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23 Global Food Companies Commit to Preserve Brazil's Cerrado Savanna

Conservationists welcome move as Cerrado is cleared faster than Amazon

LONDON—Twenty-three leading food companies today signaled that they are “committed to halting forest loss associated with agricultural commodity production” in one of the world’s most vital ecosystems, Brazil’s Cerrado savanna. At an event hosted by The Prince of Wales’s International Sustainability Unit and Unilever, the companies expressed support for the objectives defined in the Cerrado Manifesto, a call to action for the elimination of deforestation and conversion of native vegetation in the Cerrado, which about 60 leading Brazilian researchers and social and environmental organizations signed in September.

Covering more than a quarter of Brazil’s land area, the Cerrado is home to thousands of species of plants and animals, and millions of people, including diverse indigenous communities. In 2015, it yielded 45 million metric tons of soy and 74 million cattle. At the same time, however, it is being cleared faster than the Amazon.

“The Cerrado feeds billions of people from Brasilia to Beijing,” said Mauricio Voivodic, executive director of WWF-Brazil, “and to continue doing so, it needs intact habitats, rich biodiversity, fertile soil, fresh water, and a stable climate. We applaud companies endorsing the Cerrado Manifesto because they’re sending a clear message to the market that we can meet tomorrow’s demand on the cropland and pastureland we already have; in fact, we can’t afford not to.”

“Supply chain solutions reverberate across the entire planet, protecting America’s wildlife and all wildlife across the globe,” said [Collin O’Mara](#), president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. “By working with companies to improve industry practices, we are moving toward decoupling agricultural production and habitat conversion, guaranteeing that future demand can be met without further harm to vital, biodiverse ecosystems like the Cerrado.”

"This commitment by corporate actors is very welcome. It helps us move towards the commitment to eliminate deforestation from beef and soy supply chains many companies made in the 2014 NY Declaration on Forests and Climate. The Cerrado is a vital area, for the world's agricultural economy as well as for the environment. It is really important we get development there right by steering crop expansion onto the large areas of land already cleared," said David Cleary, director of global agriculture at The Nature Conservancy.

Unfortunately, about half of the Cerrado’s natural vegetation has already been lost, and another 15 million hectares are projected to be cleared in coming decades. Each year, clearing in the Cerrado is responsible for an estimated 250 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to the annual emissions of 53 million cars. This contributes to rising temperatures, reduced rainfall, prolonged droughts, and more frequent fires, and it squeezes wildlife into ever smaller spaces, including spotted jaguars, giant anteaters, maned wolves, and howler monkeys.

Research led by scientists at the Gibbs Land Use and Environment Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that farmers and ranchers in the Cerrado can meet future demand for beef and soy without clearing any more land.

“Our research indicates that there is enough cleared and suitable land to triple soy area in the Cerrado,” said Lisa Rausch, researcher at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. “Most of this cleared and suitable land is currently being used as pasture, though it is also nearly all in very close proximity to existing soy silos and could be converted to agriculture, especially as the ranching sector undergoes intensification.”

The original 23 companies signing the statement of support for the objectives of the Cerrado Manifesto are:

- Ahold Delhaize NV
- Ajinomoto Co, Inc.
- Carrefour
- Colgate-Palmolive Company
- Co-operative Group Ltd
- ICA Gruppen AB
- IKEA Food Services AB
- J Sainsburys Plc
- Kellogg Company
- Lidl UK GmbH
- L'Oréal SA
- Mars Inc.
- McDonald's Corporation
- METRO AG
- Marks and Spencer Group Plc
- Nando's Chickenland Ltd
- Nestlé S.A.
- Nutreco NV
- NorgesGruppen ASA
- Tesco Stores Plc
- Unilever
- Waitrose Ltd
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

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ABOUT NWF

The [National Wildlife Federation](#) is America's largest conservation organization, uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Visit the National Wildlife Federation Media Center at [NWF.org/News](#). To learn more about our global work, visit [international.nwf.org](#) and follow us on our international [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT TNC

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We are tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and oceans at an unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably and helping make cities more sustainable. Working in 72 countries, we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. To learn more, visit [www.nature.org](#) or follow @nature_press on Twitter.

ABOUT WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. Visit www.panda.org/news for the latest news and media resources.

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