Rotational farming/Swidden Agriculture

Rotational farming is an agricultural practice that involves alternating cultivation between different plots within the same location whilst leaving the other plots fallow. It is often misunderstood, and is considered to be a destructive farming technique which depletes soil nutrient content as it often involves the clearing of land by burning. When properly understood, it is an indigenous farming technique that takes into account local conditions such as climate, soil and natural biodiversity. It is a versatile technique for farming, particularly in marginal conditions such as mountainous regions. It is also knowledge intensive and culturally relevant in traditional farming communities.
The Platform’s guiding principles include a concern with research of potential global significance; a focus on work that complements existing research efforts and addresses more than one component or level of agrobiodiversity; a commitment to working with poor farmers, local communities and indigenous peoples on agendas of relevance to their needs. It aims to work in ways that link custodians, managers and beneficiaries of biodiversity.

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**5 Trees along stream bed**
Along the stream between fallow fields and the rice paddies, trees are planted. They provide shade which prevents the stream from drying out during drought periods and their roots keep the soil together preventing it from erosion. In this way, they help control and maintain the water supply.

**6 Livestock**
Cows and water buffaloes are allowed to graze in the paddy field only after harvest and until the rice is planted. Thereafter the animals are confined to the forest or to the 1-7 year old fallow area where they help in the process of nutrient recovery by providing manure.

**7 Wind breaks**
Trees planted in a row, just in front of the paddy fields act as a wind break which protects the paddies from the wind as well as prevents soil erosion.

**8 Rice fields**
Paddy rice is grown in the terraced and lowland fields while upland rice, well known for its drought tolerance, is planted in the swidden area. The diversity is used to provide more options in cases of climatic variability and procures food for an extended period because of different harvesting times.
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