



English summary of a follow-up report on soy production, June 2012

In 2010, Swedwatch published a report on meat and soy imports from Brazil. In this report Swedwatch follows up the changes in the Brazilian soybean sector and relevant companies' corporate responsibility activities over the past two years. The follow-up shows that companies who import soy to sell to Swedish farmers - Lantmännen, Svenska Foder and Norwegian Denofa - have increased their efforts to make soybean production in Brazil more sustainable. At the same time the level of commitment varies among the different actors and much remains to be done. Brazilian soybean production is still giving rise to serious environmental and human rights violations.

Briefly, the follow-up study demonstrates that:

- Controls exercised on soybean production have improved. Lantmännen now employ independent inspectors on site in Brazil and the monitoring of Denofa and Svenska Foder soy has been improved in that the certification actor Pro Terra has implemented several reforms in its certification system.
- All three companies are now linked to the multi-stakeholder initiative Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) in order to discuss problems and solutions with other actors. Lantmännen and Denofa have purchased their first RTRS-certified soy.
- Svenska Foder still has no Code of Conduct and no official standards as concerns ethics and the environment, even though it has increased its soybean imports. Denofa also lacks an official Code of Conduct but does impose certain requirements concerning ethics and the environment.
- The toxic chemical endosulphan that is used in pesticides in Brazil has been included in the Stockholm Convention and will be phased out in Brazil in 2013. Methamidophos will be prohibited in Brazil from 2012 onwards. Paraquat is still used widely and the overall use of pesticides is increasing.
- The soybean sector in Brazil continues to expand. As a result the Brazilian cerrado savannah, and increasingly even the Amazon rainforest, are being cleared for plantations. Violations of the rights of indigenous peoples due to the expansion soybean cultivation and forced labour on soybean plantations continue.

Swedwatch now recommends that more actors become involved in making soybean production more sustainable. The RTRS and Pro Terra certification systems have the potential to certify large volumes and impose extensive requirements as concerns respect for human rights and the environment. But they are not fully comprehensive.

Both certifications have been severely criticised and more stringent rules are necessary, including the ban on dangerous pesticides.

Swedwatch considers, however, that soy certified in either of the two certification systems is better than soy that is not certified at all. Soybean importers should consequently set up target dates for when all imported soy must be certified. At the same time, they should become involved in improving the criteria and controls within the frameworks of Pro Terra and RTRS. One option might be to buy soy from agricultural cooperatives that impose similar requirements as concerns respect for human rights and the environment.

Swedish food retailers also have a role to play as they are marketing products that fuel the use of soy. They should become more actively involved in the soy issue and demand that both Swedish and foreign suppliers use soy that is responsibly produced.

At the same time, all actors must review their reliance on soy and seek other options in the form of more locally-produced animal feed. Consumers should attempt to reduce their consumption of soy-fed meat as increased meat consumption contributes strongly to the unsustainable expansion of soybean plantations.