Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative

Using an eco-agricultural approach to Watershed management

The Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative is a project managed by the Mondi Wetlands Programme to bring together various role-players to develop partnership initiatives that strengthen responsible environmental, and to some degree social better practices within the sugar industry. It forms part of WWFs global efforts to reduce impacts of agriculture on our natural environment.

mondi Wetlands programme

NOODSBERG CANEGROWERS

WWF

mazda Wildlife Fund The Driving Force Behind Conservation

WESSA PEOPLE CARING FOR THE EARTH

Millions of people around the world consume sugar everyday. How many of us realise the impact sugarcane has on our environment?
In South Africa the industry generates a direct income of R6 billion with approximately 1 million people depending on the industry for a living

Approximately 420 000 hectares of land is used to grow sugarcane In South Africa. As with any crop, sugarcane has an impact on soils, catchment hydrology, and terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

The pictures on this page illustrate some of the common environmental impacts associated with sugarcane agriculture

Draining of wetlands

Improper irrigation practices

Sugarcane growing in an estuarine floodplain

Planting incorrectly on steep slopes

Planting within wetlands

Soil erosion

Planting cane within riparian zones

The Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative has partnered with Noodsberg Canegrowers to develop, implement and audit better practices on their member farms.

Noodsberg has committed to implement and audit their adoption of better practices amongst their 180 growers covering 30 000 ha.

Experiences are being fed back into the sugar industry and into related WWF programmes around the world.

Working with interested and committed stakeholders is critical in achieving meaningful action

To counter impacts, there are a range of better practices that can be used. A selection are illustrated here. The trick is to manage, monitor and report on such activities…

Riparian buffers

Contour roads

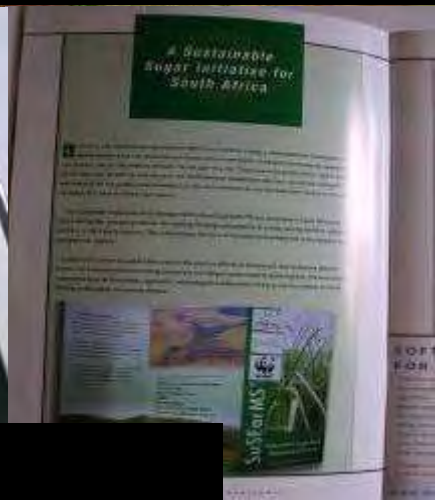
Trashing

Bio control

Contours

Alternate panel harvesting

Wetland & riparian delineation



Sharing knowledge & experiences

Better Management Practices

...So the Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative together with Noodsberg Canegrowers has developed a manual of better practice, together with a farm audit. This has been called Sustainable Sugarcane Farm Management System, or SuSFarMS. The initiative is providing support and training for farmers to use SuSFarMS.

Best available Knowledge

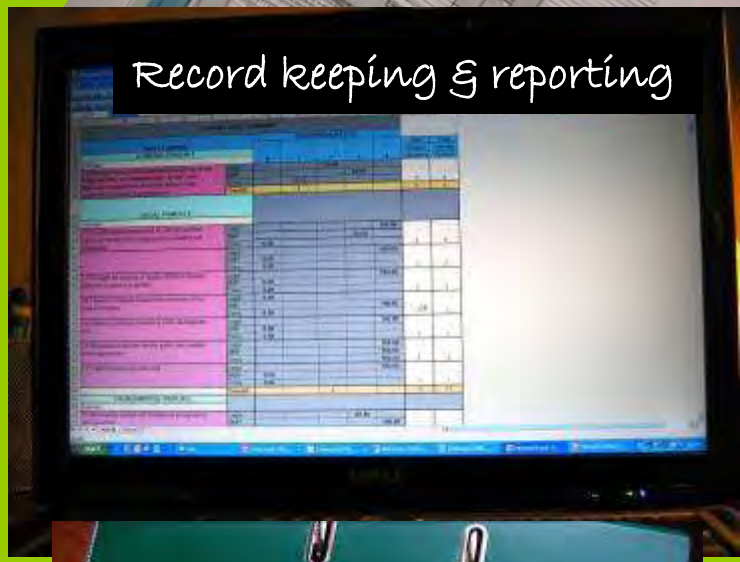
legislation

Research

SuSFarMS

Social | Economic | Environmental

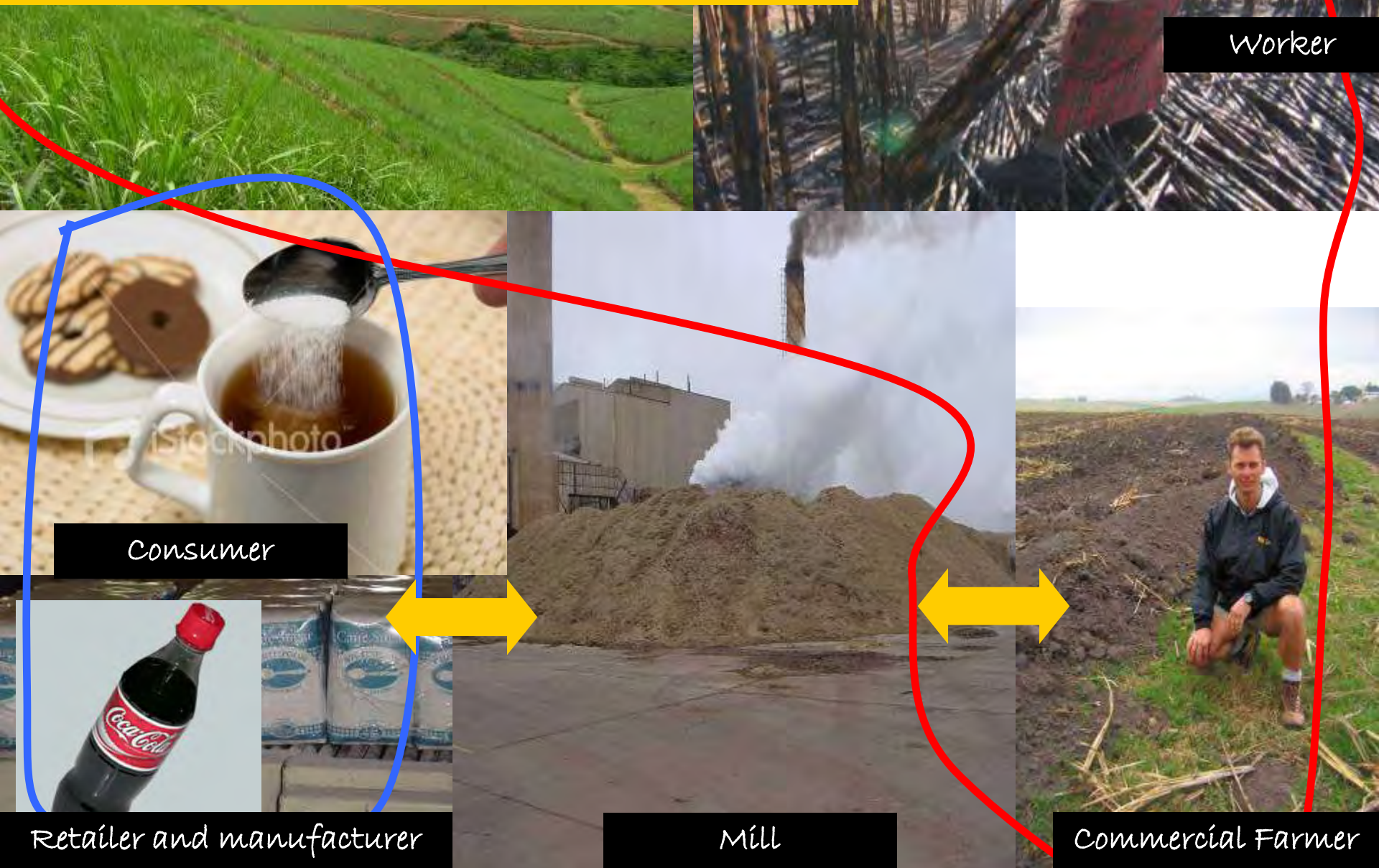
Field Audit sheet



Record keeping & reporting

Better Management Practice manual

The Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative is also working to develop linkages along the value chain from farmer to miller to retailer to consumer so sustainable practice benefits and responsibilities can be realised and supported.



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