

Thursday, 7 May 2020

NEWS RELEASE

Steam signals on the horizon

The sweet sight of steam rising from the stack at Wilmar's Inkerman Mill is less than a fortnight away.

Work crews are beginning to commission equipment at Wilmar's four Burdekin mills in readiness for the 2020 crush, and the first pre-season steam trials are set for Inkerman Mill on 19 May.

Inkerman will be the first of Wilmar's mills to begin the season, on 2 June. Pioneer, Kalamia and Invicta will start on 9 June.

Burdekin Regional Operations Manager Paul Turnbull said the pre-season steam trials were critical to ensuring a smooth start to the annual crush.

"Running steam through the factory enables us to check the pressure components and safety devices on mill boilers, commission key items of plant and rectify issues ahead of the season start," Mr Turnbull said.

"For us, steam trials are an important, final step in our testing and commissioning process. To the community, they're a positive sign that the crush is about to get under way and the local economy is about to kick into another gear."

Mr Turnbull said Wilmar was maintaining a strong level of investment in its Burdekin mills this year, despite less-than-buoyant world sugar prices and the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

"The company is spending close to \$75 million on capital and maintenance across the four mills. It's a significant investment that highlights Wilmar's long-term commitment to the region," he said.

Major maintenance season projects this year include a \$3.8 million overhaul of the generator turbine at Invicta Mill to ensure its reliability. This generator unit supplies power to the site and is interconnected to the State's power grid, to supply green energy to Queenslanders.

At Inkerman Mill, crews have installed a new secondary air system for the mill's main boiler, at a cost of \$2.6 million. The large sections of ducting were built by Wilmar trades on site at Inkerman and are in the final stages of fit-out before steam trials.

Pioneer Mill got a new \$1 million juice tank and more than \$900,000 was spent on a new intermediate carrier system, including the carrier, chain and drive units at Kalamia Mill.

In the cane supply arena, the Scott and Jarvisfield have been completely rebuilt at a total cost of \$3.4 million. Commissioning of these locos commenced earlier this week.

The locos will haul cane to Invicta Mill this season with new engines, drive trains and cooling systems, as well as new cabins and a fresh coat of paint.

Mr Turnbull said Wilmar had implemented strict guidelines to manage the risk of coronavirus, both going into the crush and during the season.

"We've put in place multiple layers of controls to reduce the risk of infection in the workplace, including health declarations, strict hygiene protocols and social distancing measures," Mr Turnbull said.

"I'd like to commend our work crews for the way they've embraced these changes and got on with the job of getting our mills ready for the 2020 crush."

ENDS



Diesel fitting apprentices Jesse Thomasson and Kobi Smith work on one of the new locos at Wilmar's Pioneer Mill.



Pre-season steam trials are set for Inkerman Mill on 19 May.



The old intermediate carrier chain was pulled out of Kalamia Mill at the start of the maintenance season to make way for the new. The \$900,000 project has been done in-house, with the carrier built at the Burdekin centralised workshop at Pioneer Mill.

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