



WIRSPA

West Indies Rum & Spirits
Producers' Association Inc.

PRESS RELEASE

Caribbean Rum Producers meet in Barbados

Bridgetown, Barbados. December 10, 2014. The availability of molasses, improving waste treatment facilities at the region's rum distilleries and the status of a promotional campaign for Caribbean rum will be among the topics to be discussed when over 30 regional rum company executives get together for the Annual General Meeting of West Indies Rum and Spirits Producers Inc (WIRSPA) at Accra Hotel in Barbados.

A key item on the agenda will be the US Cover Over Tax Scheme which is presently having a major detrimental impact on the price of bulk rum in the US market and is making a dent in regional exports.

In addition to the AGM, there will be a technical seminar as well as a meeting of the Directors of WIRSPA as Caribbean Rum Producers seek to address some of the issues affecting the US \$500 million export industry.

One major item on the two day agenda will be discussion on the status of the promotional campaign, currently running in Europe and to start in the US next year, for the Authentic Caribbean Rum (ACR) Marque which was established during the last 10 years. This campaign was designed to educate the trade about the ACR Marque and ACR brands. The Marque is a symbol of authenticity, provenance and quality for rums within the WIRSPA family. The idea behind it is to help businesses and consumers identify ACR brands, thus promoting the development of Authentic Caribbean Rum as a distinct sector within the world wide drinks industry.

The technical seminar and ACR Marque campaign are part of a CARIFORUM initiative funded by the European Union under their support for the Caribbean Economic Partnership Agreement to strengthen this important export sector.

Other areas of interest up for discussion at the meetings will be the availability of key inputs in the production processes for example molasses, its cost and availability which is of major concern to the producers. A special guest presenter has been invited from the Scotch Whisky Research Institute to share some insight into what they do and to discuss areas of collaboration.

Free Trade negotiations between CARICOM and Canada, as they work to ensure continued access to the Canadian market, will be one of the topics on the International trade side of the agenda for the meetings on December 10th and 11th. In addition, they will also look at



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developments in the EU Market as it pertains to the arrangements with other countries that serve to erode preferences of the regional brands and they will also take a critical look at the harmful use of alcohol.

This crucial industry employs more than 10,000 persons throughout the region and is estimated to pay annual taxes to regional governments in excess of US \$250 million.

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About WIRSPA

West Indies Rum and Spirits Producers Inc. (WIRSPA) is made up of over 30 rum companies in the Caribbean with 10 main brands, 15 niche brands and around 70 brand variants. Members of the association collectively employ over 10,000 people directly with indirect employment estimated at over 100,000.

Production is over 31 million cases annually.

About the Authentic Caribbean Rum Marque

The Authentic Caribbean Rum (ACR) Marque was developed as a symbol of authenticity, provenance and quality for rums within the WIRSPA family. As usage of the Marque grows it will act as a visual symbol to help trade customers and consumers identify ACR brands, but in the short-term it will be used to promote the development of Authentic Caribbean Rum as a distinct sector within the drinks industry.

For more information visit www.wirspa.com ; www.acr-rum.com or contact wirspa@wirspa.com.

The West Indies Rum & Spirits Producers Association implements the EU¹ funded CARIFORUM Rum Sector Support Project on behalf of CARIFORUM.

¹ European Commission is the EU's executive body.

“The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.



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