

AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY

Global crop certification map

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Among voluntary environmental policy instruments, certification of agricultural products has gained a lot of traction. This is particularly so for cash crops such as coffee, cocoa and palm oil. The lack of a global certification distribution map has hindered understanding of spatial gaps and of potential overlaps with areas of high biodiversity or poverty.

Catherine Tayleur from the RSPB, UK, and colleagues synthesized data from over one million farms across the world to produce the first global map of the distribution of certified producers of seven major cash crops: banana, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soy, sugar cane and tea. They find that coffee is by far the crop with the highest percentage of certified area (9%). Certification tends to occur in

geographical clusters, such as palm oil in Malaysia and Indonesia. They compare this spatial distribution with that of biodiversity, deforestation and poverty. The distribution of certified farms tends to coincide with areas of high biodiversity importance, but less so with poverty pockets, although these spatial relationships vary depending on the crop. The authors discuss targeting areas of high biological value for further expansion of certification, or encouraging already-certified farmers to adopt more rigorous schemes.

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