

Ratoon Stunting Disease Management (RSD)

RECOMMENDED FARM HYGIENE PRACTICES

PLANTING

- Have all planting material inspected by Sugar Services staff before cutting plants.
- Sterilise all cutting equipment including cane knives, plant cutters, chainsaws, topping knives, plants harvester, tipper bins.
- Check that all plants coming onto the farm have also been inspected
- Thoroughly sterilise the cutting gear and shutes of the planter before planting. The most effective method is to wash thoroughly and then apply a sterilising agent (Mirrol, cane knife steriliser) the day before planting commences.
- Sterilise the planter especially before planting kilogram and nucleus plants. If you are planting kilogram/nucleus plants and other plants, plant the kilogram/nucleus plants first.
- If you make a major variety change, when planting a block with two or more commercial varieties, sterilise between varieties.
- Should you run out of clean plants before completing a block, do not finish off with 'anything handy'. Check out another reliable source with a good history of hot water treatment
- When billet planting, thoroughly clean and sterilise the cane harvester and tipper bins before use

HARVESTING

- Insist the harvester is sterilised when it comes onto your farm. The base-cutters, butt-lifters, chopper blades and box, and extractors should be thoroughly cleaned (preferably with a pressure cleaner) and a sterilant applied. Best way – do it yourself.
- Sterilise also between blocks, especially when moving from an old ratoon to plant cane or first ratoon.
- Take special care to sterilise when moving from a known diseased block or one suspected of having RSD.
- Spray or sluice the more accessible parts of the harvester (basecutter, buttlifters, feed train chopper blades etc) with a sterilising agent after harvest each day.

EXTRAS

- Destroy all volunteer stools during the fallow as they may harbour disease
- Wash down and sterilise implements used to 'take out' a diseased block eg bumper disc, rotary hoe.
- If employing a planting contractor, check each point of hygiene before planting commences.