




Ensuring efficient and responsible use of agrochemicals

THE APPROPRIATE USE OF INSECTICIDES IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF CROP PEST CONTROL PROGRAMMES, PARTICULARLY THOSE BASED ON INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES. AS PART OF THE SA SUGAR INDUSTRY'S IPM STRATEGY, INSECTICIDES ARE USED AGAINST THE SUGARCANE BORER ELDANA (*Eldana saccharina*) AND THE SUGARCANE THRIPS (*Fulmekiola serrata*). THE PRODUCTS CURRENTLY REGISTERED ARE FASTAC® (ALPHA-CYPERMETHRIN) FOR USE AGAINST ELDANA (SINCE 2004) AND BANDIT® (IMIDACLOPRID) FOR USE AGAINST THRIPS (SINCE 2010). VYDATE®, A NEMATICIDE, IS ALSO REGISTERED AGAINST THRIPS.

Despite the value of such products as tools to suppress pest infestations, it is important that additional products from other chemical groups are available to growers. This allows not only product rotation, thereby reducing the risk of developing resistance, but also encourages the use of newer, more effective and environmentally benign products or product combinations. Fastac is a synthetic pyrethroid and Bandit a neonicotinoid, so additional products should be sourced from chemical groupings other than these two. Fortunately, there are a large number of possible groups from which such products could be sourced, including the IGRs (insect growth regulators), biocides, the avermectins and the cyclic ketoenoles.

To support this approach to developing insecticides for pest control, SASRI has established an Agrochemical Working Group, its brief is to examine possible additional products for use in sugarcane pest control. This group will not only look at insecticides, but also fungicides, nematicides and herbicides.

This holistic approach to research on agrochemicals for use on sugarcane will bring together SASRI staff involved in this aspect of pest control thus allowing synergy from researchers having the same broad objective. In addition, the group aims to develop co-operative programmes with agrochemical companies, so enhancing their ability to bring the best agrochemical solutions to the industry's pest and disease control needs. This group will not only be concerned with the development of effective agrochemicals for use by growers, but also with the stewardship of such products in the industry. 



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