



Three hurt in Cow Candy explosion

Anne-Louise Brown | 28th November 2009

THREE people have been injured in an explosion at the Cow Candy factory at Bli Bli this morning.

A man suffered third degree burns to 30% of his body when a fuel tank exploded.

The 54-year-old man, an employee of the company, was airlifted to Brisbane to receive treatment for the burns and a facial injury, believed to have been caused by an airborne brick.

Two of the man's colleagues suffered minor burns and were treated at the scene.

District duty officer Senior Sergeant Ray Hoelscher, who visited the scene, said the incident would be investigated by workplace health and safety officers.

"The explosion was a workplace accident and occurred when a large burner used to produce cow feed was being refuelled," Mr Hoelscher said.

"As it was being filled there was a flashback caused by the heat which injured three men working nearby.

"One of the men was injured seriously but luckily his co-workers were trained in first aid and treated him immediately.

"The explosion appears to have been a very unfortunate accident. Fortunately there was no fire danger."

Mr Hoelscher said the workers at the factory, which produces sugar cane cattle fodder, were shaken by the explosion.

No one from Cow Candy was available for comment when contacted by the Daily yesterday..

The manufacturing process uses a new superheated steam drying "no waste" technology invented in Queensland to dry and bale the entire cane crop into a "bundle of energy" for dairy and beef cattle.

Cow Candy emerged as a saviour for the Sunshine Coast's 100 year old sugar industry following the closure of the Moreton Sugar mill in Nambour.

Bales of the product are being exported to Korea and Japan for use as part of a total mixed ration for dairy and beef cattle.

BioCane Ltd won a Federal government grant to build an expanded processing plant.

It has since won grants from all three levels of government to provide an income for cane farmers who still have thousands of hectares under production.

Last year a Chinese company with sugar mills stepped in with a \$3 million capital injection to save the project.