



Slash-and-Burn Agriculture: The Search for Alternatives

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- Foreword by Jeffrey Sachs

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Striking an equitable balance between the legitimate interests of rural tropical households and the equally legitimate global concerns over the environmental consequences of tropical deforestation is one of the major challenges of the next decades. The Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn (ASB) consortium - eventually comprising over 40 organizations spread across the humid tropical belt - was established in 1992 by a group of concerned national and international research institutions and non-governmental organizations to address this challenge.

This book is a synthesis of the first decade of ASB's work, written by a team of 79 soil scientists, economists, ecologists, anthropologists and foresters encompassing 26 nationalities.

The first paper provides the introduction to slash and burn activities and the overall framework used by ASB, including its tradeoff matrix. The second section focuses on the different environmental, agronomic and socioeconomic dimensions, including chapters on carbon dynamics, greenhouse gas emissions, above-ground and below-ground biodiversity, agronomic sustainability and macroeconomics. The third section focuses on specific best-bet alternatives to slash and burn at a sub national scale, including community forest management, jungle rubber, shade coffee and reclamation of degraded grasslands. The fourth section provides the perspective of the main countries involved, Brazil, Indonesia, Cameroon, Peru and Thailand. **The final section compares the different sites, and assesses the tradeoffs among the environmental, agronomic, and economic functions of the forest and alternatives to slash and burn systems.**

A Collaborative Publication by the Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn Consortium, the World Agroforestry Centre, The Earth Institute at Columbia University and The Center for Natural Resources Policy Analysis at the University of California, Davis.
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