

Roundtable 4

Concurrence alimentaire non alimentaire : enjeux et risques

Land use for biofuel production

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Introduction

- at stake
 - food security
 - environmental preservation
- opportunities : virtuous dynamics where biofuel in Africa would improve rural access to energy and thereby increase agricultural productivity and potential (including biofuel potential).
- risks :
 - non-controllable feedback effects through prices
 - unanticipated changes in price conditions.



Outline

Some land is potentially available:

- which land?
- is this land really available?
- can biomass for fuel grow without endangering food security nor environment?



Which land?

Land availability

- Assessments conducted at a global scale, on the basis of:
 - bioclimatic criteria,
 - exclusion principles ;
- Use of local data to revise assessments at the national level;
- Practical availability assessed with inclusion of:
 - institutional factors,
 - risks on land rights and acceptability of energy crops
 - economic factors affecting profitability.

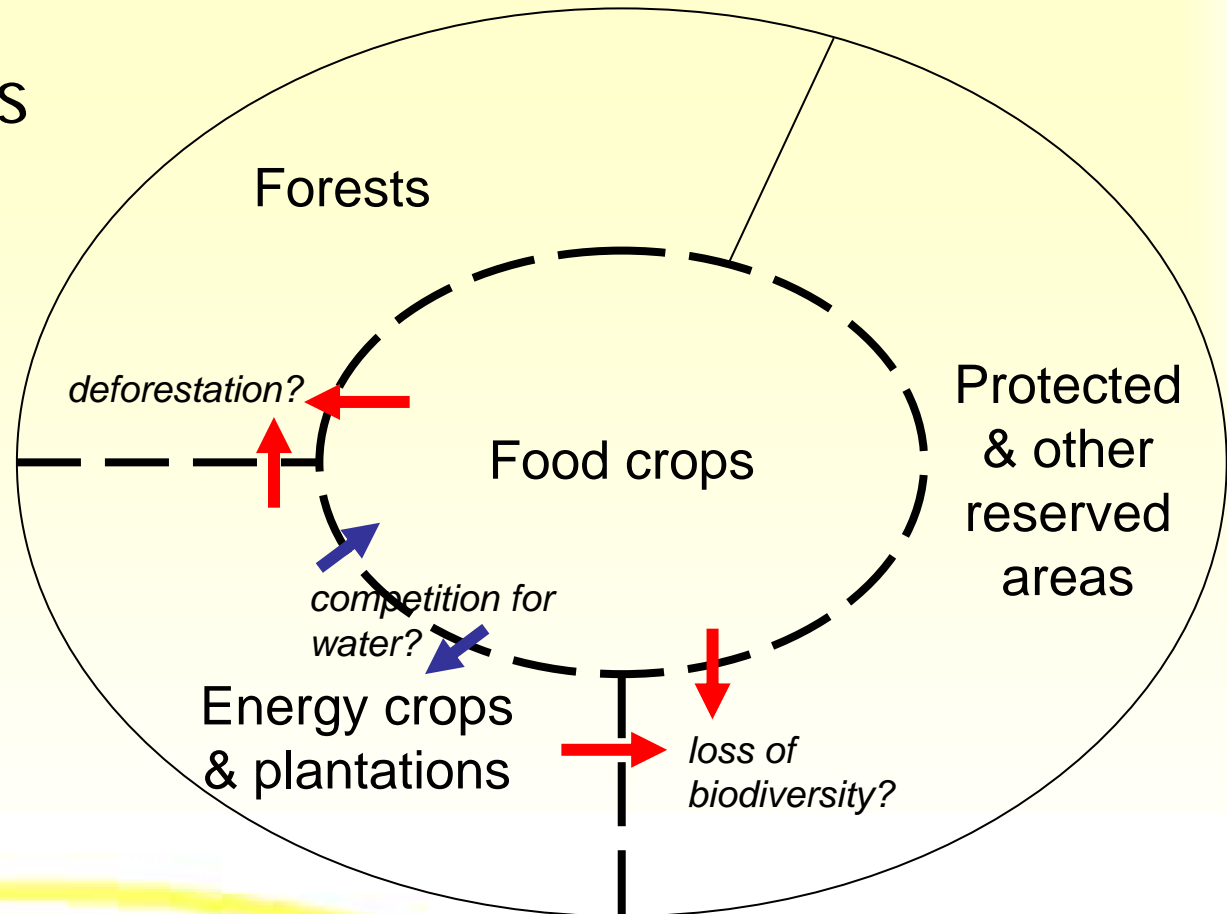


Questionning land availability

- land use dynamics

- available at what cost?

- land and other production factors



Land use drivers

- The role of prices :
 - prices include: crop price, subsidies and taxes, currency effects,... what about non-monetary values?
 - price volatility,
 - outlook for profitability.
- Can we expect strict preference for food crops in land allocation? If not, is it a problem?
- Accounting for opportunistic strategies, irreversibilities and uncertainties.



Solutions depending on context

- small-scale production for local use in rural areas
marginal land, low yields and robust technologies
- optimised combination by the peasant of food crops and diversified cash crops
competition is taking place among cash crops, lesson to learn from international agricultural markets
- existing agro-industry co-producing food and energy
adjusting to commodity prices (sugar and oil e.g.)
- land rights handed out to an outside investor
need to learn lessons from the exploitation of other natural resources (oil, gold...)





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