

NEWS RELEASE

2020 Season - Sugar Milling Update (Cane crush moves past 1 Million Tonnes)

22 September, 2020



OVERVIEW

As of Monday 21st September 2020, the volume of cane crushed to date had reached 1,057,103 tonnes. The cumulative crush to date is 8% higher than for the equivalent period in 2019, and compares to a tonnage of 976,321 tonnes crushed in 2019. The three mills have all crushed more than for the same period last year – Lautoka 1% more, Rarawai 16% more and Labasa 7% more.

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 32% lower, driven by strong cane supply and mill breakdowns that are 15% lower than in 2019.

Sugar production at 94,239 tonnes to date is similar to the equivalent period in 2019 (95,412 tonnes). Sugar recoveries measured by the cumulative tonnes cane to sugar ratio (TCTS) is currently measuring 11.2 (11.3 last week), impacted by ongoing 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 sharp increase in burnt cane deliveries compared to 2019.

The second bulk molasses shipment for 2020 has begun loading from the Malau terminal from where 15,000 tonnes will be loaded and after which the bulk tanker **STI Blackhawk** will complete loading in Lautoka with a further 21,450 tonnes, in order to depart from Fiji by 30th September 2020. The cargo will be delivered to Vietnam and Korea. Bulk sugar exports for 2020 continue in September with the arrival of the bulk vessel **MV Kodiak Island** to load 30,000 tonnes of raw sugar for export to the United Kingdom.

Lautoka Mill

Lautoka Mill crushed 28,549 tonnes of cane and produced 2,487 tonnes of sugar in the past week. This was slightly below target due to a full Chemical Boil Cleaning Intermission stop over the weekend. Inside stops for the week were 15.7 hours mainly due to bagasse conveyor issues, and power fluctuations in the power house which affected operations. Cane quality remained below expected as a result of 83% burnt cane and high extraneous matter in mechanically harvested cane. The impact of this was 11.5 TCTS.

Rarawai Mill

Rarawai mill processed 27,692 tonnes of cane, which was in line with the week's crush target. The sugar make of 2,894 tonnes was 9% above target for the week. TCTS of 9.6 units was recorded for the week. Cane quality was slightly higher for the week. The increase in cane quality at Rarawai is significant, pointing to better maturity and fresher cane. Percent burnt cane received at the mill rose to 87.0% which is going to affect sugar processing. The percent extraneous matter in mechanically harvested cane also remains high.

Labasa Mill

The Labasa mill improved throughput to 36,522 tonnes cane crushed for the week, and produced 3,755 tonnes sugar. Both crush and sugar make were more than the target for the week. The TCTS ratio of 9.7 units was slightly worse than target due to lower cane quality. The decline in cane quality is associated with 47.4% burnt cane which was higher than last week. Rain last week also had an impact on cane quality. Labasa recorded high operating efficiency for the week, crushing for 146.0hrs out of the available 152.5hrs in the week.

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