Tropical rainforests offer extensive reserves of land for different types of farming: slash and burn agriculture, family smallholdings on a pioneer front, agroforestry and agro-industrial plantations.

In the Amazon basin, scientists are seeking how to preserve the forests within small farming concerns while improving farmers’ standard of living, intensifying agricultural production under plant cover and controlling deforestation. In other words, increasing yields to avoid forest clearance and restoring soil fertility.

The agroforests set up by people in Indonesia, very rich in flora, associate on the same plot forestry, agriculture and stock-keeping:

- This system of sustainable farming has beneficial effects for the environment (soil fertility, biodiversity) and provides useful products with significant income for the local farmers.
- In the Amazon, family-based agriculture “on the pioneer front” uses slash and burn methods to clear forest land. The Brazilian State regulates this practice by allowing a farmer to cultivate only 20% of his land.

When family-based agriculture preserves the Amazonian forest.

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Did you know?

Oil palm offers the best yields when grown in a humid equatorial climate with strong sun exposure. Its expansion in Indonesia, prompted by global demand, combined with severe drought, is partly responsible for the serious forest fires of 1997/1998.