CropGPT

2026

Cocoa: Ivory Coast Risks

Iran Conflict & Fertiliser Crisis

CropGPT

Iran Crisis: Cocoa Ivory Coast

" Je n'ai pas tout couvert. En fait, j'ai fait seulement que la moitié"

I didn't cover everything. In fact, I only did half

Farmer Ivory Coast April 6th 2026

Summary

The vast majority of farmers we spoke to are struggling to access fertilizer, with over 70% having bought nothing at all; some can only cover a fraction of their land. This could have impacts for 2027 cocoa supplies.

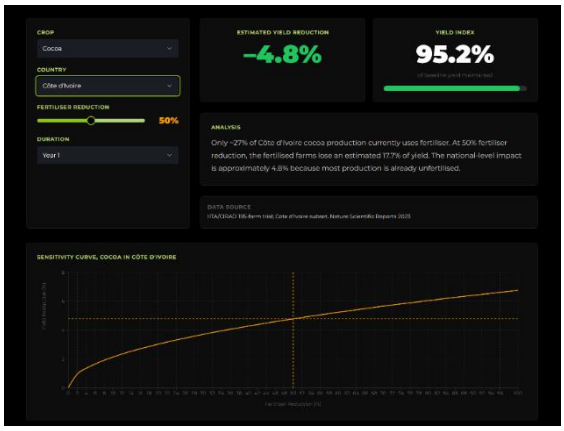
The vast majority of cocoa farmers in Ivory Coast do not use Nitrogen based fertilizers (which is what is most impacted by the Iran Crisis). In fact our research shows on 30% of Ivory Coast farmers use "inorganic" fertilizers – e.g. phosphate based products such as NPK. The rest of the farmers either use natural fertilizers such as chicken manure or nothing at all (around 50% to 70% use no fertilizer)

For this reason, the Iran crisis has not having a direct impact on the cocoa production in Ivory Coast, as it's not as exposed to the Nitrogen fertilizer crisis. However, there are indirect issues for cocoa production, related to the crisis, which could impact 2027 supplies.

This is our initial farmer survey and this will be followed by our second survey and our monthly farm visits.

Survey, Impacts and Risks

We have conducted a survey of hundreds of farmers across the cocoa belt, and this has shown that most farmers have stopping buying fertilizers. Currently **97% of farmers** are reporting challenges with fertilizer.



The impact of this, on yield will not occur until later this year and it may not hit the supply until 2027.

Separately we have modelled the **potential impacts** on Cocoa and released a yield calculator (example inset) .

The risk of these impacts occurring are more complex and dealt with below.

CropGPT

Survey Findings

Interviews were conducted across Ivory Coast's primary cocoa-producing regions, covering Nawa, Agneby Tiassa, Sud Comoé, and surrounding areas.

98% of farmers have not secured all the fertilizer they need for this season. Of those, **73%** have bought **nothing at all** and **25% have partial supply.**

Only 2% report full procurement. Many farmer who have spent, or expects to spend on fertilizer this season, is facing challenges with costs. Many of farms in the sample use an NPK compound fertilizer, The farmers have been taking action to address this including

- Switching to organic fertilizer (chicken manure)
- Reducing their application.

There is a combination of reasons for this

- Lower income from cocoa
- Higher input costs e.g. transport/fuel/energy costs have all increased globally as the price of oil has increased.

Farmers have stated cocoa prices are falling and increased costs have resulted in the lack of purchase of fertilizers. Some of which is linked to the Iran crisis directly and indirectly

For example the phosphates fertilizer used in Ivory Coast do not come via the Strait of Hormuz and do not use Nitrogen. However, they do use Sulphuric acid, which requires Sulphur. Around 44% of the world's seaborne Sulphur comes from the Strait of Hormuz.

The decrease in income (reduces cocoa fees) and increase in costs means that fertilizer user being reduced even if it is available.

Interestingly the farmers are almost entirely unaware of the geopolitical issues that are causing these problems.

This is compounded by the fact that there is not currently government intervention that can absorb this shock.

Supply Chain Context

The Hormuz disruption is compounded by other market activities – including China imposing a near-total phosphate export ban, and Russian quota constraints tightening nitrogen availability.

Ivory Coast is around 26 to 33 days from Hormuz by sea. Pre-disruption vessels loaded before late February are arriving now or have just last week. This means that we have not yet seen the physical impact of the delays yet – that will be starting in April. I.e The impact of oil or sulphur deliveries are delayed from the start of the event.

Once that pipeline of delivery empties, physical availability will tighten on top of the existing price pressure on inputs the farmers need.

The latest ceasefire is a positive development but will not solve the issue.. Idled Gulf production facilities can not restart overnight, shipping capacity that rerouted does not immediately return, and the month of delay cannot be resolved in a weekend.

Yield Risk Assessment

Only around 30% of Ivory Coast farmers buy inorganic fertilizer, and none of that is directly impacted by the Iran Crisis. Therefore the risks for cocoa is far less than other regions.

However- the surveys of farmers revealed that they are struggling to afford supplies due to a lack of money. Liquidity, rather than supply, is the primary issue.

If the 30% of farmers normally using fertilizer stop completely or dramatically reducing their application this will have an impact on production.

A 50% reduction in fertilizer would result in around 80,000 to 100,000 tones loss cocoa. The initial survey shows a much greater level of issue with fertilizer.

The second surveys and farm surveys, that are conducted every month will provide updates on the scale of the problem.

NOTE: Under-fertilization suppresses pod development, increases susceptibility to disease including black pod and swollen shoot, and degrades tree resilience going into the following season. The consequences of this season's input failure could have long term consequences.