

# AMAZON BULLETIN

NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 5 – MAY 2009

Welcome to the fifth 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*, an 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 other 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.

Through 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 efforts to protect the Amazon.

## ● Soya from Amazon deforestation ruled out



*It is estimated that forest ecosystems worldwide store about one-and-a-half times as much carbon as is present in the atmosphere. The Amazon is therefore crucial to the balance of the world's climate; it also acts as a regulator of rainfall at a regional level. © Greenpeace/Markus Mauthe*

On 14 April 2009, Greenpeace welcomed the commitment by the main soya trading companies operating in Brazil and their associations – the Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries (ABIOVE) and the National Association of Grain Exporters (ANEC) – to continue boycotting soya grown in newly deforested areas within the Amazon biome. The traders were responding to the results of monitoring conducted during the last crop season, which found 12 newly deforested areas occupied by soya. The monitoring results and the traders' announcement were delivered at a press conference in Brasília attended by the Brazilian Environment Minister Carlos Minc.

The monitoring, conducted for the Soya Working Group (the coalition set up to

implement the moratorium) by the agriculture monitoring consultancy Globalsat, focused on areas larger than 100 hectares, with a pilot programme for smaller areas in three municipalities of Mato Grosso. In total, 630 deforested sites, totalling over 150,000 hectares, were monitored in 46 municipalities in the Amazon biome. Twelve sites, totalling approximately 1,400 hectares, were identified as having areas of soya cultivation ranging from 4 to 631 hectares. Seven of these sites were in Feliz Natal, Mato Grosso, a municipality recently included in an official list of municipalities with the highest deforestation rates in the Amazon biome. In the municipality of Dom Eliseu, in Pará State, two newly deforested areas of soya cultivation were identified, covering 113 and 247 hectares respectively. ▶

- ▶ **'The moratorium has brought a new level of reliable information that ensures our consumers know the origin of soya. We are open to audits, all in the name of transparency.'**

*Carlo Lovatelli, president of ABIOVE.*

At the press conference, the soya traders renewed committed to undertaking several measures to ensure that soya planted in areas deforested since July 2006 does not enter their supply chain. Before purchasing any new soya from the Amazon biome, the traders will cross-reference the supply area against the farms that have been identified as breaching the moratorium, and will reject any soya from these farms. In cases where traders have provided pre-financing to such farms, a proportion of these farms' soya production corresponding to the deforested area will be rejected, and the farmers' access to credit for the 2009/10 crop year will be restricted by the traders. A similar procedure will be followed for purchases made through third parties.

**'Greenpeace congratulates soya traders on keeping their commitments both to the moratorium and to their clients and consumers who do not want to be associated with Amazon destruction. The soya traders' statement clearly tells those farmers who tried to ignore the moratorium that they will pay through loss of earnings and market access; the challenge for traders now is to find these farmers and isolate them from their supply chain.'**

*Paulo Adario, director of Greenpeace's Amazon Campaign in Brazil.*

While praising the soya traders, Paulo Adario, director of Greenpeace's Amazon Campaign, challenged the Brazilian Government to act on the commitments it made when the moratorium was extended in June 2008. Among these was the promise to speed up the registration of rural properties to enable soya farms to be identified more easily. This and other key governance mechanisms are necessary to strengthen the moratorium's implementation.

In response, Carlos Minc confirmed the Government's readiness to contribute to implementing the moratorium, and committed it to:

- providing USD 2.29 million to fast-track the registration of rural properties
- finalising environmental and economic zoning within the Amazon biome, to enable more precise delimitation of the land use in the region
- supporting a national and international fund for payment proposals for environmental services provided by the Amazon forest.



*Brasília, 14 April 2009. Carlo Lovatelli, president of ABIOVE (left), Brazilian Minister of the Environment Carlos Minc (centre) and Paulo Adario, Greenpeace's Amazon campaign director in Brazil (right), at the press conference to announce the exclusion of soya originating from recent Amazon deforestation. © ABIOVE*

#### **What else must be done?**

Land zoning and registration and mapping of rural properties are essential measures to improve governance in the Amazon and to enable effective monitoring of soya and other agricultural commodities so as to ensure compliance with environmental and land tenure laws. Under Brazilian law all farms must be registered and geo-referenced maps of the property submitted to the land authorities. The fact that many farms are not registered and locations not mapped makes controlling their expansion into newly deforested areas and identifying those responsible for forest destruction difficult. Farm and land use maps are necessary to show clearly defined boundaries of rural properties, legal reserves, and permanent protection areas. Increased funding will allow the authorities to build the appropriate infrastructure and establish the human resources needed to manage this task.

While these tasks clearly require the involvement of federal and state government agencies, traders are in a position to accelerate the process. To begin with, traders should require suppliers to show their environmental permits and proof of appropriate registrations, with a map of their property and its defined legal forest reserve, as prerequisites for financing their soya cultivation and purchasing their soya.

Moreover, ABIOVE's and ANEC's members must develop a traceability system, in order to exclude from the soya supply chain growers who continue to engage in deforestation. This will be an essential step in terms of allaying consumers' concerns about the social and environmental impacts of soya.

The soya moratorium remains vital: it provides a timeframe during which the traders can establish systems to guarantee the origin and legality of their soya to consumers. Greenpeace is calling for a further extension of the moratorium until the traders can ensure that no more deforestation is taking place for soya production in the Amazon and there are permanent forest protection measures in place, reinforced and supported by the Government.

Ultimately, halting Amazon deforestation and ensuring the forest's long-term protection will require national and international recognition that the Amazon, with all the benefits it provides, is worth more standing than cut.



© Daniel Beltra

#### **What can companies buying soya do to help the moratorium's effectiveness?**

Companies sourcing or using Brazilian soya should ask soya traders to guarantee that any soya found to have been planted in newly deforested areas will be rejected from their supply chain; and they should also support the extension of the moratorium.

# ● Farmers find new ways to destroy rainforest for soya

Changing patterns of deforestation are posing a new threat to the Amazon forest – in particular, the fact that some farmers are planting soya in smaller deforested areas. In response to this, Greenpeace is calling for a more comprehensive approach to the monitoring of the soya moratorium.

Deforestation data published by the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE) clearly shows a trend towards the clearing of smaller areas. In 2002, areas larger than 100 hectares made up 55% of the total newly deforested area of the Amazon, compared with 20% made up of plots smaller than 25 hectares. In sharp contrast, plots under 25 hectares made up 47% of the total newly deforested area in 2008, and the areas over 100 hectares just 22%.

This trend led Greenpeace to suspect that soya farmers might be starting to clear smaller forest areas in order to escape detection by the environment authorities and/or the monitoring system adopted by the soya traders. Greenpeace therefore decided to survey deforested plots smaller than 100 hectares to see if soya crop expansion was contributing to the new pattern. Our findings confirmed our suspicions, and showed that this trend could pose additional risks to the moratorium.

Using the same methodology as the Soya Working Group's monitoring consultant Globalsat, Greenpeace focused its monitoring on deforested plots smaller than 100 hectares in Mato Grosso and Pará States (see box). Of the 200 plots we surveyed, 10 – all located in Mato Grosso – proved to be planted with soya.

## Key findings of Greenpeace's monitoring:

- All 10 of the newly deforested plots planted with soya were established adjacent to existing soya cropland.
- Only 4 of the 10 plots were located on farms officially registered with the state environmental agency, meaning that the other 6 plots were illegally established.
- Of the 4 registered landowners, 3 had previously been fined for forest environmental crimes and, in one case, for storing wood without the required licence.

The monitoring showed that soya farmers are clearing smaller forest plots adjacent to existing farm borders and therefore finding a way to beat the current monitoring system. Assuming that the moratorium is successfully extended by another year, this threat will have to be considered by the Soya Working Group during its next crop monitoring operation.



One of the 200 newly-deforested areas monitored by Greenpeace in the Brazilian Amazon biome during 2008/2009 crop season, which proved to be planted with soya (as highlighted in the image).

© Greenpeace/Alberto Cesar



Satellite image of the same area,

The complete study (in Portuguese) is available for download at <http://www.greenpeace.org.br/amazonia/pdf/boletimmoratoriaweb.pdf>

## Monitoring methodology

Greenpeace's monitoring methodology was based on that developed by the Soya Working Group, and used August 2006–July 2008 data from PRODES, the Amazon Deforestation Satellite Monitoring Project conducted by INPE ([www.obt.inpe.br/prodes](http://www.obt.inpe.br/prodes)). Greenpeace used a geographic information system to select a sample of cleared plots to be monitored on the basis of three criteria: they had to be located in the Brazilian portion of the Amazon biome, in municipalities with more than 5,000 hectares planted with soya, and outside protected areas. These plots were cross-referenced with Landsat TM images, and after a detailed analysis 200 deforested plots of under 100 hectares in the Amazon

states of Pará and Mato Grosso were selected to be monitored. Greenpeace's aerial surveillance team flew over the 200 plots and identified 25 showing some sort of agricultural activity. Sixteen detected as being potentially occupied by soya were selected for ground visits for confirmation. Of this total, 10 newly deforested plots proved to be cultivated with soya and one was inaccessible. The other five plots were occupied by rice. Rice cultivation is not covered by the moratorium, which applies only to soya. However, rice is used as an intermediate crop to prepare the land for subsequent planting of soya, so these plots may have been intended for soya plantation the following season.

# ● Putting soya impacts on the map

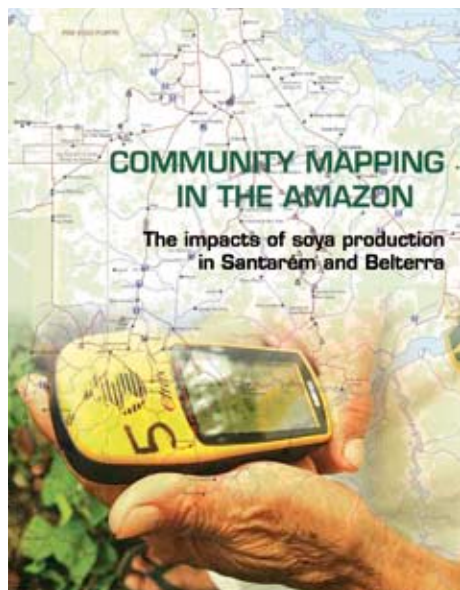
Greenpeace's team in the Brazilian Amazon has been working with local communities to map the impacts that the soya industry has had on the Santarém region of Pará State, at the heart of the Amazon. This was a collaborative project with the Brazilian organisation Projeto Saúde e Alegria (Health and Happiness Project) and the Rural Workers' Unions of Santarém and Belterra.

Ever since the US company Cargill announced its plans to build a controversial grain port facility in Santarém, local communities have fought to show the detrimental effect the growing soya industry has had on the region. The facility was in fact built illegally, without the environmental impact assessment required by the Government, and has remained in operation since 2003 despite protests from the federal prosecutor and civil society groups, and even in spite of being temporarily closed down by the Federal Government. Cargill finally submitted the assessment to the authorities at the end of last year, and the announcement of the public hearing at which further discussions will take place on this issue, is currently awaited.

Despite the moratorium on buying soya from newly deforested land, current farming practices are still damaging the environment and threatening the communities who live in the region. The community mapping project focused on training people to use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to pinpoint the damage caused by intensive agriculture and to empower the local communities to reclaim their land rights and to protect the rainforest that surrounds them. This technology can also be used to identify land grabbing.

Research carried out as part of the project between May 2007 and June 2008 showed how the impacts of soya cultivation have spread along the highways carved through the forest. Soya farming affects rivers as well: herbicides used on the crops leach into the water, and some rivers have been dammed by farmers, affecting water supplies for those downstream. Other rivers have silted up when wetland forest cover has been removed.

As their environment deteriorates, the future of local communities is at stake. Traditional routes through the forest have been blocked by huge soya plantations, and people forced to sell their land as a result of pollution from agrochemicals. The information collected for the maps even documents cases of entire communities disappearing because their former way of life has been made impossible by the destruction. However, the maps also show many communities that have somehow managed to adapt to the destruction – for some, this is the first time they have ever been formally identified on a map.



Cover of the English version of the Community Mapping Map. Cover picture © Alberto César

Documenting the state of the land across the Santarém region is an important step in the fight to save the Amazon. By enabling local communities to highlight what is happening to the forest and rivers around them, the project has finally placed a measure of control back in their hands.

The mapping project also offers a model of how money provided by proposed global funding mechanisms aimed at protecting forests could be spent in a way that allows local people to be the guardians of their forests. This will be essential if we are to limit climate change and protect forests in the Amazon and around the world in the long term.

See the maps at:  
[www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/community-mapping-in-the-amazon](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/community-mapping-in-the-amazon)



Participant of the community mapping project documents a soya field on previously forested land. © Alberto Cesar

## WORK WITH US TO SAVE THE AMAZON

**There is no time to lose in preventing further Amazon destruction. The urgent need to stop dangerous climate change 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 to the alliance of consumer companies which brought about the moratorium, to help bring a halt to deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.**

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