Issue 18
April 2021

LOWER SOUTH COAST EXTENSION MATTERS

20 Range Rd, Oslo Beach, Marburg
P O Box 392, PORT SHEPSTONE, 4240
Direct Line: +27 39 682 1822
Fax: +27 86 582 2040
Email: Buhle.Khomo@sugar.org.za
Website: www.sasa.org.za

BUHLE KHOMO

Chemical control for eldana

Infestations of the eldana borer, together with a fungal infection, causes reduced cane quality, which results in decreased revenues. In 2015, it was estimated that R1 billion was a direct loss to growers across the industry, due to eldana.

SASRI recommends using various management practices to effectively manage eldana levels on-farm. This phenomenon is termed "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) for eldana control. IPM focuses on a wide range of variables, e.g. optimum nitrogen application, planting a less susceptible variety, field hygiene, practicing the "push-pull" on-farm (where possible), and applying insecticides.

For this communication, we will focus on applying insecticides:

Fortunately, there are several insecticides currently available to growers in the market. These have different modes of action. Some are more suited for applying during cooler conditions and others are more effective in warmer periods. Irresponsible use of these insecticides might result in resistance build-up, and therefore it is crucial that an IRAC compliant spray program is followed.

The Umzimkhulu region currently runs a very efficient spray program for eldana control. This usually commences during August each year and focuses on spraying fields that would be carried over to the following year. There are three sprays done and these ensure effective eldana control into the new year before the new milling season.

We would therefore encourage growers to have their carry-over fields surveyed for eldana and take an informed decision. We do not recommend spraying fields that do not have eldana. Once a field has been sprayed, we strongly recommend that a full program is followed. We have observed over the past few years that stopping halfway through the program results in poor eldana control. Furthermore, cutting short a program could result in increased likelihood of resistance development.