

The Honolulu Advertiser
8-29-84

The Honolulu Advertiser
8-29-84

McBryde Sugar cutting costs

Kauai plantation closing for week

By Jan TenBruggencate
Advertiser Kauai Bureau

LIHUE — A&B's McBryde Sugar Co. yesterday announced it will close its plantation Nov. 26 to 30 in a cost-cutting move.

The announcement means each of Kauai's five sugar plantations will have made serious reductions in labor costs this year through temporary layoffs.

McBryde Manager Phil Scott said the firm's week off will come after harvesting and replanting is done. The move will save about \$250,000.

Furthermore, plantation employees will be required to take 11 days vacation in December, which will cut plantation operating costs during that period, and will reduce the overtime pay required to cover

employees on vacation during the regular working season. The December vacations will save the company another \$150,000, Scott said.

Still, McBryde expects a sizable loss this year, he said. That's due to several factors. Sugar prices are low. Yields on fields damaged by Hurricane Iwa in late 1982 are much lower than expected. And the drought has cut McBryde's hydroelectric power sales to Kauai electric.

Other plantations are making or have made cost-saving moves similar to those of McBryde.

Amfac's Lihue Plantation, the island's largest, was on a 32-hour workweek earlier in the year for five weeks, in part because the firm's big boiler was broken. That's the equivalent of a one-week lay-off.

Lihue industrial relations chief Mark

Hubbard said the drought is responsible for Lihue not offering work to some planting and irrigation workers, since there isn't enough water to plant or irrigate. They're expected to make up the difference when it starts raining, though, he said.

Amfac's Kekaha Sugar Co. started 20 consecutive 32-hour weeks July 30, saving four weeks of payroll.

C. Brewer's Olokele Sugar Co. manager Richard B. Cushnie put his plantation on a 32-hour week July 16, continuing through Sept. 28. It will mean 10 working days cut from the payroll year, or the equivalent of a two-week layoff.

And since Olokele's mill grinds the cane harvested at Gay & Robinson's sugar concern, that plantation is also on a four-day week for the same period.