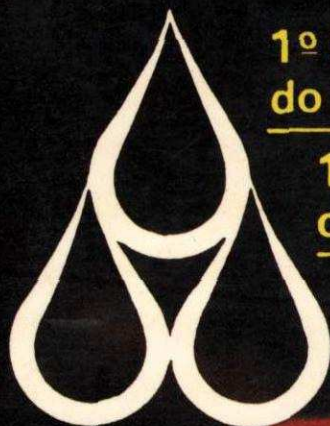




Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária - EMBRAPA

Vinculada ao Ministério da Agricultura

Centro de Pesquisa Agropecuária do Trópico Úmido - CPATU



1º Simpósio do Trópico Úmido

1st Symposium on the Humid Tropics

1º Simpósio del Trópico Humedo

**RESUMOS
ABSTRACT
RESUMEN**

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NOTES ON THE OCCUPATION OF PRIMARY HABITATS

João Murça Pires¹

The intervention of man in the environment is an issue of extreme importance, and it cannot be dissociated from agricultural problems. On the contrary, it must be a top priority of agricultural research in those primary habitats which are being colonized. This should include basic biological research, zoning, and selection of representative areas for conservation.

In Brazil, the government is considering a project on the "Reformulation of Policy of Occupation of Amazônia". This in itself, however, is insufficient. This reform must include all other ecosystems in the country, forest and non-forest.

Since the discovery of Brazil, a body of concepts and corresponding modes of action have been developing which contain extremely dangerous distortions and errors, some of which will be referred to below.

The occupation, or peopling, of primary habitats is not a pressing need to be enacted hurriedly. The "interiorization" of the nation is not vital to national security, rather it may be counterproductive. Projects which are hastily carried out are inevitably imperfect and terribly expensive as well.

The rapid distribution of unoccupied lands (*terra devoluta*) is a mistake, as these comprise a strategic

¹ EMBRAPA-CPATU. Caixa Postal 48. CEP 66000. Belém, PA, Brasil.

patrimony for the nation. They should be retained by the central government (not the state governments) and relinquished only under the proven assurance of their wise use. INCRA should be reformed. It is essential to develop a mechanism whereby abused lands can be returned to the nation. Colonization should be focused on areas of secondary vegetation (capoeira), and projects involving conversion of primary habitats should be permitted only in exceptional cases.

To think that agriculture can easily conquer tropical forests is a fantasy. Such success is achieved only through advanced techniques. For this reason Amazonia is by no means an easy solution for the unprepared refugees fleeing the drought in the Northeast.

The highway system, if not carefully planned, results in inefficient and destructive agriculture in previously inaccessible areas.

Projects which promote extensive agriculture step up the attack on the ecosystems; it would be interesting to carry out a study of the effects of thirty years of this promotion. Projects of a developmentalist character must be reviewed and purged of speculative implications.

The status of those areas which have been decreed, legalized, or proposed as reserves should be studied. Reserves which have been invaded must be restored. Pilot projects should be instituted which will examine technology for the integral utilization of forests. A rational program of tourism incorporating leisure, sport, hunting, science and education is highly recommended and would accomplish a great deal toward preservationist goals.