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RESEARCH OF THE COCOA PRODUCTS MARKET: DEPENDENCE OF PRICES ON WEATHER CONDITIONS AND PRODUCING COUNTRIES

У статті подано інформацію про вплив геополітичних, кліматичних та соціальних факторів на динаміку цін на какао, а також зміни у сфері вирощування какао-дерев в основних країнах – експортерах какао та какао-продуктів.

***Ключові слова**: какао, світовий ринок шоколаду, кліматичні зміни, врожайність, хвороби какао-дерев, дрібні фермери, ланцюг постачання, сталий розвиток, аграрна економіка.*

The article provides information on the impact of geopolitical, climatic, and social factors on the dynamics of cocoa prices, as well as cultivation changes in the cultivation of cocoa trees in the main countries - exporters of cocoa and cocoa products.

***Keywords:** cocoa, global chocolate market, climate change, crop yield, cocoa tree diseases, smallholder farmers, supply chain, sustainable development, agricultural economics.*

Cocoa is one of the most important agricultural crops in the world, forming the basis of the global chocolate industry and providing income for millions of small-scale farmers in tropical regions. Even though cocoa can be grown in many countries near the equator, its production is mainly concentrated in a small number of leading exporters. Along with major West African producers such as Ivory Coast and Ghana, which together supply a significant share of the world's cocoa, several other countries also play an important role. Nations including Nigeria, Cameroon, and Sierra Leone strengthen West Africa's overall output, while producers in Latin America – such as Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia—and in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, contribute notably to the global cocoa market.

Worldwide cocoa production usually amounts to about four to five million metric tons per year, but these levels are strongly influenced by weather conditions. For instance, long periods of drought in Ivory Coast and Ghana have led to lower cocoa yields, while heavy rainfall and flooding in parts of Cameroon and Nigeria have negatively affected harvesting activities. In Indonesia, unstable monsoon seasons and high humidity have increased the spread of fungal diseases among cocoa trees. Because climate conditions directly affect both crop volume and bean quality, changes in temperature, precipitation, and extreme weather events have become major factors influencing price fluctuations in global commodity markets.

Economic and political conditions in key cocoa-producing countries, including policies, infrastructure, and trade rules, influence global supply chains. Understanding climate and regional production patterns is vital for price forecasting, risk assessment, and sustainable development.

According to the words of Alex Kozul-Wright, a business reporter for Al Jazeera, many climate scientists point to the El Nino weather phenomenon, which produces warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, as the primary driver for volatile weather patterns. However, they also expect a transition to the La Nina pattern – the cooling of ocean surface temperatures in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific every three to five years – to revive cocoa yields at least temporarily [1].

Referring to the article cocoa crisis on different researches, one can understand that diseases of cocoa trees have also caused a lot of damage to cocoa plantations: disease has particularly come in the form of black pod disease and cacao swollen shoot virus (CSSV), and in Ghana's North West where most of the country's cocoa is produced, the Ghana Cocoa Board reported in 2024 that 81% of the crop was impacted by CSSV [2].

According to recent data from editors and publicists of the authoritative websites, the negative phenomena that threaten the cocoa business and the environmental friendliness of cocoa products are that most of the world's cocoa is produced on small, family farms, and in the past few decades, farmers have begun moving from cocoa to more profitable crops, with those remaining tending increasingly old and unproductive trees. In Ghana, prices have been further impacted by cocoa smuggling and illegal gold mining near cocoa plantations, which involves the use of chemicals such as arsenic, lead, and mercury that leech into the soil [2].

Another factor contributing to cocoa supply shortages is that many producing families are abandoning cocoa cultivation due to rising production costs. In other words, continuing cocoa farming has become economically unfeasible for them. Bart Van Besien, a policy advisor at Oxfam Belgium, argues that the recent surge in cocoa prices highlights the structural contradictions within the cocoa supply chain. These shortages and price spikes could have been avoided if corporations had paid farmers fair prices, allowing them to remain in production and invest in improving farm resilience to climate change and pests. He also criticized chocolate companies for taking advantage of market conditions, paying higher prices only when market conditions demand it, despite previously resisting fair compensation for cocoa farmers [3].

One way to address challenges in cocoa production is the “Strengthening the Cocoa Sector in Ecuador”, project of international company «Ricolto», which has led to positive changes in the country’s cocoa industry. The initiative focuses on improving farmers business skills, supporting cooperatives, promoting agroforestry and crop diversification, and increasing access to international markets. At the same time this company have been actively working with cocoa producers by providing technical training in climate-smart and regenerative farming practices, helping farmers adopt sustainable methods, and strengthening their ability to manage production in the face of changing weather patterns. For example, Rikolto’s program has grown and distributed 40,000 seedlings of a high-quality local cocoa variety to farmers, selected for disease resistance and climate adaptability, allowing them to gradually renew old trees, increase cocoa yields, and improve bean quality, which in turn enables farmers to sell their cocoa at higher prices. As a result, smallholder producers have increased the productivity of their cocoa trees, raised their incomes, and strengthened their competitiveness, while cocoa cultivation has become more environmentally sustainable and resilient. [4].

According to Market Data Forecast, the global cocoa and chocolate market size was calculated to be USD 50.94 billion in 2025 and is anticipated to be worth USD 83.89 billion by 2034, from USD 53.84 billion in 2026, growing at a CAGR of 5.7% during the forecast period. Growth is driven by sustained confectionery demand, premiumization (single-origin and high-cocoa products), and expanding non-food uses of cocoa butter in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals [5].

Currently, the cocoa market shows that supply shortages and price fluctuations are driven not only by adverse weather conditions but also by long-standing structural issues within the global cocoa value chain. The high concentration of production in a small number of countries, combined with climate risks, aging plantations, and limited support for farmers, increases the vulnerability of

the global cocoa supply. Tackling these challenges requires coordinated efforts by governments, international organizations, and private companies to encourage efficient production, ensure fair pricing, and promote long-term investment in cocoa-producing regions.

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SOFT SKILLS AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AS KEY FACTORS FOR THE CAREER SUCCESS OF YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

У роботі розглянуто трансформацію аграрного сектору в контексті цифровізації та глобалізації, що висуває нові кваліфікаційні вимоги до сучасних спеціалістів. Проаналізовано ключову роль володіння англійською мовою та «м'яких» навичок як критичних чинників, що визначають професійну адаптивність та кар'єрний успіх випускників на міжнародному ринку праці.

***Ключові слова**: сільське господарство, м'які навички, володіння англійською мовою, кар'єрне зростання, цифровізація.*

The transformation of the agricultural sector is examined in the context of digitalization and globalization, which sets new qualification requirements for modern specialists. The key role of English language proficiency and soft skills is analyzed as critical factors determining professional adaptability and career success for graduates in the international labor market.

***Keywords**: agriculture, soft skills, English proficiency, career growth, digitalization.*

Agriculture today is no longer just about manual labor; it's a synergy of digital innovation and global connectivity. Modern farms leverage cutting-edge software and collaborate closely with international partners to drive operational efficiency. Because of these changes, expectations for young specialists are also becoming higher. Good professional knowledge is important, but it is no longer enough. Nowadays, companies look for people who are great at talking to others and can handle change. That's why having good English and strong soft skills is the best way to grow your career [2].

Lots of experts agree that these skills are key. For example, Daniel Goleman showed that being emotionally smart is just as important as being good at your job. Richard Boyatzis paid attention to competencies that influence professional performance. David Kolb connected effective learning with personal experience. Peter Drucker emphasized that knowledge and communication