



# Germany's Mystery Meat

Despite “Grown in Germany” labeling, major meat brands linked to destruction of Amazon rainforest



MIGHTY INVESTIGATION



MIGHTY



**A**nimal products are at the heart of the German diet. Meat and sausage products make up the biggest portion of Germany's food production value (24%), followed by dairy (14%).<sup>i</sup> While meat has inherent environmental impacts, one of the most severe – the vast destruction of rainforests and other ecosystems – is entirely avoidable. Nonetheless, a new investigation from the environmental organization Mighty Earth reveals that despite national pride in the local origin of German meat and dairy, the feed used to raise livestock in Germany is commonly imported from companies driving destruction of tropical ecosystem across Latin America.

While brands operating in Germany understand that their customers want sustainable food, their supply chains tell a different story. An analysis of soy imports into Germany shows that much of the wurst, schnitzel, and cheese sold in Germany was likely raised using soy-feed linked to vast deforestation in South America. This deforestation is entering the German market through soy importers like Cargill and Bunge, the American agribusiness giants found driving much of the deforestation in our

report. This deforestation is entirely avoidable, as many companies have already shown, by ensuring suppliers are using previously deforested degraded lands to grow soy instead of clearing more forests.

The consequences of Germany's avoidable reliance on animal feed imported from deforestation in South America is significant. Nearly 82 million consumers help make Germany the largest food and beverage retail market in Europe, and the industry is the third largest sector in Germany overall. Within the food market, meat and dairy production are the most lucrative sectors for Germany. Tolerating hidden deforestation in the supplychain would contrast with Germany's global environmental leadership on solar and wind power, support for organic agriculture, and high recycling rates. To protect the German plate, prominent German brands need to take the lead in ensuring that suppliers like Bunge and Cargill take immediate action to ensure their meat and soy supply chains are not driving destruction of the world's last remaining pristine ecosystems.

## Destroying the rainforest for animal feed

Mighty Earth conducted an extensive investigation into deforestation driven by soy production in Latin America in September 2016- available at <http://www.mightyearth.org/mysterymeat/> and on the New York Times. Using satellite monitoring and field investigations, our teams found that agribusiness giants Cargill and Bunge were disproportionately responsible for driving the most deforestation in the Brazilian Cerrado and Bolivian Amazon basin - two regions most threatened by deforestation in Latin America. In the Cerrado alone, the areas where Bunge and Cargill operated a commercial silo saw clearance of 6500 square kilometers between 2011 and 2015, an area equivalent to entirely clearing the Schwarzwald of its trees. While not all of the deforestation captured in this data was driven by soy, these companies are not taking sufficient steps to prevent the substantial amount of deforestation occurring in the regions where they operate, and in many cases are providing the financial incentives that spur the deforestation in the first place.

The ultimate destination for the vast majority of this soy is in the animal feed used to raise livestock for meat and dairy. This meat is then sold by major consumer brands, many of which have policies against sourcing from unsustainable suppliers due to public and consumer concern about deforestation. Both Cargill and Bunge technically have sustainability policies promising not to source from deforested areas, since so many of their customers have become increasingly concerned about the practice, yet clearly are failing to implement these policies on the ground to prevent deforestation from entering global supply chains and the German market.

Deforestation and the German market Germany is a leading importer of soy from South America,<sup>ii iii iv</sup> and therefore can have a powerful voice in calling for better environmental practices for products entering the German market. Trade data shows that Germany imported 3.7 million tons of soybeans and 2.9 million tons of soybean meal in 2015,<sup>v</sup> and that Germany is a top market for Brazilian soy exports.





These figures do not account for indirect imports through neighboring countries like the Netherlands, which also

import meat and soy from Latin America for sale to German companies.

Figure 1: Export markets for Brazilian soybean meal (2015)<sup>vi</sup>

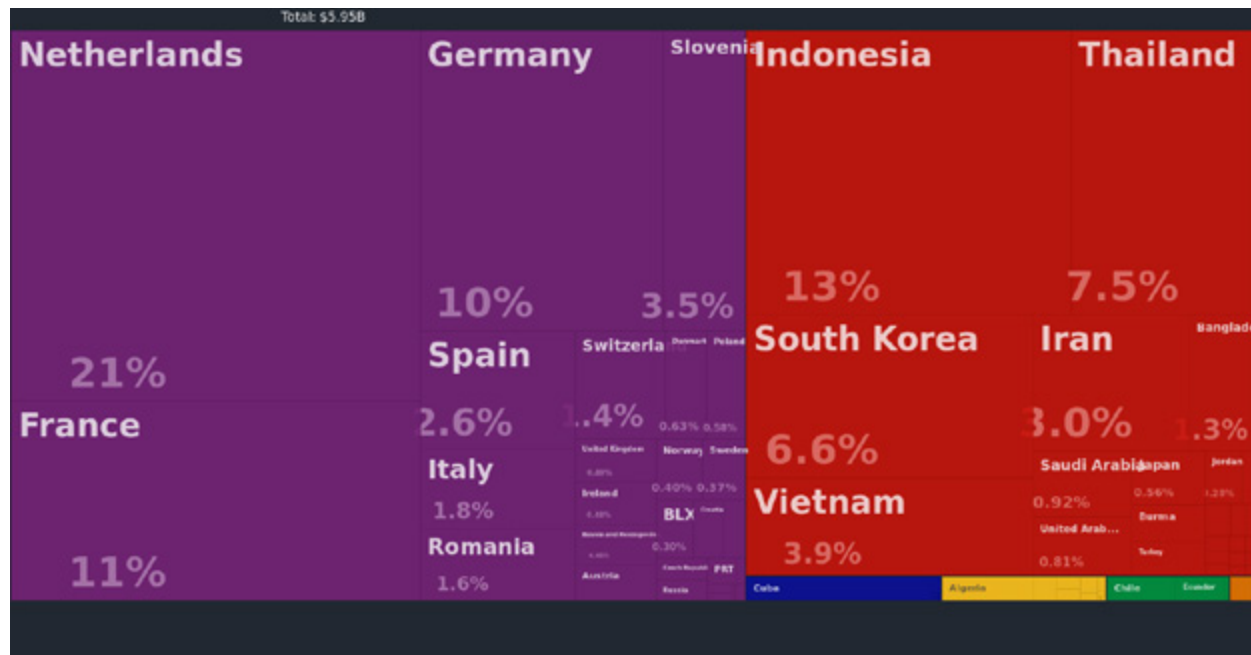
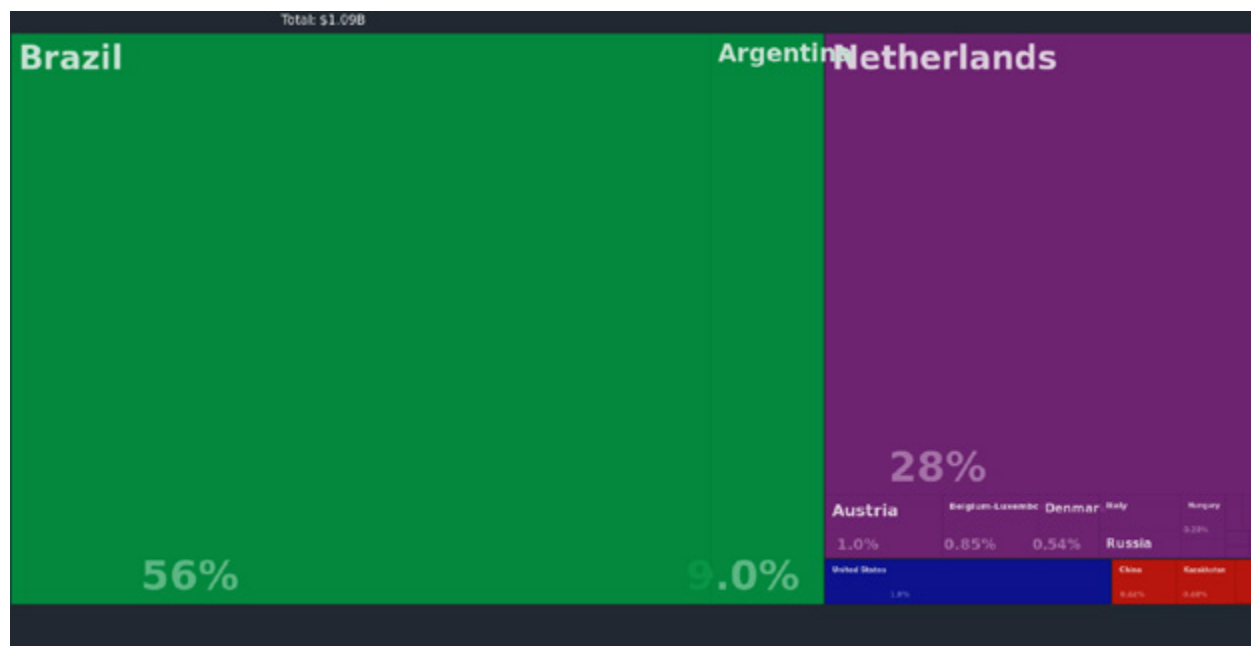


Figure 2: German imports of Soybean Meal (2015)<sup>vii</sup>







Leading German brands that sell meat are therefore likely using animal feed linked to the vast deforestation documented in our report. The leading German meat brands Toennies, PHW Gruppe, and Westfleisch all tout their environmental standards in their marketing materials, yet none have policies for sourcing animal feed sustainably, which is often where the greatest environmental impact of meat comes from. The top German grocery retailers such as Edeka and Aldi also promote various environmental policies on their websites, yet none report specific policies

for ensuring the meat and dairy products they sell are raised sustainably. The fast food sector in Germany<sup>viii</sup> shows mixed results- while McDonald's has taken the lead in calling on its suppliers to adopt stricter practices to avoid deforestation, Burger King has not yet responded meaningfully to the findings in our report. Top German grocery stores and restaurant chains have an important role to play in working with their suppliers to make sure the soy and meat products they sell to German consumers is not destroying tropical rainforests abroad.

## German suppliers



### Export of meat and meat products to

**120 countries** worldwide

### #1 European Champion in production of pork

**5.6 mio to** pork produced

**2.9 mio to** pork exported

### #2 European Champion in production of beef/veal

**1.1 mio to** beef/veal produced

**406,000 to** beef/veal exported

### Best quality in production of poultry

**1.6 mio to** poultry produced

**462,000 to** poultry exported

## Top 10 Food Retailers in Germany in 2015

Retailers	Retail brands	Food sales (in EUR billion)	Share of food sales (in percent)	Change of sales over 2014 (in percent)
Edeka Group	Edeka, Marktkauf, Netto, Plus, Treff 3000	48.3	90.6	2.7
Rewe-Group	Penny, REWE, Kaufpark, Fegro, Selgros	28.6	72.1	3.7
Schwarz-Group	Lidl, Kaufland, Handelshof	28.0	81.2	1.4
Aldi-Group	Aldi Nord, Aldi Süd	22.8	82.0	1.5
Metro Group	Real, Metro C+C	10.3	39.3	-2.7
Lekkerland	Lekkerland, others	9.0	99.0	3.2
DM-Drogeriemarkt	Drugstore	6.3	90.0	9.8
Rossmann	Drugstore	5.2	90.0	6.4
Globus	Globus, Hela, Alpha Tecc	3.2	67.0	1.9
Bartels-Langness Group	Markant, familia, Bela C&C	3.1	77.7	2.3
Total Top 10		<b>164.8</b>	<b>77.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>

Source: Lebensmittelzeitung 2016





## Companies can prevent deforestation from entering the food chain

---

Since our investigation, consumer companies from around the world concerned about deforestation have stepped forward to urge stronger forest protections in Latin America. Calls for a moratorium on further deforestation have come from several of the world's largest food companies including Unilever, Tesco, McDonald's, Carrefour, Kelloggs, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Mars Petcare, Ahold, Dunkin' Brands, Nestle, ADM, Louis Dreyfus, and Wilmar; investors representing over half a trillion dollars in assets under management; the World Bank and the IFC, both of which have offered financing for such efforts; and the Brazilian Environment Minister.

The agricultural industry has already shown that it can expand soy production without clearing forests, as demonstrated through the groundbreaking Brazilian Amazon Soy Moratorium adopted a decade ago in response to global concerns about destruction of the Amazon Rainforest. Under this moratorium, major players in the soy industry came together and agreed not to buy soy that was grown on land deforested after 2008. The results were dramatic—in the two years prior to the Moratorium, 30% of new soy plantations in the Brazilian Amazon came from

destruction of forests, a figure that dropped to less than 1% after the announcement. Meanwhile, soy production has continued to expand in the Amazon, even as deforestation has plummeted; the area planted with soy in the Brazilian Amazon has more than tripled from one million hectares to 3.6 million in just ten years with negligible new forest clearance. This is possible because of the abundance of already cleared land in the region and because farmers are implemented more efficient agricultural practices. Across Latin America, there are currently 200 million hectares of degraded land, providing more than ample to achieve ambitious agricultural goals without clearing any additional vegetation.

The global food industry can again lead the way in making sure agricultural production is not destroying tropical forest ecosystems by expanding the successful Brazilian Soy Moratorium to protect other sensitive ecosystems in Latin America. Central to this success will be prominent German food brands taking the lead in making sure tropical deforestation is not entering their products and eco-conscious German households.





## REFERENCES

- i [https://www.gtai.de/GTAI/Content/EN/Invest/\\_SharedDocs/Downloads/GTAI/Industry-overviews/industry-overview-food-beverageindustry-en.pdf?v=7](https://www.gtai.de/GTAI/Content/EN/Invest/_SharedDocs/Downloads/GTAI/Industry-overviews/industry-overview-food-beverageindustry-en.pdf?v=7)
- ii [http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree\\_map/hs92/import/deu/bra/show/2015/](http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/import/deu/bra/show/2015/); [http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree\\_map/hs92/export/bra/show/1201/2015/](http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/export/bra/show/1201/2015/)
- iii <https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/brazil/tradestats>
- iv [http://assets.wnf.nl/downloads/mapping\\_the\\_soy\\_supply\\_chain\\_in\\_europe\\_wnf\\_12\\_may\\_2015\\_final\\_1.pdf](http://assets.wnf.nl/downloads/mapping_the_soy_supply_chain_in_europe_wnf_12_may_2015_final_1.pdf)
- v [http://www.ovid-verband.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ovid-verband.de/images/Diagramme\\_2016/Sojabohnen\\_-schrot\\_Import\\_D\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ovid-verband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/ovid-verband.de/images/Diagramme_2016/Sojabohnen_-schrot_Import_D_2016.pdf) ; [http://www.ovid-verband.de/fileadmin/images/hintergründe/OVID\\_Hintergrundpapier\\_2016\\_Ohne-Gentechnik-im-Tierfutter\\_final.pdf](http://www.ovid-verband.de/fileadmin/images/hintergründe/OVID_Hintergrundpapier_2016_Ohne-Gentechnik-im-Tierfutter_final.pdf)
- vi [http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree\\_map/hs92/export/bra/show/2304/2015/](http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/export/bra/show/2304/2015/)
- vii [http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree\\_map/hs92/import/deu/show/2304/2015/](http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/tree_map/hs92/import/deu/show/2304/2015/)
- viii <https://www.statista.com/statistics/560813/most-popular-fast-food-restaurants-germany/>







[www.mightyearth.org](http://www.mightyearth.org)



MIGHTY