

Nordzucker successfully concludes long 2024/2025 campaign – high beet yields and reliable processing

Nordzucker has ended an exceptionally long campaign, which was characterised by high beet yields and stable processing across the Group. The campaign, which ended on 15 February 2025 at Nordzucker's German factory in Nordstemmen, had already begun at the sites in Opalenica (Poland) and Schladen (Germany) at the end of August due to the high yields expected.

Braunschweig, 20 February 2025 – With an average duration of 145 days (previous year: 135 days), the campaign was one of the longest in the company's history. While high beet yields were recorded across the Group, the sugar content remained slightly below the five-year average. A later sowing date than in previous years and a cool, wet spring initially slowed the development of the beet. However, a growth spurt in summer was able to partially compensate for this. As the season progressed, regular rainfall ultimately led to high beet yields, but also affected the sugar content of the beet. Beet quality was generally good in most regions, with the exception of Slovakia. In Slovakia, as well as in Germany, leaf diseases occurred in many places.

“Stable temperatures during the winter ensured good harvesting and processing conditions, so that the beet was of good quality well into January. Thanks to these favourable weather conditions and the excellent cooperation of everyone involved, we were able to conduct a very stable campaign. Despite the high beet volumes and the very long processing time, the campaign performed very well overall,” says Lars Gorissen, Chief Executive Officer of Nordzucker AG.

The crush, or processing of the sugar cane, in Australia was already completed on 14 January 2025 at the Marian site. Around 4.85 million tonnes of sugar cane were processed. Heavy rainfall and storms in the region ultimately affected the harvest of the sugar cane. For this reason, two of Mackay Sugar's three factories had already finished harvesting and processing the cane before Christmas.

Efficient processing performance and successful investments ensure CO₂ reduction in the sites

The processing performance in the factories was very good throughout the campaign across the entire Group. Major investments, such as the new 80,000-tonne sugar silo in Nordstemmen and the extraction tower in Uelzen, have already proven successful in their first campaign and are essential milestones in achieving the company's CO₂ reduction targets. The malfunction of the site in Schladen due to a defect in the extraction tower was successfully compensated for by rearranging the beet and through the extraordinary performance of the other four sites: "The damage to the extraction tower in Schladen at the beginning of the campaign was certainly a challenge. I am even more pleased that our beet logistics, production and repairs to the tower were mastered with a great deal of commitment and dedication on the part of our employees, enabling us to bring this campaign to a safe and successful conclusion," emphasises Alexander Godow, Chief Operating Officer of Nordzucker AG.

In the upcoming maintenance phase, extensive work is to be carried out in the factories to prepare the sites for the next campaign and to further improve the factories' energy efficiency. In Nordstemmen, for example, the second stage of vapour recompression will be completed over the next few months. This involves recycling steam for multiple use, which saves energy and CO₂ overall. The Danish sites in Nykøbing and Nakskov are currently being prepared for the use of biomethane produced from their own beet pulp. Nordzucker is thus continuously implementing its GoGreen measures in the factories, which serve to gradually implement decarbonisation targets and produce CO₂-neutral sugar by 2050.

Overcoming challenges together and acting sustainably

The prospect of large quantities of sugar being produced, coupled with restrained demand for sugar consumption, has caused sugar prices in the EU to fall very rapidly and significantly since 1 October 2024. Alexander Bott, Chief Financial Officer of Nordzucker AG, explains: "Even though there are initial signs that we have reached the lowest ebb and the sugar market is recovering somewhat, we are still being hit hard by low market prices and rising costs. In addition to the volatile market, climate change and the CO₂ reductions demanded by the market, there are challenges that need to be overcome. We can only overcome these major long-term issues by working together. We are addressing the challenge of improving every day – that is, operating more efficiently, more profitably and more sustainably – with a broad range of company-wide programmes."

Spread of beet diseases by "Schilf-Glasflügelzikaden" (Pentastiridius leporinus)

"Looking to the future, it is clear that we must deal with the manifold effects of climate change. We – and our beet growers – are currently particularly concerned about the steady spread of the "Schilf-Glasflügelzikade", which is becoming more and more widespread due to changing weather conditions," explains Lars Gorissen. The "Schilf-Glasflügelzikade" transmits beet diseases that have a massive impact on the sugar content of the beet and its processing quality. Nordzucker is taking a proactive approach to this issue, is active at

various levels and is further expanding its network with research institutions, associations and growers. "To prevent the spread of the cicadas, plant protection products that have already been approved must also be authorised for use against this pest in the short term. Together with the sugar associations, we are committed to this. At the same time, we are intensifying research into the interactions between host plant, cicada and pathogen, the adjustment of crop rotation and the cultivation of less susceptible varieties, as well as the storage life and processing quality of sugar beet," explains Gorissen, adding: "Sugar beet continues to be an important part of agriculture and a basis for a secure food supply; it remains interesting for our growers both economically and in crop rotation."

Background

Campaign / Crush

The sugar beet campaign, or campaign for short, is the period of the year when the sugar beet is processed in the sugar factories. The campaign usually lasts from mid-September to January. The crush is the time when the sugar cane is processed in the sugar mills of Mackay Sugar Ltd. in Australia. It lasts from about June to December.

"Schilf-Glasflügelzikade" (Pentastiridius leporinus)

"Schilf-Glasflügelzikaden" transmit the syndrome of low richness (SBR) to sugar beet (the syndrome of low sugar levels). SBR is caused by a bacterium and is externally manifested by a yellow discolouration of the leaf apparatus and lanceolate heart leaves. As a result, the sugar beet produce significantly less sugar. In addition, the "Schilf-Glasflügelzikade" also transmits a phytoplasma (a cell-wall-free bacterium), which causes the disease Stolbur - also known as "gummy beet". In this case, the beet leaves initially wilt and die, the beet body becomes rubbery, shrinks and is more difficult to process. Stolbur is also associated with high sugar yield losses.

Nordzucker Group

Nordzucker is one of the world's leading manufacturers of sugar from beet and cane. The Group extracts sugar products in various forms, such as white sugar, organic sugar, raw sugar, refined sugar, specialities and liquid sugar. In addition, Nordzucker produces renewable animal feed, molasses, fertilisers and fuels as well as electricity. In the financial year 2023/2024, the company generated a turnover of 2.9 billion euros.

The company continues to grow and expand its portfolio to include plant-based proteins, in particular from the regionally grown yellow pea.

Nordzucker already produces sustainably in many ways: from regional cultivation, with short transport distances, under the highest quality and social standards and with complete utilisation of the crops. The goal is to make the entire production CO₂-neutral by 2050 at the latest.

Nordzucker is committed to sustainability, from farmer to consumer, and is making sustainability an integral part of the company.

Excellent products and services, growth prospects and continuous improvements are the driving force behind a dedicated and international team of more than 3,900 employees at 21 European and Australian locations.

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