

# Chocolate Sweetens

## Valentine's Day Celebrations

Pesticides help farmers fight pests, such as mirids, which can reduce cocoa yields by one-third.<sup>1</sup>

Cocoa production is a significant component of the rural economy in West Africa, where over 70 percent of the world's cocoa is produced.<sup>2</sup>

Thinking of giving something sweet to your sweetheart this Valentine's Day? Without crop protection products, there would be fewer chocolates in that heart-shaped box! The majority of cocoa is grown in West Africa and throughout the 1990s, cocoa production rarely exceeded 400,000 metric tons due to the prevalence of pests and cocoa disease. In 2000, the Cocoa Diseases and Pests Control Program was introduced to teach farmers how and when to use pesticides to protect cocoa crops. Due to the success of the program and the responsible use of crop protection products, cocoa yields grew by 50 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Cocoa trees and pods are attacked by different insects, fungal diseases and rodents. Black pod rot does the most damage to cocoa, impacting an estimated 30 percent of cocoa production annually.<sup>3</sup>

1 <http://croplifefoundation.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/4-cocoa.pdf>

2 <http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/21173.pdf>

3 <http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/21173.pdf>

4 <http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/21173.pdf>

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