MEDIA RELEASE

25 November

The end of the 2019 Plane Creek crush is a relief to growers

A fortnight later than last year but Plane Creek’s 2019 cane crop has now been crushed, with Wilmar Sugar mill at Sarina recording the finishing time as 27 minutes past midnight this morning.

Chairman of CANEGROWERS Mackay and Plane Creek mill area grower, Kevin Borg, said growers would be relieved to finish the harvest, even if later than the ideal due to a few technical issues at the mill.

“The harvesting conditions were welcome – dry practically throughout,” Mr Borg said.

“This has seen the estimate of 1.27 million tonnes achieved which is an improvement on last year’s 1.142 million tonnes,” he said.

“However, growers are now looking to the skies to open to ensure the 2020 crop can get away. To date, rainfall has been patchy throughout the region. Ratoons and plant cane look reasonable but are behind where they should be in terms of growth.

“The last week of the crush saw weekly CCS come in at 15.52 with the season average at a healthy 14.53, only slightly lower than last year’s (14.71 units),” Mr Borg said.

“Average tonnes per hectare in the growing district were around 72 t/ha, an increase on last year’s 66.5T/h, which was a reduction on the five-year average of 75T/h,” Mr Borg said.

The mill is expected to release final figures soon.

“It was unfortunate that Plane Creek mill didn’t crush any cane during Week 19 because of a shredder vibration. The lost week of crushing added to an already low crushing time availability figure,” he said.

“Hopefully, these major breakdowns are a thing of the past as growers are concerned that additional cane coming in from the Clairview Racecourse Projects farm will compound the problem and make it difficult for the miller to maintain a crushing season of reasonable length.

“The ideal season for sugarcane in our region is from the middle of June to the first week in November. Growers expect the miller to achieve a milling capacity to process the crop within these parameters to ensure income on-farm can be maximised,” Mr Borg said.

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