



## **Soy & Rainforest Destruction in South America**

*The world's largest rainforests are under siege. Tropical rainforests are being cleared at the rate of 14,000 acres per day. Roughly 17 percent of the Amazon rainforest and 80 percent of the surrounding Cerrado savannah have already been destroyed. And it's getting worse, with deforestation rates in the Amazon reaching an all time high in 2007.*

### **What's going on?**

- Soy has become a leading driver of deforestation in the Amazon. RAN's Brazilian allies report that more than 50,000 acres in the Amazon have been destroyed solely for soy since 2002.
- Since 2003, when Cargill opened a now notorious soy port in Santarem in the Brazilian state of Para, deforestation in the region has doubled. If current trends continue, more than 40 million acres of the delicate Cerrado savannah and 15 million acres of the Amazon will be cleared for soy production by 2020.

### **What's causing the demand for soy to increase?**

- Ninety percent of soy crops go to meet worldwide demand for animal feed. Increasingly, however, soy is being grown to produce fuels like biodiesel. Recent government mandates to increase the use of biodiesel in the U.S., the E.U., and several countries in South America, are stimulating demand for soy production.
- While demand for soy is rising around the world, only South America has room to significantly expand soy production – which is done at the expense of forests and other sensitive ecosystems. In the next few years, South America is expected to expand production to meet more than 70 percent of increased world demand for soy.

### **Who are the leading players?**

- American agribusinesses are leading the soy explosion. In 2004, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Bunge, Ltd., and Cargill together accounted for 60 percent of all soy funding in Brazil, providing seeds and processing facilities. More than half of soy storage, shipping and processing facilities in Brazil belong to ADM, Bunge and Cargill.

## What are the consequences for the environment?

- The expansion of soy plantations means that rainforests are being completely slashed and burned, eliminating critical habitats for many plant and animal species. Brazil now ranks fourth in the world for the number of endangered species.
- In addition to widespread deforestation, the expansion of industrial agriculture into rainforests is accompanied by widespread use of toxic chemicals like Roundup and Paraquat that spread through waterways, increasing levels of nitrogen and phosphorous in river basins. These toxins sicken those who drink the water as well as animals and plants living in the rivers.

## What are the consequences for people?

- To accommodate the large-scale commercial plantations needed to produce soy and other crops, ADM, Bunge and Cargill force Indigenous people and small farmers off their land and drive workers into poverty. These companies have been repeatedly found to use slave labor, despite their public commitment to an anti-slavery pact.
- Food shortages are occurring around the world as the finite supply of food crops is splintered to meet growing demand for agrofuels, causing severe price fluctuations with which poorer communities are unable to keep pace.

## Growth in the Planted Area of Soy: 1995 – 2003

Source: Brazilian Agricultural Ministry - CONAB

