

2017 Plane Creek cane harvest comes to an end

The final tonnes of sugarcane in the Plane Creek Mill area were processed in the early hours of this morning bringing an end to the 2017 harvest season.

Chairman of CANEGROWERS Mackay and Plane Creek area cane grower Kevin Borg said Plane Creek Mill finished crushing the last of the cane around 2.30am.

He said it was a relief to growers to have the season behind them and the crop processed in a timely manner.

"The earlier finish, combined with good recent rainfall will have a major influence on next year's crop getting it off to a good start," Mr Borg said.

"The earlier finish will help the 2018 crop get well established prior to the anticipated wet season."

Mr Borg said recent rainfall was the first time this season that Plane Creek growers had to contend with wet conditions in the field.

"The season was affected however with the large amount of standover we had to harvest and process," he said.

"Standover can make things very slow and troublesome, even with our modern-day harvesters."

Plane Creek Mill had crushed close to estimate (1.18M tonnes), however final crushing statistics would not be known until Wilmar Sugar released its final figures for the season.

"CCS while looking quite low at the start of the season has picked up well due to the earlier dry conditions and the cooler weather," he said.

"With so much standover going to the mill in poorer condition, this also was reflected in the weekly averages mainly earlier in the season.

"The wet paddock conditions prevailing since last week's rain also contributed to the decrease in CCS with an average of just 12.95 units in the week ending November 11. Mr Borg said seasonal average CCS was at 14.02 units."

Mill performance also had improved this season, he said.

"Plane Creek held its usual scheduled maintenance stops, but these are expected. There were only minor holdups on a couple of occasions with no real major breakdowns, leading to consistency of crushing throughout the season."

Mr Borg said the 2018 crop was now in sight, and growers were hopeful of a good growing season.

In late March this year Cyclone Debbie caused havoc throughout the region with wind and major flooding impacting the crop, and growers were hoping for 'a tamer wet season without the extremes'.

"Having said that, we know weather forecasters are predicting better than average rainfall."

With the season now behind them, Mr Borg said most growers would be finalising their fertilising and weed control regimes prior to Christmas.

"With the uninterrupted crushing season growers and contractors will now have an accumulated maintenance program to get on top of in the off season," Mr Borg said.

ENDS

For further information please contact MCL Chairman Kevin Borg on 0429 876 441