



Monitoring of the *CHILO STALK-BORER*

SASRI's Biosecurity service, managed by Rowan Stranack, celebrated their first anniversary in 2016. With many successes already under their belt, the new division is now embarking on proactive measures of pest and disease control to ensure the safety of sugarcane. This approach includes the monitoring of Orange Rust, a potential fungal pathogen of sugarcane, using SASRI-developed spore traps along the borders of South Africa, and the monitoring of an even bigger threat to sugarcane, the much-feared *Chilo sacchariphagus* stem borer.

Chilo who?

Chilo sacchariphagus is a known pest of sugarcane and just like *Eldana saccharina*, bores into the stems of sugarcane resulting in death of the plant. An incursion of this pest in our industry could possibly lead to millions, if not billions, of rands in losses. The pest is already known to be present in the neighbouring country of Mozambique. In order to avoid an incursion, the Biosecurity team have procured the expertise of a well-known company, **CROP WATCH AFRICA**, to continuously monitor the movement of Chilo on the borders of South Africa.

"Protection through detection"

CROP WATCH AFRICA provides a service that allows for the monitoring and early detection of southern Africa's invasive pest species as per government regulations. This Early Warning System (**EWS**) is used to detect pests in a variety of agricultural sectors including the tomato, olive, peach and tobacco industries, amongst several others.

Currently, CROP WATCH has approximately 45 Delta Traps at sites extending from Kaapmuiden in Mpumalanga, along the border between Swaziland and Mozambique, and along the South African border between KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique, ending at Kosi Bay. There are also traps at each mill in the Mpumalanga Lowveld and in Swaziland.

So far there have been no reports of Chilo moths captured in the Delta traps, neither have there been any reports of cane infested with the pest in the areas being monitored. SASRI also ensures that any cane moving between the borders are inspected for any suspicious insect specimens. If any such damage is found, stalks are confiscated, photographed and sent to SASRI for assessment of the damage.

