

Friday, 18 June 2021

Herbert crush gets under way

The first bin of cane was tipped at Wilmar Sugar's Victoria Mill this morning, signalling the start of the 2021 crush in the Herbert region.

Herbert Regional Operations Manager Adam Douglas said the first bin was tipped at 8.17am and crushing operations were now under way.

"It's great to see full bins in the yard and cane going through the mill for processing," he said.

"This year's start-up was delayed by a few days due to wet weather, but we've got blue skies today and the weather outlook is fine for the coming days.

"We're looking forward to a good, productive crushing season."

Mr Douglas said the first sugar juice would pass through Victoria Mill's new \$10.6 million evaporator today, and the first raw sugar would go up the belt tomorrow.

He said the new evaporator vessel was the biggest capital project for the Wilmar group of mills this year, and the largest fabrication project ever undertaken in-house.

"The evaporator has been a key capital project for Victoria Mill as it will significantly improve the crush rate at the factory.

"In the past, the evaporator station has been our rate limiter. Putting this new, larger vessel into the evaporator station is expected to give us rate improvements of between 70 and 100 tonnes of cane per hour."

Mr Douglas said Victoria Mill had started up on A side today and was expected to go to dual-side milling operations early next week when cane supply picks up.

Wilmar's Macknade Mill is also expected to come online early next week.

This year's Herbert crop is estimated at 4.38 million tonnes of sugarcane – slightly up on last year's total throughput of 4.25 million tonnes.

The Herbert is the third of Wilmar's milling regions to start the 2021 crush. The Burdekin mills started on 8 June and Plane Creek Mill at Sarina started on Tuesday (15 June).

Herbert Cane Supply Manager Lindsay Wheeler said cane trains were now operating around the clock, and urged locals and visitors to approach all level crossings with caution.

"We've had a number of hits and near-hits in the Herbert in recent years, and we don't want to see a repeat of that in 2021.

"Please remember, our cane trains can't swerve and they can't come to a quick stop. It's up to motorists, pedestrians and other road users to be alert, and always give way to cane trains."

ENDS



Pictured at Wilmar's Victoria Mill on the first day of the 2021 season are Victoria Mill Production Superintendent Trevor Forde, Herbert Regional Operations Manager Adam Douglas and Asset Manager Feed and Crush Tienie Van Blerk.



The first bin was tipped at Victoria Mill at 8.17am today (Friday 18 June)

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