

NEWS RELEASE

2020 Season - Sugar Milling Update (Crushing Season Enters Last Week.)

24 November, 2020



OVERVIEW

As of Monday 23rd November 2020, the volume of cane crushed by the three FSC mills had reached 1,688,548 tonnes. Cane crushing for the past week was affected by rain in all three mill areas. Nonetheless, 44,808 tonnes of cane was crushed for the week. The cumulative crush to date remains 5% higher than for the equivalent period in 2019, and compares to a tonnage of 1,615,463 tonnes crushed in the same period in 2019. To date, Labasa has crushed 3% more than for the same period in 2019, Rarawai has crushed 12% more and Lautoka 1% less than last year.

Mill throughput and performance to date remains better than for the past two seasons, with average weekly mill stoppages 21% lower, driven by the strength of cane supply and mill breakdowns that are 22% lower than for the same period in 2019.

Sugar production of 148,660 tonnes to date compares to production for the same period in 2019 of 153,250 tonnes. Sugar recoveries continue to be adversely impacted by ongoing low cane purity, which to date remains the lowest for the past three years. Cane purity has been adversely affected by weather, high extraneous matter in billet cane and continuing high levels of burnt cane deliveries compared to 2019.

The 2020 crushing season is drawing to a close. The Lautoka mill plans to cease crushing on Friday 27th November 2020, the Rarawai Mill on Sunday 29th November 2020 and the Labasa mill on Wednesday 02nd December 2020. Efforts are being made to ensure that as much available cane is harvested as possible and delivered to the mills for crushing to minimize any stand over cane. The final crush tonnage for 2020 could be 3 - 4% lower than 2019 depending on late harvesting and after the early season crop damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Harold and the adverse weather in the growing season thereafter.

Lautoka Mill

Lautoka mill crushed 13,296 tonnes of cane and produced 847 tonnes of sugar for the past week. With one week of crushing left, cane supply has been weak. Rain in all the districts added further to the cane supply stops which totalled 46.8 hours for the week. Operations were further affected by 33.0 hours of factory stops, due to the re-positioning of the B side cane carrier chain. A scheduled stop of 30.0 hours for Cleaning & Maintenance was taken over the weekend. As we are nearing the end of crush the cane quality is poor and worsened by the burnt cane level of 96%. Juice quality also deteriorated as a result of stop start operations.

Rarawai Mill

Rarawai mill crushed 14,997 tonnes of cane and produced 840 tonnes of sugar for the past week. Factory stops were 35.4 hours, due to problems encountered in the feeding station with cane carrier plates, elevators and runners. Outside stops were 21.3 hours due to rain and poor harvesting efforts. A scheduled 44.0 hours Cleaning & Maintenance stop was taken over the weekend. Rarawai mill is also approaching its final week of crush, scheduled for the end of the week. Cane quality is poor, worsened by the high burnt cane level of 98% and the start-stop nature of operations.

Labasa Mill

Labasa Mill crushed 15,866 tonnes of cane and produced 1,098 tonnes of sugar for the past week. Total outside stops were 90.9 hours, of which 63.0 hours were due to rain and the rest were associated with low cane supply due to poor harvesting efforts. Rain stops were utilized to carry out Cleaning & Maintenance in the factory. Factory stops remained minimal. Labasa mill will end its 2020 crushing season next week and is pushing to crush all harvestable cane by then.

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