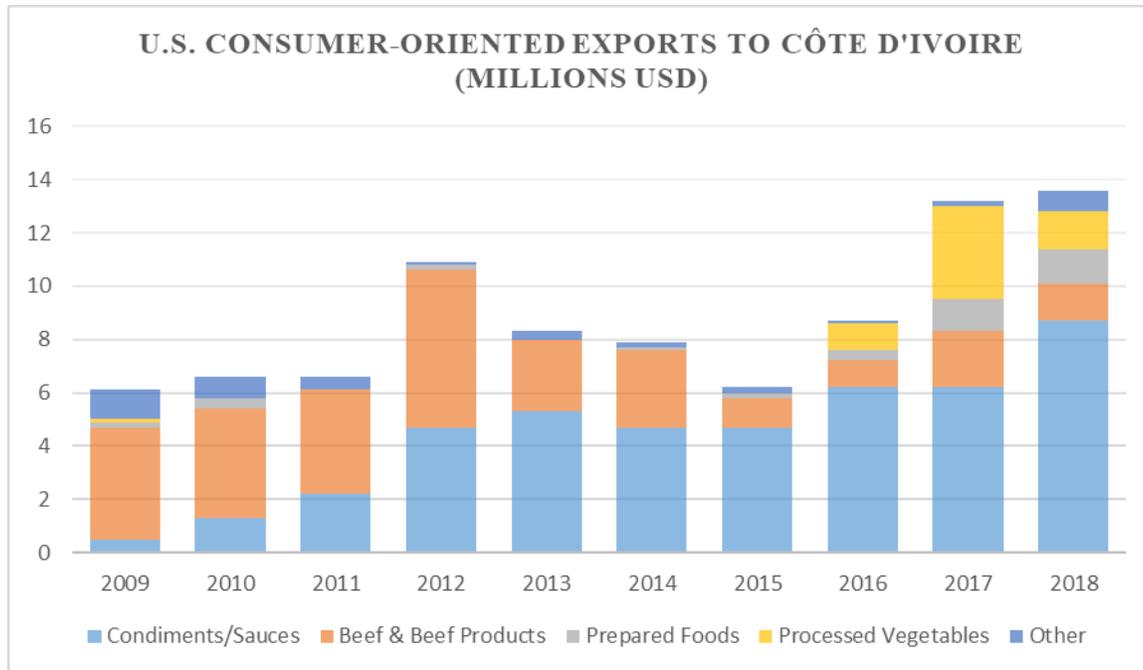
TREE CROP BILL NEARING PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL: While cocoa remains the cornerstone of Ghana's agricultural exports, the pending approval of a tree crop bill in Parliament will establish a formal authority for other tree crops in the country, and serves as an indication of Ghana's efforts to diversify its agricultural exports. While the authority will oversee the production of numerous tree crops, cashew is undoubtedly the primary focus of the bill. In addition to the government's Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) initiative, which seeks to increase domestic productivity in cereal and vegetable crops it deems important to local food security, the Planting for Export and Rural Development (PERD) initiative is aimed at export-oriented tree crops such as cocoa and cashew. The establishment of a tree crop authority is seen as a way to formalize funding for research and development in the cashew sector especially. PERD also prioritizes the citrus, coconut, coffee, cotton, mango, oil palm, rubber, and shea sectors.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE:

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME LAUNCHES CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ABIDJAN: The Regional Center of Excellence Against Hunger and Malnutrition (CERFAM), launched on March 25 in Abidjan, will promote sharing of best practices and experiences in the fight against hunger and malnutrition in Africa. This is the first such center in Africa, and globally is the third following centers in Brazil and China. ([RFI](#), [Abidjan.net](#))

ABIDJAN'S THRIVING RETAIL SECTOR TYPIFIES REGION'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE:

While traditionally targeting the most affluent consumers in major urban centers, large grocery chains operating in the region show increasing interest in suburban and peri-urban areas. Consumers in these localities may have less purchasing power but studies suggest they are no less inclined to patronize modern retail outfits, and they remain significantly underserved by these operations. With expansion of retail spaces in countries like Côte d'Ivoire to new segments of the market, foreign products and brands will stand to benefit ([Bloomberg](#)). U.S. exports of consumer-oriented food and agricultural products to Côte d'Ivoire more than doubled over the past decade, while Côte d'Ivoire's total reported imports over that period grew 64 percent.



Source: Global Agricultural Trade System (GATS)

LIBERIA / SIERRA LEONE / TOGO:

MAJOR PALM OIL PRODUCER CONSIDERS LIBERIA EXIT: Malaysian company Sime Darby, one of the world's largest palm oil producers, may sell its palm oil and rubber holdings in the country due to profitability concerns. The company is also one of the largest commercial operations in Liberia. ([Reuters](#), [Commodafrica](#))

REGIONAL:

REGIONAL COCOA DEVELOPMENTS: Bilateral discussions continue between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, which account for three-fifths of world cocoa production, in coordinating a minimum price for cocoa beans. In mid-March, after discussions between Côte d'Ivoire's Conseil de Café Cacao (CCC) and the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), the two countries signed the Abidjan Declaration. In addition to coordinating floor prices for cocoa beans, the objective of this agreement is to explore harmonization throughout the sector. It also seeks a review of International Standardization Organization (ISO) 34101 Standards on Sustainable and Traceable Cocoa production, with suggestions that the countries may

attempt to devise their own standard for cocoa beans. Year-to-date, Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana report increased bean deliveries for export of 12 and 8 percent, respectively. ([Bloomberg](#), [GhanaWeb](#), [Commodafrica](#))

NATIONAL POLICIES ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS: Amidst numerous initiatives by West African governments to boost domestic agricultural productivity across various sectors and commodities, the role of trade in food and agricultural products figures prominently in debates on food security. The most frequently highlighted commodity in this regard is rice, with governments in Sierra Leone, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and others setting ambitious targets to reduce imports or achieve self-sufficiency. Products such as poultry and tomatoes are also targets of import reduction. In 2018, Ghana began restricting imports of poultry. In the case of tomatoes, the region’s producers of tomato paste rely on a consistent supply of tomato concentrates with precise moisture levels which are largely unavailable on the domestic market. ([GhanaWeb](#), [Commodafrica](#), [Deutsche Welle](#))

Upcoming Agriculture/Trade Events:

Date(s)	Event	Location
April 4	National Seed Trade Association of Ghana (NASTAG) 9th Annual Preseason Agribusiness Networking & Exhibition Forum	Tamale, Ghana
May 7-9	FAS Joint Côte d’Ivoire/Ghana Buyers Delegation to Seafood Expo Global	Brussels, Belgium
May 18-21	FAS Ghanaian Buyers Delegation to the National Restaurant Association Show	Chicago, USA
May 22-23	4th Annual Cassava & Starch Exhibition	Accra, Ghana
Summer 2019 (TBD)	18th Annual African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum	Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire
October 5-9	Ivorian Buyers Delegation to Anuga Trade Fair	Cologne, Germany
November 11-22	Agriculture and Animal Resources Exhibition (SARA)	Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire
November 19-21	6th Annual AgroFood West Africa International Trade Show	Accra, Ghana