

# SHORT COURSES IN SUGARCANE PRODUCTION

Michelle Binedell

In June this year, SASRI conducted its 98<sup>th</sup> Senior Certificate Course in Sugarcane Agriculture bringing the total number of trained students up to just over 3 885 since its inception in 1963. Since 1975, a further 2 820 students have attended the three-week Junior course.

Since these courses cover all agronomic aspects of cane farming in the African context, they have continued to attract students from southern African sugar industries where they are held in high regard. One of the key success factors is that these SASRI courses are presented primarily by Research and Extension Specialists, allowing new scientific results and observations to be regularly included into the subject material, ensuring that courses remain current and relevant.

SASRI is committed to supporting new farmers entering the industry as well as successive generations of existing sugarcane farmers. In developing the capacity of individual farmers, these courses contribute to the sustainability of the South African sugar industry.

*Michelle Binedell is Knowledge Manager at SASRI*



# SUSFARMS® AND THE MIDLANDS COLLABORATION GAIN RECOGNITION

The Midlands Sustainable Sugar Supply Chain Collaboration (known as “The Collaboration”) was established in 2014. It is a multi-stakeholder group of key players in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands sugarcane region delivering sustainability services to sugarcane growers free of charge. The foundation of the collaboration is SUSFARMS® – the SA sugar industry’s sustainability management system. One of the main purposes of the collaboration is to promote sustainable sugarcane supply chains and support the implementation of SUSFARMS® in the region.



## National Science and Technology Forum Award

The Collaboration was recently nominated for an award through the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) and was selected as one of three finalists in the NGO category.

The awards were held at a prestigious Gala Dinner in Gauteng on Thursday, 28 June 2018 and outstanding contributions to science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation were awarded and celebrated under 13 categories. While the Collaboration did not win its category, selection as finalist signifies the high regard that the scientific community has for the work of the collaboration.

*Representing The Collaboration at the NSTF awards gala dinner, from left to right: Nobuhle Gumede (Midlands Collaboration Land Use Planner); Edith and Lotar Schulz (Midlands growers); Janet Edmonds (Midlands Collaboration Co-ordinator) and Michelle Binedell (SASRI Knowledge Manager).*

## Bonsucro Inspire Award 2018

Earlier in the year, the Collaboration and the SUSFARMS® tool was awarded second place amongst 10 nominees for the Bonsucro Inspire Award. The sixth annual Bonsucro Inspire Award ceremony was held in Nicaragua, during Bonsucro Week 2018.

The Award is awarded to an organisation, partnership or individual in recognition of their exemplary and transformative contributions to the sustainable sugarcane sector, celebrating collaboration between different actors, and sharing stories that others can be inspired by and learn from.

*Ant Edmonds thanks the organisers at the Bonsucro Inspire awards 2018.*



## What is SUSFARMS® and how can it be used?

SUSFARMS® is a tool that facilitates the production of sugarcane in a profitable, sustainable and environmentally responsible manner. It consists of a comprehensive collection of guidelines for sugarcane farming, and distinguishes between practices that are either legal requirements (laid out in the law) or best management practices derived from scientific studies.

The SUSFARMS® system also includes an assessment tool known as a Progress Tracker. This allows a grower to determine his/her current performance against a set of measures and offers advice on how to improve the situation. The results of a completed assessment allows the grower to highlight his/her strengths and weaknesses and to develop a plan to correct any obvious deficiencies. Implementation of the system

by the grower should result in improved performance in the environmental, social and economic spheres.

The results of the Progress Tracker may also provide the local sugarcane Extension Specialist with information that will guide the development of a focussed programme of work, direct new technology development and promote adoption of better practices.