

POSTER SUMMARY**IS THE TRAINING OF SMALL-SCALE GROWERS IMPROVING YIELDS? ANALYSIS OF THE 2009 TO 2018 SEASONS**DUBE S¹ AND NICHOLSON RJ²

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Abstract

For many years, the South African Cane Growers Association (SACGA) has enabled Small-scale Growers (SSGs) to attend various training courses offered by the Shukela Training Centre (STC) and the South African Sugarcane Research Institute (SASRI), using funds from the Growers' Development Account (GDA). This training ranges from agronomic training to trainings on machinery-based skills. The SACGA has kept a database of those SSGs who have attended training courses at the STC, and this poster shows an analysis of this database, from 2009 to 2018. The purpose of the analysis is to identify the trends, in order to assist the industry in making decisions on how to best serve these growers and their training needs, and it will also show the impact of agronomic training on cane yields and the Recoverable Value (RV) over time. The analysis drills down to mill-level by showing the relationship between the training of an individual grower and the yields achieved by that same grower. The poster also covers the age distribution of SSGs, with the preliminary findings showing that most participants are above the age of 50. Lastly, it shows the benefits of improved production for the growers, compared to the cost to the industry. It is critical to understand this, in order to ensure that the funds spent on training SSGs is having a positive impact on their sugarcane operations and that it is improving their livelihoods.

Key words: SSG Training