



ABOVE: Cedara College students at a recent SASRI field day, learning how to grow sugarcane sustainably.

Encouraging Sustainability

SASRI Student Field Day

Cedara College, located in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, is an agricultural tertiary institution aiming to produce competent individuals for the agricultural sector. It strives to remain relevant to society's needs, while contributing to environmental sustainability, economic growth and rural development. This ideology is equally shared and encouraged by SASRI, making Cedara a valuable tertiary institution for various collaborative campaigns. One such initiative is aimed at educating small-scale growers (SSGs) and individuals pursuing the farming sector.

Recently, two field days were arranged by SASRI for a group of students from Cedara College. The field days took place in Noodsberg, and entailed two presentations followed by a field visit to three demonstration plots and a community development co-operative project. The first presentation, given by William Gillespie, focused on the impact of new extension methodologies on the performance of SSGs, while the second, given by Mr. C Mdletshe from Illovo Noodsberg Mill, focused on the mill's role in the development of SSGs.

The four areas visited were the Amaqubhu co-operative project, which focuses on issues associated with development in a rural environment and sustainable farming for sugarcane to reduce the cycle of poverty; the Mambedwini demonstration plot, which focuses on sugarcane varieties N12 and N51 and the optimal use of the

high potential soil in this region; the Ekupholeni Controlled Traffic demonstration plot, which deals with issues relating to planting of seedcane and controlling weeds in the tramline section of this plot; and finally, the Mabheleni demonstration plot, showing students the significance of variety selection in an area and its relation to maximising the area's soil potential as well as harvesting for seedcane.

It's activities such as these that assist SASRI in sharing the wealth of agricultural knowledge, expertise and advice to the next generation. Collaborations with tertiary institutions are a vital part of SASRI's research culture, aiming to ensure innovation and relevance, while strengthening the competence of future scientists and Extension Specialists who, in turn, will encourage best practice and productivity in the sugar industry, resulting in a sustainable future for all.



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