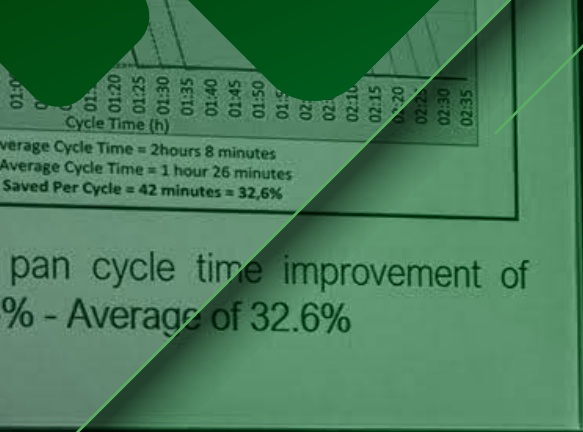


SASTA Newsletter

October 2025



A CONGRESS TO REMEMBER

From 12–14 August 2025, the ICC Durban came alive as researchers, technologists, and industry leaders gathered for the 97th SASTA Congress.

Three dynamic days of cutting-edge science, industry updates, and collaboration set new benchmarks for the sugar industry.

Inside this issue: event highlights, standout presentations, and memorable moments that defined this year's Congress.

Visit www.sasta.co.za for more information!





REFLECTIONS ON THE 97TH CONGRESS

The 97th Annual SASTA Congress was a milestone gathering for our association and industry, not only marking “99 not out” in SASTA’s history but also reaffirming our role as a vital platform for knowledge exchange, innovation, and resilience in the sugar sector.

As always, Congress is the result of months of planning and hard work. My sincere thanks go to the Congress Organising Committee, the Turners team, and to our sponsors and exhibitors who helped ensure another successful event. This year, exhibition space sold out well in advance, with a waiting list for the first time since COVID — clear evidence of renewed energy and commitment from across the industry.

I was also encouraged by the balance of contributions from both agriculture and factory research this year. For the first time in many years, factory submissions closely matched those from agriculture. This healthy competition reflects the depth of expertise across our sector and underlines the importance of continuing to support both sides of the value chain.

Beyond the technical programme, Congress provides a space for conversations that matter. From the golf day to the exhibitor stands, the connections made and ideas shared will continue to shape our work long after the event. I am grateful, too, for the financial support from SASA, which strengthens SASTA’s ability to host field days, factory visits, and knowledge-sharing initiatives throughout the year.

This year’s Congress theme, “Sustainability”, was both timely and essential. As an industry, we are navigating a complex environment — low world prices, tariff challenges, and rising deep-sea imports, among others. Our newly formed sustainability sub-committee has already begun exploring these issues, and Congress provided the opportunity to deepen the conversation. Are we striking the right balance between environment, society, and economy? How do we ensure that diversification and innovation allow our industry not only to survive but to thrive for generations to come?

It was a privilege to welcome keynote speaker Liesel Kassier, who helped frame these questions and challenged us to think boldly about the future. We also took a moment to reflect on the contributions of three remarkable SASTA (Dr Graeme Shuker, Dr Bernard Ravnö and Eddie Meyer), we lost this past year — leaders whose work and dedication shaped the path we now follow.

As we look ahead, SASTA’s centenary in 2026 is fast approaching. Preparations are already under way, and I encourage all full members to consider serving on Council or our committees. What we need most is not age or titles, but energy, commitment, and a willingness to give back to this proud and resilient industry.

The 97th Congress reminded us that, while the challenges are real, so too is the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and resilience that defines SASTA. Together, we can carry this forward into our 100th year and beyond.

- **Dr Muhammad Kadwa, SASTA President**

REPORT CARD ON THE 97TH SASTA CONGRESS:

HOW DID WE DO?



The curtain has closed on another fabulous SASTA Congress. Thank you to all delegates for your continued support of SASTA and our annual Congress. By all accounts, the 2025 SASTA Congress was a resounding success, a sentiment shared by both delegates and exhibitors alike.

Some Congress stats: Total attendance: 675 registered at the event, including 457 delegates, 173 congress exhibitors, 65 exhibition stands, 25 congress VIPs and 68 congress speakers. Representation came from 21 countries, including South Africa, with the largest international contingent from Eswatini (40 delegates). There were 94 abstract submissions, 32 withdrawals and 62 paper presentations. View Congress Proceedings [here](https://sasta.co.za/congress-proceedings/).

Hyperlink and underline the word here. with <https://sasta.co.za/congress-proceedings/>

Some highlights: The keynote address by Liesel Kassier struck exactly the right note and sparked much discussion among delegates. Liesel's presentation provided an excellent start to the 97th Congress, and the energy from her opening address carried through to the plenary session and the remainder of the congress.

SASTA is humbled by the growing support for congress and the continued generosity of sponsors and

exhibitors. The 2025 Congress exhibition was sold out, and SASTA extends sincere thanks to all sponsors and exhibitors for their support. The exhibition has become an essential part of congress, with delegates eagerly anticipating the impressive displays and valuable engagement opportunities each year.

Competition for the best exhibition stand was fierce, with exhibitors going the extra mile to design world-class booths. SEW EURODRIVE took the gold award for the second consecutive year, with BMG claiming silver and Lakeside Equipment taking the bronze medal.

Delegates also participated enthusiastically in the voting this year, and the following accolades were awarded: "Good Looking" Stand – Sonkor Engineering; "Friendliest Vibe" Stand – Rossi Southern Africa; "Informative" Stand – Bearing Man Group; and Special Commendation awards to Rototek and John Thompson.

Acknowledgements are extended to the SASTA Congress Organising Committee for their valuable time and effort in planning another world-class event. The success of the 2025 SASTA Congress is the result of the hard work and dedication of a group of volunteers who are passionate about the SASTA Congress. Plans are already under way for the 100th SASTA Celebrations in 2026, and SASTA looks forward to welcoming you to a very special congress and centennial celebration.

- **Dr Sumita Ramgareeb**
SASTA COC Chair

A portrait of Liesel Kassier, a woman with long, wavy, light brown hair, smiling and looking slightly to the left. She is wearing a white button-down shirt with a colorful patterned scarf. The background is a bright blue sky.

LIESELKASSIER KEYNOTE SPEAKER SASTA CONGRESS 2025

Liesel Kassier, Head of Sustainable Manufacturing and Finance, of TWIMS (Toyota Wessels Institute for Manufacturing Studies) was the keynote speaker at the SASTA Congress this year. Her presentation entitled **'Resilient Revenue: Adopting Sustainable Business Models in the Sugar Value Chain'** fitted in well with the congress theme of 'Sustainability'.

Her assessment of risk categories relating to climate change and natural resource shortages were particularly relevant for sugarcane production. She challenged the sugarcane value chain to think differently by building new business opportunities, to become more innovative and to fundamentally change the way we do business. Her framing of 'resilient revenue' summed up what we need to do to secure our future. We need to generate revenue streams that are stable, diversified, and less susceptible to external shocks. She emphasised that sustainable practices are the foundation for resilient revenue and some key characteristics are:

- Diversified sources: Not solely reliant on raw sugar sales.
- Cost efficiency: Optimised resource use, reduced waste.
- Market acceptance: Meeting evolving consumer and regulatory demands for sustainability.
- Risk mitigation: Less vulnerable to climate events, policy changes, or market fluctuations.

Liesel finished off with a thought-provoking statement: *"Transition: Once you see it is happening you are already underestimating the speed"*.

- **Dr Sandy Snyman**
(SASTA Vice-President)

Liesel's presentation is available on the SASTA website
https://sasta.co.za/wpfd_file/pdf-slides-liesel-kassier-sasta-congress-2025/

Celebrating a SASTA legend

Dr Thomas Geoffrey Cleasby



Watch Dr Cleasby's message on the importance and value of SASTA



In September, SASTA President Muhammad Kadwa, SASTA Councillor Phindile Miya and past President Stanley Munsamy had the privilege of visiting Thomas Geoffrey “Geoff” Cleasby and his wife Isabel, at their home in Westbrook Beach. Geoff, now 97 years old and our oldest living SASTA President shared a memorable afternoon of reflection and recognition.

Geoff served SASTA with distinction as President from 1968/69 to 1971/72, after two seasons as Vice-President, and was an active Council member for many years. A prolific researcher, he authored numerous papers for both SASTA and ISSCT, many of which remain reference points for our industry today. His pioneering work on the use of molasses in cattle feed, for example, laid the foundation for the establishment of Voermol.

In recognition of his contributions, Geoff was awarded SASTA Honorary Membership, the SASTA Gold Medal, and ISSCT Honorary Membership previously. Most recently, he was further honoured by ISSCT during its Centennial Congress, with his medal being presented to him during this special visit.

Born and educated in England, Geoff’s career took him from lecturing in Sudan to South Africa, where he joined Hulett’s as an agronomist. He rose to become Agricultural Director and later Managing Director of Hulett’s, which evolved into Tongaat Hulett’s. Beyond his professional achievements, Geoff and Isabel raised five children and now enjoy the company of 12 grandchildren.

What stood out most during our visit was Geoff’s remarkable memory and sharp storytelling as he took us through his extraordinary journey. A true legend, his legacy remains firmly woven into the proud history of SASTA.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SASTA CONGRESS 2025

View full gallery [here](#).



SASTA GOLF DAY:

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO A CONGRESS TRADITION

Warren Lawlor (SASTA Council Member)

The SASTA Golf Day has become one of the most anticipated highlights on the SASTA Congress calendar — but it wasn't always part of the event. Introduced roughly ten years ago by long-standing SASTA member Santhosh Balchund, Head of API Solutions, the golf day began as a small initiative to bring industry colleagues together in a relaxed, social setting.

Over the years, thanks to Santhosh's dedication and infectious enthusiasm, the day has evolved into something of an institution, following a tried-and-tested format that blends friendly competition with valuable networking opportunities. The event provides the perfect platform for suppliers and customers to connect — whether teaming up or competing — all while enjoying a day on the course and the camaraderie that continues at the 19th hole.

Recognising the immense value the golf day adds for both delegates and exhibitors, SASTA has collaborated with API Solutions to officially make the event a formal part of the annual congress. With Santhosh's generous support and guidance, the 2025 SASTA Golf Day became the first to be fully owned and organised by SASTA — marking an exciting new chapter for this much-loved tradition.

Staying true to its familiar format and competition rules, this year's event was another resounding success. Prizes were awarded to both winners and "honourable losers," but the undeniable highlight was a truly remarkable moment — a Hole-in-One on the very hole sponsored by BMG Durban, which carried a R100 000 prize! The odds of such a feat are astronomical, but it happened — congratulations to Vic Tindell from Vehicle Connection for achieving this once-in-a-century moment!

SASTA extends heartfelt thanks to the sponsors whose generous contributions made the day exceptional:

- AVK Valves South Africa
- BMG Durban
- John Thompson
- Loadtech Load Cells
- ROSSI
- SEW-EURODRIVE
- South African Sugar Association
- TSE Engineering
- SASA & SASRI

Photos from the Golf Day are available on the SASTA website:
https://sasta.co.za/dt_gallery/sasta-congress-2025/



You can also watch the hole-in-one video here.



"Shaping the future: Innovation and sustainability in the sugar industry"

26th International Sugar Conference

**Mohammed VI Museum
for the Civilization of Water
Marrakesh, Morocco
9 - 12 February 2026**

Experience the Future of Sugar in Marrakesh!

Join us for an insightful event in Marrakesh from February 9-12, 2026, showcasing the latest advancements in sugar production. Immerse yourself in workshops on AI and Digital Twins, and AI-driven yield optimization. Engage in key discussions on digital transformation, sustainability, cybersecurity, and next-gen refining technologies. Explore water conservation, by-product valorization, and global research priorities with industry leaders. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with experts, discover innovative solutions, and shape the future of the sugar industry.

➡ Key Topics & Highlights

- **Workshops on:**
 - AI & Digital Twins for Sugar Mills
 - AI-Driven Yield Optimization in Crop Production
 - Building Your AI Roadmap
- **The event comprises:**
 - Digital Transformation
 - Next-gen refining technologies
 - New build activity in the industry
 - Water use and recycling
 - Refinery Tour at Cosumar - Siddi Benour

REGISTER NOW

Early Bird Registration: \$ 1,000

*Extended until 30 November 2025,
exclusively for SASTA members*

Regular Rate: \$ 1,500

