

NEWS RELEASE

Clear start to 2016 crushing season

The Burdekin's 2016 crushing season has kicked off to perfect harvesting conditions.

Cooler weather and clear, blue skies presented an ideal start for the season.

Crushing commenced at all four of Wilmar Sugar's Burdekin mills this morning.

Operations General Manager Mike McLeod said Invicta Mill was the first cab off the rank, crushing its first cane of the season about 9.20am.

"It was followed by Inkerman, Pioneer and Kalamia respectively," he said.

Mr McLeod said cane supply would build gradually as the factories began to settle.

"We undertook a significant capital and maintenance program at the mills ahead of the season and there is a lot of new equipment which needs to be commissioned," he said.

"Our pre-season steam trials went well but some of the equipment can't be properly tested until there is product in the factory.

"We hope to be close to or at full cane supply by later this week."

The Burdekin mills are expected to crush about 8.3 million tonnes of cane this season.

Burdekin Cane Supply Manager Steve Postma said the crop looked good and appeared to be mature.

“We’ll know more once we start getting juice sample results from the mills but we are optimistic CCS levels will be reasonable,” he said.

“The current cold snap should have a positive impact on CCS.”

With cane trains now operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, motorists are urged to stay alert as they drive around the district.

“Motorists should approach all cane railway crossings with caution, obey all signs and signals and always give way to oncoming cane trains,” Mr Postma said.

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