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Barry Callebaut sees huge growth in Brazil as plant opens

By Jane Byrne , 31-May-2010
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A new Barry Callebaut chocolate factory in Brazil, which commenced operation last week, is building on the predicted growth for consumption of chocolate products in Latin America, according to the pod-to-pallet chocolate maker.

At a time when chocolate consumption in the US and Europe dips as consumers tighten their purse strings, hopes to shore up sales could come from emerging economies, such as Mexico, China and Brazil, that today account for about half of global growth.

In a statement, Juergen Steinemann, Barry Callebaut CEO, said that Brazil "has returned much faster to its earlier growth dynamic than most other economies after the recent economic turmoil."

Indeed, the Brazilian government there and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) now expect a GDP growth of up to six per cent for 2010.

"Against this background and based on growth forecasts for the Latin American chocolate market of more than three per cent in volume terms annually over the next three years, we see a tremendous market potential – not only in Brazil but in the entire region," added Steinemann.

Barry Callebaut said by establishing the plant in Extrema, near Sao Paulo, it can now offer its Brazilian customers the full product portfolio of traceable cocoa, semi-finished products and chocolate products.

The new facility in Brazil follows the setting up of the Swiss firm's €30m industrial chocolate facility in Mexico in January of last year in the north-eastern state of Nuevo Leon.

Raphael Wermuth, communications spokesperson for Barry Callebaut told ConfectioneryNews.com that the new factory, which is the supplier's first chocolate production plant in South America, will source the majority of its beans from the company's cocoa-processing plant in the north-eastern state of Bahia.

He said the initial target for first year of production will be 50 per cent of overall facility capacity – 10,000 tonnes – with the objective being to reach 16,000 tonnes by the third year of operation.

The supplier said that the plant will produce dark, milk and white chocolate as well as compound for artisanal and industrial customers, and while the majority of the output is targeting the growing foodservice sector in Brazil, leading chocolate makers in the region are also the focus, said Wermuth.

Last year, Barry Callebaut signed a distribution deal with agro-giant Bunge Alimentos to unlock the potential for food service sales for its B2B gourmet products in Brazil, aiming to tap into Bunge's extensive business-to-business distribution network there, which serves about 25,000 points of sale each day.

ECD Consulting pitches the Brazilian food service segment, which includes bakeries, hotels and chocolatiers, at about 60,000 tonnes a year for chocolate and compound products.

Barry Callebaut and Bunge said last year that they to capture about a sixth of this volume, within two to three years.

Zurich-based Barry Callebaut currently has about 41 facilities - including cocoa processing and chocolate facilities - worldwide.

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