

HOW IS RAW SUGAR MADE?



The annual sugarcane harvest or crush runs between June and November/December



The juice in freshly cut sugarcane is perishable, so the plant stalks or billets are quickly transported to the mill



At the mill, billets are shredded and crushed to wash the juice from the fibre in the stalks



Raw sugar crystals are transported to port for export (>80%) or sold to a local sugar refinery



After a series of boiling & crystallisation steps the raw sugar crystals are ready to be separated from the liquor in a centrifuge. Molasses is the by-product of this process



The extracted liquid is filtered then heated to separate as much as possible of the sucrose from the water and impurities in the cane juice



AT A SUGAR REFINERY

- Raw sugar is melted and much of the remaining colour and impurities are removed
- The sweet syrup is concentrated, crystallised and sterilised to produce food-grade sugar
- Food-grade sugar is now ready to be used in food & beverages or packaged and sold as white, brown, demerara (raw), icing or other specialty sugar



Nothing from the sugar making process is wasted



Residual cane fibre (bagasse) fuels mill boilers to generate electricity



Farmers use the filter mud as a soil conditioner



Molasses is widely used as a stockfeed supplement



Molasses is also fermented and distilled to produce ethanol



The by-product of the distillation process, dunder, is used as a soil ameliorant