

# THE END OF THE AMAZON SOY MORATORIUM THREATENS GLOBAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

## What can markets do?

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WWF - Brazil



# Brazil supplies many food products to the world

Brazil's share of global food production:

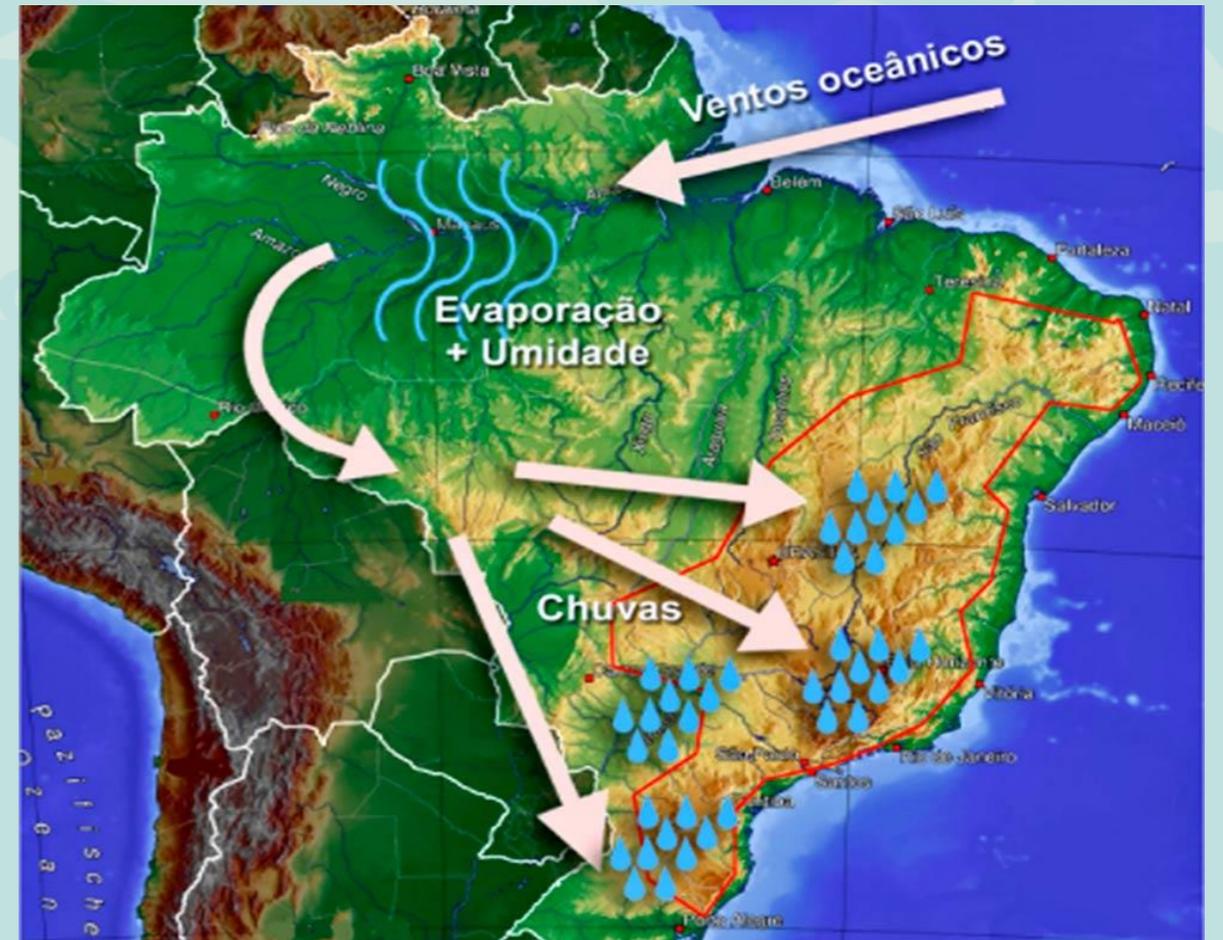
- 42% of soybean ([USDA](#));
- 10% of corn;
- 16% of cotton;
- 20% of beef;
- 14% of poultry;
- 4% of pork;
- 5-6% of eggs;
- 35% of coffee;
- 4-5% of fruits (orange, mango, banana, pineapple, melon, and others).

Source: ([USDA](#)).



# The Amazon rainforest and native ecosystems are crucial for Brazil's food production and economy

- Only 3-4%% of Brazilian agricultural (and grazing) lands are artificially irrigated ([Atlas da Irrigação](#));
- The other 96-97% are naturally irrigated, including by rainfall from Amazon forests ([Machado et al., 2024](#); [Leite-Filho et al., 2021](#));
- 1 sq. meter of Amazon forest can generate 300 L of water per year ([Baker et al., 2026](#));
- Total Amazon-borne water worth USD 20 billion annually to Brazil's economy ([Baker et al., 2026](#)).



[Flying rivers](#)

# Despite forests' importance to soy production, in January 2026 traders have unilaterally abandoned the Amazon Soy Moratorium (ASM), the main private sector mechanism protecting Amazon forests

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## Exclusive: Soy trading firms to abandon Amazon protection pact in Brazil

By Ana Mano and Manuela Andreoni  
December 29, 2025 5:39 PM GMT-3 · Updated December 29, 2025



[1/3] A tract of Amazon jungle burning as it is being cleared by loggers and Brazil August 26, 2019. REUTERS/Lucas Landau/File Photo Purchase License

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Shanna Hanbury  
9 Jan 2026 Amazon



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## Brazil soy industry's exit from moratorium on using Amazon land could spur deforestation



of Amazon rainforest stands next to soy fields in Belterra, Para state, Brazil, Nov. 30, 2019. (AP Photo/Leo Correa, File)

BY GABRIELA SÁ PESSOA  
Updated 11:01 AM BRT, January 10, 2026  
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SAO PAULO (AP) — For nearly 20 years, Brazil's largest soy producers assured buyers that their harvest — the world's biggest — wasn't grown on land cleared from Amazonian forests. The pledge, [known as the soy moratorium](#), has been widely credited with helping curb rainforest loss.



# Without the ASM's protection, everyone in the world who consumes embedded SOY (in poultry, dairy, pork, beef, salmon and other farmed fishes, eggs, biofuels and others) may be contributing to Amazon's destruction.

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Fernanda Wenzel  
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## How a long-standing pledge to protect the Amazon began to fall apart

A pact by soy traders in Brazil to preserve the rainforest is under a co-ordinated assault

# What was the Amazon Soy Moratorium?

- Voluntary agreement set up in 2006 not to source or finance soy from recently deforested lands;
- Most successful zero-deforestation commitment ([Heilmayr et al., 2020](#); [Gibbs et al., 2015](#));
- Allowed soy to grow in the Amazon by 344% (from 1.64 Mha in 2007 to 7.28 Mha in 2023) with very low deforestation ([ASM monitoring](#));
- Directly prevented overall 1.8 Mha of speculative deforestation (not necessarily on soy farms) ([Heilmayr et al., 2020](#))
- Worked as a market deterrence against speculative deforestation because it reduced the value of soy-suitable lands cleared after 2008 ([Rausch et al. \(pre-print\)](#)).

# What traders argue to unilaterally abandon the ASM?

**“Blitzkrieg” by soy farmers’ lobbies (CNA and Aprosoja) to make voluntary zero-deforestation commitments (ZDCs) unfeasible in Brazil:**

- Collusion accusation at Brazil’s antitrust agency (CADE);
- States’ laws (MT, RO, PA, TO, MA) restricting new subsidies to companies implementing ZDCs;
- Civil action by Aprosoja requesting BRL 1 billion in compensation for losses.

# Nonetheless, these excuses do not stand, because:

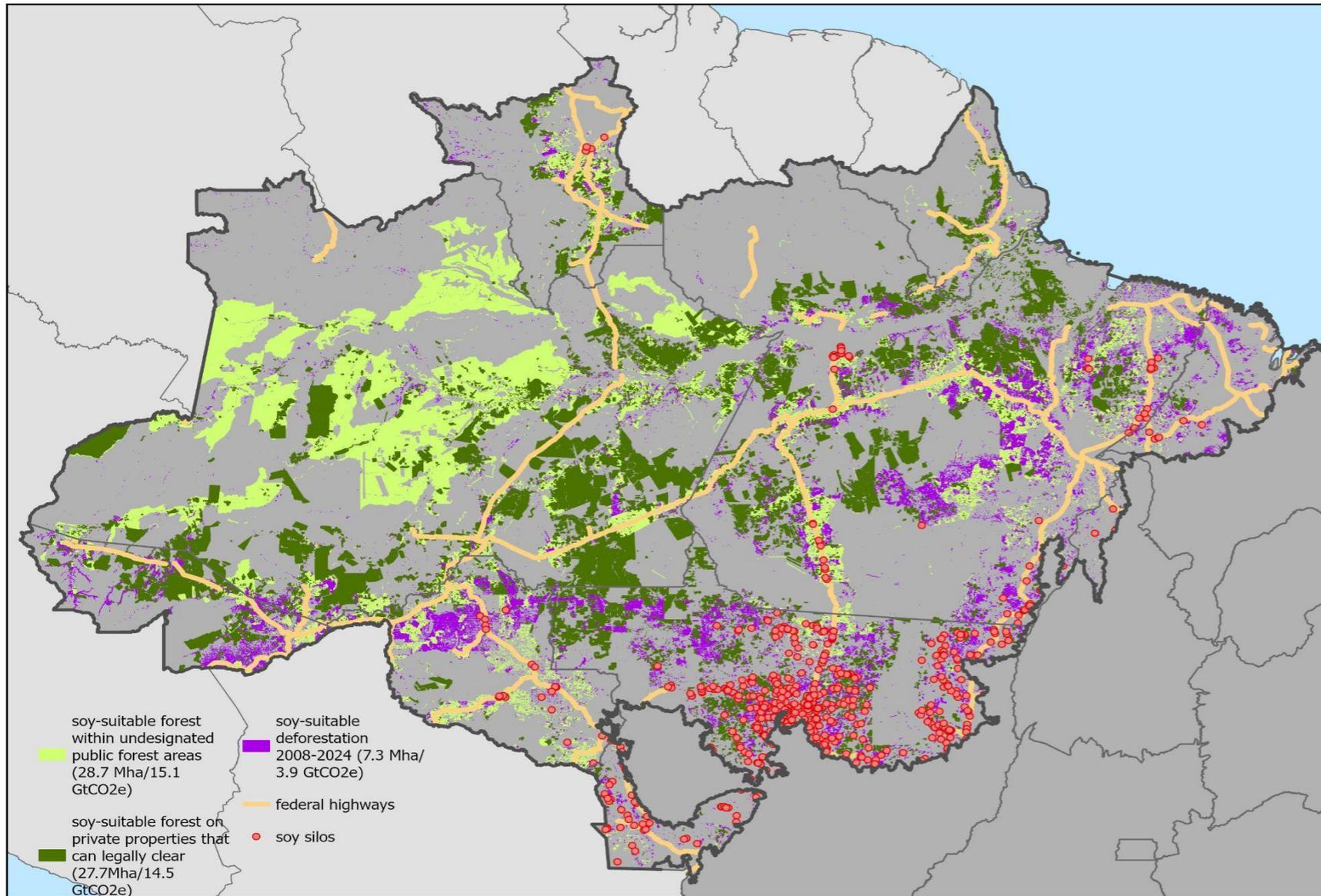
**All in all, traders still had legal certainty and capacity to withhold the ASM until a final decision is reached by the Supreme Court, but they decided to drop the mechanism altogether.**

- CSOs have taken the states' laws to the supreme court to be judged unconstitutional;
- CSOs have proposed amendments to ASM's governance, monitoring and data handling to address competition risks.
- The Mato Grosso law that entered into force is not retroactive, meaning traders would have no direct loss to maintain the ASM.

# What is at stake with the end of the ASM?

- Market deterrence lost for the highest-value commodity occurring in the Amazon ([Rausch et al. \(pre-print\); Rausch and Gibbs, 2025](#));
- Very likely increase in land value, speculation, conflicts, grabbing and deforestation;
- Disruption of rainfall cycles due to deforestation ([Baker et al., 2026](#)), threatening agricultural production, regional and global food security ([Fleishmann et al., 2025](#));
- At least 1.4 Mha predicted in additional deforestation over the next 10 years, emitting 843 MtCO<sub>2</sub> (Canada's annual emissions) ([Rausch et al. \(pre-print\)](#)),
- Dangerous approximation to the Amazon's tipping point ([Lovejoy & Nobre, 2018](#), [Brando et al., 2025](#));
- National security of countries as ecosystem collapse can increase food insecurity and migrations ([UK Government, 2026](#))

# What is at stake with the end of the ASM?



- **9.1 Mha** of soy-suitable forests on Legal Reserve Surplus within private Properties, i.e., can be legally cleared (**4.76 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> ~ India's annual GHG emissions**);
- **7.3 Mha** of soy-suitable lands deforestation between 2008-2024 enabled for soy entering the soy-land market (**3.9 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> already emitted**).

# What is at stake with the end of the ASM?

- The establishment of negative precedents hindering private, voluntary, sectoral and multi-stakeholder climate action, where these commitments may be considered:
  - A collusion jeopardizing competition laws across the world;
  - Reasons to discriminate companies fiscally;
  - Reasons to create legal insecurity and uncertainty for companies implementing DCF and other climate-related commitments;
  - Inclusion of 18 years of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from deforestation in the Amazon (2008-2026) in the scope three emissions of companies with SBTi targets sourcing embedded soy from the Amazon.

# Repercussion of traders' unilateral abandonment of the ASM

Retail Soy Group's public letter to Brazilian traders, Abiove (association) and Brazilian government, asking traders to:

- Confirm that existing climate and deforestation commitments remain unchanged.
- Confirm the 2008 cut-off date for the Amazon biome remains unchanged.
- Describe the procurement controls to ensure soy is legally deforestation free.
- Commitment to independent assurance of your monitoring, reporting and verification system.

 <b>Giles Hurley</b> Chief Executive Officer (UK)	 <b>Joe Prosho</b> Head of Sustainable Sourcing & Agriculture	 <b>Shirine Khoury-Haq</b> Chief Executive Officer	 <b>Ph. Wyss</b> Chief Executive Officer	 <b>Ryan McDonnell</b> Chief Executive Officer (GB)
 <b>Alex Freudmann</b> Managing Director of Foodhall	 <b>Andrew Edlin</b> Head of Sustainability	 <b>Hannah Gibson</b> Chief Executive Officer	 <b>Simon Roberts</b> Chief Executive Officer	 <b>Christine Hefferman</b> Chief Communications & Sustainability Officer
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 <b>Lizzie Wilson</b> Chief Executive Officer	 <b>Annette Cantwell</b> Technical Manager	 <b>Steve Tough</b> Head of Technical Services	 <b>Simon Foley</b> Procurement Director	 <b>David McDiarmid</b> Corporate Relations Director
 <b>Andy Wright</b> Responsible Business Director	 <b>Will Davies</b> Group CSR Manager	 <b>Andrew Murphy</b> Chief Information and Sustainability Officer		

# Repercussion of traders' unilateral abandonment of the ASM

NGOs Coalition's (including WWF) open letter to soy consumers to save the Amazon, asking soy end-users to:

- Continue to uphold ASM commitments and reaffirm that they will not accept animal products linked to soy-driven Amazon deforestation;
- Clearly integrate into company policy the 2008 deforestation cut-off date, full farm-level traceability, and the rejection of both legal and illegal deforestation;
- Collectively call on traders to uphold the criteria of the moratorium.



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# What can markets do?

- **Companies and financial institutions participating in soy value chains need to engage with traders and soy first aggregators asking them to:**
  - Maintain the ASM criteria in sourcing operations, even individually;
  - Explicitly integrate the 2008 deforestation cut-off date in the Amazon, full farm-level traceability, and the rejection of both legal and illegal deforestation into their policies;
  - Describe procurement controls to ensure all soy sourced and traded free from deforestation and conversion and illegalities;
  - Commit to independent assurance of their monitoring, reporting, and verification systems;
  - Use Brazil's public data platforms to source only from farms without deforestation.
  - Engage and invest in credible Payment for Environmental Services to reward farmers who could legally deforest (through e.g., TFFF, RCF, Natural Capital PES Platform).

# Why should financial institutions engage on this issue?

- Increased **exposure to illegal activities** due to loss of ASM monitoring checks
- **Loss of market access and regulatory crackdowns:** EUDR, UK Environment Act, emerging legislation in Asia
- **Increased market demand for resilient agriculture landscapes and supply chains:** climate/nature commitments
- **Supply chain instability and price volatility:** physical risks from deforestation impact on supply chains – link to Global Tipping points and UK national security assessment

# THANK YOU!

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