



LOWER SOUTH COAST EXTENSION NEWS



Results of the Coastal Variety Trial

The first crop (plant cane) of the Coastal Variety Trial planted at Illovo, Seafields Farm has recently been harvested. This trial was planted in October 2020 and was harvested in March 2022, at 17 months. In future, the trial will be harvested annually at 12 months.

Trial Details

- There are 10 varieties in the trial - nine are coastal varieties and one is an inland variety (N61). N61 was included because of its ability to grow rapidly and required testing under coastal conditions.
- The trial is replicated four times and is planted on a South-West facing slope.
- It is on a Granite parent material with a Glenrosa soil form.
- The trial includes a ripener-testing component wherein Fusilade Forte, Moddus and a combination treatment will be tested on N67 and N72. Ripener testing will only commence next season as the cane was already lodged at the beginning of the year.

Note: *The results presented below are for the plant crop only.*

Results

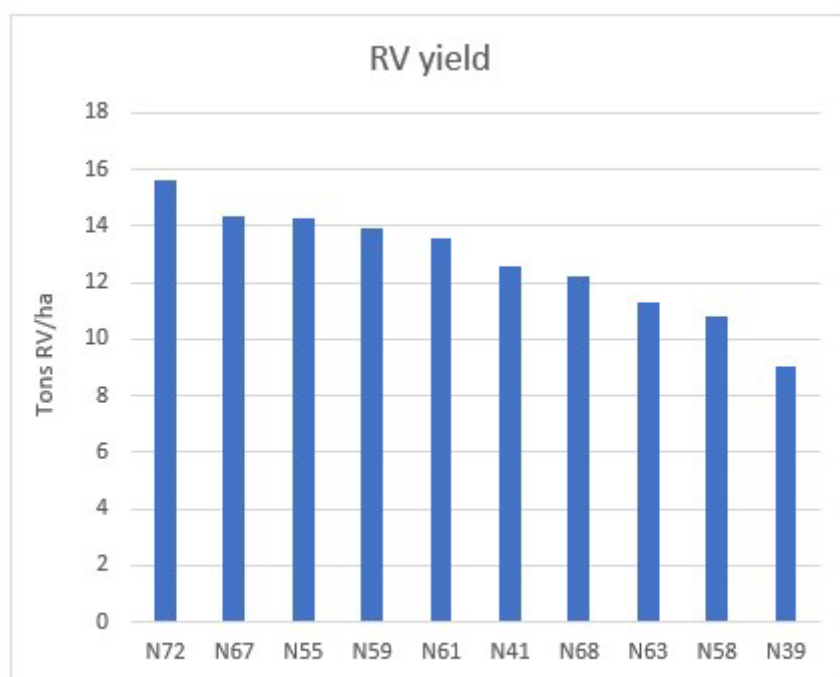


Figure 1: The average RV yield (tons/ha) for all 10 varieties

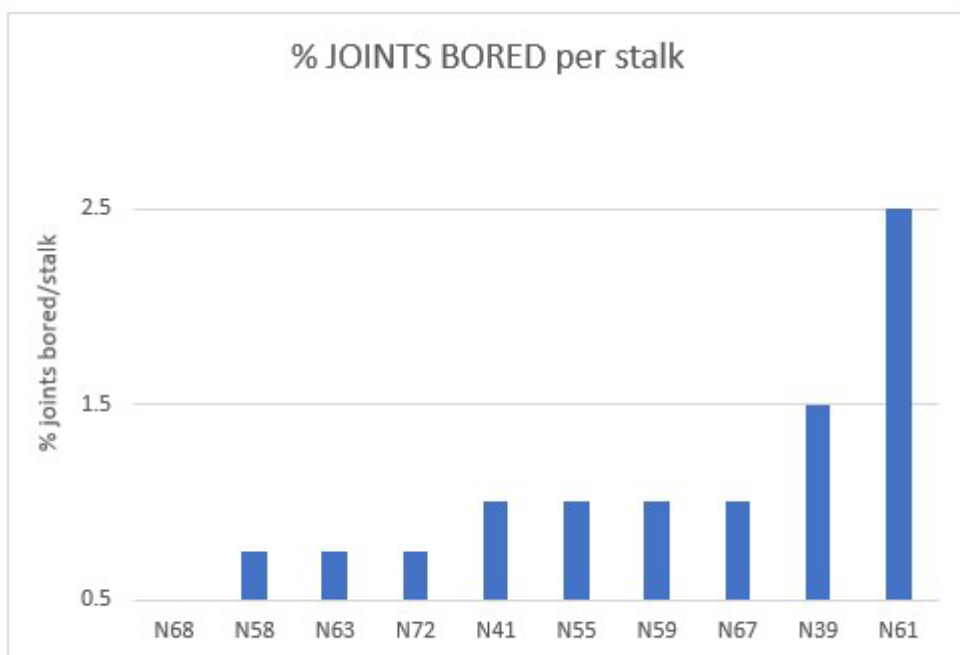


Figure 2: % Joints bored/ stalk across all 10 varieties

Variety performances of the Top 5

N72 ranked the highest in this trial in terms of RV yield. This is mostly attributed to its very high tons cane yield which was 30 tons more than the second variety. N72, however, had the second-lowest RV%, which indicates a need to ripen this variety. Fortunately, it is one of the two varieties that will be tested with ripeners in this trial in the future. N72 was amongst the varieties that showed very low eldana damage.

N67 was the second-best variety in terms of RV yield. Its cane yield ranked fourth in the trial but its RV% was the second-highest. N67 was intermediate in terms of eldana damage. It is also one of the two varieties to be tested for ripening.

N55 ranked third in terms of RV yield. N55 is a high sucrose variety and had the highest RV% in this trial. N55 consistently had the highest RV% in our previous coastal trial, over five ratoons. It ranked seventh in cane yield, as it is a low stalk population variety, especially under marginal to average potential soils. Although the eldana levels were intermediate in this trial, it has shown to be intermediate-resistant to eldana in commercial fields in our region.

N59 ranked fourth in terms of RV yield. It had the second-highest cane yield and ranked fifth in terms of RV%. N59 is suited for the coastal longer cycle and will always give you a good balance of good yields and good RV%. It has been shown to perform better on average to high potential soils. N59 showed intermediate levels of eldana

damage in this trial.

N61 ranked fifth in terms of RV yield. It had the third-highest cane yield but was low on sucrose. N61 was the fastest variety at the early growth stages and lodged very early. It would be interesting to observe how it will perform at 12 months of harvest age. It had the worst eldana damage in the trial (as is expected for an inland variety). This might be the limitation in bringing this variety to coastal areas.

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