

## Demand for beef speeds up destruction of Amazon forest

Level 2 | Intermediate

Last year was a very bad year for deforestation in the Amazon region of Brazil.

### 1 Key vocabulary

Match these words with their meanings.

1. deforestation
  2. logging
  3. cattle
  4. rancher
  5. slaughterhouse
  6. restrict
- 
- a. a person who owns or manages a large farm in the Americas
  - b. to place limits on something
  - c. the process of removing all the trees from a large area of land
  - d. the work of cutting down trees for wood
  - e. cows kept by farmers for their milk and meat
  - f. a building where animals are killed for their meat

### 2 Find the information

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

1. How much of the Amazon forest was lost last year?
2. How much beef does Brazil export each year?
3. Find four countries not in the EU that import beef from Brazil.
4. What is CIFOR?
5. How many cattle were there in the Amazon region in 2002?
6. How much will the Brazilian government spend on measures to control deforestation?

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According to a recent report, last year was a very bad year for deforestation in the Amazon region of Brazil. Satellite pictures showed that almost 26,000 sq km of the world's largest continuous forest was lost, 40% more than in the previous year. And this year's loss could be greater, according to the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

The main reason for the destruction of the forest is the increasing demand for Brazilian beef in Europe. Many people are afraid that European cattle are still infected with mad cow disease and foot and mouth disease, so Brazilian beef is becoming more and more popular. The CIFOR report says that EU countries now take almost 40% of Brazil's 578,000 tonnes of exported beef. Egypt, Russia and Saudi Arabia between them import 35%. The US takes only 8% because it has strict limits on imports in order to protect its own beef producers.

"Beef exports are the main cause of the deforestation, as

cattle ranchers are destroying the rainforests," said David Kaimowitz, the director general of CIFOR. He said that logging contributed only indirectly to deforestation. The number of cattle in the Amazon region more than doubled to 57 million between 1990 and 2002, the report says. "[In that time] the percentage of Europe's processed meat imports that came from Brazil rose from 40% to 74%. Markets in Russia and the Middle East are also responsible for much of this new demand for Brazilian beef."

But the report does not agree with the American argument that GM-free soya farming for the European market is leading to deforestation. "Although there has been a lot of concern in recent years about the increase of soybean cultivation in the Amazon region, it only leads to a small percentage of total deforestation," the authors say. Mr Kaimowitz said that the rate of Amazonian deforestation could increase in the next few years as foot and mouth disease disappears from Brazil.

The report says that giant ranching operations linked to European supermarkets are now dominating the beef export

market. "In the 1970s and 1980s most of the meat from the Amazon was being produced by small ranchers selling to local slaughterhouses. Very large commercial ranchers linked to supermarkets are now targeting the whole of Brazil and the global market," Mr Kaimowitz said.

Last month President Luis Inacio (Lula) da Silva announced new measures worth \$133m to control the rate of deforestation in the Amazon and provide greater support for local regions and community forestry. "The government's approach goes in the right direction, but without urgent action the Brazilian Amazon could lose an additional area the size of Denmark over the next 18 months."

CIFOR recommends that the Brazilian government should also try to keep ranchers off government land, restrict road projects that open up the forest, and provide economic incentives to maintain land as forest.

*John Vidal*  
*The Guardian Weekly, page 3*

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### 3 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer for each question:

1. **What, according to the report, is the main reason for the increase in deforestation in Brazil?**
  - a. soya farming
  - b. logging
  - c. cattle farming
2. **Why is there an increased demand for Brazilian beef?**
  - a. because there is still a fear of cattle disease in Europe
  - b. because it is cheaper than soya
  - c. because the US has strict limits on imports
3. **What, according to the Americans, is the main reason for deforestation in Brazil?**
  - a. GM-free soya farming
  - b. logging
  - c. cattle farming
4. **What will happen if urgent action is not taken?**
  - a. cattle farming will increase even more
  - b. an area the size of Denmark could be lost in the next 18 months
  - c. road building in the forests will increase

### 4 Vocabulary - find the words that mean...

1. Find a three-word expression that means 'a brain disease in cattle'.
2. Find a noun which means 'worry'.
3. Find a verb which means 'to increase by 100%'.
4. Find a word which means 'the process of growing crops or plants'.
5. Find another word for 'writer'.
6. Find an adjective that means 'very, very large'.

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### 5 Vocabulary - word building

Complete the table

	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Noun</u>
1.	destroy	_____
2.	demand	_____
3.	cultivate	_____
4.	increase	_____
5.	research	_____
6.	argue	_____
7.	disappear	_____
8.	dominate	_____
9.	produce	_____
10.	announce	_____

### 6 Grammar focus - passive voice

Look at this example:

*Cattle farming causes deforestation.*

We can also say:

*Deforestation is caused by cattle farming.*

Rewrite these sentences in the passive voice in the appropriate tense.

1. The EU imports 40% of Brazil's exported beef.
2. Cattle ranching is destroying the rainforest.
3. Logging does not cause deforestation.
4. Giant ranches dominate the beef export market.
5. The President announced new measures.
6. In the past small ranchers produced most of the meat.

### 7 Discussion

What are the arguments for and against the destruction of the rain forest? Look at it from the point of view of:

- a) cattle farmers
- b) loggers
- c) local people