The Growth of Soy, and what industry can do to make its soy more responsible

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London, 30 October 2014
The Growth of Soy

In the last 50 years, the production of soy has grown tenfold, from 27 to 269 million tons. The total area of soy now covers over 1 million square kilometres - the total combined area of France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Growth in global soy area (in millions of hectares)

Source: Agreltyca, 2012; FAOSTAT, 2013; Bruinsma, 2009

1970: under 30 million ha
2012: over 100 million ha
2050: 141 million ha

Forest: are areas spanning more than 0.5 ha, with trees at least 5 m high and a canopy cover of at least 10 per cent (FAO definition). Forests covered in this report include the Amazon, the Atlantic Forest and the Chiquitano Dry Forest.

Savannas: are grassland areas that include a significant number of trees and woody plants, but not so densely spaced as to form a canopy. Much of the Cerrado and the Gran Chaco fall under this category, though both also contain forest areas.

Grasslands: are dominated by grasses and other herbaceous plants. Examples include the North American prairies, the Argentinean Pampas and the Campos in Uruguay. This report distinguishes between natural grasslands and cultivated pastures, which have been sown with a small number of often non-native grass species.
Conversion in South America

Mainly on land converted from natural ecosystems, either direct or indirect (cattle).

In 2012 49 million ha:

- Argentina 19 million ha
- Bolivia 1 million ha
- Brazil 25 million ha
- Paraguay 3 million ha
- Uruguay 1 million ha

In 2020 57 million ha expected
EU:
Brazil: 16.6 million tons (beans and meal)
Argentina: 10.8 tons (meal)
US: 1.9 million tons
Severe decline of global biodiversity

Global Living Planet Index

LPI = trends in 10,380 populations of 3,038 vertebrate species

Source: WWF, ZSL, 2014
LPI decreased most dramatic in Latin America

Living Planet Index by biogeographic realms

- Neotropical (-83%)
- Afrotropical (-19%)
- Indo-Pacific (-67%)
- Nearctic (-20%)
- Palearctic (-30%)

Source: WWF, ZSL, 2014
Major issues

- Loss of biodiversity
- Climate change
- Pesticides use
- Health issues
- Land rights
- Labour rights
- Legality
Deforestation in the Amazon
Deforestation in the Chaco
Deforestation in the Atlantic Forest

Data not available for Paraguay and Argentina
Recent grassland conversion in the United States

The Prairie Pothole Region of the eastern Dakotas is under substantial pressure from agricultural development. Between 2001 and 2010, cropland replaced over 1.25 million ha of grassland, or 16.9 per cent. Three crops constituted the vast majority of this new cropland in about equal proportion: corn, soybeans and wheat (Johnston, 2012).

In the Western Corn Belt (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa), grassland was converted to corn or soy at an annual rate of 1.0-5.4 per cent between 2006 and 2011. This has resulted in a net decline of grasslands, in particular those in close proximity to wetlands, of nearly 530,000 ha (Wright and Wimberly, 2013).
Soya to feed the animals we eat

Between 1961 and 2009, global soya production expanded nearly tenfold, and it has doubled since the mid-1990s.

Deforestation in progress in the Salta Province

The Chaco
The Cerrado

Deforestation
Soya to feed the animals we eat

Between 1961 and 2009, global soya production expanded nearly tenfold, and it has doubled since the mid-1990s.

Deforestation using fire in Gancendo, Chaco

The Chaco
Soya to feed the animals we eat

Between 1961 and 2009, global soya production expanded nearly tenfold, and it has doubled since the mid-1990s.

Bad agricultural practices Gancendo, Chaco
STEPS TOWARD RESPONSIBLE SOY

The world’s population and consumption of natural resources is growing to unprecedented levels – and demand for soy continues to rise. Without a change of course, vast areas of forest and other habitats in South America will disappear in the coming decades.

But an alternative future is possible. From government policies and farming practices to commitments by buyers and investors, solutions are emerging that will allow us to meet the need for soy while conserving biodiversity and crucial ecosystems.

This farm, in Paraná, Brasil, sees no-till cultivation, which can improve soil quality and carbon levels, and reduce erosion and chemical inputs.
‘Steps’ toward responsible soy

- Producer country legislation: Forest Code Brazil, Zero Deforestation Law Paraguay, Forest Act Argentina
- Land-use planning
- Better Management Practices (BMP’s)
- Payment for Ecosystem Services: REDD+, PES law Paraguay, Forest Code compensation?
‘Steps’ toward responsible soy -2-

- Markets: Basel criteria (ProTerra), RTRS, Soy Moratorium, CGF, other ‘standards’
- Consumer country: national commitments
- Reducing waste, consumption, responsible substitution
- EU (import) regulations?
What European companies need to do (individually)

- Calculate your soy use (feed, food, etc), start tracing your supply.

- Commit to 100 per cent responsible (RTRS- or ProTerra) certified soy under a time-bound plan

- Join RTRS or ProTerra.

- Begin purchasing RTRS/ProTerra soy **NOW.** Buy RTRS credits to increase capacity in short term, support development of mass balance and segregated certified supply chains.

- For non-GM soy, choose RTRS non-GM or ProTerra soy. When buying ProTerra, ask for improvement of governance and verification.

- Support programs to support farmers, join (industry) groups who promote RT’s
What the European Task Force could do

- Together push/help your suppliers/competitors to responsible sourcing of soy
- Share best practices
- Use your influence in Industry Groups in discussions and lobby to achieve ‘responsible soy’ becomes the norm
- Join forces with other groups (Consumer Goods Forum, European Soy Customer Group, European Retail Group, ‘dairy frontrunners’)
- Joint EU lobby for import regulations?
Questions?

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- The Growth of Soy,
  http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/agriculture/soy/soyreport/


- Living Planet Report 2014:
  http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/all_publications/living_planet_report/