

# GROWER DAYS

## Effective Vehicles for Knowledge Sharing

**G**ROWER DAYS HAVE, FOR MANY YEARS, BEEN AN EFFECTIVE MEANS THROUGH WHICH SASRI COMMUNICATES RESEARCH OUTCOMES AND THROUGH WHICH GROWERS' CONCERNS AND QUERIES CAN BE VOICED AND DISCUSSED.

This year, several grower days were held throughout the sugar industry. The first meeting was held in the Felixton area where Carolyn Baker, SASRI Director, and SASRI specialists addressed a group of growers around issues pertaining to ratoonability, variety choice, the future of sugarcane through biotechnology and the process by which research requests and proposals are received, evaluated and accepted by SASRI. This meeting was followed, a few months later with a variety field day on Patch Addison's farm.

The North Coast growers were addressed at two locations i.e. Collisheen and Darnall. Topical issues included ratoonability and the progress being made towards genetically modified varieties and their future availability. Extensive questions being raised by growers about rust and thrips.

A Midlands North grower day, which was held at the Dalton Farmer's Hall, was widely attended. Presentations on varieties, integrated pest management and liming were given. Growers' concerns surrounding rust, mosaic, smut and thrips were also addressed by SASRI specialists.

Growers in the Midlands South gathered at the Eston Club Hall to hear about topical issues and challenges facing their region. The grower day was aptly titled "Operation yield buster – securing sugarcane production into the future". SASRI specialists provided informative presentations on ripeners, variety updates, mechanisation, compaction, reducing stool damage and soil nutrition. They also offered practical advice on using biosecurity measures to protect farms.

On a very chilly afternoon in August, growers on the South Coast hosted the SASRI team at Donald Roseveare's farm in Jolivet. The theme for the grower day was "Better management practices that make a difference". After some thoughtful presentations from the specialists, the group was taken into the field to look at some implements that were adapted for tramline row spacing. At the end of the afternoon a hearty supper was warmly received!

In true Lowveld style, the Lowveld Pest, Disease and Variety Control Committee hosted two very successful growers days in Malelane and Komati recently. Disease issues were addressed by the Lowveld P&D Officer, Karlien Trumplemann, while Hennie Greyling gave a presentation on the planned seedcane scheme for Nkomati. TSB Grower Support Manager, Pieter Cronje, provided the growers with an overview of variety disposition and performance in the Nkomazi region while SASRI specialists Peta Campbell and Marius Adendorff gave informative presentations on weed control, field preparation and husbandry.

These events, involving various stakeholders, provide valuable opportunities for meeting growers' needs and for discussing issues specific to each region. ✓

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Grower days are an effective means through which growers can discuss concerns.