



Slash-and-Burn Agriculture: The Search for Alternatives

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- Foreword by Jeffrey Sachs

The Problem and Approach

- Alternatives to Slash and Burn: Challenge and Approaches of an International Consortium by *PA Sanchez, CA Palm, SA Vosti Tomich, and J Kasyoki*

Thematic Research

- Carbon Losses and Sequestration Following Land Use Change in the Humid Tropics by *CA Palm, M van Noordwijk, PL Wooster, JC Alegre, L Arévalo, CE Castilla, DG Cordeiro, K Hairiah, J Kotto-Same, A Moukam, WJ Parton, A Ricse, V Rodrigues and SM Sitompul*
- Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Slash-and-Burn and Alternative Land-Use Practices in Sumatra, Indonesia by *D Murdiyarso, H Tsuruta, S Ishizuka, K Hairiah, and CA Palm*
- The Potential Role of Aboveground Biodiversity Indicators in Assessing Best-Bet Alternatives to Slash and Burn by *AN Gillison*
- Belowground Biodiversity Assessment: The ASB Functional Group Approach by *DE Bignell, J Tondoh, L Dibog, S Pin Huang, F Moreira, D Nwaga, B Pashanasi, E Guimarães Pereira, F-X Susilo, and MJ Swift*
- Sustainability of Tropical Land-use Systems Following Forest Conversion by *K Hairiah, M van Noordwijk, and S Weise*
- The Forest for the Trees: The Effects of Macroeconomic Factors on Deforestation in Brazil and Indonesia by *A Cattaneo and Nu Nu San*

Site Specific Alternatives to Slash and Burn Agriculture

- Sustainable Forest Management for Smallholder Farmers in the Brazilian Amazon by *MVN d' Oliveira, MD Swaine, DFRP Burslem, EM Bráz and HJB de Araújo*
- Permanent Smallholder Rubber Agroforestry Systems in Sumatra, Indonesia by *G Wibawa, S Hendratno and M van Noordwijk*
- Coffee, Pastures, and Deforestation in the Western Brazilian Amazon - A Farm-level Bioeconomic Model by *CL Carpentier, SA Vosti and J Witcover*
- Smallholder Options for Reclaiming and Using Imperata cylindrica (Alang-Alang) Grasslands in Indonesia by *P Purnomosidhi, K Hairiah, S Rahayu and M van Noordwijk*

National Perspectives

- The Western Brazilian Amazon by *JF Valentim and SA Vosti*
- The Forest Margins of Sumatra, Indonesia by *S Partohardjono, D Pasaribu and AM Fagi*
- The Forest Margins of Cameroon by *J Gockowski, J Tonyé, C Diaw, S Hauser, J Kotto-Same, A Moukam, R Nomgang, D Nwaga, T Tiki-Manga, J Tondoh, Z Tchoundjeu, S Weise, L Zapfack*
- The Peruvian Amazon: Development Imperatives and Challenges by *D White, M Arca, J Alegre, D Yanggen, R Labarta, JC Weber, C Sotelo-Montes, and H Vidaurre*
- Northern Thailand: Changing Smallholder Land-Use Patterns by *P Suraswadi, DE Thomas, K Pragtong, P Preechapanya and H Weyerhaeuser*

Cross-Site Comparisons and Conclusions

- Land-Use Systems at the Margins of Tropical Moist Forest: Addressing Smallholder Concerns in Cameroon, Indonesia, and Brazil by *SA Vosti, J Gockowski and TP Tomich*
- Balancing Agricultural Development and Environmental Objectives: Assessing Tradeoffs in the Humid Tropics by *TP Tomich, A Cattaneo, S Chater, HJ Geist, J Gockowski, D Kaimowitz, EF Lambin, J Lewis, O Ndoye, C Palm, F Stolle, WD Sunderlin, JF Valentim, M van Noordwijk, SA Vosti*



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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