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NEWS RELEASE

Wilmar installs lights, cameras at crossings

Wilmar Sugar has installed more warning lights and security cameras at busy cane rail crossings ahead of this year's crush.

Crushing starts at Wilmar's Burdekin and Herbert mills on 12 June and cane trains will soon be on the move, hauling empty bins to cane sidings.

General Manager Cane Supply and Grower Relations Paul Giordani said Wilmar had upgraded safety features at several busy cane train crossings this maintenance season to further reduce the risk of collisions or near-hits with cane trains.

"We have an extensive public awareness campaign around cane train safety and the need for people to always approach crossings with caution.

"We're also continually working to improve the visibility of our crossings, particularly those that intersect busy roads or highways."

Mr Giordani said pre-warning lights had been installed at two active crossings in the Burdekin ahead of this year's crush: One at McDesme on the Bruce Highway between Ayr and Home Hill, and the other on the Ayr-Dalbeg Road at Airville.

"Because the McDesme crossing on the Bruce Highway gets so much traffic, we've also installed overhead flashing lights as an additional warning system."

Mr Giordani said security cameras had been installed at active cane train crossings in the Herbert region to deter motorists and pedestrians from trying to beat trains across crossings.

"One of the issues we have in Ingham is that our locos travel through the town corridor, and we've had numerous reports of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians trying to beat the trains across the crossings. It's a very dangerous practice," he said.

"This maintenance season we installed three more security cameras at active crossings in the town area, bringing the total number of camera-recorded crossings to 11.

“We hope these cameras will deter people from running the lights and trying to beat the trains. The recordings will also be used in investigations into near-hits or collisions.”

Mr Giordani said there were six collisions and nine near-hits involving Burdekin cane trains last year – most of which involved local residents.

“A number of the collisions were due to tractors, trucks or cars failing to give way to locos at crossings without flashing lights. We also had an incident where a cane transporter was parked too close to the rail corridor and was clipped by a loco.”

Mr Giordani said the Herbert district had recorded several near-hits, but no collisions, last year.

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