

# Just a Spoonful

## ISSCT: Mexico

**M**EXICO, A COUNTRY THAT HAS BEEN PRODUCING SUGARCANE FOR ALMOST FIVE CENTURIES, WAS THE VENUE FOR THE 27TH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SUGAR CANE TECHNOLOGISTS (ISSCT) HELD IN MARCH THIS YEAR. MEXICO IS THE SIXTH LARGEST PRODUCER OF SUGAR IN THE WORLD, CRUSHING APPROXIMATELY 46 MILLION TONS OF CANE PER YEAR. OF THE APPROXIMATE 5.5 MILLION TONS OF SUGAR PRODUCED, ABOUT 10% IS EXPORTED.

A delegation of seven senior SASRI staff members attended the congress, which provided the opportunity to meet fellow sugarcane technologists from other countries and also to learn more about the industries they serve. The event also provided the opportunity to strengthen existing collaborations, and forge new ones between SASRI and the international sugarcane research community.

Congress presentations spanned a wide range of topics covering broad areas of sugarcane production and processing, bio-energy and by-product utilisation. The talks varied from findings on fundamental research to recommendations based on applied research, and included various presentations on policy and regulatory matters. There were four talks and/or posters from SASRI staff, and two co-authored papers.

The overall impression gained from the congress is that bio-products are gaining in prominence in

research institutes, with multinationals, and in the sugarcane energy sector (Brazil in particular). The value of sugar as the cheapest food energy source in the world was expounded at the congress and it was clear that biomass ethanol is today, and is likely to remain for many years, the most feasible fuel alternative to fossil-based petroleum fuels. ☑



The SASRI delegation from left to right were: Drs Derek Watt, Paula Watt (UKZN), Peter Lyne, Carolyn Baker, Abraham Singels, Charlie Reinhardt and Riekert van Heerden.



Suresh Naidoo (SASRI Committee Chairman), Drs Charlie Reinhardt (SASRI Research Manager) and Peter Lyne (SASRI Programme Manager).