

## Unlocking the Potential of Cocoa Flavanols

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America loves cocoa. Some of the oldest civilizations of the Americas were likely the first cocoa lovers. While Native Americans may not have known the full health potential of this unique plant, they knew cocoa beans were valuable, used as currency, and given as gifts. Cocoa was even considered a “food of the gods” in some civilizations but only recently have we truly begun to understand the power of this unexpected super fruit.

For nearly two decades Mars, Inc. has been studying the health potential of flavanols—powerful plant compounds found in tea, wine, certain fruits, and vegetables, and most notably cocoa. Now, Mars Botanical, the recently established scientific division of Mars, Inc., will continue to build on this long-term heritage, investigating the health and biomedical potential of flavanols while establishing a sustainable, certified source of cocoa traceable from pod to product.

Cocoa is linked to healthy circulation. And in addition to a substantial body of research on the health potential of flavanols (including more than 100 scientific publications published or supported by Mars, trend experts suggests flavanols and the larger class of compounds, flavonoids, are a fast-emerging mass market, offering a prime opportunity for mainstream health-conscious shoppers.

While traditional chocolate processing often destroys many of these beneficial phytonutrients, Mars developed a patented and proprietary process called *Cocoapro*<sup>™</sup> that helps retain the flavanols destroyed during processing. Building off of years of manufacturing experience, Mars scientists have perfected this process to reduce the cocoa bean’s exposure to high temperatures, helping protect the flavanols inside. This process ensures delivery of a cocoa extract ingredient guaranteed to have consistently high levels of cocoa flavanols. This summer, Mars Botanical will introduce *Cirku*<sup>™</sup>, a cocoa extract ingredient, guaranteeing a highly concentrated source of cocoa flavanols and *CirkuHealth*, a great-tasting dietary supplement beverage powder mix using the Cirku ingredient.

The Mars Botanical team behind Cirku is made up of experts in the field of cocoa research—from plant biologists to product developers. The company works closely with native cocoa farmers, pursuing the best ways to plant, cultivate, and harvest their fruit. This approach increases the profitability and improves the quality of life for local communities.

And, through involvement in programs like the Cocoa Sustainability Partnership (CSP) in Southeast Asia, Mars is helping deliver a cocoa revitalization program that not only educates and supports cocoa farmers, but is also planting millions of cocoa trees over the next few years in cocoa growing regions, enabling

these communities to thrive. This is all part of Mars' global commitment to ensure its entire cocoa supply is certified as sustainably sourced by 2020.