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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **BLOMMER CHOCOLATE COMPANY TO BE HONORED FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS**

Rainforest Alliance recognizes Blommer Chocolate's 50 years-plus as sustainability pioneer

NEW YORK (May 15, 2012) – The Rainforest Alliance announced plans to honor Blommer Chocolate Company, the largest cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier in North America, as a 2012 recipient of the organization's coveted "Sustainable Standard-Setter" award on Wednesday, May 16, 2012, during its 25<sup>th</sup> annual gala dinner and awards ceremony in New York City.

The Rainforest Alliance will recognize Blommer for its long-standing heritage of farmer-focused programs and its investment in the future of cocoa that sustains the industry, the environment and farmer livelihoods around the globe.

"We're proud to be recognized for the work Blommer and our partners have done over the last 50 years to pioneer and advocate for good, sustainable advances within the cocoa industry," said Peter Blommer, president and COO of Blommer Chocolate Company. "In the spirit of collaboration, we look to our partners, customers and other industry leaders to move this work forward with us. No matter how determined, no one company can bring sustainability to the cocoa industry alone."

Recently, Blommer announced its plans to invest \$45 million in cocoa sustainability efforts by 2020. Driven by an effort to assist customers and meet rising consumer demand, the company pledges to reach an additional 50,000 cocoa farmers worldwide– doubling its current farmer base to 100,000. Blommer *Sustainable Origins* programs aggregate and expand upon its global portfolio of established, sustainability initiatives, which include extensive farmer training programs throughout West Africa, Indonesia and South America. The programs are based on the Farmer Field School Model, in which farmer groups are trained in pre- and post-harvest agronomic practices that generate significant increases cocoa yields and quality, and benefit from increased income as a result. The curriculum is tailored by the farmers, based on their particular needs and challenges, and also includes training on safe farming practices, environmental stewardship, HIV awareness and the appropriate role of children on the farm, while allowing for their continuing education.

"Companies like Blommer Chocolate Company continue to raise the bar, making bold commitments to sustainability and traceability" said Rainforest Alliance, President, Tensie Whelan. "Through working with the Rainforest Alliance, Blommer is helping to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farming

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communities while protecting natural resources for generations to come.”

### **A Sustained History of Good Practices**

Blommer sustainability initiatives date back to the early 1950s when company founder Henry Blommer helped create the American Cocoa Research Institute (ACRI), which focused on best practices in cocoa agronomy, as well as the cause and prevention of pests and disease. In 2000, building on the work of ACRI, Blommer helped establish the World Cocoa Foundation, which is committed to promoting economic and social development and environmental stewardship in all 15 cocoa-producing countries around the world. Applying these practices across its network, the company works with 19 partners in the public and private sector, utilizing their strengths and expertise to reach greater goals. To date, Blommer has invested nearly \$13 million into the cocoa sector to help meet the rising demand, with \$3.7 million in farmer training and infrastructure improvements and \$9 million in direct premiums to farmers for cocoa that meets their quality standards. Additionally more than 50,000 farmers, currently participate in Blommer’s private sustainability programs, many of whom have benefitted from yields of up to 30 percent increase in cocoa bean production. Production bonuses have led to the establishment of schools and medical facilities that create additional benefits for cocoa farmers and their families in the rural areas where they work and live. In addition, tens of thousands more are benefiting from Blommer’s shared involvement in collaborative sustainability initiatives with other industry partners, organizations and private foundations.

Along with its Rainforest Alliance programs, Blommer is an active partner in the Bill & Melinda Gates Cocoa Livelihoods program and The African Cocoa Initiative, both in West Africa. Blommer private partner programs include CIFOB in West Africa, SAFOB in Indonesia, PACTS in the Ivory Coast and the Amazon Project in Ecuador.

Eight other organizations – Bloomberg, Fazendas Reunidas Vale do Juliana SA, Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal, Global Environment Facility, Marks & Spencer plc, The Nabob Coffee Company, Posada Amazonas Lodge by Rainforest Expeditions, and Staples – along with Blommer Chocolate are this year’s RA “Sustainable Standard-Setter” award recipients.

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### **About Blommer Chocolate Company**

Blommer Chocolate Company is the largest cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier in North America. With over 650 employees and four strategically located manufacturing facilities in North America, the company provides comprehensive business solutions for domestic and international customers of all sizes in the confectionery, baking and dairy industries. Among Blommer’s core competencies are cocoa bean processing, chocolate manufacturing, commodity risk management, and product and process R&D.

The company is a leader in advancing sustainable cocoa farming, playing an active role in the World Cocoa Foundation and promoting sustainable farming practices through its privately managed programs in Cote d'Ivoire, Indonesia and Ecuador. Founded in 1939, the family owned and operated company maintains an outstanding reputation for customer service and quality. For more information about Blommer Chocolate Company, please visit [www.blommer.com](http://www.blommer.com).

### **About Rainforest Alliance**

The **Rainforest Alliance** works with people whose livelihoods depend on the land, helping them transform the way they grow food, harvest wood and host travelers. From large multinational corporations to small, community-based cooperatives, businesses and consumers worldwide are involved in the Rainforest Alliance’s efforts to bring responsibly produced goods and services to a global marketplace where the demand for sustainability is growing steadily. For more information, visit [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org).