

How Does one participate?

To participate a grower group needs to join the sustainable sugar initiative South Africa. Individual farmers can be accommodated if their grower group does not join.

SuSFarMS is administered by the Sustainable Sugar Initiative South Africa which has a steering committee as part of the work plan under the Memorandum of Understanding between SASA and the WWF South Africa.

Through a members' Canegrower group a fee per tonne is levied to cover the costs of administration, auditing and updating the system and a once off joining per grower group is levied.

If you would like to participate or find out more please contact:

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SUSFarMS™

**Sustainable Sugar Farm
Management System**

SuSFarMS™

Sustainable Sugar Farm Management System

What is SuSFarMS?

SuSFarMS stands for Sustainable Sugarcane Farm Management System. It is a management and extension tool to assist users to manage sugarcane farms in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. SuSFarMS lays out better practice guidelines in a manner suitable for sustainability auditing by the farmer, extension workers or third party auditor. The methodology was developed in South Africa with sugar farmers and extension practitioners to be practical to use and implement. SuSFarMS consists of a user manual and Microsoft Excel audit spreadsheet.

What is sustainable farm management and why is it important?

SuSFarMS strives to support the positive effects of integrating plant and animal biodiversity and recognizes the farmer, farm worker and surrounding community as an integral component in achieving this. Such integration enhances complex interactions and synergisms and optimizes ecosystem functions and processes, such as biotic regulation of harmful organisms, nutrient recycling, water production and biomass accumulation, thus allowing agro-ecosystems to assist and sponsor their own functioning into the future. This is achieved by adapting and integrating the farm management system with the local resource base and existing environmental and socioeconomic conditions.

The end result of such an approach is improved long term economic, agronomic and ecological sustainability of the production system on which farming communities, and ultimately society, depend.

How does SuSFarMS work?

SuSFarMS assesses sustainability by ascertaining a farmer's adoption of better management practice (BMP) and adherence to applicable South African legislation. This is done under three categories (or Principles): Economic, Social and Environmental. These are underpinned by Criteria, Indicators and Verifiers. During an audit one looks at verifiers to show whether a BMP or legislation has been met.

An example is given in the table below:

<p>Principle: Natural assets are <u>conserved</u>, critical ecosystems services are <u>maintained</u> and agricultural resources are <u>sustainably</u> used.</p>		
<p>Criteria: Natural agricultural resources are sustainably used.</p>	<p>Indicator: Soil erosion is minimised.</p>	<p>Verifier: Extraction roads follow crest lines or conservation terraces.</p>

Better practice example:



Poorly planned road through a wetland



Well planned crest road contoured to limit erosion

How is SuSFarMS applied?

Ideally SuSFarMS should be applied collectively at a grower group level with extension services assistance. A grower group agrees on the level of performance it needs to achieve. Performance typically ranges from fully compliant to all better practice and legislation, through to partial compliance and/or no compliance. Continual improvement needs to be demonstrated and target percentages of farms on each tier of compliance set. As a minimum, growers should become legally compliant and set performance targets to achieve better practice compliance, with compliance increasing each year.

Better Practice example:



Well conserved riparian area



Poorly conserved riparian area