

NEWS RELEASE

Sugar Milling Update (2020 Crush approaches 640,000 tonnes of cane)



18 August, 2020

OVERVIEW

For the period ending 17th August 2020, a total of 637,504 tonnes of cane had been crushed by the three FSC sugar mills which continue to crush well. For the past week alone, 93,000 tonnes were crushed by the three mills. This cumulative crush compares to an equivalent tonnage of 549,660 tonnes crushed in 2019 – an increase of 16% year on year.

Nationally, mill performance remains good, with operating time efficiency still higher than last year (up 12%) and average weekly mill stoppages 44% lower, driven by strong cane supply and mill stops that are 34% lower than in 2019.

Sugar production of 54,949 tonnes to date is higher than the equivalent period in 2019 (52,694 tonnes). For the past week, 8,760 tonnes of sugar were produced. Sugar recoveries are improving, with tonnes cane to sugar ratio (TCTS) improving from last week (11.8) to 11.6 for the season to date. For the past week TCTS improved to 10.6 from 11.0, reflecting better sugar recoveries.

Loading of the next two bulk sugar cargoes – 11,500 tonnes to the USA and 30,000 tonnes to Spain has begun. The first vessel arrived in Labasa on 18th August and will load in rotation with the second vessel, (arriving on 23rd August) from the Malau and Lautoka terminals.

Lautoka Mill

Lautoka Mill crushed a total of 29,855 tonnes of cane for the week. This was slightly lower than the weekly target, but more than for the same period last year. Mill throughput was affected early in the week by a stop to repair a badly damaged steam gasket. The factory stopped again on Sunday for planned maintenance. This scheduled stop had to be extended to repair a damaged EFL power supply cable to the factory. Sugar production was 2,521 tonnes with a TCTS of 11.8 for the week. TCTS improved from last week yet is still the highest for the same period in the past three years. Cane quality improved from 9.8 in the past week to 10.0 this week but is still lower than the target figure. The percent burnt cane also increased to 29.6% from 21.5% in the past week.

Rarawai Mill

Rarawai mill crushed a total of 25,424 tonnes of cane for the week. This was 9% less than the target figure for the week. Rarawai Mill's fine performance for the past few weeks, was halted by a broken cane carrier head shaft (caused by metal fatigue) early Thursday morning. The damaged shaft was repaired and replaced, while a backup shaft is being machined at Lautoka

Mill. The mill lost 45hrs of operating time as a result and this affected their weekly throughput. The mill produced 2,376 tonnes of sugar for the week recording a TCTS ratio of 10.7 units. Purity of sugar cane improved to 10.1 units for the week compared to 9.9 for the past week. A further increase in the percentage of burnt cane is a concern, as it escalated to 43% compared to 25% for the past week.

Labasa Mill

Labasa Mill picked up performance in the week after successful repairs to their number 2 mill, which had been slowing the mill for the past two weeks. Labasa Mill crushed a total of 37,701 tonnes of cane for the week. This is the highest weekly throughput for the season and also the highest for the same period in the past three years. The mill stopped on Sunday to carry out planned maintenance, with the factory stop extended to wait for cane supply before resuming operations. Sugar production for the week was 3,863 tonnes with a TCTS ratio of 9.8 units. This also improved from the last week and we expect this to further improve with continuity in operations. Purity of sugar cane increased to 10.6 units yet is still lower than the target weekly figure of 12.1 units. Burnt cane at 5.6 % for the week is still low.

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For more information, please contact:

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