

Sweet Echoes

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
Olivia Borek	2027	English, Political Science
Steven Duverge	2024	Political Science
Liana Howe	2025	History, Economics
Christopher Sanchez	2025	Biology
Oliver Laczko	2026	Environmental Science and Policy
Clemence Sawadogo	2027	Preprofessional Sciences
Nicole Ramos Lobato	2027	Economics, Political Science

Advisor(s): Veli Aydoner

Topic Title: Sugar Cane Burning in South Florida

Audience: U.S. Sugar Board of Directors

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG #3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All at All Ages

SDG #12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Executive Summary

Currently in the United States, the practice of pre-harvest burning remains a common one in the sugar cane burning industry. U.S. Sugar, the United States' largest sugar cane harvester, is the leader in this practice. While this practice may seem benign and of little impact, especially considering the relatively short time that the burning takes place, research continues to demonstrate the unethical impacts on both the local communities and the Earth as a whole. In areas affected, there is an over thirty percent increase in hospitalizations of respiratory-related illnesses correlated with the thousands of metric tons of particulate matter emitted during the burn season. Some studies even point to one or more deaths every year directly related to the sugar cane burning practice. And, of course, the increased emissions make their way into the atmosphere, adding to the growing threat of climate change.

What is even more glaring about this issue is its unproductive and unprofitable expediency. Not only have many countries stopped sugar cane burning, including the world's largest producer of sugar cane, Brazil, but also they have become more profitable as a result. Some of U.S. Sugar's direct competitors have turned to the production of renewable resources that can be created using excess bagasse, generating more profit with less land. But we at Sweet Echoes believe U.S. Sugar can go even further; by stopping sugar cane burning, you can turn the excess bagasse *and* shrubbery into renewable energy and commercial products: all while protecting the Earth and its people.