

# SASRI's Sultan Of Soil



Dr Rian van Antwerpen, SASRI Senior Soil Scientist, recently won the **Best Paper at Congress** prize (for a member older than 30 years) at the 2017 Combined Crops, Soils, Horticulture and Weeds Congress. His paper was titled "The effect of soil sampling depth on potassium and carbon stock values" and was co-authored with Dr Neil Miles (SASRI Senior Soil Scientist) and Dr Sanesh Ramburan (SASRI Variety Scientist).

Rian is no stranger to this award as he had previously won this prestigious title at the 2016 Combined Congress. He is also a member of the Soil Science Society of South Africa council for over 10 years and has just completed a two year term as President of the Society for the 2015/16 period. In addition, Rian is President of South African Sugar Industry Agronomist's Association (SASIAA). This association aims to promote the development and application of sugarcane agronomy in southern Africa by creating opportunities for the free exchange of relevant ideas, knowledge and information between members.

At SASRI, Rian is not only Senior Research Scientist in the soils department but also the Manager of the Systems Design and Optimisation (SDO) programme. In this role, he oversees a variety of projects involving the design and improvement of farming systems for sustainable sugarcane production.

His expertise in soil science primarily include water storage capacity of soils, soil salinity/sodicity, soil compaction, tillage practices, root distribution, sugarcane residue blankets, organic ameliorants and soil health.

In his spare time, Rian is quite the artisan as he enjoys restoring old tools, refurbishing furniture and dabbling in a bit of woodworking. He has many wonderful artefacts which he has collected and successfully restored over time. He also enjoys spending time with family and friends.

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*The Combined Crops, Soils, Horticulture and Weeds Congress is an annual knowledge-sharing event that brings together researchers from four societies i.e. The Soil Science Society of South Africa (SSSSA), The South African Society of Crop Production (SASCP), the Southern African Weed Society (SAWS) and the Southern African Society for Horticultural Science (SASHS) to showcase their latest discoveries.*

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A press-drill from the year 1898, which Rian has recently restored.