

SOUTH AFRICAN SUGARCANE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SENIOR CROP SCIENTIST/CROP SCIENTIST

Robust, high-yielding sugarcane cultivars form the foundation of sustainable sugarcane production in the challenging agro-climatic conditions of the South African sugar belt, which extends from southern kwaZulu-Natal into the lowveld of Mpumalanga. The breeding and testing of cultivars adapted to these unique conditions are undertaken exclusively by the South African Sugarcane Research Institute (SASRI), a private research institute funded by the South African sugar industry. All sugarcane cultivars grown in South Africa are produced by SASRI and due to their exceptional performance under harsh conditions, they are also extensively grown in several sub-Saharan countries through formal agreements.

SASRI currently has an exciting opportunity for a scientist/senior scientist to lead the cultivar testing programme for the sugar industry. The incumbent, as part of the sugarcane breeding team, is responsible for the design and management of a multi-location testing network for pre- and post-release sugarcane genotypes. The testing occurs on six SASRI research stations strategically sited in the sugar belt, as well on an extensive network of trial sites located on commercial farms.

Constant engagement with sugarcane farmers and extension specialists adds a further exciting layer to this dynamic position. A key performance area of the variety scientist/senior scientist is ongoing interaction with growers to demonstrate the value of the superior cultivars produced by the breeding programme. Hence, the incumbent also bears the responsibility for promoting and monitoring cultivar adoption.

The incumbent is also expected to lead additional independent research, technology development and knowledge exchange projects related to cultivar testing, cropping systems interactions and adoption. In this regard, SASRI actively encourages publication in science journals, presentation of research outcomes at discipline-specific conferences, supervision of post-graduate students and mentoring of interns.

The incumbent should ideally have:

- a PhD or MSc in plant breeding, crop science, or agronomy;
- experience in working as part of a team of specialists focused on common goals;
- knowledge of cropping systems gained within a commercial context;
- extensive experience in multi-location cultivar testing, particularly in trial design and data analysis;
- an interest in the study of GxE interactions, with a working knowledge of quantitative genetics; and
- experience in developing cultivar characterisation strategies and engaging with farmers to promote the adoption of new cultivars.

Added advantages would be experience in:

- integrating crop physiology and modelling to develop innovative cultivar selection technologies; and
- data mining and predictive modelling to develop cropping systems decision support tools;

To apply, please visit the on-line job portal on the SASA website

<http://www.sasa.org.za/careers/Vacancies>).

Closing date for applications is XXXXX 2018. SASRI reserves the right to consider applications received after this date but will not be obliged to do so.

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