

# Forest amount affects soybean productivity in Brazilian agricultural frontier

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, large tracts of tropical forests have been converted to crop and pasturelands across southern Amazonia...



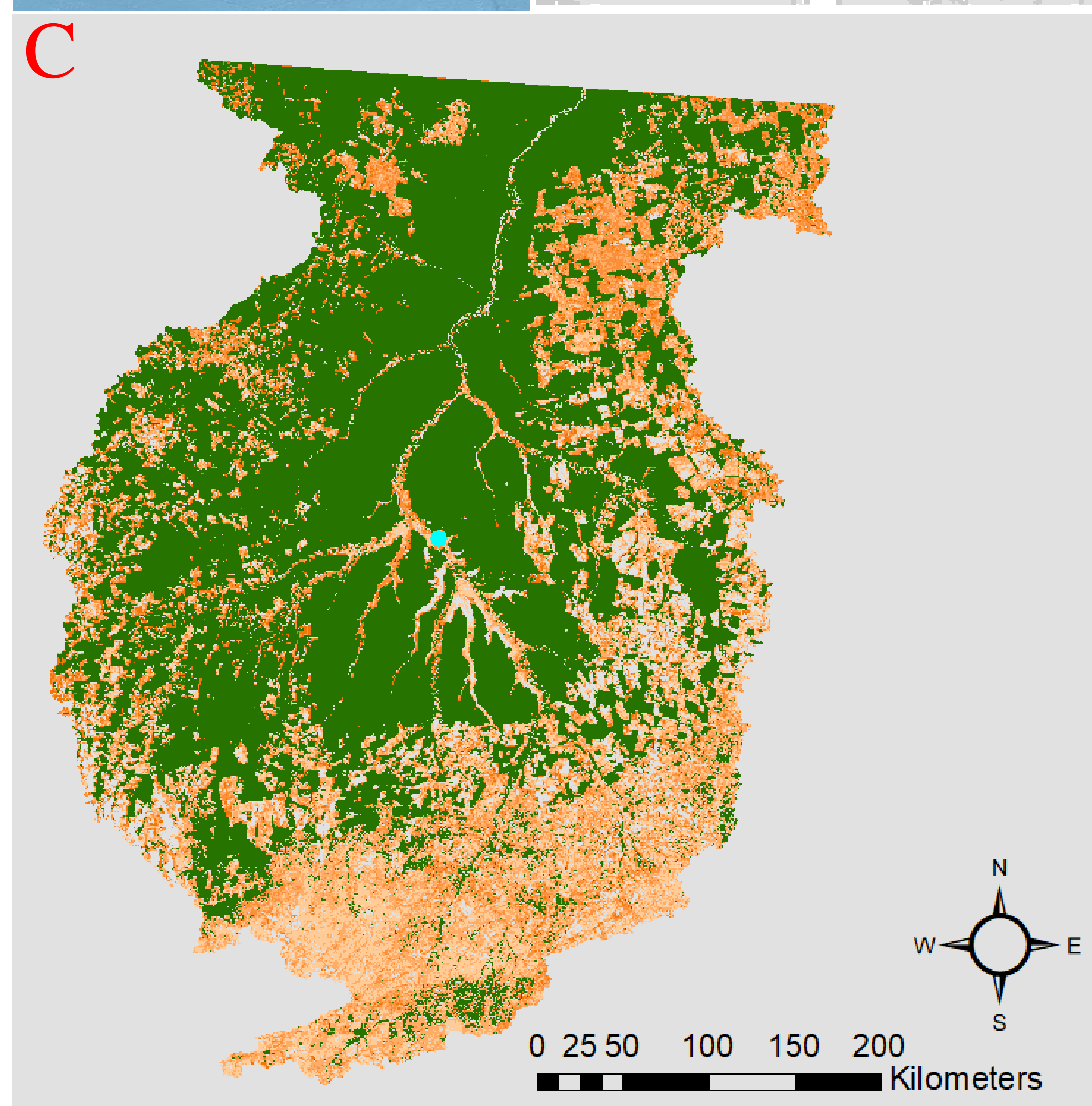
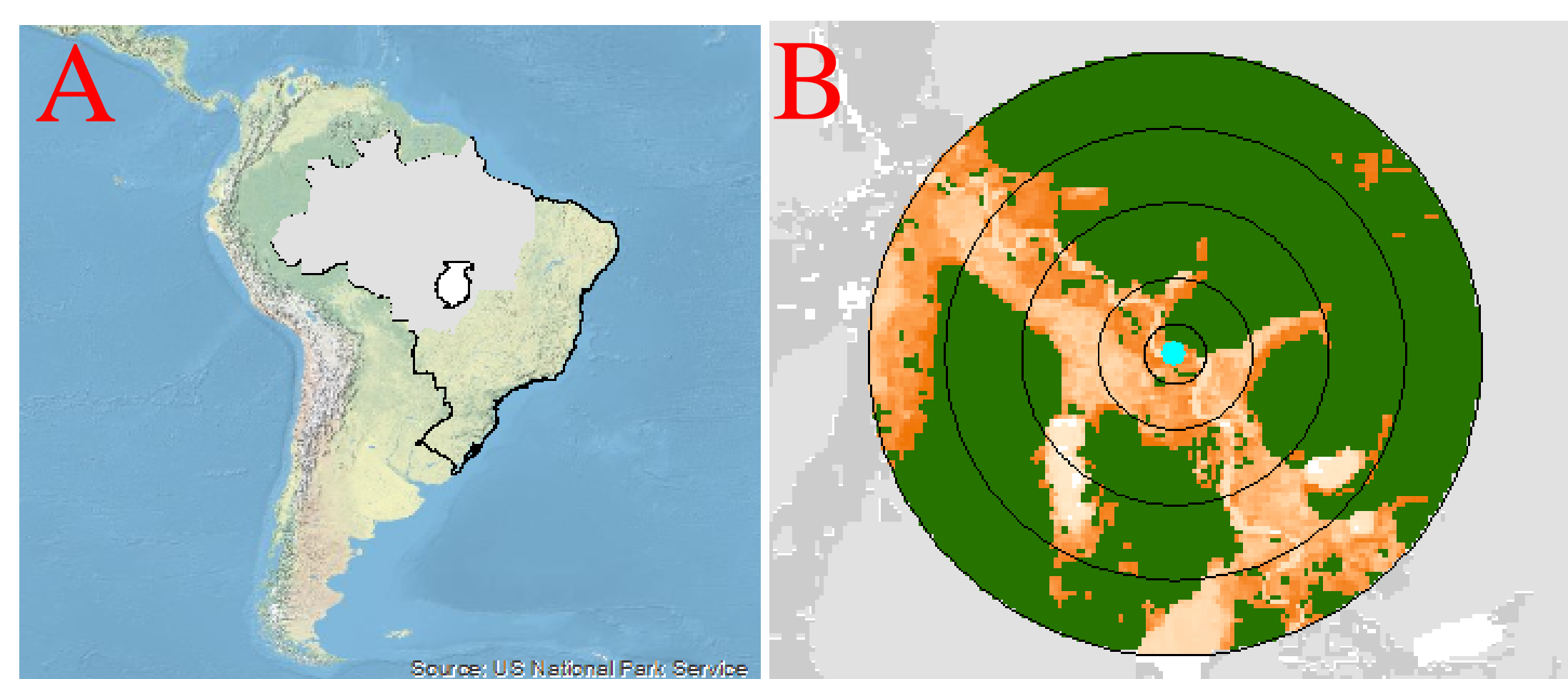
Photo: Paulo Brando

... largely to meet the increasing worldwide demand for protein. As the world's population continues to grow and consume more protein per capita, forest conversion to grow more crops could be a potential solution to meet such demand. However, widespread deforestation is expected to negatively affect crop productivity via multiple pathways (e.g., thermal regulation, rainfall, local moisture, pest control, among others).

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

Here we quantified how forest amount and fragmentation affect crop productivity during the soybean planting season across southern Amazonia (A and C).

We modeled the relationship between forest amount and enhanced vegetation index (EVI—a proxy for crop productivity) at five local scales ranging from 2 km to 20 km buffers (B), between 2001 and 2015.



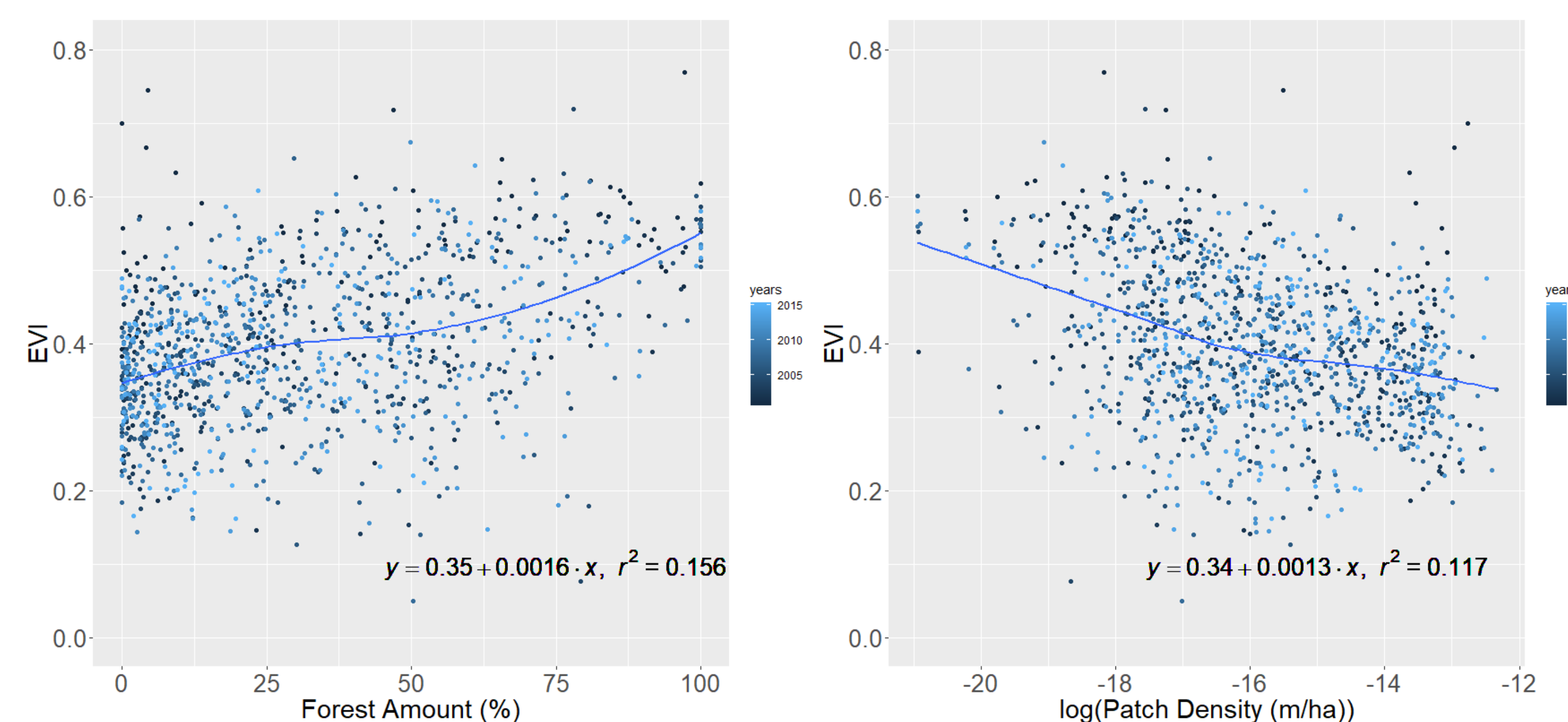
Forest

Soybean

Brazilian Amazon

## RESULTS

We found that the maximum MODIS-based EVI in soybean fields increased as a function of forest amount and decreased as a function of forest fragmentation at all local scales.



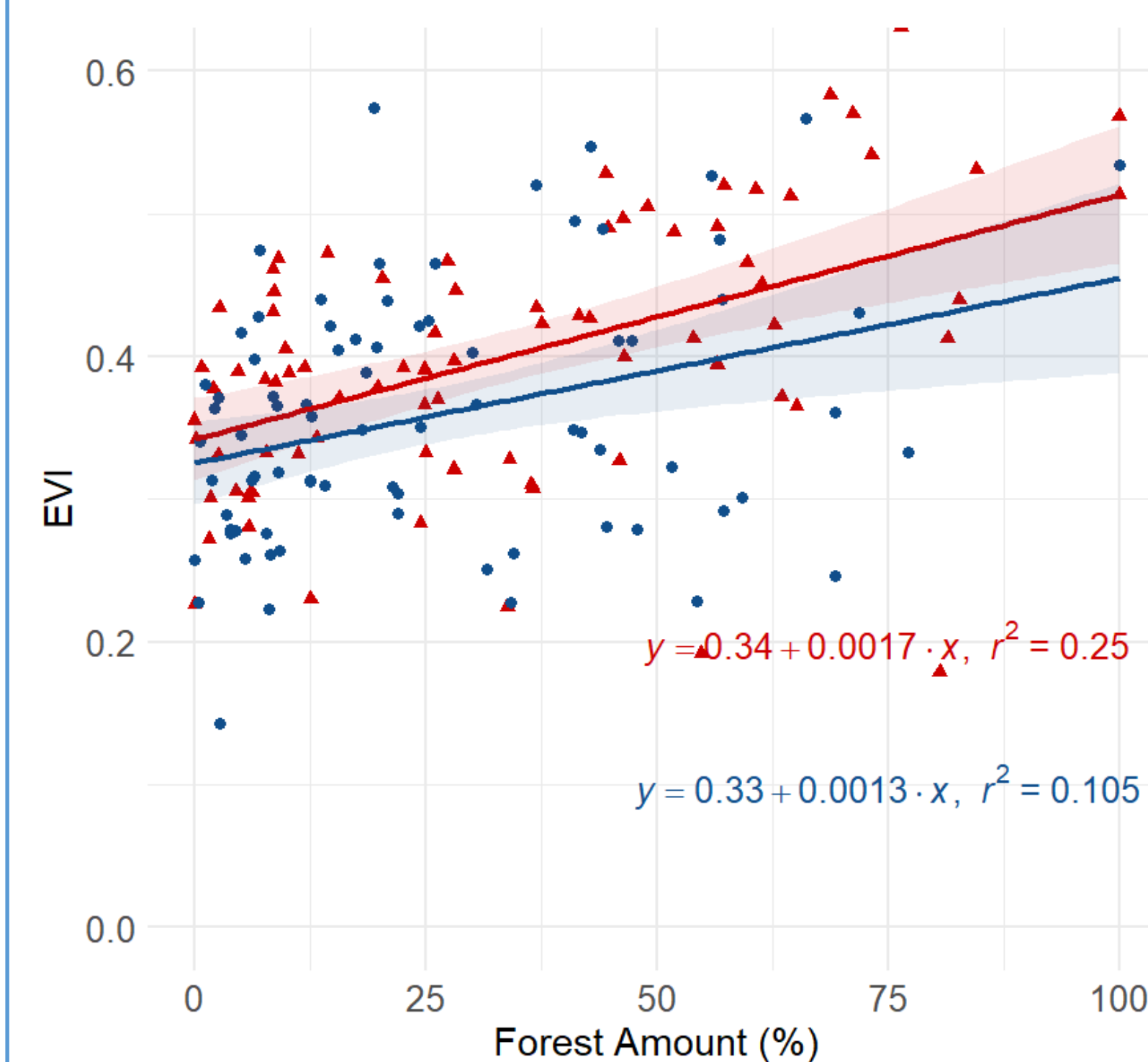
Landscape Pattern – Xingu Basin



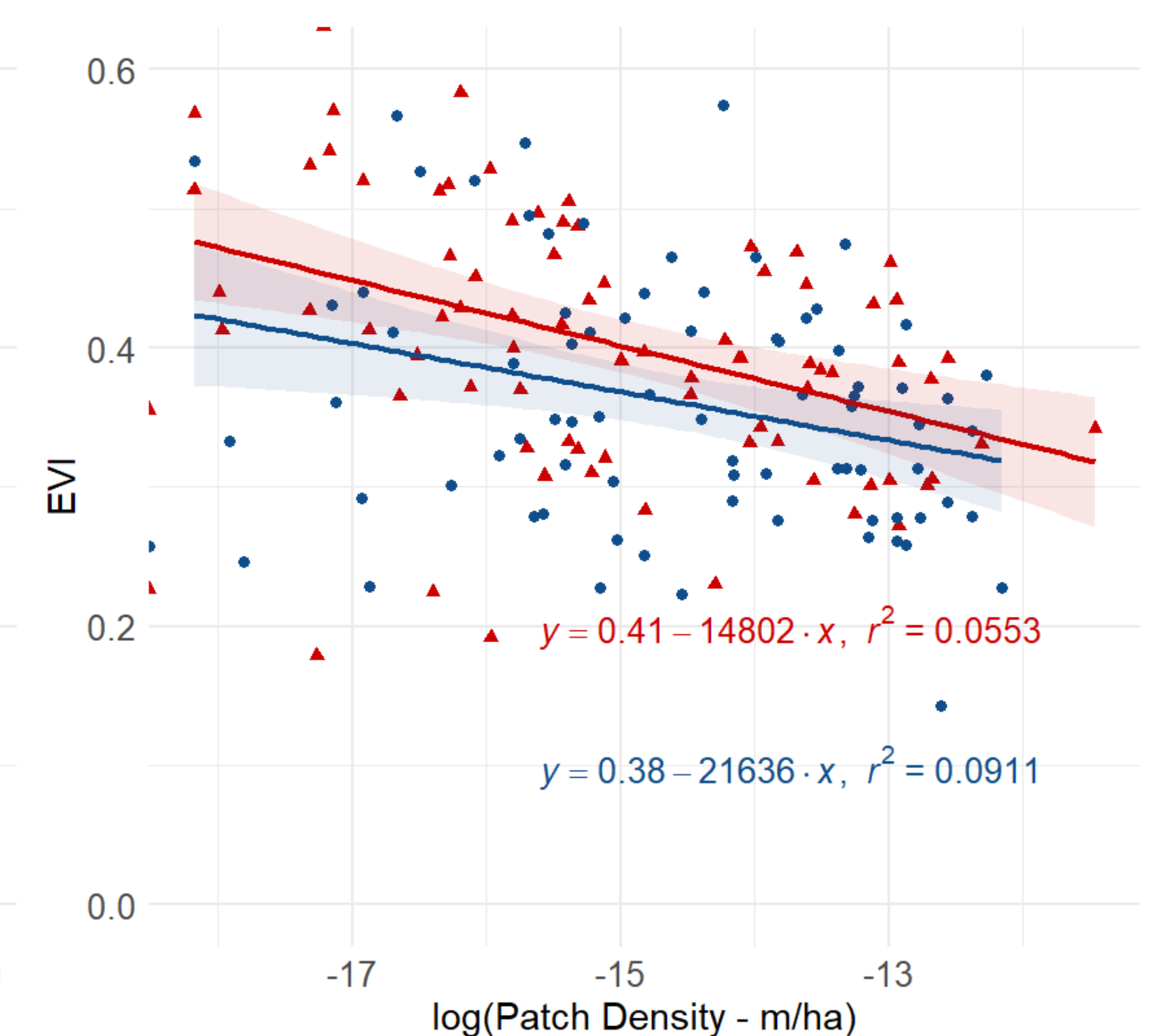
$$EVI = G \times \frac{(NIR - RED)}{(NIR + C1 \times RED - C2 \times BLUE + L)}$$

The strength of this relationship increased in hotter and drier years.

## Forest Cover Change



## Fragmentation



## CONCLUSIONS

Forest amount crop productivity, while forest fragmentation decreased it. Forest amount increased, while fragmentation decreased crop productivity. Our results highlight the importance of considering forests to design sustainable landscapes, especially as climate becomes hotter and drier.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

