1- Sugarcane Detrashing...

Manually removing the dry leaves from the stalks (= 'stripping') during the last months before harvesting (in green hand cutting system): a practice

- Inherited from the past (when cane had to be delivered free of trash) for time saving at harvest
- Still practiced in Reunion Island by small farmers mainly dedicated to sugarcane growing, mainly as...

... an Agri Environmental Measure:

- Supported by subsidies from Ministry of Agriculture
- Committed by voluntary farmers for 5 years, to:
  - Enhance soil conservation, moisture and fertility
  - Reduce herbicide use.
- Commitment also includes keeping all the trash in the area after the cane cutting, covering bare soil corridors subsequent to mechanical cane loading operations.
- By 2010’s, ~ 25% of cane growers involved (~15% of the total sugarcane area)

2- Field Traffic Control during Cane Loading

In Reunion volcanic soils, cane loading without traffic control seems not to be a problem in dry conditions (D), but when wet conditions occur (E), there are consequences on soil compaction (F) and cane regrowth.

3- Key Factors of Crop Longevity?

Among the panel of good cultural practices, the high longevity of some hand cutting cane crops in Reunion could also be explained by less recognized practices such as detrashing and field traffic control at harvest.

One example of success story: 28 years of high yielding with var. R570 at Saint-Philippe, involving continuous detrashing and traffic control (G) : traffic is restricted to corridors, where cane growth is nevertheless reduced.

Reference:
Blandine ROSIES. Pratiques agricoles et longévités des plantations de canne à sucre à La Réunion, interactions avec les stocks de carbone des sols. Agro-Paris-Tech, Univ. Paris-Saclay, Cirad Réunion, C@Run project. Master 1 thesis.