

Better management practice	<p>Harvesting operations minimise soil loss and compaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet, poorly drained soils are harvested during the dry season • Grab loaders and infield vehicles are operated with low tyre pressures and preferably radial ply tyres • Total mass is distributed over all axles, with infield loads not exceeding 5 tons per axle • Where tandem axles are used, make use of walking beams • Vehicles must drive on the interrow only • Where wheel and row spacing do not match, infield traffic is confined to the minimum number of inter rows 	<p>Harvesting operations</p> <p>The harvesting operation should be planned to minimise negative environmental impacts. It must take into account topography, soils (erodibility and compactability), weather, extraction routes, waterway crossings and loading zone sites. Equipment having the least impact on the environment should be used. Ensure that the stack trenches are covered once the stacks have been removed, and discourage labour from attacking and killing wildlife during the harvesting operation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to harvest cane in wet, poorly drained areas in the drier winter season. Grab loaders and infield vehicles should be operated with care to minimise damage to soil and cane stools. • Vehicle operators, cane cutters and crane operators should be trained and tested if certification is necessary. The Shukela Training Centre (STC) provides training, visit their website at www.sasa.org.za or contact your local SASRI Extension Specialist. • Keep tyre pressure low for good surface contact. Radial tyres are better than cross-ply. • Ensure total mass is distributed over all axles. Infield loads should not exceed 5 tons per axle. • Where tandem axles are used, make use of walking beams to gain more control and reduce compaction. • Vehicles should be driving only on interrows. • Confine infield traffic to the same path each year.
	<p>Green cane harvesting and/or burning of sugarcane is practised in terms of economic, social and environmental conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The harvesting operation results in >30% groundcover (consisting of tops or leaves) to improve soil organic content 	<p>A cane residue blanket is valuable because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conserves valuable moisture by reducing evaporation and run-off • suppresses weed growth • reduces soil erosion • reduces surface capping and compaction of soils. <p>Because of the above attributes, a cane residue blanket increases sucrose yields in many situations. Growers should ensure that greater than 30% of the area harvested is covered with tops or leaves.</p>