



SUGAR CANE GROWERS COOPERATIVE OF FLORIDA

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DECEMBER FREEZE EVENTS IMPACT SUGAR PRODUCTION

BELLE GLADE....The record breaking early freeze events and record cold temperatures for December 2010 wreaked havoc with the 2010-11 sugar cane crop's results knocking off estimated production by some 20%. Still unknown is what impact the freeze will have on next year's crop due to the uncertainty of the viability of the seed cane.

The 114-day crop, the second shortest in Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative's 49 year history, rivals that of the 1970-71 freeze-impacted season. The Cooperative commenced its harvest campaign on October 27, 2010 with liquidation completed on February 19, 2011. The 46 grower-members of the Cooperative produced 2,426,865 tons of sugarcane grown on 61,650 acres in Palm Beach County. This yielded 265,682 short tons raw value (STRV) and 17.4 million gallons of blackstrap molasses. This compares to last year's production of 2,747,396 tons of cane producing 316,081 STRV sugar and 16.8 million gallons of blackstrap molasses. Sugar yields dropped to 10.72%-- a level not seen since the damage brought on by Hurricane Wilma in the 2005-06 crop—and a full point below the 11.73% yield achieved in 2003-04.

"The December freeze events were so severe and widespread that very little of the crop was un-impacted," said George H. Wedgworth, President and CEO. "Farmers recorded below freezing temperatures on three distinct occasions in December—December 7 and 8 with temperatures below 30 degrees for up to 9 hours; December 14 and 15 with temperatures below 28 degrees for over 12 hours; and December 27 and 28 with temperatures below 28 degrees for seven hours—a phenomenon never seen before in the Glades." A general rule of thumb is that most varieties of sugarcane are able to withstand freezing temperatures up to four hours before terminal bud damage occurs. "Once the terminal bud freezes it becomes a race against the clock to get the sugarcane from the field to the processing facility as the cane deteriorates over time," Wedgworth added. "We're pretty proud of our team's ability to harvest the entire crop in record time with good recovery of sugar."

The Cooperative consists of 46 grower-owners and employs 550 people during the harvest season. The primary functions of the Cooperative are the harvesting, transporting and processing of sugarcane and the sales of raw sugar to American Sugar Refining, Inc. (ASR) that is co-owned by the Cooperative and Florida Crystals Corp. Refined sugar is then marketed nationwide through Domino Foods., Inc.

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