

# Seedcane

## FROM LABORATORY TO FIELD

A recent field day organised by the South African Sugar Industry Agronomists' Association (SASIAA) centered around the theme of "Seedcane - from laboratory to field." Attendees embarked on a captivating journey, witnessing the entire process firsthand.

The event commenced with a warm welcome from SASIAA co-ordinator Riekert van Heerden, setting the stage for the enlightening experiences to come.

Providing an introduction to the farming landscape in Eshowe, SASRI Extension Specialist Ruth Rhodes offered valuable insights.

Next, SASRI's Principal Biotechnologist, Sandy Snyman, engaged the audience with an informative "show and tell" session, highlighting the novel NovaCane® tissue culture process whereby disease-free sugarcane plants are reproduced by means of tissue-culture techniques in a laboratory.

Gareth Chittenden, representing Zululand Nurseries, then took the stage to discuss the meticulous cultivation and hardening-off techniques employed for NovaCane® plantlets in their well-managed commercial nursery.

SASRI's Extension and Biorisk Manager, Rowan Stranack, explained the legal aspects of seedcane production, providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the process after which guests were treated to a tour and the history of Colin Hohls' Sunset Farm by farm manager Hercules Maritz.

Thereafter SASRI's Agricultural Engineer Peter Tweddle took us to a plot of N78 NovaCane® and provided an overview of the new SASRI project focused on the agronomic management of NovaCane® plantlets.

The event culminated with lunch at the picturesque Sunset Farm dam, allowing participants to reflect on the enriching experiences of the day.

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