



World Association of
Beet and Cane Growers



NEWS FROM WABCG

EDITORIAL

We've just sent out the registration form for our next conference and I'm looking forward to welcoming you all to my home in Fargo in June!



We'll probably be around 50 planters from twenty countries, gathered around a programme that we've enjoyed putting together. After our usual 'around the world' ses-

sion and a session on the sugar industry in the USA, we will move from the technical to the economic: markets, climate change, communicating farmers' activities... I am sure you will appreciate this new opportunity to bring the family together. Our technical visit will take us on a tour of technical trials and I will be delighted to welcome you to my farm with my wife Jill!

Before I close my Edito, I'd also like to invite you to visit our new website, <https://wabcg.org> It's a more modern, welcoming site, designed to explain the work of the WABCG - your association!

**David Thompson, President
WABCG**

FEBRUARY 2024



Save the dates!

WABCG Council

18-21 June 2024
Fargo, USA

Registration are open!

WABCG/ISO Consultation

25 November 2024
London, United-Kingdom



Check our new website!





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NEWS FROM TÜRKİYE

The sugar sector in Türkiye is highly regulated. The Turkish government sets production quotas by presidential decree. The Sugar Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry regulates and monitors the market.

The government also owns TurkSeker, which has 15 factories. In addition to the state sugar company, there are 12 private beet sugar factories and 6 beet sugar factories owned by sugar beet cooperatives. There are a total of 33 beet sugar factories in Turkey, with a sugar production capacity of 3.6 million tonnes.



The Turkish government regulates sugar production through a quota system, which is usually announced at the beginning of each marketing year. The quota system consists of an A quota, a B quota and a C quota. The A quota is the amount that can be sold on the domestic market in a given marketing year. The B quota is a small amount to be kept in reserve as a buffer. The government allocates the A and B quotas to existing sugar producers. 36.82% of the total quota is allocated to TurkSeker, 35.60% of the total quota is allocated to cooperatives and the rest is allocated to the private sector in the 2023/24 sugar marketing year.

The 2023/24 sugar production quota was increased by the Turkish government to 3.0 million tonnes (+6%) in line with consumption growth. Thanks to favourable weather conditions, the 2023 sugar beet season was generally good. Growers were rewarded for their efforts. Sugar beet was harvested on 364,000 hectares (+23%) by 100,000 growers, producing 25.2 million tonnes.

16 sugar factories have completed their campaigns and the others are in progress. The 2023/24 sugar campaign is expected to end at the end of February. At the end of the campaign, 3.4

million tonnes of sugar will have been produced. This is a record in the history of the Republic of Turkey.

As the Union of Sugar Beet Growers Cooperatives (PANKOBİRLİK), we procure all the agricultural inputs needed to produce the crop for the members of our cooperatives. To this end, we have imported 33,500 tonnes of urea fertilizer at low cost for sugar beet growers in the 2023/24 sugar production season.

We are also conducting a project with Selcuk University to develop a sugar beet seed variety. We have a production permit to produce 5 seed varieties. These varieties will be registered by PANKOBİRLİK after two years. Our studies on other sugar beet seed varieties are in progress.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a good season in 2024!

Tolga DEMİRHAN, Director General
PANKOBİRLİK, Türkiye





NEWS FROM COLOMBIA

Current situation

Colombia continues to face challenges in terms of public order with an increase in indicators such as kidnappings, extortion, farm robberies, murders, etc., many of them related to the problem of illicit crops, the presence of illegal groups and social conflict in the territory.



Sugarcane producers in the southwest of the country have also been victims of systematic attacks on private property for several years, which have increased since 2014.

To date, more than 5000 hectares have been invaded, more than five thousand jobs have been lost, 6 workers have been murdered, 14 have been injured, 15 have been kidnapped, machinery has been burnt, workers' houses have been destroyed, among many other crimes that leave economic losses, social instability due to the expansion of the conflict to other regions and questions about legal security and the role of the state, which should guarantee free enterprise and defend private property.

Cane price

The good news for cane farmers is that international prices remain good, resulting in a 10% improvement in the weighted average price per kilo of sugar compared to the price in 2022. These revenues mitigate the impact of the drop in productivity.

Productivity of the campaign

The sector faces challenges arising from climate variability and change that have significantly impacted the sector's productivity indicators.

The productive performance of sugar cane is directly related to the level of rainfall. Rainfall in 2022 maintained high levels, affecting the development of agricultural and harvesting practices, the results of which are evident

in the indicators for 2023. According to the climatic supply in the Cauca river valley and the analyses carried out by Cenicaña, the following is evident during 2023:

- The tons of cane per hectare (TCH) indicator was below historical values and closed 2023 with a 14% reduction compared to 2022.
- The harvested area was reduced, especially in the northern and southern zones of the Cauca river valley. This is due to excessive rainfall events that affected harvesting logistics.
- More than 50% of the harvested varieties were less than 12 months old, causing simultaneously low TCH and low yields.
- Rainfall in the last two years has prevented renovations in the planted areas, increasing the number of cuts.
- High rainfall during the last three crop cycles has impacted the TCH, preventing the crop from expressing its true potential.
- The first months of 2024 will be under the effects of the El Niño phenomenon, which is projected to be present until April.

Activity of Procaña

We continue to strengthen our relationship with the communities through programs that contribute to social, economic and environmental development, and here is a summary of the most important ones.

Aldeas (Alianza para el Desarrollo Económico, Ambiental y social)

PROCAÑA in alliance with the Caicedo González Ri-



opaila Castilla, El Amparo and Mariana Hoyos de Gutiérrez foundations consolidated this alliance initiative, whose purpose is to strengthen the articulated work of the business and social

sectors to boost strategies that contribute to generate development opportunities for the communities that facilitate the relationship with the actors and

Indicador	AÑO 2022	AÑO 2023	HISTÓRICO	Variación 2022-2023
TCH	118	102	117	-14%
TAH	12,4	10,8	12,9	-13%
TCHM	8,74	8,17	9	-7%
TAHM	0,91	0,86	1	-5%
Edad (m)	13,8	12,7	13	-8%
No Corte	5,3	5,4	5,2	2%
Caña Molida (t)	22.562.036	20.494.183	22.367.867	-9%
Azúcar producido (t)	2.396.705	2.195.484	2.510.410	-8%
Rendimiento Comercial (%)	10,6	10,7	11,2	1%
Sacarosa aparente % caña	12,1	12,3	12,8	2%
Temp Min °C	18,7	19,1	18,9	2%
Temp Máx °C	29,9	31,2	30,5	4%
Lluvia	1659	1259	1359	-24%
Días secos	219	257	247	17%



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maximize social investment. The first axis is the family vegetable gardens in order to energize small producers and their families through educational processes for the production of food for self-consumption, bartering and commercialization, promoting associative processes.

To date, 1,566 gardens are in operation, 60% of which are led by women and benefit 4,855 people.

Fondo social

Provide support to communities affected by adverse weather events or violence.

Initiative led by sugar cane growers and sugar mills, which through partnerships with public and private companies contribute to improving the social and economic conditions of families and rural communities in the hillside and high mountain areas.



The fund was created in 2019 with voluntary contributions from sugar cane growers and sugar mills. The main achievements of this program are:

- Investment in tertiary roads in excess of 5 billion pesos.
- 28 km of tertiary roads recovered in 2 municipalities.
- Improved mobility and living conditions for more than 7,300 people in the region.
- Positive impact on the activities of 9 associations of small food producers.
- For every peso donated, 1.5 pesos were raised with allies such as the Governor's Office of Valle del Cauca.

Programa integral

In 2015, Procaña led the development of the Sustainable Cane Guide for Colombia with partners such as Solidaridad Internacional, the Ministry of Agriculture, Cenicaña, CVC, sugarcane growers and some sugar mills. This programme supports the farmer's transition towards more sustainable practices through a technological platform in the cloud that allows self-assessment and self-management of the producer, using management indicators through an action plan that includes agri-environmental, social and economic aspects. Access to the programme is free of charge, and is currently benefiting more than 41,150

ha. 6 technical assistants providing support to farmers and, since 2020, it has been led by the CENICAÑA Research Centre.

Nuevas generaciones

Programme created in 2106 to motivate the children of sugar cane farmers to participate in agricultural and trade union activities. Currently the group is made up of more than 120 young people, some of whom are part of the steering committees and the board of directors of the guild and participate in activities that we design especially for them. The main motivation of the young people is to contribute to programs that contribute to the sustainability of the sector and agriculture, through the use of technology and innovation.



Somos sostenibles

This is a tree planting program: With the leadership of the New Generations of PROCAÑA, we have managed to plant 6,879 trees on the properties of our affiliates, with the support of the associations of river users, the National Army and various entities of the territory. This activity is part of the establishment of biological corridors as multipliers of flora and hosts for fauna and beneficial insects, which contribute to the biological control of pests, protection of water sources and compensation of the carbon footprint.



Corazón de Caña

Sectoral Reputation Strategy that integrates sugar cane producers, sugar cane mills, unions and other entities of the sugar cane agroindustry and aims to position the sugar cane agroindustry as a national pride, like coffee and flowers in Colombia.



Martha Betancourt, Directora Ejecutiva
Sugarcane Growers Association of Colombia (Procaña),
Colombia



NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

38,000 hectares of sugar beet were cultivated in Austria. After pest infestation by the weevil and replanting, around 36,000 hectares remained for harvesting. The wet and cold weather in spring helped to minimise the damage caused by the weevil. The problem in Austrian beet cultivation is that the total ban on neonicotinoids following a judgement by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) means that they are no longer available. This active substance was used for seed treatment and was the most effective plant protection product for controlling the weevil.



The vegetation year - especially the summer - was very hot and dry. There were some short periods of rain in between, meaning that the beet yield at harvest was around 74 tonnes, around 10 % lower than in previous years. The sugar content of 17.5 % is significantly higher than in previous years, which almost compensates for the poorer beet yield.

The harvest began at the beginning of October under very dry soil conditions. As a result, in some regions the beet could only be harvested with high harvest losses. Harvesting in all regions was only possible thanks to the onset of rainfall during the main harvest. The very prolonged rainfall delayed the harvest by around four weeks. The onset of snowfall and frost caused further difficulties. However, all the sugar beet was ultimately harvested.

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Outlook for 2024

Sufficient sugar beet areas have been contracted for cultivation in 2024 to ensure a sufficient supply of raw materials for the two Austrian sugar factories.

Despite the difficulties with crop protection,

farmers are opting for sugar beet, which currently has a very attractive price compared to other crops.

The European sugar market is currently in balance, which is the reason for the positive market development.

We are therefore concerned about the European Commission's misguided solidarity with Ukraine, which allows Ukraine unlimited duty-free access of sugar to the European Commission. This has led to Ukraine expanding its beet areas and sugar production. **The European Commission hasn't raised any production requirements on imports and plant protection products, such as neonicotinoids, may be used. In addition to possible market disruption in Europe, this also leads to a distortion of competition.** The demands made by our European sugar beet growers' association CIBE to the European Commission to impose quotas on imports in order to provide planning security for everyone were at first not heard. The European Commission has now after the pressure of some member states and beet growers associations announced that it will set import quotas based on the imports of the last two years. It is to be hoped that this announcement will actually be implemented.

Markus Schöberl, Director

Die Rübenbauern (Association of Austrian Beet Growers), Austria

Some sugar beets had to be harvested in the snow

