Demand for beef speeds destruction of Amazon forest

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1 Key vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these key words from the text:

cattle	deforestation	logging	rancher
urgent	enormous	satellite	slaughterhouse

1. _____ means 'very, very big'.
2. A _____ is a farmer on a large farm in the Americas.
3. Animals are killed for their meat in a _____.
4. If something is _____, it is very, very important.
5. Cows which farmers keep for their meat or milk are called _____ .
6. _____ is removing all the trees from large areas of land.
7. _____ is cutting down some trees for their wood.
8. A _____ is an object that travels high above the Earth and sends back pictures and other information.

2 Find the information

Look in the text and find this information as quickly as possible:

1. How much of the Amazon rainforest was lost last year?
2. What is CIFOR?
3. What percentage of Brazil's exported beef do the EU countries buy?
4. What percentage does the US buy?
5. How many cattle were there in the Amazon region in 2002?
6. How much will the Brazilian government spend to save the rainforest?

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An international report says that last year was a very bad year for the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Satellite photographs show that almost 26,000 sq km of the world's largest forest was lost, 40% more than the year before. The Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) says that this year's loss could be even greater.

The main reason for the loss of forest, or deforestation, is that farmers are cutting down trees so that they can produce grasslands for their cows. Brazil exports a lot of beef to Europe and Brazilian beef is very popular in Europe because there is no mad cow disease in Brazil. The CIFOR report says that EU countries now buy almost 40% of Brazil's 578,000 tonnes of exported beef. Egypt, Russia and Saudi Arabia import 35%. The US takes only 8%.

"Beef exports are the main reason for the damage to the forest, as cattle ranchers are destroying the rainforests," said David Kaimowitz, the director general of CIFOR. He said that logging is not a direct cause of deforestation. The number of cattle in the Amazon region increased by more than 100% to 57 million between 1990 and 2002, the report says. "[In that time] the percentage of Europe's meat imports coming from Brazil increased from 40% to 74%."

The Americans say that soya farming for the European market causes deforestation. The CIFOR report does not agree with this "Soyabean farming in the Amazon region is increasing but it only causes a small percentage of total deforestation," it says.

The report says that enormous ranching operations are now controlling the beef export market. "In the 1970s and 1980s small ranchers produced most of the beef in the Amazon region. They sold it to local slaughterhouses. Now large commercial ranchers are producing the beef and selling it to European supermarkets."

Last month the Brazilian government said it was going to spend $133 million to help to save the rainforest. This is a very positive step. Without urgent action to save the rainforest, a huge area of forest will disappear during the next 18 months. CIFOR says that the Brazilian government must stop ranchers using government land, stop building roads in the forest, and give money to people to keep land as forest.

John Vidal
The Guardian Weekly, page 3

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3 Comprehension check

Decide whether these sentences are true or false:

1. Logging is the main cause of deforestation.
2. Brazilian beef is not popular in Europe.
3. The US buys more Brazilian beef than the EU does.
4. Soyabean farming causes only a small percentage of deforestation.
5. In the 1970s and 1980s enormous ranching operations produced most of the beef in the Amazon region.
6. The Brazilian government is spending money to help save the rainforest.

4 Vocabulary - animals and meat

Match the animals with the meat:

1. cattle (cows)
2. sheep
3. pigs
4. hens

a. lamb
b. chicken
c. beef
d. pork

5 Vocabulary - prepositions

Fill the gaps with a preposition. Check your answers in the text.

1. Last year was a very bad year _____ the rainforest.
2. Cattle farming is the main reason _____ deforestation.
3. Logging is not a direct cause _____ deforestation.
4. The percentage of imports increased _____ 40% _____ 74%.
5. The report does not agree _____ the Americans.
6. Small ranchers sold their beef _____ local slaughterhouses.

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6 Grammar focus - present continuous

Look at this sentence from the text:

Soyabean farming in the Amazon region is increasing.

This means that this activity is happening now and is continuing. We use the present continuous to talk about these processes.

Make more sentences using the present continuous from these prompts. You can check your answers in the text.

1.	farmers	cut down	trees
2.	cattle ranchers	destroy	rainforests
3.	enormous ranching operations	control	beef export market
4.	commercial ranchers	produce	beef and ...
5.	... they	sell	European supermarkets
6.	the rainforest	disappear	