

THE BIRTH OF I.M.1 COCOA VARIETY

The journey of discovering Thai cocoa I.M.1 variety unfolded over 30 years of extensive study and development. This variety was selected and developed by Assoc. Prof. Sanh La-onsri, Ph.D., a former professor at the Faculty of Agricultural Production, Pomology Department, Maejo University and one of the co-founders of MarkRin Chocolate. It is a hybrid selection between Cocoa ICS Variety from Peru and Criollo and Forastero Amelonado from the Philippines.



Figure 1. Prof. Sanh La-onsri with his I.M.1 cocoa tree

It is notable for its excellent flower and high yield. Moreover, it is able to self-pollinated, drought resistant and thrive rapidly in Thailand agricultural landscape. When their beans are processed, it awakes a distinct yet pleasant aroma with notes of citrus and yellow tropical fruits. The high percentage of cocoa butter is also considered of one the outstanding traits of this variety compared to beans from other regions and varieties.

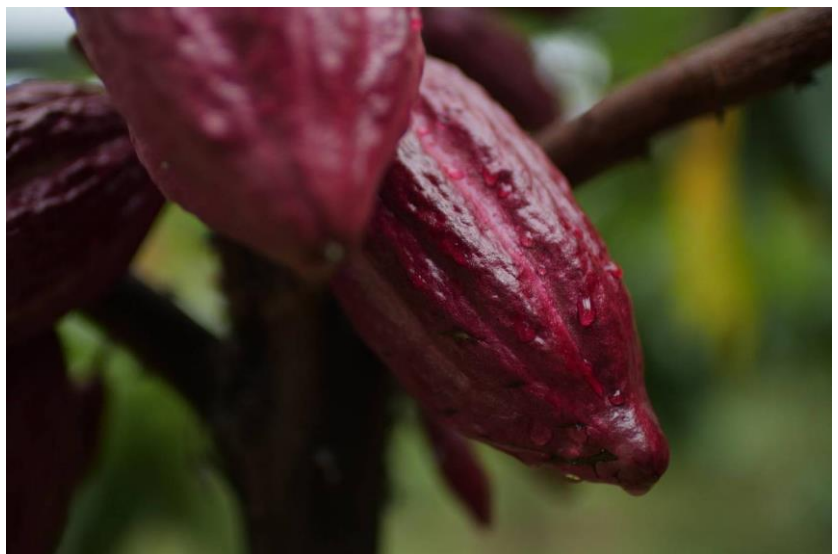


Figure 2. I.M.1 cocoa pod variety

According to test results from Cocoa of Excellence Programme 2019 & Biodiversity International in Italy released on December 12, 2019, there is cocoa butter content up to 61.0-67.1% in I.M.1 cocoa bean.



Figure 3. New I.M.1 cocoa baby trees

Having discovered this excellent cocoa variety, Associate Professor Dr. Sanh La-onsri could not wait to promote its cultivation throughout Thailand. He wanted to help Thai farmers generate another source of stable income and improved the Thai agricultural diversity. At the same time, his other ambition was for the world to recognize cocoa as a prominent crop in Thailand next to rice, sugarcane and other tropical fruits.



Figure 4. Markrin Farm's staffs with our cocoa farmers

Until nowadays, his effort has not been wasted. Cocoa trees of I.M.1 variety are being planted in 75 out of 77 provinces throughout Thailand. Sustainable farming practices and intercropping with other cash crops are meticulously employed. As a result, the first container of organic cocoa beans of Thailand has been exported to the EU to serve the most demanding chocolate consumers. This is considered a great milestone of Thailand agriculture to mark its name on the global cocoa map. Dr. Sanh La-onsri 's team, now registered as MarkRin farm Company Limited, continues to carry on his hard works for the expansion of sustainable cocoa farms across Thailand.



Figure 5. Our export sack of organic I.M.1 cocoa bean

In the near future, MarkRin farm Co., Ltd aims to get certified by Rainforest Alliance as well as comply with the EUDR from the EU. If we these two goals are completed, it will transform the cocoa industry in Thailand to become more sustainable. At the same time, it will also improve the life standards of our cocoa farmers. We are looking forward to many great years ahead of bringing sustainable Thai chocolate to the world!