Missouri Chocolate Company Sells Tanzanian Rice

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP) — A Springfield chocolate company has started selling rice from the small village in east Africa that supplies the company with its cocoa beans.

Askinosie Chocolate has begun selling bags of rice from the Tanzanian village of Kyela, which is where owner Shawn Askinosie gets the cocoa beans for the company's line of chocolate bars. Proceeds from the rice sales will fund the lunch program for the village's school, according to The Springfield News-Leader [1].

The one-pound bags of Kyela rice are on sale now for $16.50 at Askinosie Chocolate and can be bought online from www.askinosie.com. Askinosie said the $15 in profit from each bags goes to the Kyela school lunch program.

"Kyela rice is considered a gourmet rice," Askinosie said. "It's naturally sweet."

The program is being implemented without any donations and involves Askinosie partnering directly with farmers in Tanzania, using a product grown by farmers there, he said.

Askinosie began working with farmers in Kyela two years ago when he was looking for cocoa beans for a new line of chocolate bar. He traveled to Tanzania with some local high school students through a program known as Chocolate University, which allows participants to learn about the chocolate business while also helping out in a community.

While in Kyela, the students also set up the school with a few laptop computers and several educational computer programs. Since their return, two students, Margeaux Loeb and Allison Yoakam, who attend Glendale High School, have also started a scholarship program for the Kyela school through Community Foundation of the Ozarks. The scholarship will help students make the $100 payment to attend school.

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