

# 2018 Agronomists Field day



The South African Sugar Industry Agronomists Association recently held a field day on Rob Gurney's farm, Roseleigh Estate, in the Midlands. This event was hugely successful with an attendance of approximately 70 Agronomist Association members, growers and SASRI staff.

The theme of the event revolved around crop nutrition and the efforts made to remediate soil acidity on the farm. Soil acidity is one of the leading issues in limiting cane yields and has been described as a "silent cancer". Rob has succeeded in managing these aspects on Roseleigh Estate for many years and has recently expanded his operation to the neighbouring farm. However, with this expansion he has also inherited serious subsoil acidity problems on the land. Several talks were held around managing such soils during the course of the day. Two field visits to soil pits were also conducted to show attendees the difference in the soil profiles of a healthy soil and an acid soil. The agenda for the day was as follows:-

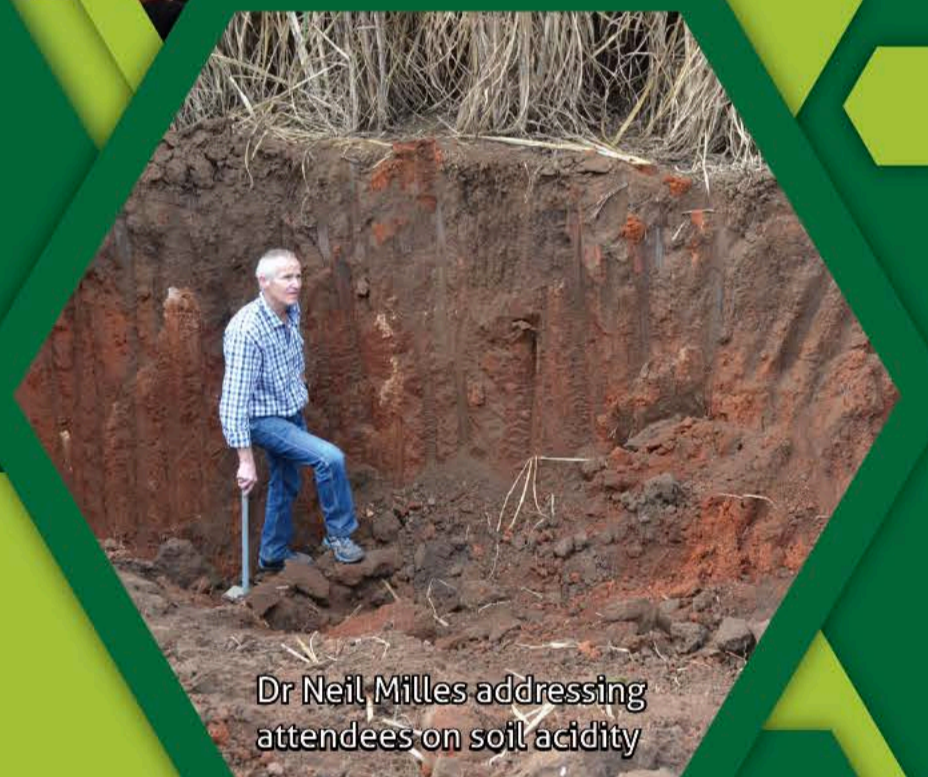
- » **Experiences with acidity and nutrition in the region**  
*(Neil Milles, SASRI Senior Soil Scientist)*
- » **Growers' awareness of acidity and general adoption of ameliorative action in the region**  
*(Paul Botha, SASRI Extension Specialist)*
- » **Managing soil acidity on my home farm and my strategy for my new farm with 70% acid saturation in the subsoil**  
*(Rob Gurney, Sugarcane Farmer)*
- » **Varietal comparison N48, N61 and N54**  
*(Sanesh Ramburan, SASRI Varieties Agronomist)*
- » **Drone demo – impact of drones on future farming**

The day concluded with a light lunch on the Gurney's farm.

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*(SASRI Publications Officer)*



Information provided by the  
South African Sugarcane Research Institute  
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Dr Neil Milles addressing attendees on soil acidity