



Soy

World demand for edible oils and animal protein is high and rising. Soy is a crop that provides both edible oil and livestock protein feed (soy meal). To meet current demand, mainly driven by livestock feed, in spite of increased productivity, the global planted area of soy is currently growing at 3.6% per year. Most of the recent growth has been taking place in the American subtropical and tropical regions. This expansion has direct and indirect impacts on natural habitats of high conservation value and the livelihoods of people and endangered species that depend on those habitats.

WWF recognises that soy meal and oil are basic commodities that generate income to farmers, processing industries, and support services, providing local employment and valuable foreign exchange earnings. But soy production often carries high social and environmental costs due to associated forest clearing, atmospheric, terrestrial and water pollution, and disregard for local community and indigenous rights. Soy production is usually capital intensive and large scale and is not a smallholder subsistence crop. Conversion of high conservation value forests (see separate position paper) and other critical habitats for soy cultivation is unacceptable. Without significant changes in policies and practices nature and people will suffer major damage. WWF calls upon the industry, regulators, financiers, buyers and other stakeholders to work collectively to develop and promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable practices to minimise the negative effects of soy production and trade.

WWF believes that for soy production to be socially and environmentally beneficial, the following actions are needed:

Environmental issues:

- Avoid conversion of high conservation value forests and critical habitats
- Adopt farm-level Better Management Practices identified by stakeholder consultation to minimise negative impacts on freshwater (pollution, sedimentation, erosion etc)
- Avoid genetically modified soy (see separate position paper)

Social and Cultural Issues:

- Provide national-level, effective protection of communities in areas with unresolved tenure disputes
- Develop long-term sustainable livelihood alternatives for people negatively affected by soy expansion

Land use Issues:

- Use zoning and infrastructure planning at regional level to integrate soy production into a mosaic of other land uses (protected areas, other natural areas, restoration and production areas) leading to a land-use plan negotiated and agreed with stakeholders
- Respect legal and customary rights of local and indigenous communities to land; aim to restore degraded land where necessary; avoid resettlement and resettle already evicted persons in accessible and already cleared areas through the establishment of incentives and disincentives that redirect expansion of soy away from areas of high conservation value and important to local livelihoods

Policy Issues:

- Require the use of Better Management Practices as a condition for regulations, permits, financing, land title, monitoring
- Make producers and traders responsible for mitigating negative environmental and social impacts of soy production by enforcement of public policies
- Remove trade and domestic subsidies in developed countries that lead producers in developing countries to use environmentally-damaging cost-cutting measures to compete for market share

Corporate Governance Issues:

- Use independent monitoring and evaluation of the industry and publicise results
- Encourage additional private sector voluntary regulations

WWF will work with governments, private companies, financial institutions, and civil society organisations at the farm, landscape and global levels to:

- Identify, analyse and promote those better production practices that reduce the impact of soy production to acceptable levels while being financially sustainable.
- Eliminate incentives for soy production that convert any natural habitats, replace high conservation value forests, degrade priority freshwater ecosystems or alter the natural conditions for biodiversity in these habitats.



Position Paper

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- Identify areas that should be zoned out of soy production or protected in some other way due to their high conservation value or critical ecosystem functions.
- Support efforts at the national, regional and global levels to increase transparency of chain of custody in commodities production including tracing to origin and production methods
- Increase awareness about the effects of trade and domestic policies on people and the environment