

Demand for beef speeds destruction of Amazon forest

Level 3 | Advanced

1 Key vocabulary

Complete the sentences using these words from the text:

deforestation	quota	herd	logging	play down
slaughterhouse	indigenous	rancher	justifiable	restrict

1. A _____ is a building where animals are killed for their meat.
2. A large group of animals that live and move about together is called a _____.
3. A _____ is someone who owns or manages a large farm in the Americas.
4. _____ is the process of removing all the trees from a large area of land.
5. If you _____ something you place limits on it.
6. _____ is the work of cutting down trees for wood.
7. If something is _____, there is a good reason for it.
8. If you _____ a problem, you try to make it seem less important than it really is.
9. A _____ is an amount of something that someone is officially allowed to have or do.
10. The _____ people of a region are the people who lived there for a very long time before other people came to live there.

2 True or false?

Decide whether these statements are true or false and then look in the text to check your answers:

1. The Amazonian forest is the world's largest continuous forest.
2. Most of Brazil's beef is exported to the United States.
3. Brazilian beef is popular in Europe because people are afraid that European cattle are diseased.
4. Logging is the main reason for deforestation.
5. Soybean cultivation causes more deforestation than cattle farming.
6. There is no foot and mouth disease in Brazil.

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Europe's demand for beef made last year one of the worst yet for Amazonian deforestation, according to an international research report that quotes Brazilian government figures due to be released soon. Last year 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, says the internationally funded Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

The destruction is being driven by a growing demand for Brazilian beef in Europe because of the fear of mad cow disease and foot and mouth in European herds, last week's CIFOR report says. EU countries, it says, now take almost 40% of Brazil's 578,000 tonnes of exported beef. Egypt, Russia and Saudi Arabia between them import 35%. The US, which has strict beef quota systems to protect its own ranchers, takes only 8%.

"The deforestation is being fuelled by beef exports, with

cattle ranchers making mincemeat out of the rainforests," said David Kaimowitz, the director general of CIFOR and one of the report's authors. He said that logging contributed only indirectly to deforestation. The Amazon's cattle population 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 it plays down US claims that GM-free soya farming for the European market is leading to deforestation. "Although the last few years have witnessed a great deal of justifiable concern about the expansion of soybean cultivation into the Amazon, that still explains only a small percentage of total deforestation," the authors say. Mr Kaimowitz said that the rate of Amazonian deforestation could grow in the next few years as Brazil became free of foot and mouth disease.

The report suggests that giant ranching operations linked to European supermarkets were 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 restrict deforestation in the Amazon and provide greater support for indigenous territories and community forestry. "The government's approach goes in the right direction, but unless urgent action is taken the Brazilian Amazon could lose an additional area the size of Denmark over the next 18 months," Benoit Mertens, another author of the report, said.

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
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3 Find the expression

Find an expression in the text which means 'completely destroying'.

4 Comprehension check - cause and effect

Match the beginnings and endings of the sentences:

1. Europe's demand for beef ...
 2. Brazilian beef is popular in Europe ...
 3. The US takes only 8% of Brazilian beef exports ...
 4. GM-free soybean cultivation cannot be blamed for most of the destruction ...
 5. The rate of deforestation is likely to increase ...
 6. Although logging is a factor in deforestation ...
 7. Unless urgent action is taken ...
 8. The transformation of the Amazonian beef industry from a local industry to a global industry ...
-
- a. ... a huge area of rainforest will be lost in the next 18 months.
 - b. ... because it has strict quota systems to protect its own farmers.
 - c. ... it only contributes indirectly to it.
 - d. ... because it accounts for only a small percentage of deforestation.
 - e. ... has led directly to an increase in deforestation in Brazil.
 - f. ... because Brazil will probably soon be free of foot and mouth disease.
 - g. ... was caused by a link-up between European supermarkets and commercial ranchers.
 - h. ... because European consumers are afraid of mad cow disease in European herds.

5 Vocabulary - collocations

Which prepositions follow these words?

1. demand _____
2. fear _____
3. concern _____
4. linked _____
5. support _____
6. according _____
7. due _____
8. responsible _____

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6 Vocabulary work - words for groups of animals

Put these words into the correct box (eg 'a herd of cattle'):

dogs

sheep

cows

birds

wolves

elephants

HERD	FLOCK	PACK

7 Grammar focus - present simple continuous passive

Look at this example:

The deforestation is being fuelled by beef exports.

Make more sentences in the same form from these prompts:

1.	millions of trees	cut down
2.	large areas of rainforest	lose
3.	40% of Brazil's beef	export to the EU
4.	the whole of Brazil	target
5.	new measures	introduce

8 Discussion

Which of these are more important: the forests, food, income for local farmers?