

NEWS RELEASE

Countdown to Burdekin crush

The Burdekin's 2014 crushing season is set to start in less than a month.

Pioneer, Kalamia and Inkerman mills are scheduled to commence crushing on Tuesday 3 June, with Invicta to follow a week later, on 10 June.

Wilmar Sugar Cane Supply and Grower Relations General Manager Paul Giordani said the district's crop was estimated to be 7.93 million tonnes.

"Overall, the crop is down on our original expectations, although the Inkerman and Kalamia crops are still strong," he said.

"Unfortunately, comparatively speaking, Pioneer and Invicta's crops are disappointing.

"Early concerns about parts of the Burdekin River Irrigation Area which had no access to irrigation water for a period in December and January appear to have been realised.

"The Invicta and Pioneer areas also seem to be most affected by yellow canopy syndrome (YCS), although across the board, YCS appears to be more widespread this year and affecting all cane varieties."

Mr Giordani said the earlier starts at Kalamia and Pioneer mills should help ensure the Burdekin's three north bank mills (Invicta, Kalamia and Pioneer) finished crushing about the same time in early November.

“From day one of the season we will be transferring Kalamia cane to Pioneer Mill for processing to help us get through the Kalamia crop,” Mr Giordani said.

“Invicta Mill will also crush Kalamia cane throughout the season.

“Even with an earlier start, Inkerman is currently expected to finish crushing a few days behind the other mills.”

The Burdekin mills will start steam trials from the week beginning Monday 19 May.

Wilmar Sugar has made another significant investment in capital and maintenance projects this year.

Some of the larger projects undertaken include two new pans at Pioneer Mill, an upgrade of Inkerman Mill’s high-voltage switchboard, three new mud filters at Kalamia Mill and a new high purity condensate tank at Invicta Mill – all worth more than \$2 million each.

All mills are on track to be ready for the scheduled start to crushing.

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