



ZULULAND NORTH EXTENSION NEWS



RAINFED VARIETY TRIAL RESULTS

A rainfed variety trial comprising 18 varieties was planted on the 20th September 2016 at Mattinson farm. The trial was harvested for the fourth time on the 24th August 2021, as a third ratoon crop at 16 months old.

Note: This trial was harvested at different ages:

- Plant crop (P) at 12 months
- 1st ratoon crop (R1) at 13 months
- 2nd ratoon crop (R2) at 18 months
- 3rd ratoon crop (R3) at 16 months

For this reason, the results from the plant, first, second and third ratoon crops are presented in graphs below as the accumulated RV yield (tRV/ha) and the accumulated cane yield (tcane/ha). Varieties N55, N58, N41, N51 and N17 remain the top performers in this trial with good RV yields over four crops.

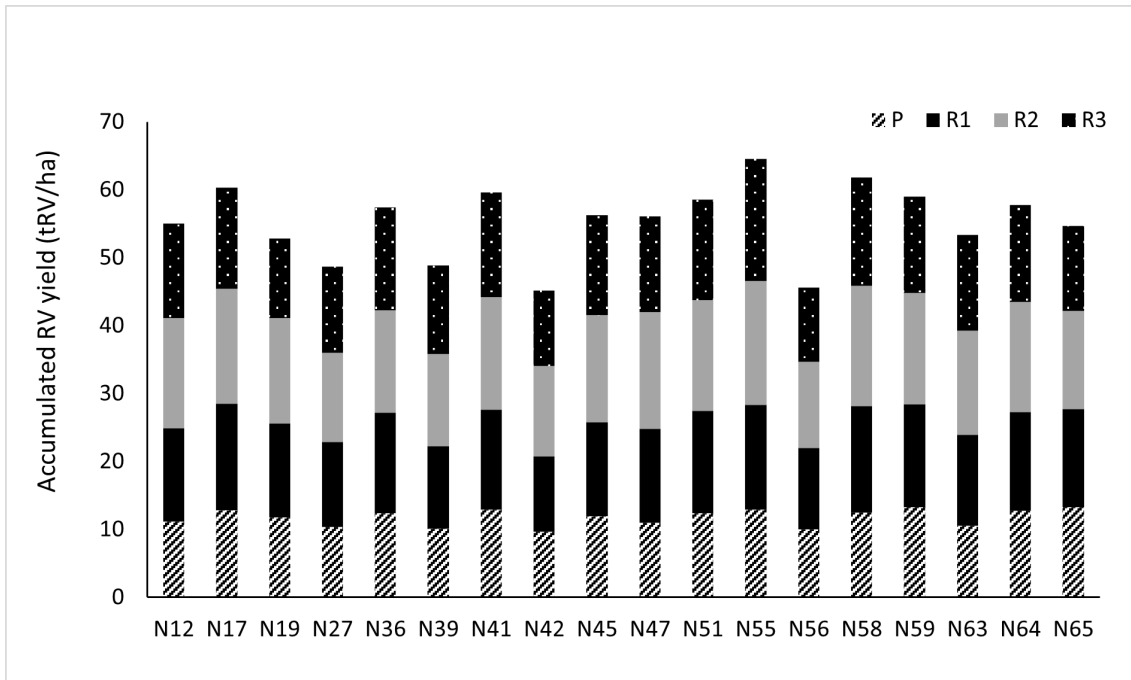


Figure 1: Accumulated RV yield (tonsRV/ha) for the P, R1, R2 and R3 crop

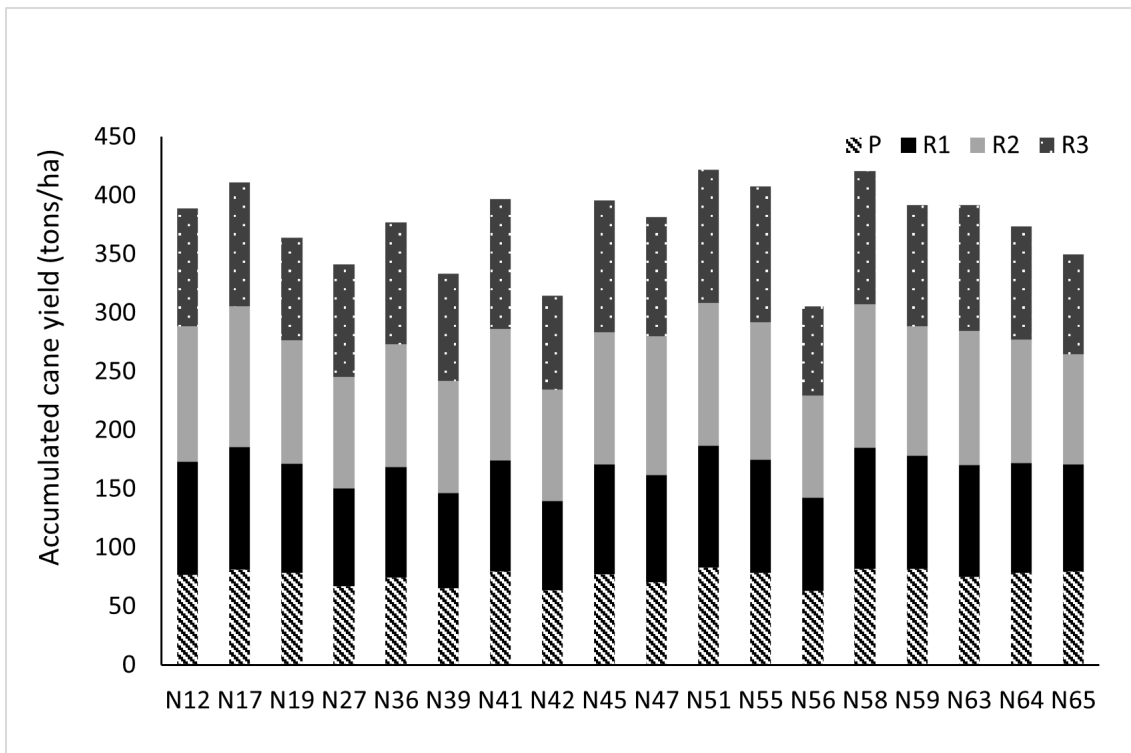


Figure 2: Accumulated cane yield in tons/ha of P, R1, R2 and R3 crop

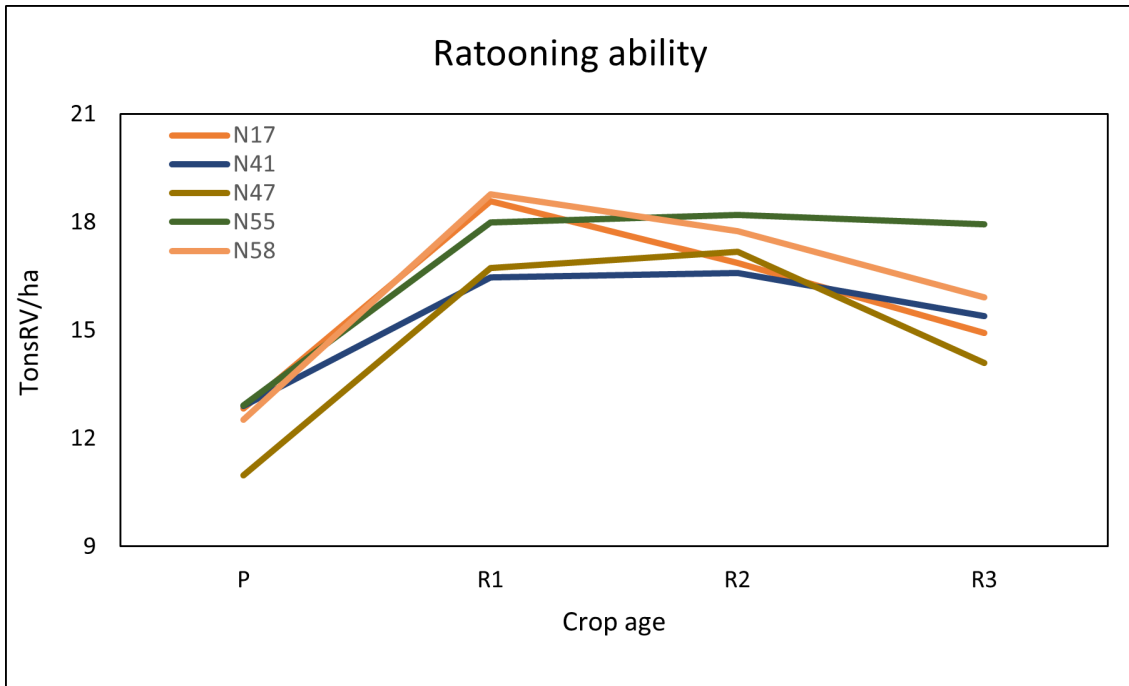


Figure 3: Ratooning ability of the top five varieties in the trial

Comments on the top four best performing varieties over four crops

N55: Outperformed all other varieties in this trial with good RV yields. Although this variety is rated intermediate-resistant to smut, be careful as smut has been observed on this variety in the Felixton area. Also avoid planting this variety on low-potential soils. Consistent ratooning ability of this variety is encouraging as shown in figure 3.

N58: To date this very promising new variety has achieved very high cane and RV yields. Although the results showed a slightly lower RV yield compared to N55, its cane yield is relatively good. Good ratooning ability makes it a good variety.

N17: Used as a control. N17 has performed exceptionally well in this trial. Generally, on a par with the newer varieties like the N58 and N55. Ratooning ability is very poor on this variety as shown in figure 3.

N51: Good cane yields were achieved over four crops. Lodging on this variety can be a problem under good growing conditions.

Looking at some older varieties that have also performed well in this trial; N41, N36 and N12 are still going strong, and it will be interesting to see how long they will carry on compared to the newer varieties. N59 performance has been great, but unfortunately it does get smut and growers are advised not to plant too much of this variety on their farms.

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