



# SRA-LGAREC UPDATES

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## COST REDUCTION MEASURES IN SUGARCANE GROWING

Production cost in sugarcane growing is getting higher every year due to increasing cost of farm inputs and labor. This could be minimized, without compromising yield, by adopting the following cost reduction measures recommended by the Sugar Regulatory Administration in the growing of plant canes and ratoon crops.

**Soil Analysis** – Through soil analysis, correct amount and kind of fertilizers are applied in a specific farm. Unnecessary inputs entail costs.

**Liming** – Liming improves the availability of nutrients in the soil and lowers fertilizer recommendations.

**Organic Farming** – inorganic fertilizer inputs may be reduced by trash farming, use of rock phosphate, guano, mudpress, bagasse and mill ash or other agricultural products such as chicken and livestock manure.

**Use of High Grade Fertilizers** – To satisfy the NPK requirement per hectare based on soil analysis, high-grade fertilizers are more economical to use than the low-grade fertilizers.

**Rate of Seeding** – The best population per hectare is 40,000 plants. By planting more than this recommendation will incur about P2,000.00 per additional “lacsá” of canepoints used.

**Seedpiece Selection** – Proper cane point selection at planting reduces costs for replanting. A savings of about P352.75/ha is gained if cane points are properly selected.

**Replanting** – When missing hills occur replant the area to complete crop stand and to maximize production per unit area. When using cane points replant 1.0 – 1-½ months after planting (MAP) and 2-3 MAP when using chipped tillers.

**Weed Control** – For effective weed control at lower costs, timely implement either of the different strategies: three plow cultivations and three row weedings; pre or post-emergence herbicide application + three plow cultivations and

two row weedings; and, three plow cultivations and three blanket weedings.

### **Pest Control:**

1. *Sugarcane Stemborers* or ‘*tamasok*’ – Release adult *Trichogramma* parasites at the rate of 40 strips /ha starting at 1 ½ MAP at P6.00/strip to effectively control stemborers. It is economical for only P240.00 and also safe to use.
2. *White Grubs* or ‘*buk-an*’ – Insecticides could be substituted application of lime and the frequent cultivation to minimize pest population.
3. *Rodents* – The substitute for rodenticides to minimize rat populations in the sugarcane fields are sanitation and cultivation.

**Harvesting** – Supervise harvesting to ensure that operations are properly implemented. To be economical follow the following tips during harvest:

1. Cut canes close to the ground for higher yields and eliminate costs for stubble shaving
2. Observe proper topping at harvest – Leave two canepoints when harvesting. Higher rendement can be realized by excluding ‘no sugar stalks’ for milling.
3. Mill clean canes – Leave all trashes in the field during cane loading and handling. Trashes include cane tops, dried leaves and stalks, bull shoots, weeds, roots and soil particles. Extra cost is paid for trashes that lower sugar rendement.

**Ratooning** – about P250.00/ha cane be saved when cutting canes close to the ground, due to the skipping of stubble shaving. By trash farming, another P1,050 can be saved due to lesser frequency of weeding and cultivation.

By adopting SRA’s recommendations in growing sugarcane from planting to harvesting, a total of P42,000 and P29,000 are needed for plant and ratoon crop, respectively. Following the suggested cost reduction measures could reduce this up to P7,000.00 per hectare. (*compiled by rgentima*)