SUGARCANE SUMMARY FOR CROP YEAR 2023

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In 2023, sugarcane was grown on 532,000 acres in 25 Louisiana parishes. An estimated 489,085 acres were available for harvest for sugar. The 11 operating raw sugar factories in the state processed 15,774,657 tons of sugarcane. In total, the 11 factories produced 1.841 million short tons of sugar (96º pol). The average yield of cane produced from each harvested acre amounted to 32.3 tons/acre. The average sugar recovery at the 11 raw sugar factories was 233 pounds of sugar (96º pol) per ton of cane. The yield of commercially recoverable sugar produced per harvested acre was approximately 7528 pounds.

Although the pricing period is not complete for the 2023 crop, the average predicted price for raw sugar is $0.40 per pound. Molasses price is estimated at $ 1.05 per gallon at 79.5° Brix.

The gross farm value of the 2023 sugarcane crop was $ 931.2 million for sugar and molasses. The gross farm value represents 60 percent of the value of the sugar and 50 percent of the value of molasses produced. The remaining percentages are for the raw sugar processors, which amounted to $ 636.7 million. Total value of the sugarcane crop to Louisiana producers, processors, and landlords at the first processing level was $1.567 billion.

The 2023 sugarcane growing season had an early start with above average temperatures for February; however, a freeze on March 21, 2023, killed most growth to date. Spring months for cultivation were dry. Rainfall was near below normal for the spring. Spring cultivation, herbicide applications, and fertilization were made in a timely fashion. Sugarcane brown rust levels were low. A dry spring then led into a very dry summer causing significant drought conditions throughout the Louisiana sugarcane growing region. Those growers that could irrigate the cane crop did so. The drought was more severe in the western and northern parishes of the growing area. Significant rainfall did not return to the sugarcane growing area until mid-Fall. Dry weather reduced both the sugarcane borer and the Mexican rice borer.

Short seedcane and dry fallow fields caused a delay in planting. Unlike 2020 and 2021, the Louisiana sugar industry was spared of any tropical storms. The crop remained erect for most of the planting and harvest season. Lodging was more severe in the southeastern parishes where most growers produce excellent sugar per acre. There were reports of severe lodging with HoCP 14-885. More growers switched to billet planting in 2023.

Harvest began on September 27, 2023, at the Alma mill and concluded at the Cora Texas raw sugar factory on January 16, 2024. Most of the 2023 harvest season was dry, which had a beneficial effect on sugar recovery. The dry weather also allowed for some post-harvest

cultivation and plowing out of fields for replanting. Fallow fields were precision graded and rows pulled up. More growers are planting cane in succession – harvest a field and immediately burn, plow out, and prepare for fall planting.

The 2023 sugarcane variety census showed that the most widely grown variety was L 01-299, grown on 53 percent of the production acres, followed by Ho 12-615 (12%), HoCP 96-540 (9%), and HoCP 09-804 (9%). No new sugarcane varieties were released to sugarcane growers in 2023.

Rainfall and other weather data for Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Lafayette airports are reported in (Tables 1-3).

Table 1. 2023 monthly weather summary for Baton Rouge from data obtained at Ryan Airport.

Month	Maximum Temperature	Minimum Temperature	Average Temperature	High Temperature	High Temp Date	Low Temperature	Low Temp Date	Monthly Rainfall	Rain Days
January	69.4	48.4	58.9	83	17	31	14	10.22	10
February	72.4	51.8	62.1	87	28	32	18	3.39	6
March	78.2	56.4	67.3	88	26	29	20	3.43	7
April	79.6	59.9	69.7	90	4	47	17	7.92	10
May	88.4	67.5	78.0	94	15	53	2	4.57	7
June	94.9	74.1	84.5	101	30	67	6	3.53	12
July	97.8	77.8	87.8	102	31	73	24	2.21	6
August	101.5	78.7	90.2	106	27	68	17	1.53	4
September	94.9	71.2	83.0	100	7	62	19	2.98	5
October	83.9	59.4	71.7	95	1	44	31	1.47	2
November	71.9	50.1	61.0	86	20	34	2	3.67	9
December	67.8	45.0	56.4	84	9	31	31	6.49	6
Annual	83.4	61.8	72.6	106		29		51.41	84

Table 2. 2023 monthly weather summary for New Orleans from data obtained at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.

Month	Maximum Temperature	Minimum Temperature	Average Temperature	High Temperature	High Temp Date	Low Temperature	Low Temp Date	Monthly Rainfall	Rain Days
January	69.4	52.7	61.1	81	17	36	15	2.91	9
February	71.7	56.2	64.0	84	28	41	18	2.73	8
March	75.7	59.6	67.6	86	9	39	20	2.15	8
April	78.2	63.6	70.9	86	3	52	18	3.16	10
May	86.4	70.5	78.5	93	20	60	2	3.30	9
June	93.7	75.9	84.8	100	29	70	7	1.54	9
July	95.5	77.9	86.7	101	31	73	23	3.31	9
August	98.2	79.9	89.0	105	27	72	17	2.97	4
September	91.7	75.5	83.6	98	7	67	20	4.12	7
October	81.3	64.5	72.9	90	4	51	31	1.06	2
November	69.8	55.2	62.5	84	7	40	29	3.15	11
December	65.6	50.4	58.0	83	9	36	29	9.45	6
Annual	81.5	65.2	73.4	105		36		39.85	92

Table 3. 2023 monthly weather summary for Lafayette from data obtained at the Lafayette Regional Airport.

Month	Maximum Temperature	Minimum Temperature	Average Temperature	High Temperature	High Temp Date	Low Temperature	Low Temp Date	Monthly Rainfall	Rain Days
January	69.3	50.7	60.0	81	11	34	14	7.70	9
February	70.2	53.0	61.6	83	28	33	18	2.66	7
March	77.0	57.8	67.4	89	25	31	20	1.22	8
April	79.0	60.4	69.7	90	1	47	17	6.69	9
May	87.4	69.1	78.2	93	20	57	2	1.92	9
June	95.2	76.1	85.7	100	30	67	6	3.81	7
July	96.3	77.3	86.8	103	31	72	24	3.74	9
August	101.5	79.1	90.3	110	27	69	31	1.10	2
September	94.3	72.5	83.4	100	7	66	19	3.46	10
October	82.4	61.0	71.7	94	1	42	31	2.01	6
November	71.7	51.1	61.4	86	7	32	2	2.71	9
December	67.4	47.1	57.3	84	9	34	31	9.47	7
Annual	82.7	63.0	72.9	110		31		46.49	92