
Cuban Sugar Harvest Kicks Off with Prospects for Larger Production

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Sugar Cane Harvest kicked off in Cuba with expectations to increase the sugar output between 15 and 20 percent over the last campaign's total production.

The 2013-2014 campaign reported the largest growth over the past ten years, a four percent according to official statistics, but below the expected 1.8 million tons of sugar.

The current sugar cane harvest will count on 50 sugar plants, two more than in the previous campaign.

According to Celso Garcia, president of the AZCUBA Entrepreneurial Group, which replaced the former Sugar Ministry, they expect to exploit industrial capacities in more than 70 percent to obtain not less than 43 tons of sugar cane per hectare and produce over 1.2 million hectoliters of alcohol, out of which 476 thousand will be exported.

The current harvest is also to produce more than 225 thousand tons of animal feed and 125 Gigawatts-hour of power to the national electric system, based on the processing of sugar cane waste.

The harvest is scheduled to wind up in May after a 100-day period of operations by all sugar plants.

The AZCUBA Group expects to revert the long-term slump of the industry, which produced 8 million tons of sugar in 1990, with projections for 2.4 million tons in 2015.

The ongoing economic transformations on the island prioritize the sustained growth of sugar production and the improvement of relations between the industry and sugar cane growers, along with diversification.

The Cuban sugar sector was considered the locomotive of the country's economy in the past but its production went down to only 1.1 million tons of sugar in 2010, the worst harvest over the past 105 years.