LAND SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR RICE PRODUCTION IN ACID SOILS

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ABSTRACT

Landscape and hydrological conditions occurring in acid soil areas of the humid tropics have determined the principal land use system of growing rice on lowlands using widely different technologies. For the existing ricelands, particularly in Asia, rice probably will remain the most appropriate crop with only slight opportunities for changes in land use. The main benefit of land suitability evaluation, therefore, would be to get an indepth understanding of limitations and express them at a subgroup level of suitability classification. The concepts and principles generally applied are outlined. More recent developments by the FAO are discussed and their applications in several countries are considered. The main advantage of the FAO Framework is its applicability to single specific land utilization types such as rice production, which also can be narrowly defined to include management types, technical know-how and the economic background. The limitations identified and problems diagnosed at sub-group levels facilitate better access to such information for the researchers and land users.