



WWF

HIGHLIGHT

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CONVERSION AND CONSERVATION IN THE CERRADO

A group of farmers in Mato Grosso, Brazil are demonstrating that it's possible to produce soy and protect the environment together.

"It was completely different when my parents used to farm," recalls Conceição Missio. "Once upon a time the land suffered from degradation and erosion, and people weren't concerned. But today we have better guidance and an awareness that helps to preserve the environment. That consciousness didn't exist before."

Conceição is a farmer in Sorriso, in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, where the Amazon rainforest meets the Cerrado savannah. Like many, her most valuable crop is soy.

Brazil exports more soy than any other country, and around a third comes from Mato Grosso. The vast majority is used as animal feed, especially in Europe: pigs, poultry, cattle and farmed fish are all raised on soy. If you've eaten chicken or sausages, cheese or eggs recently, chances are that soy from Mato Grosso was involved at the far end of the supply chain.

The problem is that the huge expansion of soy production in recent decades has come

at the expense of natural ecosystems. And as demand for animal products, and hence for soy, continues to increase, more forests, savannahs and grasslands are at risk.

CERTIFIED SOY

But Conceição is demonstrating that soy doesn't have to be bad news for nature. Along with eight other farmers, she recently achieved certification from the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS). RTRS-certified soy cannot be grown on land recently converted from forest or other natural ecosystems, among other legal, environmental and social criteria.

In total, the group farms 20,342 hectares of soy, while setting aside 15,125 hectares for conservation. Brazilian law requires farmers to leave a proportion of native vegetation on their land, including around watercourses, though this doesn't always happen in practice. The certified farmers are conserving around a third more than required by law to protect areas of high environmental and/or social value.

"The world is a finite thing that we will have to share together in the future. If you understand that today, you can grow responsibly in the future. If not, you will have problems, because it takes a lot of time to change."

Magali Sartre
Bel Group Corporate Social
Responsibility & Corporate
Relations Director

WWF TARGETS

2020 25% of global soy production is Round Table for Responsible Soy (RTRS) certified

PROGRESS

0.71% of global soy production is RTRS certified (January 2016)

PRIORITY COUNTRIES

Production

Brazil, USA, India, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay

Markets

China (largest importer globally), EU (Netherlands – largest importer in the EU), USA

Present focal regions

Amazon, Cerrado, Chaco region of Paraguay, Atlantic Forest (Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina), Argentina

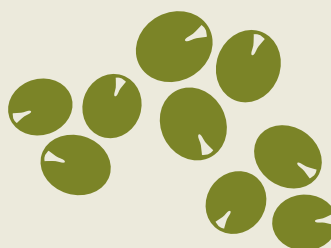
CONTEXT

Threats

- Forest clearing
- Loss of biodiversity
- Pollution
- Disregard for community and indigenous rights, and displacement of smallholder subsistence crops
- Capital intensive and large scale

Opportunities

- The plant provides three main products: soy meal for animal feed, soy oil (for human consumption and biofuel) and soybeans for human consumption.
- RTRS certification can work as the mainstream solution to drive responsibility in the soy sector globally.
- RTRS ensures safe working conditions.
- RTRS standards support good agricultural practices



Certification is the result of two years of work to improve management practices through a project called People who Produce and Preserve, supported by WWF, Solidaridad, local organization CAT (Friends of Earth Club) Sorriso, Dutch sustainable trade agency IDH and French cheese company Bel Group. Other local producers are now getting involved and a further 42,000 hectares are expected to be certified in 2016.

MARKET CONNECTIONS

Change on the ground in Mato Grosso is being driven by growing awareness on the other side of the world.

“We wanted to do something to offset the impact of the soy used by the farmers who supply our milk,” says Magali Sartre, Bel Group Corporate Social Responsibility & Corporate Relations Director, an RTRS member, which sponsors the project. “People don’t imagine that dairy cows in France are eating soy from Brazil. But it’s a problem we have to tackle.”

Starting in 2015, the company purchased RTRS credits equivalent to the volume of soy used by its 2,850 fresh milk producers in Europe, and this will be extended to cover all its suppliers worldwide this year (2016). Purchases of RTRS credits are

directly linked to payments to certified producers, so the more companies that buy them, the greater the incentive for producers to become certified.

“What started as something technical has become a much closer connection – we feel we really know the nine producers,” says Magali. “Saying you’re a member of RTRS doesn’t mobilize people, but knowing producers by name really changes things – it motivates our staff and helps explain to others how we can change the market.”

“Now we want to convince the whole dairy sector to take action toward a more responsible industry.”



The Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) is an international multi-stakeholder initiative founded in 2006 that promotes the use and growth of responsible production of soy.

responsiblesoy.org

For more information,
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www.panda.org/markets



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.

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