

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognisance must also be taken of the Department of Water Affairs ("DWA") procedures for identification and delineation of wetlands and riparian areas which provides a guide for identification of wetlands using soils, vegetation and the position in the landscape. • Note that disturbance of a watercourse or wetland may require a licence from DWA as well as Environmental Authorisation in terms of the 2014 EIA Regulations. • Indigenous vegetation along stream banks should not be removed. • Where vegetation has been removed, the introduction of suitable indigenous plants should be encouraged and pressure points plugged. • Wetlands that have been degraded should be rehabilitated (see Wetland Management: Mondri Wetlands Project). • Forested riparian areas should not be burnt.
Legal Requirement	<p>Wet agricultural land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mechanical practices are being used to clean drains, except authorised • Existing drains have not been widened or deepened • There is no evidence of active erosion • Approved plans are available for any alterations to existing drains 	<p>Wet agricultural land</p> <p>Wetlands that have been drained in the past (also known as relic wetlands) may continue to be cropped. However, no new drains of any kind may be excavated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where soil has been deposited in existing drains, no mechanical practices are allowed to be used to clean the drains. The deposit may only be removed by hand tools. • While keeping a good vegetative cover to prevent erosion, the vegetation within the drain must be managed. It is permissible to slash or spray vegetation and remove the debris. • The drains may not be widened or deepened. There should be no evidence of erosion. • Where it is not practical or cost effective to sustain crop production, the wet agricultural land should be allowed to revert back to wetland. • A management and maintenance plan should be implemented which includes the closing of existing drains and the removal of alien invasive plants until such time as indigenous vegetation has been re-established.
Better management practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relic wetlands have or are being rehabilitated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relic drains and wetlands – must be managed to maintain water flow. Ideally all relic wetlands should be removed from production and rehabilitated over time. • Planting new cane land - If sugarcane replaces another agricultural crop such as maize or vegetables, a permit from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is not required. However, special attention is needed to ensure that the conservation layout conforms to that of sugarcane. A permit from the agricultural authority is required before any virgin/new land (veld, pasture or timber) can be planted to cane or for any conversion from dryland to irrigated land. Where land has not been cultivated for 10 years, it reverts back to virgin land status. Under NEMA, environmental authorisation is required for the clearance of more than 1ha of indigenous vegetation, and for the physical alteration of virgin soil to agriculture if it exceeds 100 ha in extent.



Open drain in wetland



Well managed riparian zone with buffer



A typical wetland in the KZN midlands



Typical wetland soil