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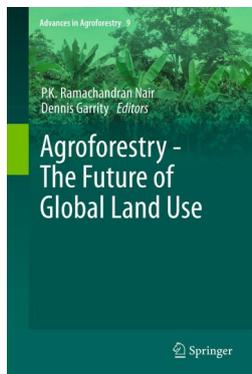
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Peer reviewed

A global view of agroforestry

Agroforestry – The Future of Global Land Use. P.K. Ramachandran Nair & Dennis Garrity (editors), 2012, Springer, 531 pp. £126 (hardback) ISBN 978-94-007-4675-6; <http://www.springer.com>



Both P.K.R. Nair and D. Garrity, the editors of this book, have been major promoters of agroforestry worldwide for several decades, and for that they deserve credit. This book is one of their recent efforts towards this aim.

The book is organised into three parts. It is unique in the sense that the first of the three parts is entirely dedicated to six keynote speeches made by world leaders at the 2nd World Congress of Agroforestry (WCA2), June 2009. The speeches, although not well suited to the thematic mode and style of disciplinary books, make essential contributions to the discipline of agroforestry. They address many of the most serious land-management challenges that the world is currently facing and present agroforestry as a robust, science-based land-management approach to fight hunger and poverty and restore environmental resilience.

The remaining two parts are made up of 18 peer-reviewed thematic chapters. Seven of them address “Global Perspectives” (Section II). All were produced by lead organisers of WCA2 symposia, who are well known in the field of agroforestry, with inputs from other presenters in their respective symposia. The remaining 11 chapters are on “Regional Perspectives” (Section III). All were produced by leading professionals currently spearheading significant agroforestry-related initiatives worldwide. Thus, the book presents a comprehensive and authoritative account of agroforestry today. Also, the contents of several of the thematic chapters are on topics that have not been presented much in the agroforestry literature.

The third section presents a range of topics related to agroforestry development in regions including Africa, Latin America, South Asia, Japan, Europe, Canada and the United States. Although most of the continents are covered, at least one

chapter based on one of the countries of Oceania would have made the book more comprehensive and complete—Australia, in particular, has a very rich experience of agroforestry. Even so, the editors have managed to assemble an excellent collection of studies and reviews on agroforestry around the world, encompassing both developed and developing countries.

The final chapter, a conclusion by the two editors, presents carefully thought-out strategic and forward-looking suggestions to be pursued for realizing the promise of agroforestry in the future. They have to be commended for making the extra effort to outline such pathways and directions, instead of just reviewing past work.

In summary, the book is well written, beautifully produced and contains a wealth of information on agroforestry today. The quality of plates and figures is excellent. It also has a good index and a comprehensive list of references. All the chapters are of high quality, containing detailed, state-of-the-art, up-to-date information on the different topics of interest to a broader, multidisciplinary audience. The book is presented in a format which will be understandable to the general reader. It will be most useful as a general reference for information on agroforestry worldwide today, and on the prospects for agroforestry in future global land use. It is of interest to anyone engaged in the practice of agroforestry, forestry or agriculture. The book is also useful as a textbook. Therefore, I recommend it to both undergraduates and postgraduate students of agroforestry, forestry, agriculture, ecology or biology, and that a copy of the book is purchased for institutional libraries.

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