

Heads We Win!

Tails We Lose Page 2

Production Watch Page 2

Apprentice Page 3
Induction

Everything is at a Stand still
when workers strike
(tonnes of canes perish)

Strike Action Cripples Sugar Industry

The cause of the industrial unrest that crippled the industry's operations in August was similar in nature to that of the first three-day protest of October, 2007 and in the First Crop of 2008 when workers pressed for more compensation as it regards pay increases and indirectly, the rising cost of living. Their actions stemmed from the breakdown in talks between Management and the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU) negotiations on increased wages and salaries for the year.

The Union was bargaining for an increase of 14.25 % and because the Corporation cannot afford to pay more than 5.25%, the process reached deadlock and resulted in the intervention of the Chief Labour Officer, Mr Mohammed Akeel.

Meanwhile the estimated losses on weekly sugar production neared \$850M and sugar – some 7,000 tonnes. By the end of August, the Corporation was anticipating to make shipment

of some 50,000 tonnes of sugar to Europe to garner revenue but instead of meeting this demand, the industry was jolted by strike actions which caused us to lose close to \$800M. However, on a positive note, the company provided Barbados with 4,000 tonnes of molasses.

Human Resources Director Mr Jairam Petam made a strong appeal to workers to improve on attitudes to work through improved attendance and increased productivity, "we'll count on management to be more proactive, attentive to queries and grievances of workers and in a similar way, we will want all parties to exercise good judgement by ventilating grievances before proceeding on industrial action."

Strikes cost the company and the economy! As we await the outcome of the arbitration panel, let's commit ourselves to bringing about a secure future for our industry and our country.





Our industry is a traditional one and since its existence has always weathered the storms to win...

By the end of July the industry had recorded 91 work stoppages for the year and although weather conditions had an adverse effect on our grinding operations it almost faded into insignificance when compared to the actions by our most valued asset – the sugar workers. One of the realities the industry faces is an incurring of more losses for the Corporation and this breathes uncertainty as to our profitability for the year.

As it is, we lagging behind in our commitments to markets which are our most dependable source of profitability, and the effects are felt all around. Workers as a result of their actions are losing money and the Corporation loses sugar and cannot supply the markets. No

Heads We Win! Tails We Lose

– CE comment

sugar means we have no returns to get. Workers, their families and our country will suffer. In other words, these actions have far reaching effects and do us no good.

The nature of any businesses is to generate profit and when expenses exceed revenue this can no longer be considered a business but a social entity which we can ill-afford. This is the situation the Corporation is currently facing.

Everyone knows the financial commitment we have to the new factory at Skeldon was increased and the Corporation has had to generate more from its own coffers than what is expected to cover the payments necessary to complete the project. Just as we finish this, the industry faces a price cut that costs us G\$8bln and for this Crop, there has not been much sugar in the bag to cushion the effect of this loss.

Where does this leave us? To take a stand of either being a loser or a winner!

Our industry is a traditional one and since its existence has always weathered the storms to win. This storm is just another, the speed of winds has increased but we can still come out unscathed. Winning means being fearless of challenge and determined to take the risks. Losing means throwing in the towel and bringing harm to ourselves and our country so let's retain that title of Winner.

Let's step-up to our responsibility of returning to profitability, we have to save the ship from going down and to do this, difficult decisions will have to be made.

As we monitor production centres and critically assess their contribution we have to encourage ourselves to work together to grow and produce more sugar. The trend of negotiate, strike, negotiate, strike has got to stop. We have to remember the support we give to the economy - 18% to the GDP - and deliver on our promises. The industry does not, quite rightly, have the support of Government to fund the industry so we have to depend on ourselves.

Apart from the economy's dependence on the sugar industry, the industry is a buttress to the community, the average contribution of each estate to the community is \$3Bln. This cannot be ignored but while the Corporation has every intention of operating every location, if there is no support from the community then the difficult decisions will have to be made.

So my charge can be taken literally. To be the head we have got to win. Let's talk through our differences while we work and contribute to our own financial security and return to profitability.

Heads. We win! Tails. We Lose!

On October 1 when the industry faces a 9% reduction in the price we get for sugar from Europe

Production Watch



Grinding for the Second Crop got underway on July 12 and after seven weeks of grinding, the close-to-40,000 tonnes of sugar declared was below the targeted figure by 10,000 tonnes and threatens the industry's ability to produce profitably in face of the increased challenges in the last quarter of the year.

One of the major shakes to the revenue of sugar comes on October 1 when the industry faces a 9% reduction in the price we get for

sugar from Europe. Finance Director Paul Bhim explained that for the industry to survive this decline in revenue, at least 50,000 tonnes of sugar had to have been shipped to Europe by September 31 to reduce the industry's loss which is estimated to be \$1.8bln.

"The Corporation is faced with steep increases in the cost of its key inputs and with a further reduction in the European Union price and wages negotiations for the annual pay increases, cost management together with increased and sustained production are therefore necessary to counter the challenges faced," Bhim stated.

All human efforts are critical to the outcome of the Crop and judging

from the success reported in the out of crop maintenance programme grinding locations do have the potential for maximum achievement. In the remaining 19 weeks for the Second Crop there is much optimism to reach the 176,050 tonnes of sugar targeted.

The call is for management to be more proactive, attentive to the queries and grievances of workers and workers in a similar manner to exercise good judgement by ventilating grievances before proceeding with industrial action. We are in dire need of every tonne of sugar we can get and there is no time to waste. So let's keep Guyana's sugar industry alive and efficient.

Induction Of Apprentices

Centre noted an increase in the number of applications made this year and endorsed their commitment to the Corporation, parents/guardians and students to sustaining the image of the premiere institution by developing the students into the kind of product that will contribute effectively to GUYSUCO and, by extension, the country.

The rapid technological move that the company embarks on will bring about the imminent revisiting of the Centre's curriculum with a view of enhancement so as to make training compatible with technology.

The onus is on the students to grasp all that there is to learn through the institution so as to play a more meaningful role in taking the industry forward. The thrust of messages by officials called for students to be dedicated, willing to make sacrifices, serve the institution with diligence and persevere towards reaching the top. Complementing this is the encouragement of all stakeholders to play a



The Second year Apprentices accept their new collogues

Another batch of 61 budding apprentices have joined the GUYSUCO Training Centre to embark on the course of study that will define their future in the technical field.

At the induction exercise, held on August 11, Management of the

Training is integral for staff development



12 staff members of the factory department completed training in Boiler Operations standing with them is Norman Forman Factory Manager - commissioning

Introducing a factory with components of such distinction like the ones we have at Skeldon will undoubtedly result in an increase in the number of training activities to ensure that those who shoulder the responsibility of realising the potential of the state of the art factory are adequately prepared to do so.

The recent venture was held in July when 12 staff members of the factory department completed training in Boiler Operations and were certified at a simple graduation ceremony in the Training building of the estate.

Factory Manager Commissioning, Norman Foreman in congratulating the participants on their commendable performance reminded that the boilers are pivotal to the operation of the factory - contributing to both co-generation and sugar processing.

"The boilers are the sensor of the factory and are among our examples of achievements in technology. They are the first of their kind in GUYSUCO and demand much care and attention in their operation," Foreman said pointing to the need to increase training activities to support the existing skills of workers.

The preliminary training was facilitated by the UK-based College of Fuel Technology as part of the after-sale service. Participants sat examinations in General Boiler Operations, Water Tube Boiler operation and a competency test in operating the bagasse boiler.

Training in the operation of the recently acquired cane harvester also formed part of the programme for employees of the location.



Increased Activity in Safety

Although the local industry's largest location Albion remains resolute in the achievement of the projected 37,258 tonnes of sugar for the crop, there is recognition of the importance of safety at every level.

When the second round came for front line managers to have their knowledge and skills in health and safety sharpened, General Manager, EBE Babish Ramkeerat called for participants to embrace the industry's goal of having zero-tolerance for incidents and accidents with as much fervour as we do for production targets and incentives.

Some of the topics covered in the one-day event included a refreshing of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 32/47; GUYSCUO Safety Policies; Accident Investigation and Report Writing; and HIV/AIDS awareness.

This move is one of several that will pervade the sugar belt as the stage is set for the launching of the Voluntary Counselling and Testing services in HIV/AIDS at our diagnostic centres at Ogle and Rose Hall; and through mobile clinics in the West Demerara areas, Albion and Blairmont.

Estate Health and Safety officers will return to the training room as they participate in the more indepth levels of safety made possible through the annual visit of BookerTate Safety Consultant Bill Nelson.

GUYSUCO SWEETENS CARIFESTA



The Brazilian group performing at the Albion Community Centre



GuySuCo proudly display it's products at Carifesta - Albion

The business of "making sugar" necessitated the movement of our peoples to our land and over the centuries of its existence the local sugar industry continues to dominate and affect the lives of many permanently and forever.

In the month of August, Guyana was mandated to host the 10th celebration of Caribbean Festival of Art, CARIFESTA, and the staging of events all targeted to give everyone in our three counties opportunity to witness and even participate in the programmes planned country-wide, drew on the sweetness of our local sugar industry could not have been resisted.

The Corporation's community centres at Blairmont, Albion and Uitvlugt were the means through which visitors assessed the substantial and wide-ranging contribution to our country's social stability. The mammoth crowds which convened at the recreation centre to witness the show of talent put on by both local and Caribbean artistes. Thanks to the rehabilitated community centres and sports facilities that exist on the grinding locations.

We appreciate the fond memories CARIFESTA X has caused in our live but hope that GUYSCUO's involvement in the event served as a temporary distraction from the current adversities and reduce the intensity of fear that comes with reassessment and transition.