

Floodplains have huge agro potential

The map shows the most fertile floodplains, which are formed when the Amazon River and its tributaries overflow. The reader should take into account that between its lowest and highest level, the Amazon River fluctuates between 8 and 10 meters, which allows large areas to be flooded for approximately six months of the year, and those areas available for cultivation to be naturally fertilized for the other six months.

The valleys of the Amazon, Purus, Juruá, Madeira, and other rivers are floodplains; these waters transport a large load of fine sediment and organic material, and possess a low level of acidity of between 6 and 6.5 pH.

Other rivers' floodplains haven't been indicated, because

they possess a lower agricultural potential or are formed from rivers whose waters are highly acidic, such as those of the Negro, Trombetas, and Tapajós. For example, waters in the Rio Negro basin often possess a pH of 4.5.

The approximate area of the highly fertile floodplains is estimated at 180,000 square kilometers (18 million hectares or 44.5 million acres), which are fertilized naturally each year.

Technology inputs needed

As indicated by Gov. Gilberto Mestrinho, in whose state—Amazonas—80% of these floodplains are located, appropriate technology, such as lightweight and wide-wheel tractors, are needed to cultivate these areas, due to the soil's poor consistency. Scientific research and technology are required to determine the type of crops and seeds that can guarantee high yields.

This fabulous agricultural potential, together with an equally fabulous mining and forestry potential, is not currently being developed because there are insufficient population and skill levels which are only possible and justifiable under conditions of high and growing demographic density.

