



Ribeye beef sold at Lidl in The Hague linked to Brazilian deforestation



A recent [investigation](#) by Repórter Brasil in partnership with Mighty Earth has found that German-based supermarket Lidl sold premium ribeye beef steak linked to deforestation in Brazil's Pantanal wetlands. The product was found at one of Lidl's stores in The Hague in the Netherlands.

The investigation found 'Premium Vlees' ribeye beef was supplied to Lidl by the world's largest meat company, JBS, from its slaughterhouse in Campo Grande in central Brazil. This site, in turn, is supplied cattle by farms that received animals for fattening from distant areas in the threatened Pantanal tropical wetlands - including cattle sold by indirect supplier farms officially under federal sanction and fined for illegal deforestation.

The sourcing of beef from deforested land comes despite [commitments](#) from the Schwartz Group (Lidl's owners) to minimize deforestation by ensuring beef from Brazil is exclusively sourced from producers who have signed their 'Cattle Agreement' or who can provide an equivalent sustainability/environmental certificate.

The new research follows [persistent reports](#) since 2009 of alleged deforestation linked to Brazilian meat giant JBS. This includes [multiple news reports exposés](#), [investigations](#), and Mighty Earth's own corporate [audits](#) and recent Trader Tracker monitoring [reports](#) - as well as other EU-based supermarket chains dropping JBS as a supplier because of [allegations](#) of modern slavery and deforestation linked to exports of its beef and other meat products.

The recurrence of deforestation [allegations](#) points to a systemic failure by JBS to effectively address problems in its Brazilian beef supply chain. It also shows the need for enhanced regulatory and decisive commercial action by supermarkets and other consumer-facing companies - including the immediate suspension of suppliers linked to deforestation.

BEEF DRIVES FOREST DESTRUCTION IN BRAZIL

Brazil is the world's largest beef exporter, exporting two million tonnes of beef each year. The production of beef is a major driver of deforestation in the Amazon and other key habitats like the Cerrado woody savanna and the Pantanal wetlands. Scientists estimate that two-thirds of cleared land in the Amazon and Cerrado has been converted to cattle pasture, and 57 million hectares of the Brazilian Amazon is now used for cattle ranching. In 2017, about a third of Brazil's beef exports were assessed to have come from the Amazon. In 2020 Brazil exported some 25,700 tonnes of processed beef to the Netherlands, worth \$100 million.

While headquartered in Brazil, JBS has over 450 facilities and offices in more than 20 countries. With annual revenues of \$50 billion, JBS is the world's largest producer of beef - slaughtering almost 35,000 cattle a day in Brazil alone. Despite the deforestation risks, JBS's global meat exports are booming - JBS saw a 40% increase in trade volume from Brazil between 2017 and 2019, and JBS was responsible for about a third of Brazil's beef exports in 2019. The company's second quarter of 2021 was its biggest ever in terms of global sales and net profit.

There is a risk that cattle purchased by JBS have at some point grazed on deforested land, either in the Amazon or other key habitats impacted by environmental devastation such as the Pantanal wetlands. In 2020 the strongest fires in decades were seen in the Pantanal, with cattle pasture clearing one of the main drivers of the outbreaks.

LIDL'S LINKS TO BRAZILIAN DEFORESTATION

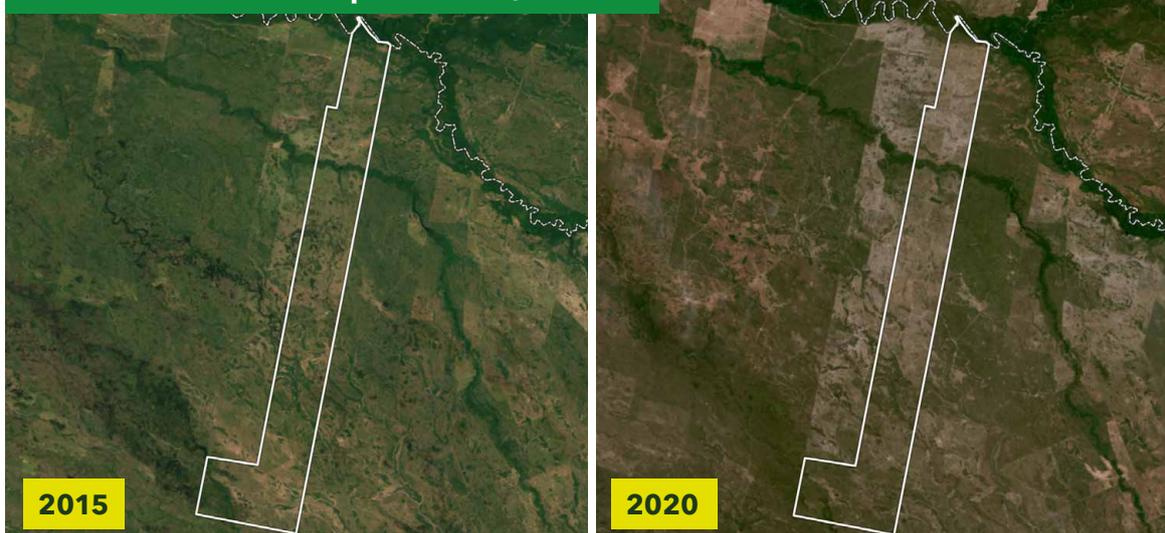
Repórter Brasil traced the opaque JBS's supply chain links and found that Pica Pau Farm, located in Rio Negro, Mato Grosso do Sul, has regularly supplied the JBS slaughterhouse at Campo Grande over the last two years. The owner of Pica Pau farm, Osvaldo Firmino de Souza, purchased cattle for fattening from two indirect supplier farms in the Pantanal which have been officially sanctioned for illegal deforestation.

In December 2018 the Brazilian federal environment agency IBAMA found illegal deforestation of 181 hectares of Pantanal land at **Santa Therezinha do Piquiri Farms I, II and III**. The owner was fined for the crime and the land was indicted - or embargoed - by the IBAMA anti-deforestation environment agency. Repórter Brasil found that even after the crime and interdiction, animals from Santa Therezinha do Piquiri continued to be sent for fattening to Pica Pau Farm in Rio Negro - JBS's direct supplier.

Repórter Brasil found a similar situation involving another supplier of the same JBS meatpacking plant in Campo Grande. Rancher Hélio de Lima is the owner of the **Tereré Farm**, a 40,000-hectare estate in Porto Murtinho in Mato Grosso do Sul. In 2014 IBAMA interdicted 2,300 hectares of the farm which had been illegally deforested. Records show the same crime had been found there four years earlier. The Tereré Farm specialises in breeding calves, which are later sent for rearing and fattening on other properties belonging to the farmer Hélio de Lima, from where the

animals are sent for slaughter. They include the Monza Farm in Campo Grande and the Morro Grande Farm in Terenos, which are both direct suppliers to the JBS export slaughterhouse and meatpacking plant at Campo Grande. Repórter Brasil found that the Campo Grande slaughterhouse supplied the 'Premium Vlees' ribeye beef steak sold in Lidl in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Santa Therezinha do Piquiri Farms I, II and III



Indirect supplier **Santa Therezinha do Piquiri Farms I, II, and III** in Corumbá in the Pantanal was interdicted and fined for illegal deforestation in 2018

Tereré Farm



Indirect supplier **Tereré Farm**, a 40,000-hectare ranch in Porto Murtinha in Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil had 2,300 hectares interdicted for illegal deforestation in 2014. Calves are sent from Tereré to other farms, including Monza Farm in Campo Grande and Morro Grande Farm in Terenos, and both send cattle to JBS's Campo Grande slaughterhouse - which supplies the Premium Vlees' ribeye beef steak sold at Lidl supermarket in The Hague, the Netherlands. Image taken December 2020.

LINKS BETWEEN PANTANAL ECOSYSTEM DESTRUCTION AND BEEF SOLD AT LIDL IN THE HAGUE



1

Santa Therezinha do Piquiri Farm I, II, III
Corumbá in the Pantanal, Mato Grosso do Sul. Calves sent for fattening.



2

Pica Pau Farm
Rio Negro in Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil.



3

JBS's Campo Grande slaughterhouse



4

Lidl
'Premium Vlees' ribeye beef steak found at Lidl in the Hague in the Netherlands.

A

Tereré Farm
Porto Murтинha in the Pantanal, Mato Grosso do Sul. Calves sent for fattening.

B

Morro Grande Farm
Terenos, Mato Grosso do Sul.

C

Monza Farm
Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul.

Researchers from Repórter Brasil took photos of sample Premium Vlees ribeye beef processed by JBS at Campo Grande in Brazil and for sale at a Lidl supermarket in The Hague on March 24, 2021.

In response to a request for information from Mighty Earth in December 2021, Lidl Netherlands stated that “given the risk of deforestation linked to beef with South American origin, we have decided together with our supplier to look for alternative sourcing. The result is that from January 2022 onwards we will not sell beef with South-American origin in our fixed assortment.”



While this move helps Lidl reduce their exposure to South American deforestation, acting in one country does not substitute for an overarching approach on deforestation that covers all Lidl stores in the world.

Based on the allegations presented and JBS’s history of related violations, **Mighty Earth urges Lidl to immediately suspend JBS as a supplier of beef products to all its global stores.**

More specifically:

- Lidl should suspend all direct and indirect supplier contracts with JBS in light of this investigation and multiple earlier ones. Any suspension should only be reversed once JBS has agreed to adopt a meaningful zero deforestation and zero-conversion policy, as well as stringent monitoring of both direct and indirect suppliers with full traceability.
- Lidl should adopt time-bound, specific and group-wide commitments to eliminate deforestation, ecosystem conversion, and human rights abuses from their global beef supply chains.
- Lidl must ensure effective implementation by monitoring suppliers’ practices and requiring suppliers to provide evidence of compliance. This compliance, in practice, means that JBS should provide full traceability of both direct and indirect suppliers.
- Lidl should regularly and publicly report on progress toward deforestation and conversion-free beef commitments, using verified metrics and disclosing all farm suppliers to enhance supply chain traceability.
- Lidl should make full supply chain transparency, monitoring, and traceability a condition of trade with suppliers for commodities with deforestation, environmental, and human rights risks.
- Lidl should set goals to shift its meat sales to alternative proteins such as plant-based products.

RIGHT TO REPLY

Lidl Netherlands stated: “Protecting biodiversity, including preventing deforestation, are central themes within our sustainable purchasing policy. Given the risk of deforestation linked to beef with South American origin, we have decided together with our supplier to look for alternative sourcing. The result is that from January 2022 onwards we will not sell beef with South American origin in our fixed assortment.”

JBS told Repórter Brasil that it “does not condone or tolerate any type of disrespect for the environment, Indigenous communities or Brazilian legislation” and that at the time of purchase, all of the aforementioned direct supplier properties complied with the company’s responsible source protocols.

A lawyer for rancher Hélio de Lima told Repórter Brasil that IBAMA’s fine was “a result of a huge mistake”, since no native forest had been deforested at the site, and that only degraded pasture was cleared in an area that had been abandoned by previous owners.

Cattle farmer Oswaldo Firmino de Souza from Pica Pau Farm could not be reached by Repórter Brasil.

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