Agroforestry Species in Peruvian Amazon: Farmers' Preference Survey

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Abstract

The involvement of farmers into the process of improvement of multistrata agroforestry systems (AFS) has been receiving increased research attention during last decades. Proper species composition, reflecting both farmers' needs and ecological sustainability, is the crucial feature of AFS. According to our knowledge native tree species preference survey has been carried out in the Peruvian Amazon, however, the preferences for the species regarding different floristic strata were not reported from this region. The objective of this study was to identify the most preferred species from particular floristic strata suitable for AFS in the surrounding of Pucallpa in Peruvian Amazon. The data was gathered in two-rounded survey using participatory methodology modified according to Franzel *et al.* among local farmers. The list of 13 preferred species includes well-known commercial species (*e.g. Cocos nucifera* or *Manihot esculenta*), fruit bearing species (including native fruit trees like as *Myrciaria dubia*), medicinal plants (*Morinda citrifolia*), legume (*Cajanus cajan*), spices (*Piper nigrum*) and traditional indigenous species so far lacking exploration (*Plukenetia volubilis*). The respondents selected on average 65 species, so the demand for useful plans reflect the high biodiversity of the region; the farmers do not stand the marketability above the household consumption and the farmers go on searching for alternatives to traditional cash crops. The balance between the need for biodiversity conservation and satisfaction of needs of small-scale farmers in the Peruvian Amazon can contribute for sustainable development of the rural areas in the region. Considering the current knowledge of preferred species among farmers in given area, it is imperative to carry out research exploring their potential in evolving production systems and to quantify the opportunities of adoption and improvement of AFS.

Keywords: Amazonia, floristic strata, multistrata sytems, Peru, priority setting

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