

Greenpeace Pressure Breaks Through

Brazil cattle giants unite to end Amazon destruction
Monday, 5 October 2009

At a signing ceremony in Sao Paulo today, four of the world's largest beef and leather companies (1) agreed to ban the purchase of cattle from newly deforested land in the Amazon (2). The four - Marfrig, Bertin, JBS-Friboi and Minerva - dominate the world export market and supply the UK.

The move is due in part to pressure from British companies such as corned beef manufacturer Princes, which today announced its own support for the moratorium. Princes has joined Clarks, Adidas and Nike by announcing its determination to cancel contracts with suppliers unless their products are guaranteed to be free from Amazon destruction. Reacting to the news, Greenpeace executive director John Sauven said:

"Today's announcement is a significant victory in the fight to protect the Amazon. Cattle ranching is the single biggest cause of deforestation globally, and the fact that these multibillion dollar companies have committed to cleaning up their supply chains will lead to real change in the Amazon."

"British companies have helped make this happen by getting tough with their suppliers, but this is not the end of the story. We now need to make sure that this agreement is properly enforced and extended to the entire cattle industry in Brazil."

In June this year a Greenpeace report entitled 'Slaughtering the Amazon' exposed the link between forest destruction and the expansion of cattle ranching in the Amazon. (3) The report explains how cattle ranching is the leading cause of deforestation anywhere in the world.

The Brazilian cattle sector, which occupies 80 per cent of all deforested areas of the Amazon, is the country's most carbon intensive industry. Brazil is the fourth largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the world.

The event was attended by Governor Blairo Maggi of the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso, which has the highest rate of deforestation in the Amazon as well as the largest cattle herd in Brazil. Maggi announced that the state would support efforts to protect the Amazon and would provide high-resolution satellite images for monitoring.

Reacting to the news, a spokesperson from Princes said:

"Princes have held detailed discussions with our Brazilian suppliers regarding a moratorium on deforestation for cattle in the Amazon biome.

"Princes supports the need to bring about an industry-wide agreement to end deforestation and requires its suppliers in Brazil to operate in line with the principles outlined in Greenpeace's Commit or Cancel policy. We will continue to engage with our suppliers and NGOs to ensure that these conditions are being met."

NOTES:

Measures adopted by the companies today include:

- Monitoring of supply chains and clear targets for the registration of farms that both directly and indirectly supply their cattle.
- A pledge to take steps to end the purchase of cattle from indigenous and protected areas and from farms using slave labour.

For more information please contact the Greenpeace press office - 0207 865 8255

FOOTNOTES

(1) Bertin is the world's largest leather exporter and Brazil's second-largest beef exporter; JBS-Friboi is the world's largest beef producer and global exporter of processed beef; and Marfrig is the world's fourth largest beef trader.

(2) www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/minimum-criteria-for-industria

(3) www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/slaughtering-the-amazon