

The **Comminutor**

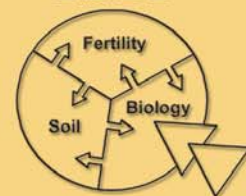
Newsletter of the TSBF Institute of CIAT

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Staff from collaborating institutions had the opportunity for visiting the field trials (top photo) and for interaction with one another and with farmers working with TSBF-CIAT in western Kenya (bottom photo).

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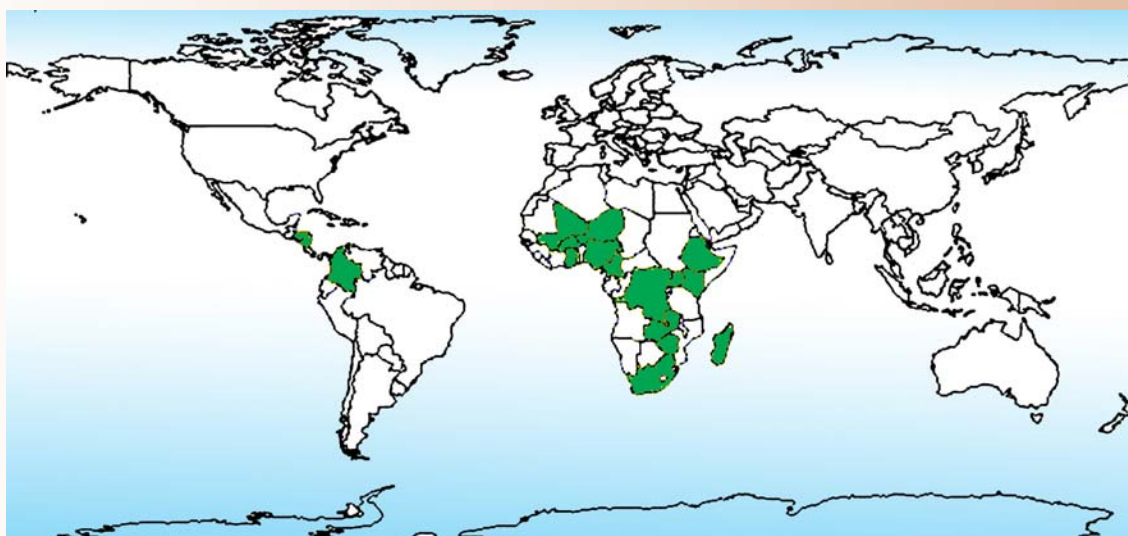
TSBF-CIAT is a research programme whose main aim is to contribute to human welfare and environmental conservation in the tropics by developing adoptable and suitable soil management practices that integrate the biological, chemical and socioeconomic processes that regulate soil fertility and optimize the use of organic and inorganic resources to the land users.

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Overview of TSBF-CIAT's work

The Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (TSBF-CIAT) has as its main goal to contribute to human welfare and environmental conservation in the tropics by developing adoptable and suitable soil management practices that integrate the biological, chemical and socioeconomic processes that regulate soil fertility and optimize the use of organic and inorganic resources available to land users. The research approach advocated by TSBF-CIAT includes both process-level and system-level study of agroecosystems. Process research focuses on understanding the biophysical regulation of soil fertility by such mechanisms as decomposition, soil organic matter dynamics and soil biota activities. System-level research is concerned with assessing the ways in which soil fertility is regulated by the farmer and by both the socioeconomic and biophysical

environments in which soil management is practised. TSBF-CIAT is adopting a holistic approach to integrated soil fertility management that considers soil conservation, water management, ecosystem services, markets, resilient germplasm and fertilizers, integrated pest management, institutions and policy. In the past 10 years, TSBF-CIAT has extended its activities to Latin America and most parts of west, east and central Africa (see map below) with notable impact on farming communities. Farmer-led research on soil fertility management has been key to TSBF-CIAT activities since the mid-1990s. TSBF, through its social scientists, is actively disseminating to farmers best-bet technologies from field trials in various benchmark sites in more than 22 countries in Africa and Latin America. This issue of *The Communitator* highlights some results from some of these sites, mainly through pictures.



■ Countries where TSBF-CIAT activities are located.