

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Countdown on to 2015 crush**

Steam trials at Wilmar Sugar's four Burdekin mills are set to start later this month as preparations for the 2015 crushing season enter their final weeks.

Crushing is set to commence at the four mills on 10 June, with steam trials scheduled to take place in the last two weeks in May.

Wilmar Sugar Operations General Manager Mike McLeod said the mills were finalising another large capital and maintenance program.

"The largest single project in the Burdekin is a \$4.3 million investment in a new evaporator at Invicta Mill," he said.

"The new 4500m<sup>2</sup> evaporator replaces three smaller vessels and associated equipment on the factory's A side."

A new \$3 million, 80-tonne vacuum pan for Inkerman Mill was manufactured by Wilmar Sugar's Engineering Services employees at the Pioneer Mill Central Workshop.

"The team fabricated two pans for Pioneer Mill last year, did Inkerman's this year and will make one for Invicta next maintenance season," Mr McLeod said.

"Although we still use external contractors for a significant portion of our manufacturing work, it's great to have the capacity within the business to take on large engineering projects."

Other projects the Engineering Services team has completed this year include a new air heater for Kalamia Mill and a pan condenser and bagasse bin reclaimer for Pioneer Mill.

“The replacement of the Kalamia Mill number one boiler air heater and ductwork is worth \$2.6 million,” Mr McLeod said.

A key focus of this year’s investment program across the group has, once again, been on improving factory reliability and efficiency, to build on performance gains achieved in recent seasons.

“Overall, the Burdekin mills crushed well last year and we’re aiming to maintain or improve on that performance this year,” he said.

The Burdekin mills are expected to crush 8.27 million tonnes of cane this year - about 200,000 tonnes more than last year’s total.

Despite the very dry wet season, the positive impact of last year’s early planting and the improved availability of irrigation water have helped boost the crop.

“Based on our crop estimate and an allowance for some in-season wet weather, crushing should be finalised in mid-November,” Mr McLeod said.

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