

Agricultural Landscapes in the Wet Tropics

Future visions balancing environmental, social and economic needs



Background

The Wet Tropics of North Queensland are characterised by a mixture of natural and agricultural landscapes that exist side-by-side.

Balancing farm profitability, protection of biodiversity and maintenance of the services natural ecosystems provide are a challenge for the people of this region.

The need for protection of areas of high conservation value requires balance with profitable production systems to sustain people's livelihoods.

Links between production and conservation will be the focus of this research project. To build these links we plan to work in partnership with farmers and the community to understand their future goals and aspirations.

These will be used to develop a framework for systematic planning for future agricultural landscapes in the Wet Tropics, based on partnerships with stakeholders.

The project will be carried out by Dr Iris Bohnet from CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems.

Study areas

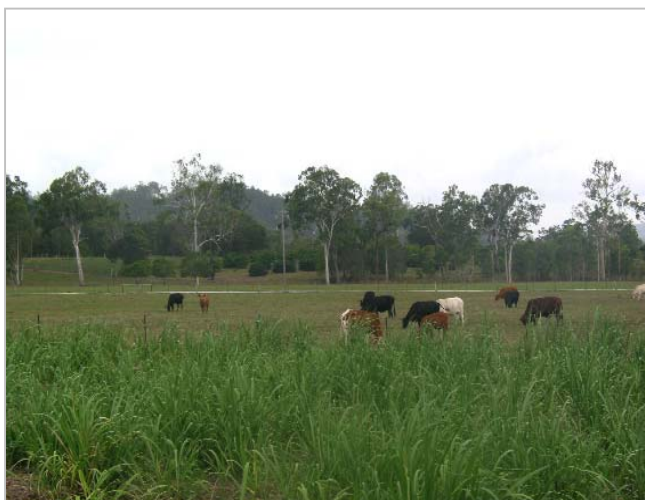
The study areas include two neighbouring landscapes – a lowland and an upland landscape. The lowland area is Mossman, characterised by tropical coastal landscape with flat areas covered in sugarcane and tropical fruit orchards. The upland area is Julatten, characterised by a mixture of land uses including timber plantations, grazing pastures, abandoned paddocks, orchards and sugarcane fields.



Objectives

The objectives of the project are to:

1. Understand farmers' goals and aspirations regarding the use and management of their land.
2. Identify sustainable land use and management options (e.g. combining farming with riparian revegetation, timber plantations, fruit orchards, or rainforest restoration) together with local farmers.
3. Understand from farmers how novel land use and management options can be adapted to their needs.
4. Generate future visions for agricultural landscapes in the Wet Tropics based on the identified land use options.
5. Discuss and predict potential trade-offs of each landscape vision with local farmers and the community.
6. Identify landscape goals in collaboration with local farmers and the community that can be translated into planning and management of practical conservation measures that make sense to farmers and the farm business.



Anticipated outcomes

This research attempts to help farmers and the wider community identify options for diversifying income sources, plan for their future and participate in the process of directing change towards sustainable future landscapes.

Q: Are you interested in participating in this project?

A: If you are, please contact Iris Bohnet.

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