

Can failure of first generation land reform farmers be avoided through comprehensive training and mentoring by established farmers?

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Driven by the target of 30% land redistribution and the restitution of land rights, the South African sugar industry has had 350 new farmers join the industry in the past ten years. Most of these farmers did not have farming experience and few had agricultural qualifications. CANEGROWERS as the member organisation for all these farmers organised a comprehensive training and mentorship programme in 2004 for all new farmers. Attendance was voluntary and costs were covered by the agricultural training authority. The training programme was managed by the industrial training centre and the mentoring by the local grower leadership. Training ranged from basic agronomy to business management and was supplemented with a mentorship programme. This poster will determine whether participation in this comprehensive training programme has contributed to the success of these farmers by analysing their financial records, production and participation in local industry structures. These findings have been used to inform the design of future programmes which CANEGROWERS intends to run.