

Better management practice	<p>Burning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool burns in the morning on slopes of less than 15% in cool, wet or low lying areas is practised • Burnt tops are left scattered evenly in the field to help with soil and moisture <p>Crop residue management (green cane harvesting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mulching is practised on slopes of greater than 15% and in areas where the cane residue blanket does not increase the risk of stools rotting or inhibits ratooning 	<p>A yield response to a crop residue blanket is greatest when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cane is harvested in the summer months • cane is grown on high yield potential soils • rainfall is marginal • altitude is <500 m. <p>When the burnt tops are left scattered (i.e. not windrowed) after harvest, they provide a mulch, which is about 50% as effective (in terms of soil and water conservation), as a full crop residue blanket. Scattered tops therefore serve a very useful purpose and should not be raked into windrows. A cool burn in the early morning when dew is still present ensures that a greater quantity of burnt tops is left as mulch.</p> <p>Burning at harvest generally results in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher output from cane cutters • higher payloads • cleaner cane <p>Burning at harvest is generally advantageous in the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • altitudes greater than 500 m • valley bottoms, high water table areas and where full irrigation is practised • where ratoon chlorosis is endemic. <p>On request SASRI will assess the economics of burning or green cane harvesting for each field or farm area.</p> <p>Better management practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green cane harvesting should be practised for maximum conservation, particularly on steep slopes and erodible soils. • On slopes greater than 15%, green cane harvesting should be practised during the wet season to reduce the impact of raindrop action. • On slopes greater than 15%, the land should have adequate protective cover during the season when high intensity storms occur. These areas should therefore be cut early in the season to allow for adequate canopy development before summer. • After burning, the tops should be left scattered evenly in the field to help with soil and moisture conservation. • Green cane harvesting should result in >30% of ground cover (consisting of tops and leaves) after harvesting to improve soil organic content. • A cool burn in the morning (provided it conforms with the codes of burning practice) provides more tops than a late afternoon, hot burn.
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