

By Julie Wernau

Coffee futures fell Friday ahead of Carnival in Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer, as producers booked last-minute sales before tonight's start to the nearly weeklong holiday.

Arabica coffee for March delivery fell 2.3% to end at \$1.204 a pound on the ICE Futures U.S. exchange, its first fall in five sessions.

Thiago Marques Cazarini, a coffee broker with Cazarini Trading Company in Brazil, said this week's jump higher for coffee surprised some exporters.

"[Futures] surprised on a quick way up, but it has to prove against skepticism, against fundamentals of stocks overseas, no need from roasters to buy and a reasonable crop coming this year," Mr. Cazarini said in a note.

Traders said exporters out of Brazil have been booking last-minute sales to take advantage of a rally in prices this week caused by a falling dollar and news that dryness in Colombia could negatively impact crops in the world's second-largest growing region for the mild arabica bean.

In other markets, cocoa for March rose 0.3% to end at \$2,772 a ton, March raw sugar futures ended up 3% at 13.27 cents a pound, March cotton fell 0.4% to end at 59.97 cents a pound and frozen concentrated orange-juice futures for March dropped 1.2% to end at \$1.3505 a pound.

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