

AMAZON BULLETIN

NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 3 – APRIL 2008

Welcome to the third issue of *Amazon Bulletin*, bringing you the latest news about the moratorium on trading soya from newly deforested land in Brazil's Amazon rainforest.

In April 2006, Greenpeace published *Eating up the Amazon*, a report on its investigation into the links between soya in the supply chains of leading international companies and the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. The report and subsequent global campaigning activities prompted an alliance of food producers, supermarkets and fast-food chains, along with Greenpeace and civil society organisations, to come together to call for change. Responding to this pressure, the major soya traders operating in Brazil announced a moratorium on trading soya from newly deforested land in the Amazon, effective as of July 2006.

By producing this Amazon Bulletin, Greenpeace aims to keep the food and agribusiness sectors informed about the progress of the moratorium. It also hopes to encourage other companies to join the alliance and support its efforts to protect the Amazon.

● Amazon Soya Watch



Sorriso, Mato Grosso State, Amazon, Brazil. 16/12/2007. Area of former pristine Amazon forest inside a soya farm, cleared between August 2006 and July 2007. The area was aerially surveyed on behalf of the Soya Working Group in December 2007. © Greenpeace/Rodrigo Baleia

The first evaluation of the progress of the soya moratorium has now been completed on behalf of the Soya Working Group (SWG), the coalition of soya traders, environmental NGOs and civil society groups set up to lead implementation of the moratorium. It concluded that none of the soya planted for the current (2007/2008) crop season is in newly deforested areas in the Brazilian Amazon biome.

This modestly positive outcome is in stark contrast to the recent news that, after three years of decline, Amazon deforestation began increasing again in the second half of 2007; reaching record rates in November and December.

Greenpeace has carried out its own aerial surveys of the newly deforested areas which confirm the findings of the SWG's positive evaluation; but these surveys also show some recent deforestation within the boundaries of soya farms, raising concern that the destruction of the Amazon for soya could become a problem again.

Although it is too soon to say for certain that the sudden November-December increase in deforestation is due to a resurgence in clearing for soya expansion, this alarming development underlines the need for a long-

term and properly enforced commitment by traders not to buy or sell soya from newly deforested areas in the Amazon.

The price of soya rose by more than 70% in the 12 months prior to March 2008, giving farmers a strong incentive to clear new areas of forest for soya plantation. Nevertheless, the area planted with soya during the 2007/08 season in Mato Grosso State (the main centre of soya growing in the Amazon) is still lower than in 2004/05, when there was the last peak in price and deforestation rate.

Current trends indicate that both the demand for and the price of soya are likely to continue to rise as stocks of soya and other staple crops decrease. Further pressure on land is likely to be added by the rising demand for beef and by expansion of the agrofuel industry into areas currently used for soya or cattle ranching, which may be displaced deeper into the Amazon.

Greenpeace has been encouraging the food industry to continue leading the way in the Amazon ever since the major soya traders operating in Brazil originally announced the landmark moratorium, in collaboration with a group of NGOs and food retailers and processors, including McDonald's. ▶

▶ The traders have taken an important step forward by putting in place a monitoring system that shows when and where deforestation is occurring within the soya planting regions of the Amazon biome. Unfortunately this system is not yet able to identify who is responsible for new forest clearance. This is partly due to the fact that the registration and mapping of rural properties in the Amazon, while officially compulsory, are still widely ignored by farmers and landowners.

As a result, the current monitoring system is unable to distinguish soya producers who are committed to preventing further deforestation from those who are not. Only when it becomes possible to identify the perpetrators of deforestation will soya traders be able to guarantee to their customers that the soya that they buy is not linked to Amazon destruction (and thereby fuelling climate change).

The Soya Working Group undertook an enormous challenge almost two years ago when it set out to develop an effective mechanism for assuring international consumers that they are not financing Amazon destruction – a goal which is in sight but not yet achieved. It is clear that the initial moratorium timeline needs to be extended – two years are not enough to achieve the huge task of establishing and implementing an effective governance regime for the Amazon soya industry.

Therefore, until a new agreement on how to proceed is reached between the soya traders and NGOs within the SWG, retailers sourcing Brazilian soya must continue to insist, together with the wholesalers who supply them, on buying soya that is not linked to Amazon deforestation – and at the same time they must call upon soya traders to extend the moratorium until the development of a reliable means of ensuring this is completed and in place.

● The monitoring system

In order to ensure compliance with the moratorium, a system of monitoring newly deforested areas has been put in place, and is being further developed, by the Soya Working Group.

The identification of newly deforested areas was carried out via analysis of satellite data supplied by the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE), and followed up by aerial surveying to establish any possible links with soya planting. The agricultural monitoring consultancy Globalsat was hired by the Soya Working Group to survey for any evidence of planting for the 2007/08 crop season in areas of over 100 hectares (250 acres) deforested between August 2006 and August 2007 within the Amazon biome states of Rondônia, Pará and Mato Grosso (see map, right). Together, these three states account for almost all the soya plantations in the Brazilian Amazon biome. The aerial surveys were flown between December 2007 and February 2008, and no soya was found in any of the 195 newly deforested areas identified and visited.

A pilot project is also being conducted to determine the land use of deforested areas of under 100 hectares in three municipalities in Mato Grosso (Vera, Feliz Natal and União do Sul, all traditional soya producing centres), with the aim of estimating how much soya planting on newly deforested land might be overlooked by not monitoring these smaller areas. In addition, Greenpeace conducts its own aerial surveillance, documenting newly deforested areas within the land holdings of soya farms which may subsequently be planted with soya.

The next challenge for the Working Group will be to develop an effective traceability system to identify the farmers responsible for planting soya in these areas.

Monitoring of new

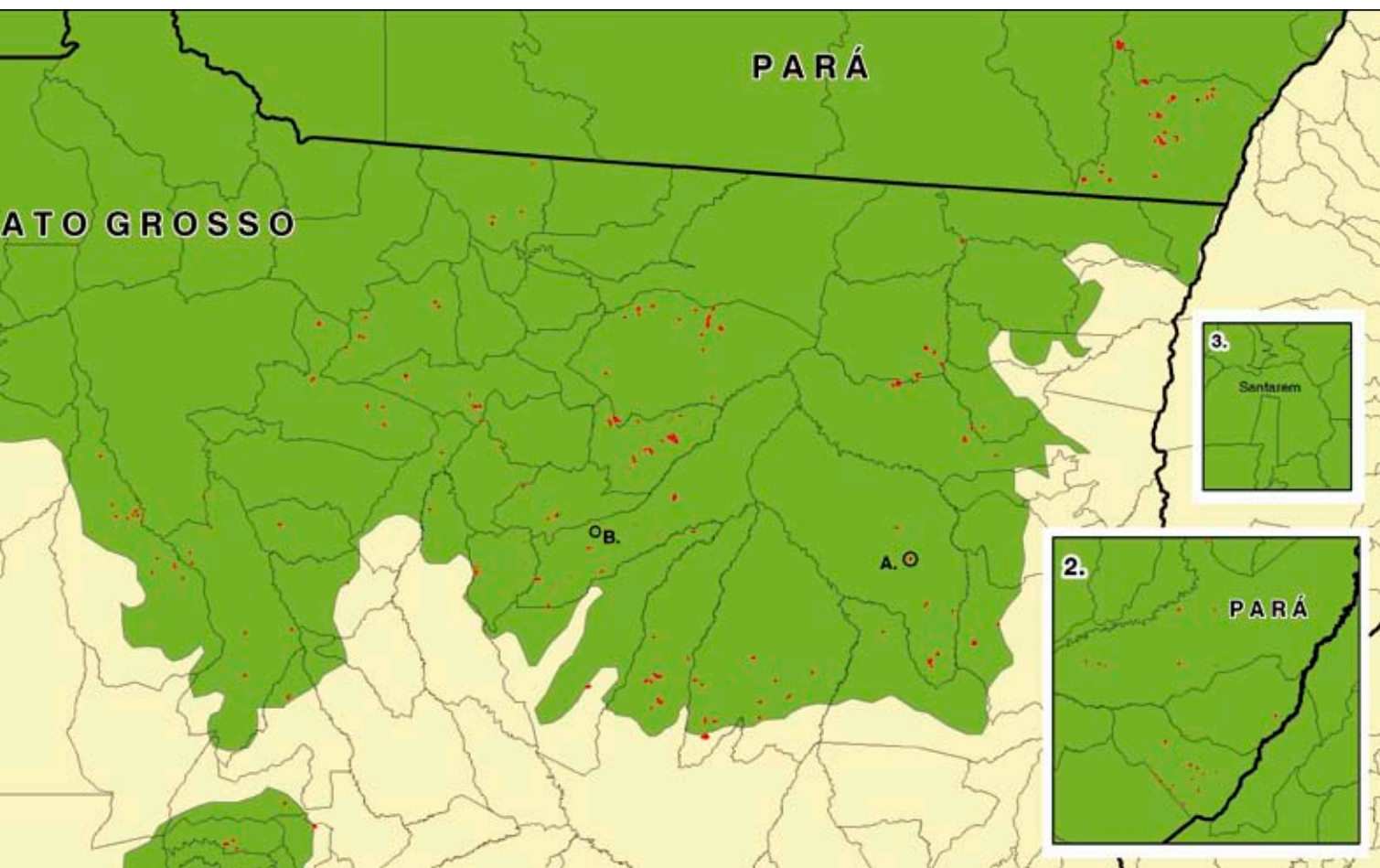


- Monitored areas, shown slightly enlarged for clearer visibility
- Amazon biome in Brazil
- Cerrado biome in Brazil
- Municipality boundary
- State boundary

A: 315,7 ha of cleared forest in Querência, Mato Grosso state, in the Amazon. © Greenpeace/Rodrigo Baleia



Newly deforested areas for soya planting



Technical notes: 195 newly deforested areas of over 100 hectares were monitored, by Globalsat (www.globalsat.com.br) between December 2007 and February 2008, in the municipalities where it is estimated that the total area planted with soya is greater than 5,000 hectares. All deforested areas, including the ones under 100 hectares, in the municipalities of Vera Feliz Natal and União do Sol in the state of Mato Grosso were monitored. No soya was found in any of the areas monitored. The deforestation data is provided by Prodes Project (INPE/MCT) for the 12 months from August 2006 to August 2007. This data is available at the website <http://www.obt.inpe.br/prodes>. The Amazon biome limits and the municipality and state boundaries are as provided by IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). © Greenpeace

B: Rice planted in a newly deforested area of 58 ha, next to a soya plantation in Feliz Natal, Mato Grosso state, in the Amazon. © Greenpeace/Rodrigo Baleia



The Brazilian Government's reaction

The Brazilian Government has responded promptly to the surge in deforestation recorded in the second half of 2007 by adopting a legal framework to stop further destruction. The approved measures include the 'embargoing' of all rural properties where illegal deforestation, burning and logging without permission have been verified and making it a criminal offence to purchase or commercialise products derived from such properties. The new measures also forbid banks from extending credit to embargoed properties.

IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources), which is the federal environment agency responsible for monitoring and controlling the Amazon, has already published a list of 4,000 properties across the country embargoed for these and other environmental offences. The list is publicly available on its website – http://siscom.ibama.gov.br/geo_sicafi/.

The Governmental initiative also forbids any granting of new deforestation permits in the 36 municipalities where 50% of the deforestation took place between July and December 2007, until all the properties have been registered. In addition, the new legislation establishes a procedure to fast-track mapping of rural properties across those municipalities. This will facilitate satellite monitoring of illegal deforestation.

Measures the Government has introduced are very much in line with the repeated demands of Greenpeace and of the Soya Working Group, which for almost two years have been pushing for the registration and monitoring of rural properties in the Amazon to be fast-tracked. However, welcome as the legislation is, for its implementation to succeed the Government will need to back it up with more human and financial resources than are presently available.



The Brazilian Environmental Agency IBAMA launched a search website for public monitoring with the list of all rural properties embargoed due to involvement with environmental illegalities http://siscom.ibama.gov.br/geo_sicafi/



*Gaúcha do Norte, Mato Grosso State, Amazon, Brazil. 16/12/2007. A heavy chain pulled by tractors is used to remove the remains of trees that have been felled and burnt.
© Greenpeace/Rodrigo Baleia*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JUNE

5

'Amazon alliance' meeting with European Customer Group in Brussels

WORK WITH US TO SAVE THE AMAZON

There is no time to lose in preventing further Amazon destruction. The urgent need to limit global warming and stop further catastrophic loss of biodiversity requires the global food and agribusiness industries to take responsibility and engage without delay in developing solutions. Consumers are increasingly demanding that they do so. Nothing less than the future of the Amazon rainforest and of global climate stability depends on such actions. For this reason Greenpeace hopes that more businesses will commit themselves to the alliance of consumer-facing companies which brought about the moratorium, to help bring a halt to deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

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