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NEWS RELEASE

Wilmar BioEthanol plays vital role in COVID-19 battle

Ethanol produced at Wilmar's Sarina Distillery is playing a vital role in the national fight against COVID-19.

Wilmar BioEthanol is providing hundreds of thousands of litres of ethanol a month to manufacturers of clinical-grade hand sanitisers, hygiene products and cleaning products that are supplied to Australia's frontline health services, including Queensland Health.

In the first quarter of this year, the leading Queensland producer has delivered almost double the volume of ethanol to customers in the pharmaceutical, personal care and hygiene industries, compared to the same period last year.

Wilmar BioEthanol National Operations Manager Carl Morton said the company had responded quickly to the unprecedented demand for ethanol from manufacturers of sanitisers, hygiene products and cleaning products.

"We've responded to the COVID-19 public health crisis by maximising production of industrial-grade ethanol at the Sarina distillery, releasing all available inventory in our supply chain, and optimising our product formulation so we can make more industrial-grade ethanol available to the market."

Mr Morton said the demand for ethanol had surged in a short timeframe, and the company had explored every possible way to quickly boost supply to the domestic market.

"Our Sarina plant operates 24/7, but our teams are now working extended shifts at our packaging and distribution facility in Yarraville, Victoria," he said.

"It's enabling us to continue delivering ethanol to clients across Australia, including contracted suppliers to health services."

Ethanol and Trading Business Manager Trevor Barr said Wilmar had increased its first quarter supply to pharmaceutical customers by 80 per cent this year, compared to the same period last year. The volume of ethanol supplied to cleaning and hygiene product manufacturers is 300 per cent up on last year.

Mr Barr said Wilmar was continuing to work with federal and state governments to ensure the company optimised supply to its customers who manufacture sanitisers, analytical solvents and cleaning products for hospitals and health services.

“We’re pleased to be working with government on this issue, and we’re proud that our efforts are supporting Queensland Health’s fight against COVID-19,” he said.

Wilmar’s Sarina distillery produces about 60 million litres of bioethanol a year from molasses – a by-product of the raw sugar manufacturing process. The molasses is sourced from the Burdekin south to Sarina.

The plant produces ethanol for fuel and a range of industrial products. From Sarina, it is shipped to Wilmar’s Yarraville facility, where is blended, packaged and distributed to customers throughout Australia.

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