



Living Amazon Initiative

SUSTAINABLE AGRO - COMMODITIES



80%

OF DEFORESTED
AREAS IN THE
AMAZON ARE
OCCUPIED BY CATTLE
RANCHING

The unsustainable growth of the cattle ranching and agricultural sectors is driven by numerous factors. Chief among these driving forces is the growing global demand for meat, animal feed, and biofuels. Expansion into the Amazon is ultimately made possible by access to remote lands, by investments in transportation infrastructure and by unclear land tenure and use rights. The perceived lower value of natural forests compared to “productive” lands, and limited knowledge about better practices further exacerbate the dynamics of these sectors.

WWF seeks to tackle the impacts of cattle ranching and agriculture by fostering better practices and guiding the “siting” of these activities.

Our aim

Under the framework of WWF’s Living Amazon Initiative, this strategy aims to address the threats posed by extensive cattle ranching and mechanized agriculture by promoting improved production of critical agro-commodities through the adoption of improved standards and better management practices.

How we plan to make it happen

- Promoting the adoption of better management practices
- Helping delineate areas where extensive cattle ranching and mechanized agriculture production and expansion should not occur

WWF’s vision for the Amazon

WWF shares a vision for an ecologically healthy Amazon Biome that maintains its environmental and cultural contribution to local peoples, the countries of the region, and the world, within a framework of social equity, inclusive economic development and global responsibility.

WWF’s Living Amazon Initiative

Built upon 40 years of conservation experience in the region, the Living Amazon Initiative is one of WWF’s global initiatives, and it concentrates some of the organization’s most promising and challenging efforts which aim at promoting a biome-scale conservation vision for the largest rainforest and river system on Earth. One of the five transformational strategies identified to achieve this is “Sustainable agro - commodities”.

Amazon biome

Amazon basin





MARKET FORCES ARE CREATING GROWING PRESSURES TO EXPAND MECHANIZED AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK INTO THE AMAZON

Our proposal: Better practices and appropriate location

Until recently, the patterns and rates of conversion of Amazon forests for agriculture and for the raising of livestock were largely determined by national policies and national or regional economic forces. Amazon agriculture and livestock rearing were largely isolated from global economies and commodity markets. Beef production was lower than local demand, and large-scale mechanized agriculture had yet to penetrate the region.

Market forces are now creating growing pressures to expand mechanized agriculture and livestock into the Amazon forests.

Chief among these forces are the demand among “emerging meat-eating nations” for animal feed and meat, and the growing international demand for ethanol and bio-fuels.

Given WWF’s leadership role in creating and facilitating commodity roundtables and in promoting improved agricultural practices, we are well-positioned to help reduce the environmental and social costs associated with the expansion of livestock and agricultural production in the Amazon.

WWF will seek the commitment of agro-commodity producers to situate new production in established/zoned areas, thereby protecting priority conservation landscapes. WWF will also work towards ensuring that a significant percentage of the market for Amazon agro-commodities (grain, meat, bio-fuels) meets social and environmental production standards.

Promising experiences: PROMOTING GREENER PRACTICES

Extensive cattle ranching is the number one culprit of deforestation in virtually every Amazon country. Eighty percent (80%) of deforested areas of the Amazon are occupied by cattle pastures. Agriculture is the second main cause of forest conversion, and it is also a main cause of soil erosion and river water siltation.

As market trends generate increasing pressures on the Amazon ecosystems, it is vital to ensure the conservation of critical areas and to promote better productive practices throughout the region. For instance, Brazil is increasing its share as one of the world’s top beef producing countries; however more efficient production could limit deforestation in places like the Amazon where the space currently used to raise cattle could – at least - double its productivity.

WWF actively engages key market stakeholders in sustainable practices, through such mechanisms as the Round-table on Responsible Soy, and the Brazilian Sustainable Cattle Ranching Group, where the sector leaders embrace better production practices like the commitment to zero net deforestation.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/amazon

WWF’s Living Amazon Initiative

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