

# MIDLANDS SOUTH

# EXTENSION MATTERS

## Seedcane

Dear Grower

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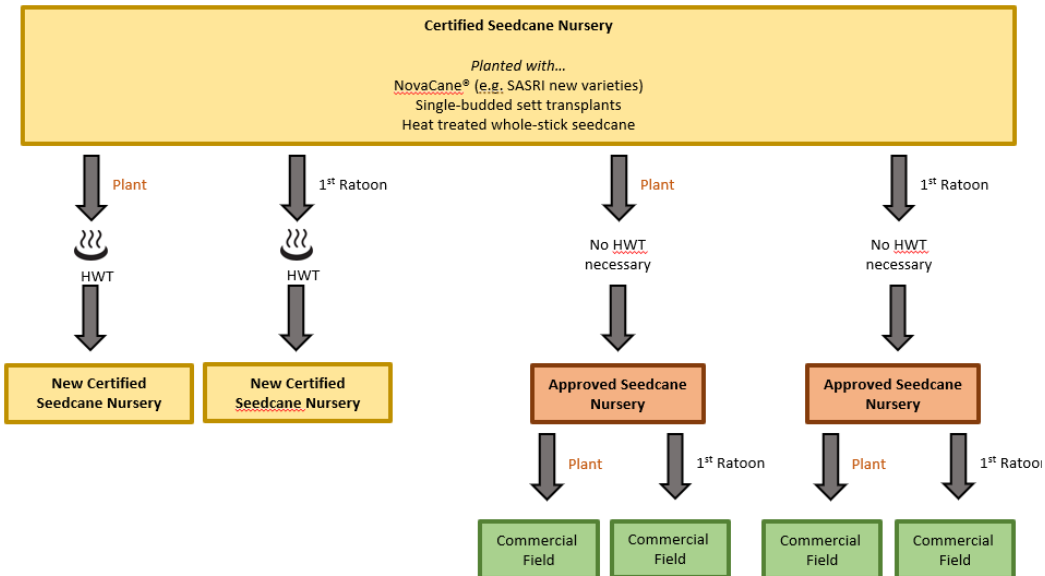


PAUL BOTHA

As you would know, a decision was taken by the Industry that by 2023 all seedcane planted must be either certified or approved. This decision was extended to 2028.

The use of good quality, true-to-type, pest and disease free seedcane has been accepted as best practice throughout the sugarcane producing world. Planting healthy, well-grown seedcane ensures good germination and optimal plant population, which, in most instances, guarantees longer ratoon life. However, and most importantly, planting healthy seedcane also ensures that the industry is protected from the financial losses caused by pest and disease incursions.

**ALL seedcane MUST be inspected by P&D before planting, even if it is from your own farm. Please contact me to set up any inspections needed.**



▲ Flow diagram of seedcane production

### What is NOT seedcane...

- ⊗ Cane that has never been inspected by the Biosecurity teams for smut, RSD, mosaic, off-types and eldana)
- ⊗ Any cane that “looks good”.
- ⊗ Any cane that is NOT from a Certified or Approved source
- ⊗ Seedcane taken from a Certified or Approved nursery that is older than a first ratoon.

## Criteria for Certified / Approved Seedcane\*

- ◆ Seedcane nursery must be **registered and inspected by the LPD&VCC** - 3 inspections for certified seed & 2 for approved seed.
- ◆ One year fallow period and 100% volunteer-free fields are required before the nursery can be established.
- ◆ Certified seed is to be planted in an approved nursery that has been fallowed for at least 9 months.
- ◆ 2 cuts/harvests from a certified nursery are allowed (Plant and 1R).
- ◆ Currently 2 cuts/harvests are allowed from an approved nursery.
- ◆ Seedcane used to establish a certified seedcane nursery must itself be from a certified seedcane source.
- ◆ If whole-stick seedcane, it must be hot water treated at 50<sup>o</sup> C for 2 hours. Transplants from HWT cane or NovaCane<sup>®</sup> plantlets may also be used.
- ◆ Must have less than 0.1% smut, mosaic and off-types.
- ◆ Must be tested and found negative for RSD prior to harvest and distribution.
- ◆ Must be well-grown without undue stress having been experienced.
- ◆ At time of harvest the age must be:
  - 9-12 months in the Irrigated North and KZN Coastal areas less than 500 m above sea level;
  - 12-18 months for Midlands areas greater than 500 m above sea level.

### Other important considerations

- ◆ Seedcane requirements for commercial use need to be planned well in advance (sometimes years in advance).
- ◆ Be aware of possible limits to the area planted to any single variety.
- ◆ Seedcane movement BETWEEN LPD&VCC control areas MUST get approval from BOTH LPD&VCCs involved.
- ◆ BUYERS BEWARE – request certificates and inspection records from the seller.

\*Taken from:

SASA, 2023. *Local Pest, Disease and Variety Control Committee Rules (As amended in 2023)*.

## Longhorn Beetle

The longhorn beetle (*Cacosceles newmannii*), first identified in 2016 in sugarcane at Entumeni in Zululand, has recently been found in the Melmoth area, also in sugarcane. This is some considerable distance from the original outbreak.

This is a very serious pest capable of causing severe damage to sugarcane.

Growers are requested to be on the alert and report anything suspicious.

Longhorn beetle larvae bore into the stem of the sugarcane stalk causing damage similar to that of eldana, only far worse. Damage may be easier to spot in the stubble right after harvest.

Growers who have commercial timber or farm near plantations should be particularly vigilant.

