

# I Am a Chocolate Taster

Rose Potts is in charge of tasting products at Blommer Chocolate Company. She spoke with TFK's Vickie An.



Rose Potts samples a piece of chocolate.

When I was a teenager, I used to come up with crazy recipes. Once, I made Jell-O with Life Savers. That didn't work so well! I have always liked experimenting with food, and I have always liked science. That's how I started on my path as a chocolate taster.

I graduated from Penn State University with a degree in food science. I took many tasting classes. After college, I got a job at the Blommer Chocolate Company **plant** in East Greenville, Pennsylvania. Blommer is one of the largest chocolate makers in the United States. I've worked here for 25 years.

I didn't start out being in charge of tasting. I had many different jobs first. In the process, I learned about the types of cocoa beans we use at the plant. This trained me to be a better taster.

Most of the world's cocoa bean crops come from West Africa. Cocoa is also grown in South America, Indonesia and other places. Cocoa beans from different regions have different flavors. The beans are made into products like liquid chocolate, chocolate bars and cocoa powder.

Each day, I prepare product samples for group tastings. We always taste in the morning. That's when our senses are sharpest. We look at the color of the chocolate. We smell it and feel how it melts in our mouths. We listen to the sound it makes. We

decide if it's fruity or nutty or spicy. We don't eat a lot of chocolate, just a little bit of each sample. When we are done, we decide if the product tastes right. If it doesn't, we decide what adjustments to make. I've probably tasted thousands of kinds of chocolate.

The average person wouldn't be able to taste most of the **subtle** flavors that I can. It takes years to be able to tell the fine difference between flavors. But even expert tasters learn something new every day.

**Think** → Rose Potts says that several people try the chocolate samples. Why do you think it is important for more than one person to taste products at a company?

### Power Words

**plant** *noun*: a factory where products are made

**subtle** (*sut-ul*) *adjective*: so delicate that it is difficult to notice



Cocoa beans are the seeds of cocoa pods. The beans are used to make chocolate.

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