

Reversing deforestation in Apuí, Brazil

Mid-Year Update 2022

Planting plans are on track. 35 hectares of coffee agroforestry are already planted with 22 farmers, and the planted seedlings are showing a good survival rate. Our partner IDESAM monitors both fire and deforestation, and so far there's no record of either occurring in any of the participating properties. Preparation for the next planting season – recruiting farmers, preparing the soil and raising seedlings – is well underway.



For many of the rural settlers that moved to Apuí in the 1970s, conventional coffee plantations had very low productivity – 8 bags of coffee per hectare per year. With the IDESAM and WeForest coffee agroforestry systems, farmers can expect to double this. Marluca D., who was already participating in coffee agroforestry with IDESAM, was able to expand her productive area by 0.5 ha in 2021 with WeForest's support. On the left is a mature area of coffee agroforestry she established with IDESAM two years ago, and on the right, WeForest coffee seedlings planted on her land just a few months ago.



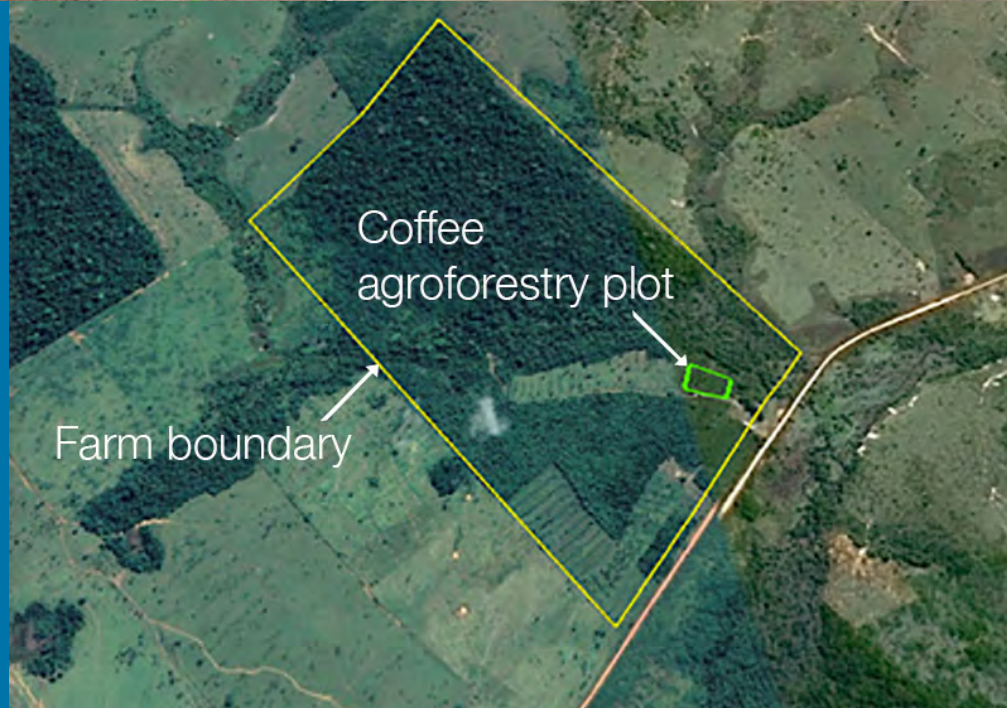
Earlier this year, Brazil Project Manager Cris Yuri visited Apuí to check on the progress of the coffee agroforestry systems established by the 22 farmers taking part. Even though the closest participating farmers' lands are only 30km away from IDESAM's HQ in Apuí, the roads are in poor condition, so it can take up to an hour and a half to reach them!



In all the farms, good weather conditions (at least for plants!) means that the seedlings we've planted are already shooting up. Elpidio and Dagmar, who arrived in Apuí just five years ago, are very happy with their coffee agroforestry system and are looking forward to expanding their plot in the future.



How exactly can producing organic coffee slow down deforestation? This graphic says it all. The yellow line shows the boundary of Elpidio and Dagmar's farm, which has a large fragment of forest still remaining. The area where we are developing organic coffee agroforestry with IDESAM is shown in the small green square. Just look how much native forest is still standing in the rest of the farm, compared to the deforested surroundings. Without the coffee improving their income, the family may have been forced to sell off their land – and those trees would have suffered the same fate.



This engagement meeting with local farmers took place in March. These meetings offer a unique opportunity to gather with local communities and present the agroforestry and coffee programme, and to identify new farmers to come on board for the next season. This is where information is exchanged and doubts are addressed to make sure everything is understood before anyone signs up.



In May coffee agroforestry systems management and pruning workshops were offered to the families that will produce coffee next year. Each workshop took two days: one to explore the theory, and one to put what they learned into practice.



What is agroforestry?

Agroforestry combines agriculture and forestry; environmentally and socially-appropriate trees and shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland. It plays a critical role in successful forest restoration by:

- reducing the pressure on forest resources and incentivising sustainable forest management by alleviating poverty;
- compensating the loss of access to forest resources;
- ensuring reliable incomes to fund sustainable forest management.

IDESAM's work in Apuí started in 2012, with each producer receiving support to recover 1 hectare of coffee plantation in an agroforestry system, with native trees for shade including jatoba and mahogany, as well as species whose fruits and seeds could be collected and sold, such as cocoa, açai, Brazil nut, crabwood and copaiba. Regenerating coffee systems has doubled productivity in the region and enabled farmers to earn income from coffee and look to the future of essential oil production from native trees. Creating value in standing productive forests can prevent their degradation and destruction.

Please visit our [Why and How](#) webpage for more information.



You'll receive an annual update in March. Meanwhile, stay up-to-date with our interactive [Apuí map](#), and check out the [photos](#) on Flickr.