Plenary Session VIII.

Thematic Papers: Property Rights, Markets & Institutions

Tala-andig villagers transporting rattan back to the village in Mindanao, the Philippines. At what point do remunerative marketing opportunities and dwindling natural supplies encourage farmers to undertake enrichment planting of economic species into fallow land?

Oral Presentations:

Productivity Management of Swidden Fallows: The Interplay of market Forces and Institutional Factors in Isabela, Philippines

By Paulo n. Pasicolan*

A large potion of grasslands in the Philippines is classified as abandoned swidden under long fallow. Generally, they are marginal lands and with low productivity per unit area. Being oftentimes invaded by *Imperata cylindrical*, the light loving nature of this grass coupled with frequent burning. Perpetuates the species dominance over other plants. Thus, reforestation and agroforestry, are regarded as the most ideal conversion processes to effectively eradicate this weed species. However, reforesting the grasslands through Contract Reforestation Program has been costly, with a dismal performance in the initial phase.

This paper highlights the spontaneous introduction of tree crop in swidden fallows in the two municipalities of Isabela, Northeastern Philippines. It identifies the various institutional factors of successful tree growing at the farm level.

Field visitation and random informal interviews with small tree growers where carried out. Their motivations and considerations for tree growing were confronted.

Factors that led to the successful tree growing: 1) presence of ready wood market, 2) availability of credit assistance, 3) provision of more planting area with tenurial security, 4) mutual partnership between the private and government sectors, and 5) effective extension program.

Isabela's idle grassland transformation to tree-based system could prototype a larger scale conversion towards a more stable land use. It was largely spontaneous and market-driven. By meeting farmers basic tree growing needs, e.g., sure wood market, provision of starting capital, more planting area, etc. A transition from swidden fallow to tree-based system can be achieved, without necessarily depending heavily on direct government financial support.

Keywords: fallow management, tree-based cropping, spontaneous conversion, market-driven, institutional incentives.

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The Role of Land Tenure on Development of Cinnamon Agroforestry in Kerinci, Sumatra

By Suyanto*, Thomas Tomich**, and Keijiro Otsuka***

When population density is low and land is abundant, traditional shifting cultivation (with a long fallow period) is sustainable. However, when population pressure increases and land become scarce, the fallow period may become too short for sustainable food crop production. The adoption of agroforestry systems can be an alternative to unsustainable shifting cultivation. Important tree crops such as rubber (*Hevea braziliensis*) and cinnamon (*Cassiavera*) have been introduced into shifting cultivation systems in Sumatra. This paper analysis the effect of land tenure on development cinnamon agroforestry that is as example of improved tree fallow.

Land tenure has important role in establishing sustainable land use practice. Traditionally indigenous societies have followed a matrilineal inheritance system with joint ownership that limits individuals right to land and others asset. There seem to have been, however, significant change toward more individualized in responds to populations pressure and commercialization of tree crops. With more secure individual land right, it will stimulate farmers to adopt more efficient and more sustainable land use, including the development of agroforestry.

With secure land and tree tenure, high profitability of cinnamon production, and diminished access to forest land, farmer will tend to convert bush-fallow area into cinnamon agroforestry rather than into shifting cultivation to produce annual food crops. This evidence will bring environmental benefits, comparing with if the major source of tree plots is primary forest.

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The Development of Central Sumatran Traditional Fallow Systems in a Changing Environment

By Silvia Werner*

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the traditional fallow system of central Sumatra has undergone successive changes. Triggered by external developments, local farmers integrated economic tree crops, especially rubber, into their upland fields. This economic enrichment of the fallow, however, did not change the shifting cultivation system itself. It represented an ideal complementary to upland rice production, using excess labour force during periods where labour demands in the rice fields were low.

During the last decades, however, the proportion between rice production and cash revenue generation within the land use system changed. Initially, cash revenue from economic tree crops was only used to provide cash income for taxes, school fees and consumer goods which could not be produced by the farmers themselves, whereas food, especially rice, subsistence was always the priority of agricultural production. Nowadays, farmers increasingly focus their attention on economic tree crops and cash generation. The major motive for the establishment of an upland field more and more shifts from rice production for subsistence to the establishment of a tree crop garden, where rice merely is an intercrop during the pre-harvest period.

Depending on the environmental conditions as well as on the availability of land, information, infrastructure and inputs, different villages now move in different directions, changing the picture of a formerly more uniform shifting cultivation landscape.

In remote areas with limited infrastructure but abundant land resources exhibiting a rolling hill relief with no potential for irrigated rice production, rice is still cultivated on upland fields. A full food subsistence, however, is not aimed at anymore. When the home-grown stock has been consumed, rice is bought with the cash revenue generated through the sale of economic tree crop products.

Where geomorphology is favorable, upland rice production is replaced by irrigated rice production, whereas the shifting cycle is reduced to initial slashing and burning for the establishment of an economic tree crop garden. Vegetables still are grown in the pre-harvest period, but no rice.

In areas with limited potential for irrigated rice production, but good infrastructure, farmers very much focus now on the cultivation of economic tree crops, especially cinnamon, which promises good revenues, is not prone to pests and needs little care. Rice and vegetables are interplanted during the first years, but the main consideration for the opening of an upland field is not rice production anymore, but the establishment of an economic tree crop garden.

The decline of shifting cultivation for the means of rice production causes a decline of traditional fallow systems consisting mainly of secondary vegetation. Ecologically and economically tree crop gardens now more and more replace the function of traditional fallows as a local source for building and handicraft materials, fuelwood, fruits and medicinal plants, for the recovery of the soil fertility and for soil protection as well as for biodiversity conservation.

Keywords: shifting cultivation, tree crop gardens, Sumatra, economic fallow, rubber, cassiavera

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Poster Presentations:

The Role of Policy and Market Institutions in Determining the Feasibility of Rattan Cultivation Within Shifting Cultivation Systems

By Brian Belcher*

Rattans are among the most economically important non-timber products from tropical forests in Asia. The bulk of rattan production still comes from unmanaged wild resources. However, a number of rattan cultivation models have been developed, including some traditional approaches that incorporate rattan within the fallow in shifting agricultural systems. This approach seems to offer many advantages in terms of increased income, reduced risk, and income generation from the fallow, making longer fallow periods economically feasible. In practice though, rattan enrichment in fallow is not really very widespread, and traditional rattan gardens in Indonesia are being abandoned in some places. This is due partly to technical limitations, but more to economic limitations. Marketing systems typical of non-timber forest products, and policy and other institutional mechanisms, tend to depress farm gate prices for rattan, making rattan cultivation relatively unattractive, even in the face of increasing industrial demand for rattan raw material. This paper examines the economic benefits and constraints to rattan cultivation in fallow and suggests options to increase the attractiveness of the strategy.

Keywords: rattan, shifting cultivation, institutions, market, policy, cost-benefit analysis, Indonesia

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The Pivotal Role of Indigenous Regulatory Institutions in Support of Sustainable Swidden Farming Systems in LAO P.D.R.

By Phouang Parisak Pravongviengkham

Swidden farming system or slash-and-burn agriculture, with upland rice and maize as the major crops, is the predominant land use system in the upland areas of Lao PDR. Previous papers dealing with slash-and-burn agriculture have used ethnic identity for policy formulation and in the planning and execution of development activities. Present terminology still classify the population in Lao PDR into "dwellers of the lowlands, midland mountain slopes and highlands or mountain summits" strongly reinforces bias associating a particular swidden system with a particular ethnic cultural group.

Initial observation on upland land use practices from a recent in-depth agroecosystem, village and household survey in parts of Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang and Houphanh have revealed that swidden farm typology should rather include landscape-ecological endowments (including slope classes & soil types/vegetation); size of holding-population pressure; livestock systems & importance; access to markets & inputs/access to alternatives sources of income & also very important (in the Lao context) the local institution indigenous regulatory role – traditional social norms and local decision-making process (affecting the use of the resources). In the Lao swidden systems, especially in the last 20-30 years, local institution indigenous regulatory systems (at village community-level) has a pivotal in ensuring the sustainability of the different swidden systems, irrespective of ethnic identify.

Recent "grassroot survey work" has shown that the practice of shifting cultivation was not just a form of successional management of fallow plots driven by the upland farmer ethnic affiliation or individualistic farming skill/knowledge/management and decision making ability. With accumulated local knowledge on resources availability & capability (better understanding of dynamics of existing eco-systems & perceived understanding of land capability & fertility) and increasing external influence (roods/education/market/information-technology/credit system, etc.); the need to use more efficiently available resources, for achieving the maintenance of normal livelihood and gradual betterment of the community socio-economical status, have became a priority occupation at village committee and elder's group. This form of community-based management of communal resource was devised by the village authority & elders groups with the participation of all households. There was no inference nor influence from the district or other external forces. This shows a strong sense of solidarity and autonomy.

The local regulatory system has been a driving force in influencing and directing the gradual move of the traditional swidden system, from the stage of a simple fallow plot successional system to a more complex "block/plot" fallow rotational systems. The main feature of this "block/plot" system is that the village authority is given the sole right (by the community) to select and allocate (on a yearly basis) to each grouping of households a block fallow site and, within the block, to each individual farmer the plot site to swidden. The formation of groupings of households to work together is obligatory but can be flexible, the allocation of blocks and plots can also be flexible or inflexible.

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The reason behind this relatively strict to strict block/plot fallow land allocation system & procedure is to achieve fair & equitable distribution of fallow land among all village members /households. A block fallow site is composed of a number of fallow plots. A farmer crop, in most cases, on one fallow plot. The indigenous regulatory system was important to ensure that all village households have equal opportunities in resource use, which consequently provided an incentive for the farmer to manage better land resources provided to him/her. The regulatory systems have played also a catalytic role in motivating & supporting collective enterprises that benefit also to individual household, e.g., creation of a village rice bank, collective social fund, credit system (to support intensification of agricultural production).

The efficient 'manipulation' and management of the fallow blocks & plots and the retainment of strong inter-household, intra-village and even inter-village solidarity and equitable use of land and other eco-resources has been one major determinant in allowing a more productive and stable land use practice and, therefore, ensuring the sustainability of a number of Lao swidden systems and consequently, the normal functioning & maintenance of upland farmers' livelihood. The consciousness & awareness in supporting sustainable swidden-based agro-ecosystems is reflected in the unanimity in the practice of village-level regulatory social norms.

Efficient manipulation of fallow succession by the whole village community can help in retaining a good fallow vegetation cover & allows also a more productive used of scarce labour (e.g., less labour need for slashing and weeding). It allows also intensification of other important economic activities within the village agroecosystems; **such as the full exploitation or biological improvement of fallow lands for more intensified cattle production**, which is considered by the local farmers themselves a viable alternative to reducing gradually and eventually substituting the practice of a still predominant rice-based swidden farming system.

It is therefore important and indispensable to achieve a sound understanding of the dynamics of the Lao swidden systems, their evolutional pathways and the role of the local institution, community and the individual farmer within different communities; to be able to classify and describe the functioning of the different systems and sub-systems, their sustainability and unsustainability so that appropriate development strategies and action programs can be developed to strengthen the sustainable systems & to improve (if possible) the unsustainable systems.

Due to the fact that my research work covers a wide range of issues and topics, the paper that I wish to present would focus on describing in brief the different Lao swidden systems, their evolution from traditional swidden management system, that is from the stage of a simple fallow plot successional system to a more complex "block/plot" fallow rotational systems; strengths & weaknesses of these systems. Then I would focus in-depth on what I called "the regulatory fixed block/fixed plot rotational system" where intensification of livestock in the 'communal fallow land' has become an integral part of this type of swidden system (there are other sub-components also of economic importance but my focus will be only on fallow succession manipulation & intensification of livestock). This type of swidden system is original (livestock production-wise) since (1) it allows fencing of the whole village herd in one specific location and enabling soil fertility management (here upland rice is not fenced), (2) it facilitates management of the herd and (3) it shows clearly entry points for introducing technical innovations, e.g., planning longer term improvement of fallow lands; establish forages & legumes in the fallows,

Introduce permanent animal care services. In this system livestock production can be intensified relatively easy (technically and socially and environmentally feasible), since the community is already well organized, by indigenous social norms.

Effect of Land Allocation to Farmers on Shifting Cultivation in Vietnam: A Case Study of Sinh Pinh Commune, tua Chun Dictrict, Lai Chau Province

By Dinh Van Quang*

The landuse rights parallel with others regulating the transfer of land to other people and even offspring and its use as collaterals for money lending as provided by laws in 1993 have caused farmers of this country to change their approach to landuse, encouraged them to practice sustainable farming and better protection of land resources which have been allocated to them. As a result, the use and management of public lands in the Upland of Vietnam have experienced good success.

The H'Mong household economy TOT project carried out at Sinh Pinh commune. Tua Chua district, Lai Chau province, using the integrated farming models of Forest Tree Cropping +Swiddenning + Gardening on sloping lands appears to be promising. The H'mong forest people formerly using their traditional method of forest clearing for food production have begun to plant forest tree crops, to establish alley cropping and practice soil conservation management. Intensive-labor farming to increase land productivity begins to be adopted on lands recently received.

Rotational swiddening is a traditional system among forest peoples. Under the prevailing conditions, changes of that system do not seem to be easy, in particular under the conditions of higher pressure from an increasing population. The use of legumes to cover the land under farming, to practice better soil conservation management, to increase soil productivity and shorten the restoration process should receive the highest priority in research on landuse in particular in the mountain area of this country.

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Building on Traditional Practices to Improve the Productivity of Natural Resource Management: A Community-Based Approach

By Tawatchai Ratanasorn*

The evolution of resource management and the development of community institutions and regulations amongst pioneer and rotational swiddeners in the highlands of northern Thailand will be presented. Recent changes have had considerable implications for fallow management.

The Thai-German Highland Development Programme (TG-HDP) has been supporting governments efforts to improve the quality of life of the highland population, reduce drug abuse problems and maintain a better ecological balance since 1982. The traditional practices of the ethnic groups with which TG-HDP has been co-operating can be broadly divided into Pioneer Swiddeners (Hmong, Lahu, Lisu) and Rotational Swiddeners (Karen). In the case of the Pioneer Swiddeners, fallow management was hardly considered as new forest land was progressively opened up for cultivation and villages sites periodically relocated. Settlements consisted of a number of clans who retained considerable decision making authority within each clan, resulting in weak community regulation of local issues, including resource management.

In the case of the Rotational Swiddeners, fallow regeneration was, and remains, central to the swidden system and traditional practices (single year of cropping, no soil preparation, retention of large trees, etc.) ensure that this occurs. Swiddening is associated with wet rice cultivation, village sites are permanent, community institutions are well developed and clear regulations for resource management exist.

Over the last 15 years or so, recent developments have exerted external pressures on these traditional systems. Both groups, but in particular the pioneer swiddeners, have had to adjust to permanent settlement within a fixed land area, the promotion of community leadership, a ban on forest destruction and increased population pressure on a limit land resource. An approach to develop community institutions and subsequently inter-community networks has been found to be an essential element of adjusting practices to new realities. Natural resource management systems have required adjustment, agricultural systems and practices have been modified and a number of innovative approaches developed by different community groups which impact on fallow management. These include, semi-permanent/alley cropping, the planting of legume cover crops, the inclusion of trees and the integration of livestock raising.

Keywords: pioneer, rotational swiddening, fallow management, swidden intensification, indigenous practices, permanent agriculture

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Synthesis Reports.

Farmer-Developed Fallow Management Innovations in Southeast Asia: The Opportunity for Strategic Regional Partnerships

By James Hafner[*], Ellen McCallie[**] and Lucy Fisher[***]

This paper presents review of the range of fallow management systems developed by farmers in Southeast Asia based primarily on papers to be presented at the "Indigenous Strategies for the Intensification of Shifting Cultivation in Southeast Asia Workshop (23-27 June, Bogor, Indonesia). Based on the synthesis developed by participants in a related graduate seminar at Cornell University, an analytical framework for regional research is proposed which includes three components: key analytical concepts and assumptions; a template of criteria for fallow systems characterization; and considerations for research process design based on partnerships among peoples' organizations, development NGOs, research and government agencies.

Our analysis of fallows research highlights the need to put in context both the object of study (i.e., the process of fallows intensification) and the approach to study (i.e., research strategy and methods). Conference papers which form the basic data set for this paper covered a wide range of plant species, management strategies and local development contexts. However, they can be grouped broadly into three basic types: descriptive case studies of fallow management systems; applications of evaluative tools to proposed or extant fallow systems; and multiple site analyses of trends, principles and hypothesis.

The analytical framework proposed here places emphasis on understanding the observed fallow management systems as transitional systems within a dynamic setting. Thus, a minimum data set for describing farmer-developed fallow management regimes within a local, hierarchical systems context is proposed. This identifies a range of factors to which farmers are responding in developing their livelihood strategies and the fallow component of their farm systems. Conceptually, stock factors (primarily biophysical) are seen as interacting with selection factors (primarily socio-economic, such as farm household goals, opportunities and constraints) to produce the fallow management system observed. On the basis of this characterization, an attempt is made to generalize about "contexts" of fallows intensification and assess the potential for transferability of farmer innovations. The key themes and trends which emerged from case studies are noted and several regional hypotheses are proposed to guide a regionally coordinated research.

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From the characterization step, it appears that a regional research effort could follow a standard process of: evaluating and validating technological innovations along economic and ecological criteria, identifying promising technologies, delineating "representative sites," and refining "extrapolation domains" for fallow systems to be applied regionally. Concerns are raised about such a research process and the assumptions on which it is based. Based on the track-record of technologically-driven research in socially and economically marginalized areas, and the transitional nature of fallow management forms, critically examination of assumptions behind the array of possible research approaches should be integral to the research agenda. It is argued that research in politically marginal, heterogeneous, and less productive dryland areas should address the question of how agricultural research can most effectively contribute to a process of wider social change. Thus, it is proposed that a research initiative should seriously examine how to incorporate the following elements: place fallows management within a wider systems context; strive to build local institutional capacity through site-specific research collaboration with farmers and NGOs; seek technological results which are both effective in practice and scientifically valid. Thus, capacity building and participatory technology development is viewed as complementary to on-station and on-farm experimental research, and comparative, site-based research. Regional research which is self-reflective, values innovative methodological approaches and integrates local people provides the best hope for both avoiding the shortcomings of past research and policies targeted at swidden farmers -- and directly advancing the strategic needs of this marginalized group.

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