

Public Abstract

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Title:PROTECTION PRODUCTION PROSPERITY COSTA RICAN FARMERS RESPOND TO THE WINDBREAKS PROJECT

In 1991 and 1992, farmers in Monteverde, Costa Rica participated in a reforestation project implemented by a local conservation organization. Installing windbreaks useful to farmers and wildlife was the main purpose of this project. This thesis aims to add to the body of social research that has been conducted on the relationship between the farmers, the windbreaks, and the project implementing organization. It examines the motivations of farmers for involvement in the Windbreaks Project, benefits and disadvantages of windbreaks, management of natural resources and assistance needed, opinions of past reforestation activities, and economic impacts of the windbreaks. The researcher conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 42 farmers. Findings show that farmers indicated conservation benefits of the windbreaks. Farmers indicated a wide range of techniques used in the management of natural resources. The most common techniques were enclosing resources, avoiding damage to resources, and engaging in reforestation. Most farmers indicated positive opinions of the past reforestation activities and willingness to participate in future activities. However, some lamented that the Monteverde Conservation League lacked presence in the countryside. Communication between this local social organization and the farmers around Monteverde needs to be reestablished prior to the implementation of any new reforestation activities. The Monteverde Conservation League staff may use the findings from this study in future decision-making related to reforestation activities. Also, this work can contribute to the body of research in agroforestry by providing information about the social factors and economic outcomes of windbreaks in the lives of farmers in Costa Rica.