

MEDIA RELEASE

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2019 Crushing Season Update #1

FSC advises that after a slow start, both Labasa and Lautoka mills have been steadily performing well and throughput is increasing.

CEO Graham Clark says “we have achieved the 5,000 tonnes per day mark as of yesterday, for both mills, which is good for the sugar factories”.

“As of yesterday, the two mills had collectively crushed 70,000 tonnes, this should increase to 100,000 tonnes by the weekend”, adds Clark.

The mills are quickly settling to steady crushing patterns and starting to reach budget targets. Both mills have crushed close to 35,000 tonnes each to date.

In terms of refurbished and new equipment at both mills, FSC has seen a steadier running of the mills this year, which is a direct result of the mills refurbishments. Lautoka Mill's diffuser plant is averaging an extraction rate of 97%, up by 2 points from last year.



Above: a locomotive carrying cane at the Lautoka Mill

TCTS (tonnes of cane to tonnes of sugar) has started high, as is usually the case during season start-ups, however both mills are on track to achieve the target of less than 10 TCTS this season. Currently Lautoka TCTS is around 12 and Labasa is just under 10.

Cane supply is steadily improving but the mills are still running out of cane around the 4am to 5am each day and cane supply improves again from around 7am each.

Cane maturity is much better with Clark adding “you can see a lot more cane flowering, which signifies that its matured. So, cane purity is lifting nicely and is back at around the 80% mark”.

FSC has distributed the first eleven of its new 6-wheeler trucks to Labasa and they are operating well. However, the industry still faces a shortage of lorries. Clark says “what we are hearing is that drivers are wanting higher rates. Growers are ready, they have mobilized their cutters etc but lorry availability seems to be an issue”.

Clark ends by saying, “its early days yet, only two weeks into the crushing season, we would like to see Rarawai start-up on 9th July as scheduled and we are hopeful for a good season”.

ENDS

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