Summary

In the last quarter of this century, the Amazon rain forest has been subjected to a continuous process of deforestation for agricultural development, mainly livestock production, stimulated by Brazilian Federal Government fiscal incentives. The Brazilian Amazon has experienced some negative consequences of converting forest into pasture. Out of about five million ha of existing cultivated pastures, 30% are completely or partially degraded.

Research in the eastern Brazilian Amazon, during the last decade, has generated valuable information for pasture improvement, management and reclamation. More recently, EMBRAPA's research on plant introduction, soil fertilization, and pasture establishment has given additional significant contributions to reclamation of degraded pastures, namely: 1) For this ecosystem, the high potential of grasses like *Andropogon gayanus*, *P. maximum* CPATU 130 (cv. Tobiatá), among others, has been shown; 2) phosphorus fertilization has been critical in *P. maximum* and *A. gayanus* establishment, whereas nitrogen has had little effect; and 3) it has been possible to minimize pasture reclamation costs through sowing of *P. maximum*, *A. gayanus*, and *Brachiaria humidicola* with annual crops. Maize production is valuable in reducing land preparation and fertilization in-

vestments. These data suggest that it is bioeconomically more viable to reclaim degraded pasture lands rather than clear more segments of forest for new pasture establishment.