



LOWER SOUTH COAST EXTENSION NEWS



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SEPTEMBER GROWER DAY

On Tuesday 14th of September, we had Lower South Coast growers and SASRI specialists coming together at Avondale Farm for a morning of information exchange.

The day kicked off with a welcome by Mike Neethling (Umzimkhulu RD& E Chair) and an introduction to the new SASRI Director, Dr Terry Stanger, who welcomed the opportunity to meet growers from the region.

Dr Louis Titshall (Senior Soil Scientist) took us through a very informative presentation on **improving nutrient use**. This presentation raised some very interesting discussion points. Thereafter, Rowan Stranack (Extension and Biosecurity Manager), assisted by Dr Stuart Rutherford (Principal Scientist: IPM) then led a discussion on **chemical eldana control**, in light of the large carry-over crop that is expected in the current season.



Dr Louis Titshall delivering an informative presentation on improving nutrient use.

Some of the important points to note from the 'improving nutrient use' presentation

- Liming to between 5 and 10% acid saturation is advantageous as this ensures the crop goes through several ratoons before the soils are acidified again.
- Correcting subsoil acidity would be very beneficial over drought years when the roots need to reach deeper for water and nutrients.
- Split application of nitrogen fertiliser is highly recommended as it minimises Nitrogen (N) losses through leaching and volatilisation.
- Timing of N Fertiliser application is also crucially important. Apply N Fertiliser when the crop is actively growing.
- It is best to apply Phosphorus (P) fertiliser in the furrow at planting as it is immobile in the soil.
- Over application of Potassium (K) will lead to luxury consumption by sugarcane with no benefit to yield.
- It is recommended to test organic fertiliser for their nutrient content as

some organics (e.g. chicken litter) have high P content, which might lead to excessive P buildup in the soil.

Some of the important points to note from the 'eldana control' presentation

- It is advisable for growers to have 'on-farm' eldana surveying teams, to assist in decision making.
- Only fields with eldana presence should be sprayed - do not spray fields where no eldana has been found.
- An IRAC compliant spray program must be followed in order to avoid resistance build up.
- Make sure the prescribed window period between chemicals of the same mode of action is allowed before the following spray.

A big thank you goes out to Daniel Bunge for hosting the grower day on his farm, to SASRI specialists who took time to come out to visit us and to all growers and other stakeholders who attended.

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