

WR 353

economy

hav892 yy ylp lcp  
1010:sugar:

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1982

havana, oct 29, reuter -- cuba hopes to surpass last year's 8.2 million tonnes crude sugar output during the harvest which will begin in mid-november and is scheduled to end on april 30, 1982, a cuban sugar industry source told reuter.

sixty-one of cuba's sugar mills are making last minute preparations for the start of operations, granma reported today.

by the end of december all of the nation's 152 sugar mills should be turning out crude sugar, the nation's number one foreign currency earner.

despite rock bottom prices for crude sugar on the world market, the cuban government has voiced its determination to continue increasing its yearly production.

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last july, cuban president fidel castro declared: +we can never forget that no matter how low world market prices are, sugar continues to be our principal source of foreign currency.+ dr castro said that +the decisive fact is the just prices which we receive from the soviet union and other socialist nations.+

according to cuban sources, the soviet union purchased over three million tonnes of crude sugar last year at more than 30 cents a pound, at a time when world market prices fluctuated between six and seven cents a pound.

cuba's 8.2 million tonnes crude sugar output during the past campaign was the second highest in the nation's history. cuba produced 8.6 million tonnes during the prolonged 1970 harvest, but the supreme effort left the rest of the economy in a critical condition.

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diocles torralba, the cuban sugar minister, said that last year's harvest was the most efficient in the nation's history. two hundred and fifty thousand fewer cane cutters were used in the harvest than in the 1970 campaign.

last year fifty per cent of the cane was cut by mechanical combines and almost one hundred per cent was loaded by machine.

last week the head of cuba's trade union movement, roberto veiga, said that this year's campaign will require fewer men than last year because of a more careful selection of the cane cutters, the introduction of more mechanical combines and better organisation.

among the major innovations in the field of organisation has been the establishment of agro-industrial complexes. the agro-industrial complex centralises management within each sugar mill of the entire agricultural, transport and industrial process. last year 17 agro-industrial complexes operated. this year the number of sugar mills under the agro-industrial centralised management system will jump to 92, according to industry sources.

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in order to +incentivise+ greater labour productivity, sugar workers received substantial wage increases in 1980. sugar industry sources said that the investments in increased salaries has been more than compensated for by increased productivity.

outstanding sugar workers also win the right to buy scarce goods such as automobiles, motorcycles, colour tv's and air conditioners at reduced prices. in addition, this year 1 014 sugar workers will win tourist trips to the soviet union and eastern europe at half the regular price.

--reuter lem/syl