

Increasing Robusta Production in Brazil the Potential of 200 Thousand Hectares in Sao Paulo State*

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SUMMARY

Indonesia, Vietnam, Brazil, Ivory Coast and Uganda are the largest producers of robusta coffee in the world. In Brazil, robusta is grown in States other than Sao Paulo. For many years, experimental and observation plots have been set up by the Instituto Agronômico in order to ascertain the potential for cultivating robustas in this State provided that 50% of the instant coffee industries are located in West of the State and there are 200 thousands ha with edapho-climatic aptitude for growing robusta. Nevertheless, in this region there is a widespread occurrence of nematodes as *Meloidogyne incognita*, *M. paranaensis*, *M. exigua*, *Pratylenchus* spp and also of leaf rust disease, *Hemileia vastatrix*. Recently the bacteria *Xylella fastidiosa* has been considered as a possible additional agent collaborating for the bankruptcy of arabica coffee cultivation and the consequent impoverishment of farmers in this vast region. Selection for vigor, yield, bean size and type, leaf rust and nematode resistances, resulted in the release of Apoatã (IAC 2258) cultivar of *C. canephora*, which is specially suited as rootstock for all arabica cultivars. The observation of many seed plots of IAC 2258 in several localities of this region as well as controlled experiments in Campinas, Mococa, Ribeirão Preto, Pindorama and Votuporanga indicated several other lines with high yields, rate of dry fruits/green bean up to 65%, variable earliness and large flat seeds up to 90%. The characteristics of the selected lines and clones are discussed in this paper. So far, promising lines are IAC 661, IAC 66-3, IAC 67-9, IAC 68-10, IAC 69-7, IAC 70-1, Guarini (IAC 1598-1), Robusta col 10, IAC 640, IAC 1645-5, IAC 16471, IAC 1647-7, IAC 1655-7 IAC 2290 and IAC 2291. A few hundred clones are currently under evaluation. The low altitudes, hot climate, poor and eroded soils infested with nematodes limit many agriculturally attractive options of this marginal region for producing arabica coffee. Thus, the success of this enterprise could have a high social impact and may represent an economically valuable solution for this former arabica-producing region of Sao Paulo.