

MEDIA RELEASE

5 August 2019

2019 Crushing Season Update #4

Both Lautoka and Labasa Mills have completed 8 weeks of crushing for the 2019 season. Rarawai Mill has ended its 4th week of crushing. For the 2019 season a total of 433,489 tonnes of cane has been crushed by the 3 mills with 40,085 tonnes of sugar made. The TCTS ratio continues to improve, reaching 10.8 after both Rarawai and Labasa achieved weekly TCTS of 10.0 and 9.5 respectively, last week.

The Lautoka Mill has crushed 181,916 tonnes of cane to date. During week 8, 29,623 tonnes of cane was crushed. Sugar recovery is being impacted by high levels of extraneous matter being received in billet cane, and to date TCTS is recorded at 11.6. Efforts to correct this situation are in hand.

Rail cane deliveries to Lautoka have been affected by aging locomotives, which have been increasingly succumbing to breakdowns in the past two weeks.

Recognizing the problem FSC has located four second hand right sized locomotives which will be brought to Fiji as soon as possible to relieve the Lautoka rail delivery delay. Meanwhile urgent repairs have been completed, and all locomotives are currently operating.



Above: Fiji's largest sugar mill, the Lautoka Mill

Mechanical performance of the Lautoka Mill was generally good for the week, with the only major stops being to replace conveyor rollers and a shredder motor. Mechanical stops for the week totaled 16 hours. The mill ran out of cane on Sunday 04th August at 12.30pm and after a stop for cleaning and maintenance resumed crushing at 8.30pm.

The Rarawai Mill crushed 57,593 tonnes of cane by the end of week 4, and pleasingly TCTS has reduced to 10.0 during the week. The Rarawai Mill ran consistently at or above its target crush rate of 3,500 tonnes per day from Monday 29th July to Thursday 1st August.

Unfortunately, on Friday 2nd August a large choke was experienced on the cane carrier. This was caused by a metal post dislodging from a tipped rail cart and falling unnoticed into the carrier. The post jammed against the carrier head shaft and caused the carrier to choke, fully laden with cane. Fortunately, no damage was caused to the carrier, but it took several hours to manually clear. Bagasse feeding was also disrupted following the choke. The mill resumed crushing during the afternoon shift on Friday 2nd August, with 172 cane lorries offloaded, another 187 cane lorries offloaded on Saturday 3rd August and 209 cane lorries offloaded on Sunday 4th August. All available cane was crushed out on Sunday 4th August. Cane lorries were also diverted to Lautoka during this time.

The refurbished boiler at Rarawai is operating well. The upgraded ash removal system is recovering higher levels of ash this year, which was previously expelled via the boiler chimney, together with flue gases. Ash and soot emissions via the chimney are lower than in prior years, although an upgrade to the ash handling system is underway to clear ground level ash volumes, which will be mixed with water to prevent dust and ash circulation.

The Labasa Mill continues to run well and crushed 33,877 tonnes of cane during week 8. To date the Labasa Mill has crushed 193,980 tonnes of cane. Rain impacted the Labasa crush throughout the week and disrupted cane supply especially at the beginning of the week when the mill stopped each day whilst cane supply was restored. Mechanically the mill has run well with no major equipment stoppages. Sugar recovery in Labasa is responding to improved cane quality and TCTS reach 9.5 for the week and is recorded at 10.1 for the season to date.

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