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ASIA

Aalst Chocolate eyes growth in Asia through customer-driven innovation

05 October 2023 | News

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Against the backdrop of strong Asian chocolate demand, Aalst Chocolate, a Cargill company, unveiled plans to drive growth through its unique â??bean to barâ?? positioning and customer-led product innovation for the Asia Pacific market.

Established in 2003, Aalst Chocolate is celebrating 20 years since its founding as the first Singaporean brand to produce both chocolate couverture and compounds and has since built a solid foundation as a leading Asian chocolate manufacturer with product offerings curated especially for Asian consumers.

â??We are seeing a growing appetite for chocolate among consumers across the APAC region driven primarily by a large youth population, higher disposable incomes and emerging trends such as prioritisation of indulgence, mindful eating and sustainability. People still want to enjoy tasty flavorful treats while being more conscious about the quality, nutritional value and source of the foods they are consuming,â?• said Xiaoling Liu, Managing Director, Aalst Chocolate and Indulgence Leader, Food Solutions Asia Pacific, Cargill.

Aalstâ??s vision to grow as a chocolate company â??from Asia for Asiaâ?• was given a boost when it was acquired by Cargill, a global food and agriculture company, in 2021. As part of Cargill, Aalst has been able to expand beyond a chocolate company to truly become a â??bean to barâ?• innovator, integrating and leveraging Cargillâ??s extensive cocoa sourcing capabilities and global cocoa customer networks, presenting an overall stronger and more secure supply chain. Aalstâ??s local R&D expertise is further supported by Cargillâ??s four Asian food innovation centres in Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing and Gurgaon, which accelerate Aalstâ??s capability for product innovation tailored for Asian palates.

â??Today, Asia accounts for about 25 per cent of cocoa consumption in the world. It is the fastest-growing region in terms of volume and value and especially stands out for its immense innovation potential. Within the next 10 years, Asia is expected to overtake North America as the second-largest chocolate market in the world. By unlocking the power of our â??bean to barâ?? supply chain, insights-driven innovation and customised sustainability solutions, we see Aalst as a driving force shaping the chocolate sector through innovation in Asia and the world, delivering greater value as the partner of choice for

innovation and growth,â?• said Francesca Kleemans, Managing Director, Food Solutions Southeast Asia, Cargill.