



FORESTS OF THE WORLD POSITION ON SOY

According to FAO - the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization - the annual net loss of tropical forest land was 7 million hectares in 2016¹. Soy, together with cattle farming, palm oil and timber production, are the four leading causes of deforestation worldwide. Soy causes both direct and indirect deforestation. Cattle farming is the absolute primary cause of deforestation in South America. But soy is often grown on land that has been used for cattle farming in the past, after which cattle farming is pushed further into the forest, causing new deforestation².

Soybean is rich in oil and protein and is also a complete source of protein that contains all the essential amino acids that should be included in the human diet. In addition, soy is an effective crop that has become a sought-after ingredient in animal feed for especially single-stomached animals. The increased demand for meat and dairy products in recent years has caused a huge increase in demand for soy for animal feed. In addition, soybean oil is increasingly used in processed foods³. All in all, this has driven a significant and rapid increase in demand for soy, which is why production and thus the area used for soybeans has also increased. Consumption and demand are expected to increase even more in the coming years.

Soy was initially primarily grown in temperate areas. But after a soy genetic modification in 1996 made it possible and advantageous to grow soy in tropical climates⁴, the areas of soybean crops have grown steadily in South America. This has caused major deforestation in rainforest areas⁵ as well as degradation of other valuable forest areas such as the Cerrado in Brazil and El Chaco in Argentina. Soy is often grown in large monoculture plantations, which damages biodiversity and adversely affects the climate. In addition, the cultivation of soy has included the use of large quantities of chemicals, caused soil erosion and implied land ownership change, which has led to marginalization of small farmers and violations



of indigenous peoples' rights⁶.

Forests of the World recognizes that soy is a valuable crop that can potentially be grown sustainably. But Forests of the World is concerned that rising demand for soy will have consequences for additional areas of rainforest and other nature with great conservation value. As the situation is right now, soy poses a threat to precious natural areas such as the Cerrado and the rainforest as well as to the global climate. Forests of the World believes that we must ensure that soy does not cause more deforestation, compromise the rights of indigenous peoples or adversely affect the environment and climate. We therefore recommend:

REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF SOY

Since soy is primarily used as animal feed in the meat-producing industry, this is where the primary focus of reducing soy consumption should be. First of all, meat production must be reduced. It is certainly both possible and necessary to reduce the consumption of meat, and for humans to ingest proteins from plant-based sources instead. It is far more effective if humans eat plant-based protein than if an animal needs to be fed the protein first. It is also possible to include other sources of protein in the animal feed⁷, thereby reducing the consumption of soy. Last but not least, it is important to focus on where soy is otherwise used inappropriately, such as in biofuel. We therefore believe that:

- **Politicians:** Must set targets to reduce meat production, especially from animals where soy is an important feed ingredient. In addition, politicians must ban soybean oil in biofuels; here, no food crops should be used, only waste products. Therefore, the EU must immediately end all support (e.g. state aid and tax incentives) for food crops in biofuels and phase them out as soon as possible.
- **Feed Producers/Agriculture:** Should consider reducing meat production and e.g. change to more valuable welfare meat. In addition, they should investigate alternative sources of protein that do not directly or indirectly put pressure on the rainforest or other valuable nature.
- **Consumers:** Must reduce their consumption of meat.



USE CERTIFIED SOY

In cases where soy is to be used, Forests of the World recommends that you go for soy that is sustainably grown and has not caused deforestation, violated the rights of indigenous peoples and adversely affected the climate. There are several international certification schemes that try to secure this, but none of these schemes are yet fully capable of ensuring zero deforestation. If you are going to use soy, Forests of the World would recommend choosing RTRS (Round Table on Responsible Soy) or ProTerra certified soy, which ensures better conditions in and around soy production than non-certified soy. Following an analysis⁸ of how or whether the two certification schemes ensure zero deforestation, that the rights of indigenous peoples are respected, and that the climate is not adversely affected, we have the following concerns⁹ on ProTerra and RTRS:

The RTRS certification¹⁰ has the following shortcomings;

- **No deforestation**; RTRS 'new no-deforestation Cut Off date'¹¹ in 2016 gives way to certification of fields cleared without an HCV¹² assessment.
- **Definition of forests**; RTRS lacks the definition of 'natural vegetation', which is their definition of 'Native forest', which is their definition of forest. This weakens their 'no deforestation' rule.
- **Governance**; RTRS provides room for many stakeholders around the table, but it is doubtful how much influence a small organization will have in policy development. Immediately, it seems that ⅓ of the board is occupied by stakeholders with a more financial focus.
- **GMO-free**; RTRS does not allow GMO-free soybeans to be labeled.

The ProTerra certification has the following shortcomings;

No deforestation; ProTerra sets the threshold for deforestation in 2004, which is earlier than the RTRS. However, the standard allows for compensation for this date, so it is uncertain how strong this is in practice. Furthermore, only HCVA¹³ is secured under ProTerra.

Indigenous peoples' rights; ProTerra lacks descriptions of how indigenous peoples' rights should be included in the production of soy, as the standard only refers to



international conventions in the introduction and does not formulate anything about implementation.

Governance; ProTerra lacks transparency and it is difficult to gain insight into how to participate and what the opportunities are for influencing standards development.

Transparency; ProTerra is failing to publish their accreditation reports and other documents that will provide insight into who is certified for what and how.

IMPROVE THE TRACEABILITY OF SOY

Today, it can be difficult for a Danish retailer and ultimately the consumer to gain insight into what kind of soy is included in the products they buy. This is especially true if it is soy used in animal feed. Thus, it is not possible for the retailer to allow the consumer to decide for himself which soy to support, and it is not possible for the farmer to promote the use of better soy. Forests of the World believes that it should be visible to all parties which soy is included in the production chain or in the product. Therefore, traceability must be improved. The Forests of the World therefore recommend that;

Politicians: work to tighten requirements for traceability in supply chains in relation to Danish imports, including soy, which pose a risk to the environment (in the form of deforestation, loss of biodiversity, etc.) and to the people living in the production areas.

Businesses/importers: take responsibility for their supply chains and tighten requirements for the sustainability and traceability of the soybean they import.

Consumers/farmers: demand manufacturers on the traceability and sustainability of the content of their products.

Note: This position is based on what the situation and certification schemes look like now in January 2018. If this position needs to continue to be valid, then our knowledge of the situation and certification schemes must be updated continuously as new things happen in the field. For instance, it has just been announced that in a year's time it will be possible to label Non-GMO under the RTRS certification, which will be extremely relevant to look at. Furthermore, it is important to point out that we currently lack knowledge of some elements of the



certification schemes. This is especially true of how these work in practice. We have not yet worked with them in the field, so we do not know how the different principles are interpreted, observed and applied in reality.

See the references below for more information, immerse yourself in Forests of the World report on soy and palm oil, or contact us at Forests of the World.

References

1. FAO (2016) STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS 2016 - Agriculture remains the most significant driver of global deforestation - FORESTS AND AGRICULTURE: LAND-USE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES [Online] Available from: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-c0176e.pdf>
2. Hermansen, John E. et al. (2012) Note on certification schemes for documentation of sustainability in relation to production of soybean and palm oil, p. 4 [Online] Available from: http://pure.au.dk/portal/files/52013713/Note_certificeringsordningar_rev_october.pdf
3. WWF (2016) Soy Scorecard, p. 9 [Online] Available from: http://soyscorecard.panda.org/files/WWF_Soy_Scorecard_2016.pdf
4. Hermansen, John E. et al. (2012) Note on certification schemes for documentation of sustainability in relation to production of soybean and palm oil, p. 107 [Online] Available from: http://pure.au.dk/portal/files/52013713/Note_certificeringsordningar_rev_october.pdf
5. Ibid., P. 5
6. Ibid., P. 5
7. Research is conducted on proteinaceous clover, insects and horse beans. For more info, see the background report on the World Forests website.
8. For detailed analysis see background report on the World Forests website.
9. In the analysis of these two certification schemes, we have looked more closely at our focus areas and thus recognize that there may be other shortcomings in the certification schemes.
10. Version 3.1 online available here:
11. A date indicating when the last deforestation must have occurred.
12. High Conservation Value - An assessment of the value of an ecosystem in terms of conservation. Many use a definition developed by the High Conservation Resources Network; <https://www.hcvnetwork.org/about-hcvf>
13. High Conservation Value Area; An area defined as conservation-worthy.