

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Herbert crushing finalised**

The Herbert region's 2015 crushing season was finalised at Victoria Mill this morning.

Harvesting finished on Tuesday and the last cane was crushed on Victoria's A side milling train about 7.40am today.

In line with the agreed staggered finish to the season, Victoria's B side milling train finalised crushing on Sunday morning, with Macknade wrapping up on Monday morning.

Wilmar Sugar Cane Supply and Grower Relations General Manager Paul Giordani said the Herbert mills crushed a combined total of 4.459 million tonnes of cane for the season – the region's largest crop since 2008.

"The final crop was almost 460,000 tonnes larger than originally forecast due to pre-season and in-season rain," he said.

"It was a real positive from the season, particularly given the impacts of yellow canopy syndrome, the disappointing wet season and recent crop damage from rats."

The CCS average for the season was 13.38, which although down on last year's result, was better than expected.

"CCS levels were slow to rise at the start of the season but eventually exceeded expectations and stayed quite high for the balance of the season," he said.

Wilmar Sugar Operations General Manager Mike McLeod said Macknade Mill recorded one of its best seasons for a number of years.

“Macknade crushed 1.55 million tonnes of cane for the season – about 15 per cent more than its original budget,” he said.

He said another significant capital and maintenance program was planned for Victoria Mill to achieve improved reliability for future seasons.

“While Victoria didn’t perform as well as we would have liked this season, there was still some good progress made in critical areas where investment has been made,” he said.

“One of the key areas which impacted reliability this year was the feeding station.

“There are issues with the historical design of the station, which we’ll be looking to help correct during the maintenance season.”

Mr Giordani said, unfortunately, it was a disappointing season for cane train safety, with two collisions and a number of near hits.

“We also had some concerning incidents involving interference with our rail infrastructure, most notably the shooting of a brake van and an incident where a gas cylinder was rolled into a moving cane train,” he said.

“Despite our repeated safety warnings every season, a minority of people continue to take risks and do the wrong thing. It’s very frustrating.”

Both men thanked all growers, harvesting contractors and Wilmar Sugar employees for their efforts during what had been another challenging season.

“The mills will complete their factory wash downs and turn their attention to capital and maintenance,” Mr Giordani said.

“Hopefully, the wet season arrives soon to give next year’s crop a much-needed boost.”

CONTACT : Kylie Newman - (07) 4722 1958 or 0409 272 79

---

2 December 2015