

ITP Research Form

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Shoup Paper Title: Chocolate Law

Abstract:

Arguably the most iconic Swiss product is chocolate. Since 1819, Swiss manufacturers have dominated the chocolate industry, placing strict controls on materials and manufacturing to preserve the tradition and quality of chocolate. Our research focuses on the business and agricultural practices that make Swiss chocolate a luxury good, and the environmental and labor consequences of global demand for Swiss chocolate. As a result of this project, we were introduced to government officials and to chocolate shop owners, chocolate historians and experts in cocoa tree cultivation, and even an entrepreneur trying to bring cannabis-infused chocolate to Europe. The breadth of our research reveals how intertwined the chocolate industry is with significant issues in international trade, sustainable business practices, and fair labor regulation. Though some of our conclusions may be ‘bittersweet,’ Switzerland’s major manufacturers seem to be throwing their weight in the right direction, working to improve working conditions for their international laborers, ensuring continued support for domestic dairy farmers, and fighting the impact of climate change and deforestation. However, if the foretold “chocapocalypse” does indeed obliterate the world’s chocolate supply in the near future, when stocking up on Swiss chocolate, always choose milk.