

## Introduction

---

Colombia has become a world leader in oil palm. Fedepalma, as the representative of the Colombian oil palm growers, is a source and disseminator of information, and the International Conference is positioned as one of the main events worldwide and particularly in America. Proof of this is the growing success it has had throughout its 19 versions.

This important technical meeting is organized every three years by the National Federation of Oil Palm Growers of Colombia, Fedepalma, with the support of the Colombian Oil Palm Research Center, Cenipalma.

Under the motto "Innovation and sustainability in oil palm, nourishing people and protecting the planet," the 19th International Oil Palm Conference exceeded all expectations. Throughout the event, over 1,600 participants from all over the globe participated in over 66 conferences given by national and international experts who are famous for their high-level research and experience. From all fields of knowledge, they showed their commitment to an economically, environmentally, and socially responsible palm growing that transforms the environments where this activity takes place.

Therefore, in this special issue of *Palmas*, we present the research articles presented during the Conference. Its contents recognize both the needs of the sector and the most recent innovations used to face the challenges and opportunities of oil palm cultivation, production, and commercialization.

The academic agenda began with the inauguration of the Conference, followed by five plenary sessions with keynote speakers who addressed state of the art issues and topics of general interest for the participants. These included the challenges in innovation and sustainability, the past, present, and future of palm oil, the importance of palm oil for human nutrition and health, and an analysis of the oil market behavior.

During the second and third days, the academic agenda revolved around three simultaneous modules, with specialized conferences on the specialized management of oil palm crops, genetic improvement, mills, added value, uses of palm oil, sustainability, and market environment.

Fedepalma will continue to work together with Cenipalma in the development of high-level research events. The next International Conference will take place in September 2021 at Centro de Convenciones Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. You are cordially invited.