

NEWS RELEASE

2020 Season - Sugar Milling Update (Cane crush to date remains higher than 2019)

15 September, 2020



OVERVIEW

For the period ending 15th September 2020, a total of 964,340 tonnes of cane had been crushed by the three FSC sugar mills. The cumulative crush to date is 11% higher than for 2019, and compares to an equivalent tonnage of 868,509 tonnes crushed in 2019. The three mills have all crushed more than for the same period last year – Lautoka 10% more, Rarawai 19% more and Labasa 6% more.

Overall Mill performance to date remains better than for the past two seasons, with operating time efficiency 8% better than last year, and average weekly mill stoppages 29% lower, driven by strong cane supply and mill breakdowns that are 11% lower than in 2019.

Sugar production at 85,103 tonnes to date is similar to the equivalent period in 2019 (84,991 tonnes). Sugar recoveries measured by the cumulative tonnes cane to sugar ratio (TCTS) is currently measuring 11.3 (11.4 last week), impacted by low cane purity, which to date is the lowest in three years. Cane purity has been adversely affected by dry weather, higher temperatures, high extraneous matter in billet cane and a 46% increase in burnt cane deliveries compared to 2019.

The second bulk molasses shipment for 2020 of 36,000 tonnes will begin loading from the Malau terminal this weekend, after which it will complete loading in Lautoka in order to depart from Fiji by month end. Bulk sugar exports for 2020 will continue in September with the arrival of a bulk vessel to load 30,000 tonnes of raw sugar for export to the United Kingdom.

Lautoka Mill

Lautoka Mill continued to crush above 30,000 tonnes of cane per week, recording 30,138 tonnes crushed for the past week. This was 40% above target for the week. A total of 23 hours of factory stops were recorded mainly due to problems in the front end and in the power house. The same were rectified within the week. Outside stops of 3 hours were directly associated with rain, which brought relief after a long dry spell. Total sugar produced improved to 2,845 tonnes and the TCTS of 10.6 units for the week was the lowest for the season. Sugar content in cane of 10.13% remains 16% worse than budget. The decline in cane quality continues to be impacted by dry weather, high temperature, high extraneous matter (20%) coming in with mechanically harvested cane and the percent burnt cane rising to 76.5%. Chemical usage to protect sugar quality has been at an all time high this season due to inferior cane quality.

Rarawai Mill

Rarawai mill picked up from last week and crushed 27,018 tonnes of cane for the period. Crushing resumed during the week after completing the installation of a replacement cane carrier shaft. This accounted for 32 hours of the 60 hours of factory stops recorded for the week. Cane quality remains very poor, as the mill continues to clear harvested stand over cane in the fields.

Cane quality was further depressed due to 76.3% burnt cane crushed this week and high extraneous matter in green cane delivered to the factory. Sugar produced was 1,957 tonnes and showed an improvement towards the end of the week as cane quality improved slightly.

Labasa Mill

Labasa mill crushed 25,750 tonnes of cane for the week, which was 18% less than the target for the period. The shortfall was directly caused by 39 hours of no cane due to rain. Factory stops were low and associated with minor operational issues which were all resolved within the week. Sugar produced was depressed due to the shortfall in crush. The total Sugar make was 2,600 tonnes with a TCTS ratio of 9.9 units for the week. As a result of stop start operations and due to rain, the sugar content in cane reduced to 10.57% from 11% recorded a week ago. The percent burnt cane increased to 31% and the percent extraneous matter in cane remains high, both affecting sugar production.

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For more information, please contact:

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