

Stakeholder Outreach meetings

Noodsberg Cane Growers Committee

Presentation on *BSI by D Willers*

Discussion and general comments.

Standards development often influenced too greatly by corporates and may be inapplicable to the lower end of the supply chain (ie small holder growers)

Any system needs to be of some tangible benefit and not too onerous. A particular Certification body was cited as being too onerous and too much concentration on social issues. Often the costs of audit and time taken to conduct is exhorbitant and not considered worth the effort.

The BSI standard was then briefly discussed and some points raised.

Obey the Law.

How would the system treat countries whose national laws are lenient? ie national laws might be complied with but international conventions not? This could result in too easy acceptance in countries with poor legislation.

Living wage - minimum wage - how would this be handled? These figures would need to be officially available.

Principle 3 Criteria 3.1 Indicator - Sugarcane yield

Growers would prefer a measure which includes sucrose or sugar production - cane yield per se is not the main target of performance.

Principle 3 Criteria 3.2 Indicator - Global warming burden

Growers would need some indication of scientifically backed up relationships between practices and "global warming burden" to be confident in use of this measure. Research may still be needed to provide this.

In terms of SusFarms and BSI - how would these two systems function? SusFarms may become an accepted standard in the SA Sugar industry.

It was suggested - and this is already underway - that a benchmarking exercise be carried out between SusFarms and the BSI. This could identify where SusFarms lacks information to comply with BSI and these extra numbers or aspects could later be added to the SusFarms audit to enable compliance with BSI. Most legal aspects and social aspects of the BSI are covered in SusFarms.

In essence SusFarms is a management tool describing the better management practices required to achieve acceptable social environmental and economic sustainability. The BSI could provide these acceptable metric targets.

After much discussion during the development stages of SusFarms they came to the conclusion that the most suitable categorization was a simple 3 principles - Economic, Environmental and Social - suggest BSI could consider the same. If principles were the same benchmarking the two would have been easier.

If BSI were audited on criteria only then SusFarms indicators could have been used.

Alternatively if SusFarms was implemented as a farm management system (leaving out the auditing for certification) then the BSI could provide the audit aspect.

Growers would still need the SusFarms audit sheet to enable them to do self assessment.

Pilot studies for BSI and SusFarms - it would be ideal to combine such a study using Noodsberg Cane Growers. However if the SA industry took over management of the SusFarms program decision making would be moved to a different place.

There is still a need for the detailed audit requirements for BSI to be rolled out - and values for indicators would also need to be verified. Ideally research specialists from the SA Sugarcane Research Institute could contribute to the development of the acceptable values.

Attendance :

Noodsberg Cane Growers Committee Chairman- Lloyd Harries, Environment Subcommittee
Chairman- Lotar Schulz, Members (4)
WWF South Africa- Vaughan Koopman
Noodsberg Mill manager - Eckard Lucht
SA Sugarcane Research Institute Extension Officer- Pat Brenchley
BSI Project manager - D Willers, TWG Leader Agriculture - P Turner

Noodsberg Local Grower Council members

Small Holder Growers

Discussion

The BSI standard was introduced and described by D Willers.

Generally growers were enthusiastic particularly in respect of potential financial premiums.

The need for a local language explanation pamphlet was raised.

The possibility of either the Mill or NGO's providing audit and compliance training for BSI was also raised and positively received.

Attendance:

Noodsberg Cane Growers Environment committee Chairman- Lotar Schulz
Noodsberg Local Grower Council members (10)
BSI Project manager - D Willers, TWG Leader Agriculture - P Turner

Report by Peter Turner, TWG Leader Agronomy

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