

SUPPLY RISK · CASHEW · FREEWORLD TRADING

A cashew shortfall identified months before the supply chain could see it

KEY TAKEAWAY

Suppliers in Ivory Coast were reporting a large cashew crop to Freeworld Trading. Helios registered heat stress in January and moved the crop to Take Action. The in-shell arrived in the volumes expected; only at cracking did roughly **5–6% of the crop** prove unusable. The disruption was identifiable in the climate data months before it became visible anywhere in the supply chain.

BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGE

Freeworld Trading imports nuts and seeds from origin and supplies major retailers across the UK, Europe and the US, including Lidl, Costco and Kroger. Cashew is purchased against the crop well before it can be counted.

An importer's view of a crop in origin is largely the view its suppliers provide. That reporting is well informed, but it describes the condition of the field rather than the yield a stressed nut-set will deliver at collection. By the time a shortfall is evident in the in-shell, the opportunity to cover it has passed.

WHAT HAPPENED

In January, Helios registered heat stress on Ivory Coast cashew and moved the crop to Take Action. The platform scores conditions against the growing stage relevant to cashew in that region, so heat falling on the window in which the nut is set is assessed differently from equivalent heat at any other point in the season.

Supplier guidance to Freeworld pointed in the opposite direction: a large crop, with in-shell volumes reported as expected. Nothing in that reporting indicated a shortfall. At the point of issue, the Helios assessment stood against every human source in Freeworld's chain.

THE OUTCOME

The loss surfaced at processing. Cracking revealed that the kernels had not matured, and Freeworld assessed the loss at approximately 5–6% of the crop on yield alone; in one project area quality was poor enough that the crop could not be processed.

The finding came late in the cycle, after purchasing commitments had been made, and it matched the January assessment. Heat stress during the window in which the nut is set was the cause Helios had identified months earlier, while the crop was still on the tree.

“This came in really useful [in] the Ivory Coast... they had a crop, but it was such bad quality that we couldn't actually process it... your report said take action very early.”

— Freeworld Trading

The Impact

5–6%

OF THE CROP LOST TO POOR YIELDS

January signal

MONTHS AHEAD OF THE SPRING HARVEST

Big crop

INCORRECT SUPPLIER PREDICTION

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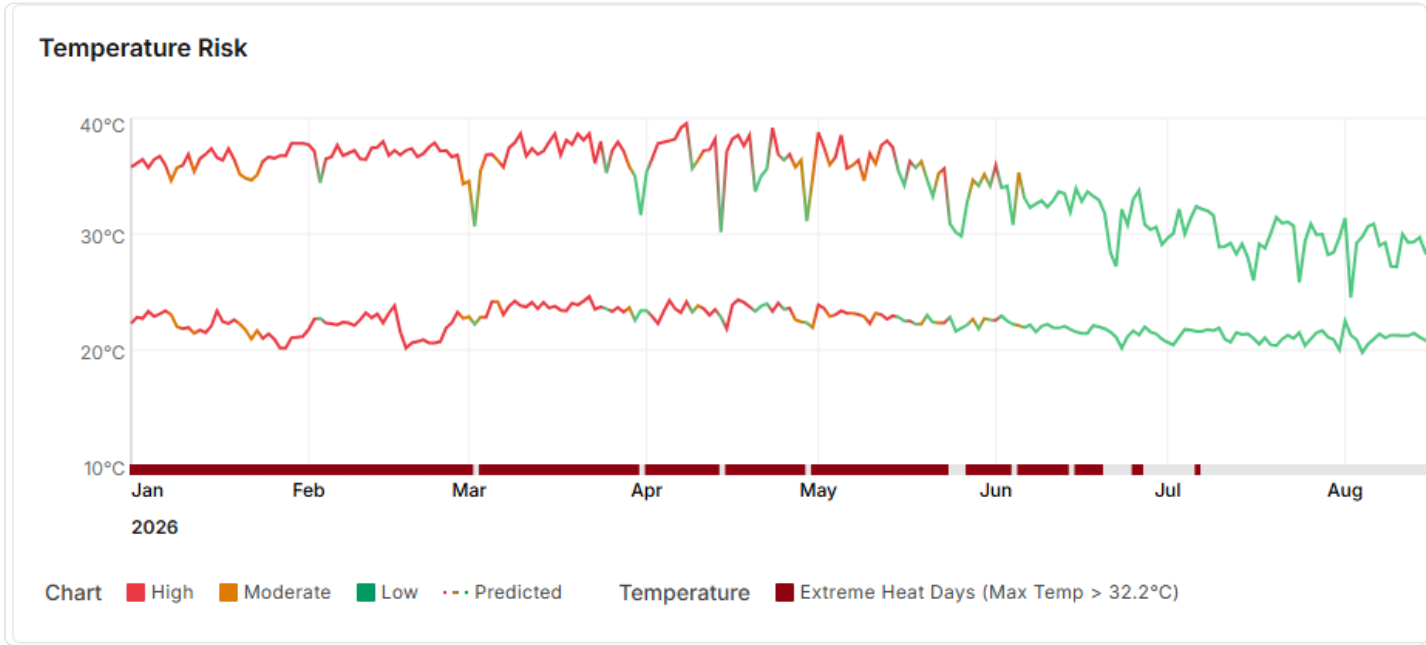
PROJECT AREA WHOSE CROP COULD NOT BE PROCESSED AT ALL

SUMMARY

Suppliers in Ivory Coast reported a large cashew crop. Helios registered heat stress in January and moved the crop to Take Action. The volume arrived as the suppliers had described, but roughly 5–6% of it was lost to poor yields, and one project area could not be processed at all. The platform identified the cause months ahead of the point at which the supply chain could see it.

For a business that has had to argue to buyers that crop failures can be anticipated rather than absorbed, a dated call that proved correct is the substantiation, not the forecast.

IVORY COAST · TEMPERATURE RISK, 2026 SEASON



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