

GUIDELINES FOR DESTRUCTION OF SUGAR CANE

INTRODUCTION

The destruction of sugarcane is best done soon after harvest of the mature crop. If the crop to be destroyed has grown too big, it should be pushed or slashed down and the residue chopped up as much as possible. After the mature sugarcane crop has been removed, destruction can proceed.

CHEMICAL DESTRUCTION

Methods for chemical destruction differ slightly from district to district. In the Innisfail district, the preferred approach is to sprayout the old sugarcane crop using a herbicide, such as glyphosate. This creates minimal disturbance to the soil and reduces the risk of soil erosion.

It is vital that only a chemical registered for sugarcane crop destruction is used and that product label directions for use are followed exactly.

The level of destruction of the sugarcane crop after sprayout should be evident about eight weeks after application of the chemical.

Performance of some sprayout applications can be improved by cultivating (eg with a plough or disc plough) or slashing, then following chemical label directions for sprayout.

MECHANICAL CULTIVATION

Repeated mechanical cultivation of caneland with any one, or a combination of ploughing implements, is a common approach to destroying sugarcane crops.

Cultivation implements cut the old sugarcane stool into small pieces. The resultant disruption of the stool and drying of the soil, enhances the destruction of the sugarcane plant. An appropriate time interval should be left between cultivations to let the soil dry out and to kill most of the small pieces of sugarcane stool.

The effectiveness of this method is reduced if the soil remains moist as this promotes regrowth of the cane. To improve the destruction of the sugarcane crop, increase the number of cultivations.

CHEMICAL AND MECHANICAL DESTRUCTION

Mechanical and chemical destruction methods can be combined to successfully destroy a sugarcane crop.

GRAZING/ SLASHING

Grazing cattle on or regular slashing of caneland after harvest will eventually kill out the sugarcane crop. The time taken for complete destruction of the sugarcane crop can be considerable and will depend on weather conditions and grazing rate.