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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Cal Poly Professor Heading to Africa to Investigate Chocolate - Slave Labor Ties**

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- A Cal Poly Food Science professor is heading to Africa this month to study whether the world's appetite for chocolate is fueling a market in child slave labor.

Food Science and Nutrition Professor Tom Neuhaus, who heads the Cal Poly Chocolates enterprise project on campus and the campus Fair Trade Club, will study the cocoa bean industry in the Ivory Coast during his one-month trip. The West African nation supplies 70 percent of America's cocoa beans and close to 100 percent of the chocolate in American candy bars.

Neuhaus is taking a sabbatical during fall and winter quarters to work on the research project. He expects to publish the results of his study on the status of slave labor in the cocoa bean industry by March 2006. He is paying for the research trip himself. To help finance the trip, Neuhaus is selling T-shirts and water bottles at the Cal Poly Campus Market.

Neuhaus became interested in the plight of Ivorian cocoa farmers while teaching food science and researching his specialty, chocolate production. Media reports of child slave labor on West African cocoa farms began surfacing in 2000, he notes; child slave labor on cocoa farms was the subject for the recent British documentary film "Slavery."

In 2001, Neuhaus explains, U.S. Congress members worked with the Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA), the World Cocoa Foundation and a variety of international fair labor and trade and children's advocacy groups to develop a plan to combat and end child slavery on cocoa bean farms. Protocols and procedures in the plan were supposed to be in use worldwide by July 1 of this year.

"Depending on who you ask, the chocolate manufacturers or the legislators, the plan is or is not working," Neuhaus said. "In February this year, the legislators involved held a press conference to say that they would not be buying their wives chocolate for Valentine's Day, because it had probably been made with cocoa beans picked by child slaves in the Ivory Coast."

And on July 14, the International Labor Rights Fund sued several international chocolate manufacturers in Federal District Court in Los Angeles. The suit charges that the companies have ignored repeated and well-documented warnings regarding the use of child labor on Ivorian cocoa farms.

Neuhaus wants to investigate the situation first-hand.

During August and September, he will meet with two certified Fair Trade Ivory Coast cocoa-bean cooperative farms which do not use slave labor, as well as a committee working to implement the global plan to end child slave labor in cocoa-farming.

The professor will be posting journal entries on a blog (Web log) throughout his trip to the Ivory Coast at [www.hopeandfairness.blogspot.com](http://www.hopeandfairness.blogspot.com). Those interested can also contact Neuhaus by e-mail at:

[hopeandfairness@yahoo.com](mailto:hopeandfairness@yahoo.com).

T-Shirts are \$12, water bottles are \$7; both bear the Fair Trade logo and the slogan "Make Poverty History!" Discounts are available for bulk purchases. The shirts are available at El Corral Bookstore on the Cal Poly campus, and the water bottles are for sale in Campus Market. Both can also be ordered from Neuhaus via e-mail.

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*Editors please note: Photos taken by Neuhaus on previous trips to African cocoa-bean farms and the villages surrounding them are available through Public Affairs. Contact Teresa Hendrix at [thendrix@calpoly.edu](mailto:thendrix@calpoly.edu) to receive jpgs. Neuhaus is available for interviews through Monday Aug. 15, the day before his departure for the Ivory Coast.*

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