

NORTH COAST EXTENSION MATTERS

Wishing all North Coast growers a happy and successful 2025!

Seedcane Production on the North Coast

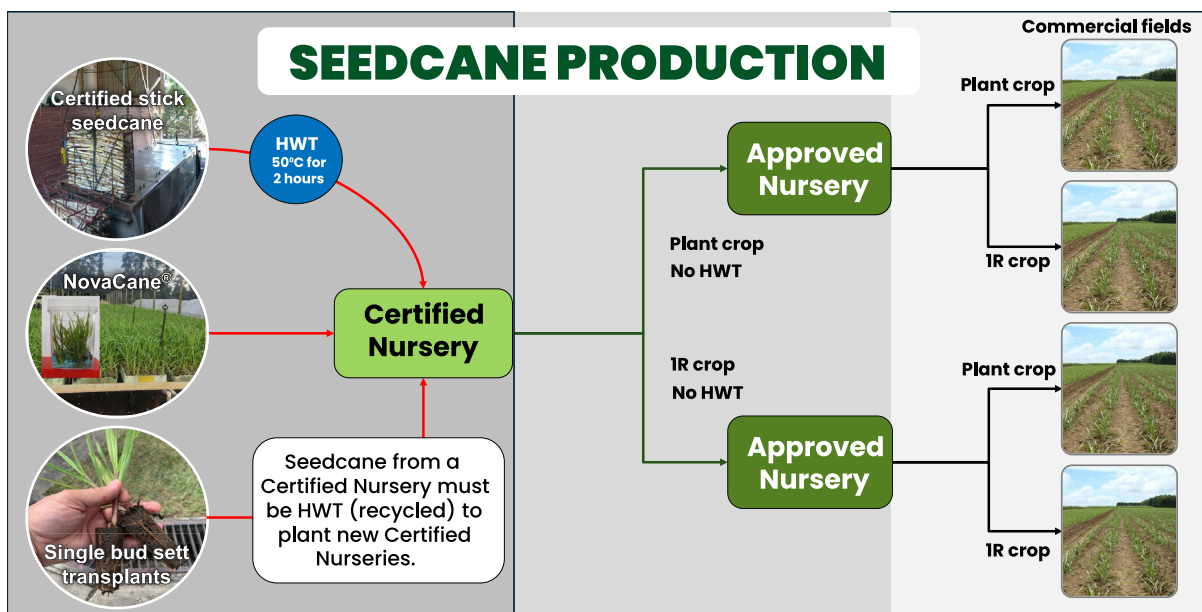
One of the key aspects of ensuring a profitable, healthy sugarcane crop is the planting of good quality seedcane. This crucial practice has numerous benefits which include:

- ✓ A significantly **reduced risk of pest and disease outbreaks** in commercial fields (e.g. RSD, smut, mosaic and eldana).
- ✓ **Improved germination** which leads to rapid growth of a uniform stand minimising the need for gap filling and weed control after planting. This also results in the improved likelihood of **higher yields**.
- ✓ **Varietal purity**.

The production of seedcane is governed by the local, pest, disease and variety control committee (LPD&VCC) regulations which are aimed at ensuring the sustainability of all growers and the industry at large in the face of several serious and potentially damaging biosecurity threats. LPD&VCC regulations require that all commercial sugarcane fields be planted with either **certified** or **approved** seedcane. These terms refer to the two different classes of seedcane registration.

What is Certified and Approved Seedcane?

Seedcane production starts with **Certified Seedcane**. A certified nursery is established using hot water treated (HWT) whole stick seedcane, HWT single-budded setts or Novacane[®] plantlets. This is the nucleus seedcane material from which **Approved Seedcane** nurseries are established. A certified nursery may be cut twice (plant and first ratoon) to plant an approved nursery – Approved Seedcane does not need to be HWT. Approved Seedcane nurseries in turn produce the seedcane to plant commercial fields of sugarcane (again two cuts are permitted).



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Below are tables of the required standards for the two classes of nursery seedcane registration:

Class of seedcane	Source (for establishing Nurseries)	Fallow period	Maximum age at harvest	Permissible harvests
Certified seedcane	HWT certified whole stick seedcane OR HWT treated single-budded sett transplants OR NovaCane® plantlets	Minimum 12 months with a minimum of 6 months totally free of sugarcane	KZN Coastal Belt (<500m asl): 9-12 months Midlands (>500m asl): 12-18 months	Plant and 1st ratoon only
Approved seedcane	Certified seedcane	Minimum 9 months with a minimum of 6 months totally free of sugarcane	KZN Coastal Belt (<500m asl): 9-12 months Midlands (>500m asl): 12-18 months	Plant and 1st ratoon only

Class of seedcane	Local Pest, Disease and Off - Type Limits				
	RSD	Eldana/100	Smut	Mosaic	Off-types
Certified seedcane	NIL (40 stalk sample / ha; cane must be +/- 9 months old)	5e/100 100 stalk sample Inspection within 1 month of harvest	<0.1% (3 line by line inspections)	<0.1% (3 line by line inspections)	<0.1% (3 line by line inspections)
Approved seedcane	NIL (40 stalk sample / ha; cane must be +/- 9 months old)	5e/100 100 stalks ample Inspection within 1 month of harvest	<0.1% (2 random inspections)	<0.1% (2 random inspections)	<0.1% (2 random inspections)

What are the requirements to establish a seedcane nursery?

Firstly, identify the potential nursery site at least one year in advance and inform the SASRI Biosecurity Officer (Thobeka Khumalo) of your intention to establish a nursery. It is critical that all LPD&VCC Certified and Approved Seedcane nursery sites are registered with the LPD&VCC. The Biosecurity Teams will carry out all the necessary fallow period inspections. The tillage of a nursery site, other than to eradicate the crop and to plant a cover crop, is not permitted. All lime applications must therefore be carried out before the beginning of the fallow period.

The movement of seedcane between different LPD&VCC regions

Moving seedcane between different LPD&VCC control areas is a major biosecurity risk. Therefore, the movement of seedcane between different LPD&VCC regions may only take place with the approval of BOTH sending and receiving LPD&VCCs.

The way forward

Growers have the option of:

- ✓ Producing Certified and Approved Seedcane themselves in their own on-farm nurseries
- ✓ Sourcing their Certified Seedcane from a local LPD&VCC registered cooperator (for planting as Approved Seedcane)
- ✓ Sourcing Approved Seedcane for planting commercial fields from a registered cooperator.

Ideally, growers should establish their own on-farm seedcane nurseries. This allows you to synchronise your planting and variety needs i.e. ensuring you plant your **variety of choice** at the **right time** and of the **right quality and quantity**.

As we have relatively few registered seedcane cooperators on the North Coast, it is hoped that many more growers will embrace this important process to ensure that our region is able to meet the growing demand for valuable seedcane resources.