

THE UK SOY STORY

HOW RETAILERS' COMMITMENTS
TO TACKLING SOY-DRIVEN
DEFORESTATION COMPARE



FOR
YOUR
WORLD



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- For the first time, 6 of the UK's 10 major supermarket retailers have published time-bound commitments to source and support the move to deforestation and conversion-free soy, along with action plans outlining how they plan to get there. This represents significant progress and sends strong demand signal for deforestation and conversion free soy in the UK.
- WWF have assessed and awarded a point score out of six to each retailer based on how far we think their UK policies, action plans and wider efforts are stacking up to advance towards deforestation-free soy.
- Tesco and Waitrose have leading policies which have achieved full marks against our scoring criteria. Both of these retailers have set out a clear pathway to source deforestation and conversion free soy, and along with M&S, have ambitious aspirations to source only from landscapes which are verified in their entirety as zero-deforestation soy sourcing areas.
- The scoring shows that Iceland and Morrisons are lagging behind with no clear commitment or action plan.
- To reach the ultimate goal of deforestation and conversion-free soy in the UK by end 2020 and to support the entire supply chain to achieve this at pace, WWF urges retailers to converge towards best-practice by aspiring towards the most credible zero-deforestation standards. We also urge retailers to support both legislative change and industry-wide transformation.
- New landscape approaches which shift production onto abandoned or degraded land may enable whole sourcing areas to become verified as deforestation and conversion-free at scale. This represents real opportunity for sector transformation in the run up to 2020.



INTRODUCTION

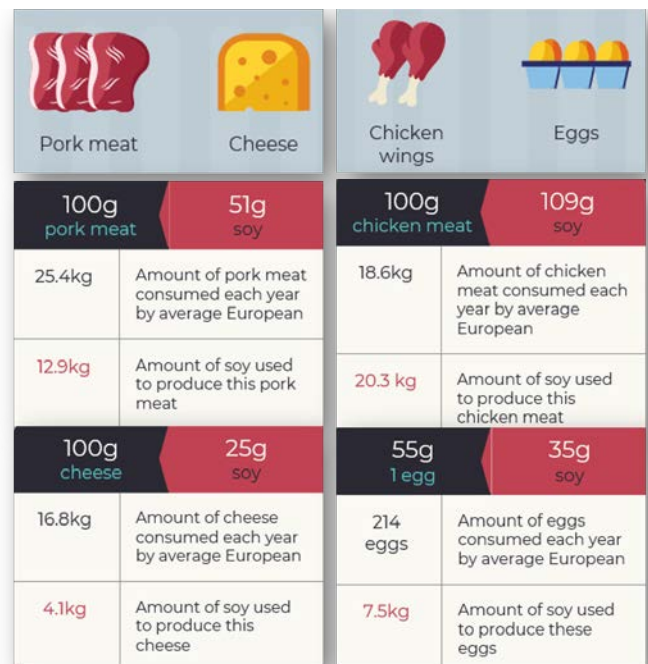
Soybeans are one of the most important crops in the world, doubling up as a highly nutritious protein source for both humans and for livestock feed. But our hunger for this bean has led to vast amounts of deforestation and habitat conversion in some of our most precious places, particularly in South America, the biggest soy producing region after the USA. Here, neighbouring the Amazon, is a lesser known ecosystem comprising vast savannahs, dry forests and gallery forests, that make up the [Cerrado](#), home to 5% of the world's biodiversity, including over 10,000 species of plants, many of which are found nowhere else on earth. The Cerrado also plays a vital role in the fight against climate change, storing [13.8 billion tonnes of carbon, more than 37 times the annual net carbon emissions from the UK in 2018](#). Unfortunately, this valuable carbon-rich habitat is being rapidly cleared to make way for soy and beef plantations. Once covering an area over 800,000 square miles, an area larger than the UK, France and Germany combined, now only [half of its original extent remains](#).

Much of the deforestation occurring in the Cerrado is unnecessary and often driven by complex land speculation processes. This is when virgin land with natural vegetation is bought cheaply, often from small landowners, and is quickly cleared so that it is made suitable for agricultural production. Typically, the land will first be used for grazing cattle, but the ultimate aim is to resell or lease the land for soy production, as land suitable for soy has high economic value. It is therefore the prospect of future soy production, via livestock grazing, that is fuelling much of the unabated deforestation and conversion in the Brazilian Cerrado. However, research shows that there are more than [25 million hectares](#), an area larger than the size of the UK, of degraded or abandoned land that could be used to produce commodities like soy or beef, without the need for any further clearance of native vegetation. It's estimated, therefore, that soybean production could double or even triple in the Brazilian Cerrado towards 2050 without clearing any more native vegetation.

ARE WE REALLY THAT HUNGRY FOR SOYBEANS?


Each of us in Europe consumes an average of [61kg of soy per year](#). That's not coming from soy sauce or tofu, almost all of the soy we eat is embedded in the animal products, in the meat, cheese, milk and eggs that we consume. In fact, over 75% of all soy produced is used to feed animals that feature prominently in our average diets. As the global appetite for meat and animal products continues to grow, further demand for soy is fuelled, and consequently greater pressure is placed on the forests and savannahs of the Cerrado and other ecosystems like the Gran Chaco in Argentina and Paraguay.

The UK is an important market for soy beans. WWF's [Risky Business](#) report, using data from 2015, revealed that the UK imports around 3.3 million tonnes of soy per year, requiring an overseas land area of 1.68 million hectares, nearly 11 times the size of Greater London, to grow it. Of this volume of soy imported, approximately 77% comes from locations with high deforestation risk, including vulnerable ecosystems in South America. Given our large overseas footprint, the UK must act on our responsibility to end soy driven deforestation in these key soy sourcing regions.



The soy we consume is embedded within other animal products, like pork, cheese, chicken and eggs. Explore our [virtual fridge](#) to see how much soy is hidden in the food you love.

Key learnings on soy from our Risky Business report (2017)

SOY	AVERAGE ANNUAL IMPORTS AND FOOTPRINT 2011-15	RISKS	NOTES
	<p>Every year the UK consumes around</p> <p>3.3 MILLION TONNES OF SOY.</p> <p>Over 75% of this is related to our consumption of livestock.</p> <p>Meeting this demand requires an estimated</p> <p>1.68 MILLION HECTARES of land. This is just under 1% of the global area of soy cultivation from 2011-14.</p>	<p>77% of UK soy imports come from high-risk countries: Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay.</p>	<p>RTRS or ProTerra certification could ameliorate risks, but currently they account for only around 2% of global production.</p> <p>Brazil's soy moratorium had a major impact on breaking the cycle of deforestation and soy expansion in the Amazon. But it has increased the pressure on the Cerrado biome.</p>



Agricultural workers on a soy plantation

SO, IS ANYTHING BEING DONE?

Over recent years there has been a swell of corporate and government commitments to tackle deforestation. In 2010, the ~400 companies that comprise the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) [committed to achieve zero-net deforestation by 2020](#). In 2014, governments, multi-national companies and other non-governmental representatives endorsed the [New York Declaration on Forests](#), committing to play their part in halving global tropical deforestation by 2020 and ending it entirely by 2030. By 2019, the number of signatories reached over 200. More recently, in 2015, 7 European countries signed the [Amsterdam Declaration](#) on deforestation, committing to support the transition to deforestation-free and sustainable commodities, also by 2020.

While all these commitments have been positive, with the end of 2020 just twelve months away, it's clear that they are not going to be met. In fact, some recent research (in 2019) from [Global Canopy](#), shows that not a single company is on track to meet their own deforestation-free commitments. This represents a significant global failure to tackle deforestation in commodity supply chains. Studies by the IPCC and others have shown that tackling deforestation is an absolute and urgent requirement for winning the fight against climate change.

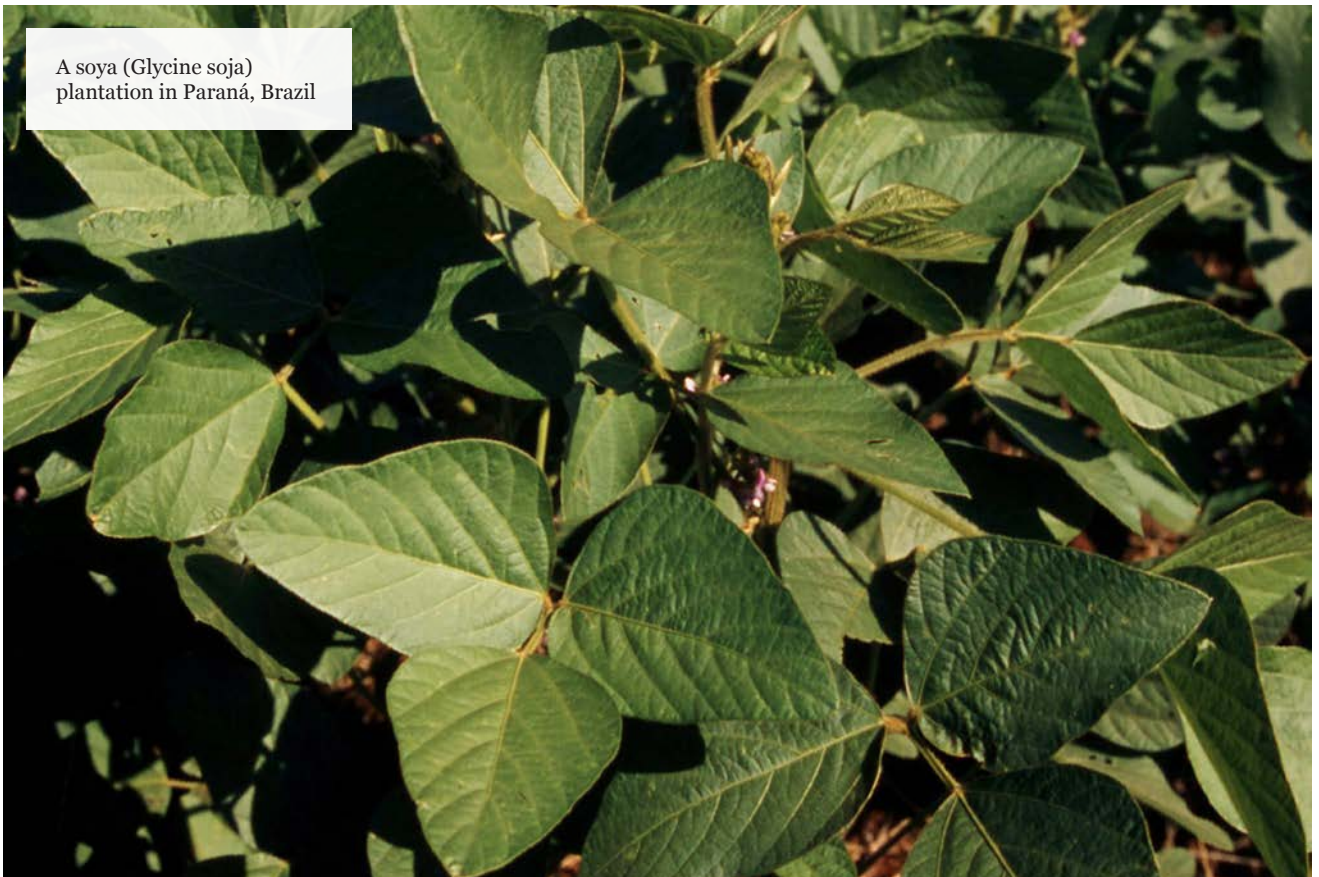
More urgent and concerted action is needed, [particularly for commodities like soy](#) that have had much less attention from companies compared to palm oil for instance.

ACTION FROM THE UK GOVERNMENT

In response to failing corporate pledges and a lack of commitment and action on soy, in 2018 the UK government came forward to form the [UK Roundtable on Sustainable Soya](#). This was set up to call on UK industry to work towards a shared goal of tackling deforestation and habitat conversion in soy production, particularly focused on key sourcing regions in South America.

During the inaugural UK Roundtable meeting, UK industry committed to producing time-bound action plans for sourcing sustainable soy, with a deadline of April 2019. As of October 2019, 6 of the UK's 10 major supermarket retailers have published, for the first time, time-bound commitments to support and source deforestation and conversion-free soy, along with action plans outlining how they plan to get there. This is a significant step forward for the biggest soy using companies in the UK and is a very welcome move from the sector. The onus is now on the remaining 4 retailers without action plans to catch up and publish these. But for the 6 who have committed the focus must now be on urgent implementation to achieve deforestation and conversion free soy supply as soon as possible.

A soya (Glycine soja) plantation in Paraná, Brazil



UK RETAILERS STEP UP: BUT ARE ALL SOY POLICIES EQUAL? OUR SCORING METHOD

We have assessed UK retailers' soy policies, using only publicly available information, to see how they stack up against key criteria that WWF believes are essential to having a robust policy.

We have awarded a score based on six assessment criteria, which are shown in Table 1. There was one point available per criteria, and all criteria were weighted equally for the purpose of this analysis. Policies could therefore achieve a maximum of six points, based on how far we think their policies, action plans and wider efforts are stacking up to advance progress towards deforestation-free soy.

The scoring criteria used in this assessment is by no means an exhaustive list, but instead represents what WWF feel are the most important first steps that all soy using companies should be taking. Also, for this exercise we used information based only on retailers' UK supply chains, however in the future we expect retailers to publish policies which apply to any international operations too.

The policies assessed include those from Aldi, Asda, Iceland, Lidl, Marks and Spencer's, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, The Co-Op and Waitrose. See Table 2 for further information about where we found retailers' policies.

Chickens are soy hungry, on average requiring 575g of soy to produce 1kg of chicken protein



Table 1: The six assessment criteria which we used to score retailers' soy policies. These represent the important first steps we expect soy using companies to be taking, and is not an exhaustive list. Retailers received one point per criteria met.

Criteria number	Feature of soy policy	Scoring guidance	Points available
1	An ambitious and time-bound commitment to using 100% deforestation and conversion-free soy	We used the Accountability Framework Initiative's definition of a commitment to determine whether the information published on the company website was sufficient to constitute a commitment: "A public statement by a company that specifies the actions that it intends to take or the goals, criteria, or targets that it intends to meet with regard to its management of or performance on environmental, social, and/or governance topics." A commitment has therefore been scored if present with a time-bound deadline towards using 100% deforestation and conversion-free soy.	1
2	A clear and robust action plan, with transparency on steps being taken to achieve commitment	A commitment must be backed up with a robust action plan that sets out the steps being taken to make good on commitments. It is important that these are transparent and clear over the time-bound period (i.e. clear steps sequenced over time).	1
3	Use of credible deforestation and conversion-free standards	To receive a point here, retailers must have explicitly stated which sustainability standards suppliers are required to meet in order to be compliant with their policy. We have defined a 'credible standard' as one which excludes both legal and illegal deforestation and habitat conversion, and therefore goes beyond the minimum expectations set by FEFAC.	1
4	Aspiration towards physical volumes of certified deforestation and conversion-free soy	WWF recognises the importance of certification credits to show market demand for more sustainable soy and therefore they are an important part of a transition plan. We want to see companies seeking to go further to source physical supplies of deforestation and conversion-free soy to guarantee their supply chains are not linked to deforestation. One point has been awarded if, by deadline of commitment period, the retailer plans to be on 100% certified physical supply (both mass balance and area mass balance accepted).	1
5	Aspiration to support an upscale in the production of sustainable soy through supporting landscape approaches	Landscape-level approaches have strong potential to scale-up efforts to tackle deforestation in a way that no one retailer can do on their own. One point has been awarded to retailers who have signalled support for such landscape-level approaches to end soy-driven deforestation.	1
6	Active participation in wider sector transformation	One point has been awarded to retailers for participation in wider sector transformation approaches. Examples of approaches scored: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signatory to the Cerrado Manifesto Statement of Support • Active participation in cross industry platforms aspiring to increase uptake of sustainable soy 	1

Table 2: List of UK supermarket retailers included in this analysis, along with links to company web pages which we used to allocate points, correct as of 1st October 2019.

Retailer	Information used to inform this analysis	Retailer	Information used to inform this analysis
Aldi	Soy policy	Morrisons	Statement on soy
Asda	Soy policy	Sainsbury's	Soy policy
Iceland	No information on soy on website	Tesco	Soy policy
Lidl	Soy policy	The Co-Op	Soy policy
Marks and Spencer's	Soy policy	Waitrose	Soy policy

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT OUR SCORING SHOWED

All of the retailers have now started to make progress on tackling deforestation associated with soy used in their UK supply chains, but there are some clear front runners and still those that are barely in the starting blocks.

Our scoring has showed that Iceland and Morrisons, both lacking a clear commitment or action plan, are lagging behind. In the middle of the pack are The Co-Op, Aldi, Asda and Lidl, who are demonstrating commitment by purchasing zero-deforestation soy credits to cover their volumes by the end of 2020. While this is a step forward and we acknowledge the role credits have played in signalling demand for sustainable soy, action is now needed to shift the wider supply chain and we urge retailers to move certified physical supply of soy as fast as possible. Purchasing physical volumes of verified zero deforestation and conversion-free soy is the only way that a retailer can be assured that they are not directly linked to deforestation. Furthermore, we want to see retailers supporting sustainable production in vulnerable regions, and one way to do this is via an area mass balance approach, by purchasing certificates from vulnerable areas to directly support sustainable and conversion-free production in these regions. Given the direct link to a producing region, we view area mass balance soy as preferable to mass balance, but ultimately are looking for the entire industry to shift towards deforestation and conversion-free production.

Despite a credible plan to reach 100% physically certified soy, Sainsbury's also ranked with the middle performers, as they lost a point for not naming which standards they accept as zero conversion and zero deforestation.

Tesco and Waitrose are the two UK retailers leading the way as they achieved full marks against our scoring criteria. They have set out a clear pathway to deforestation and conversion free soy, and along with M&S, have ambitious aspirations to source from entire landscapes which are verified as zero-deforestation soy sourcing areas (see Box 1). Tesco however, is the only retailer to have an explicit commitment to this, demonstrating that they recognise the importance of multi-actor landscape approaches, like the Amazon Soy Moratorium, to eliminate deforestation from soy production at scale and at speed.

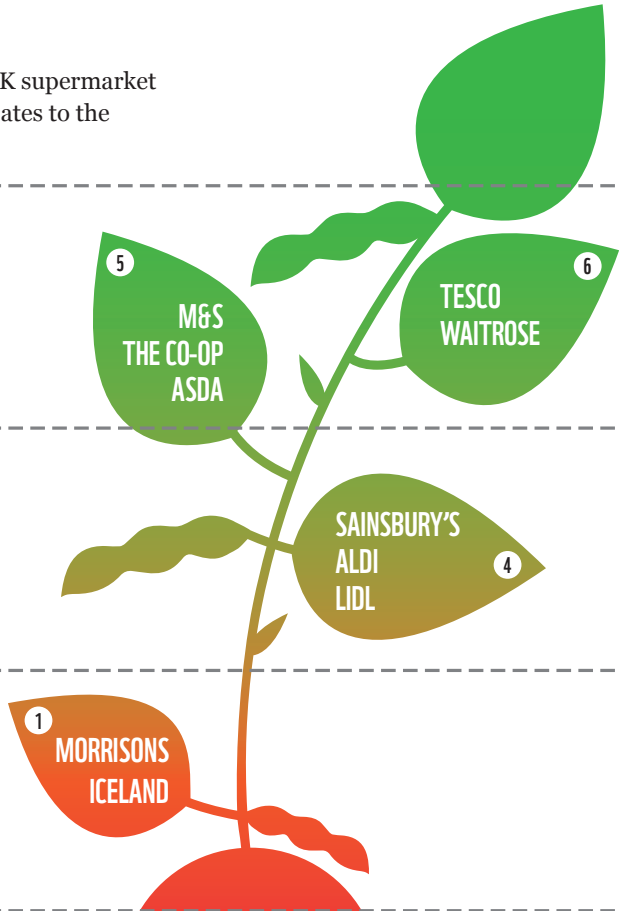
Tesco, The Co-Op, M&S and Waitrose, also recognise the need to reduce their dependency on this single commodity by looking at the overall size of their soy footprint. They were the only retailers which made reference to supporting research and innovation in sustainable alternatives to soy. M&S and Waitrose went one step further and provided clarity on the ways in which they intend to do this. Though this was not a feature we scored against, we want to acknowledge these retailers' efforts to actively contribute to the development of innovations which may help to relieve pressure on vulnerable ecosystems.

Table 3: UK retailers' performance against the six assessment criteria we used for this scoring exercise. More information on our scoring criteria can be seen in Table 2.

Points	Retailer	Time-bound commitment?	Action plan?	Credible standard?	Physical supply?	Landscape approaches?	SoS Cerrado Manifesto?	Total
5-6	Tesco	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	Waitrose	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
	M&S	1	0	1	1	1	1	5
	The Co-op	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
	ASDA	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
	Sainsbury's	1	1	0	1	0	1	4
	Aldi	1	1	0	1	0	1	4
	Lidl	0	1	1	1	0	1	4
0-2	Morrisons	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		7	7	6	8	3	10	

How do UK retailers' soy policies measure up? This is our UK supermarket soy policy leader board. The number circled on each leaf relates to the number of points awarded to each retailer on that leaf.

5-6 POINTS



3-4 POINTS

0-2 POINTS



A BIG STEP FORWARD, BUT MORE TO DO. SO WHAT NEXT?

Commitments and policies are just the first step on the journey to tackle deforestation. For these to be effective, all retailers need to implement their action plans and publicly report on progress being made. Those retailers that are lagging behind should publish ambitious and time-bound commitments as soon as possible. Though there were retailers who achieved top marks, their soy sustainability journey is far from over. These are the four recommendations we make to all retailers and represent opportunities for retailers to demonstrate leadership:

1) Broaden scope of commitment and action beyond UK soy supply chains to international supply chains (i.e. are applied at Group level)

Whilst we congratulate retailers for beginning to address their UK soy supply chains, looking to the future we also expect retailers to be publishing action plans outlining how they intend to do this across international operations too at a group level.

2) Retailers should support transformative industry-wide solutions

We call on UK retailers to demonstrate their commitment to ending soy driven deforestation and conversion in vital soy sourcing regions such as the Cerrado by supporting industry-wide transformation, such as that which would be achieved through landscape approaches to sustainable sourcing and thus following the example laid by Tesco.

3) Support agricultural production on rehabilitated abandoned or degraded land, and support efforts to restore native vegetation

There is enough degraded or abandoned land available to increase soy production in the Cerrado without any further deforestation. We therefore advocate for approaches which can re-habilitate degraded land to be agriculturally productive and/or can be restored back to native vegetation and have both biodiversity, water and carbon storage benefits.

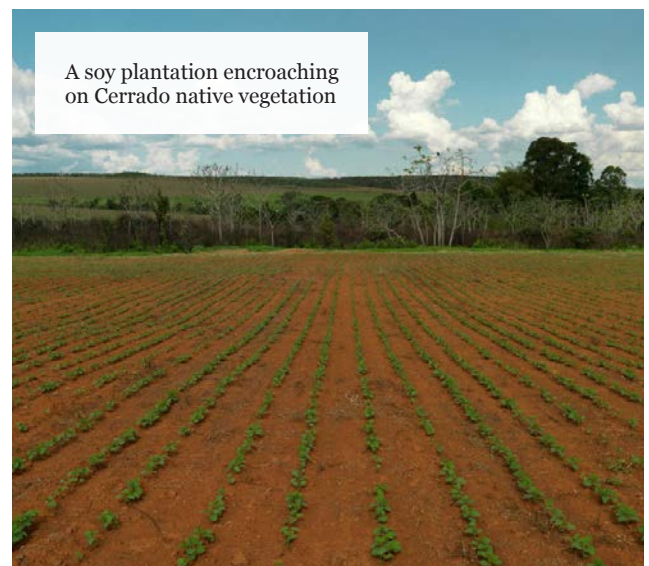
4) Retailers should work with UK government to ensure that the legal frameworks needed to support the entire supply chain to go deforestation and conversion-free are put in place

Retailers should use their voice to advocate for legislative and policy changes that would support and enable their businesses and suppliers to make the transition to deforestation and conversion-free soy. Critically, this will enable retailers to move from 'cleaning up' their own individual supply chains to buying from suppliers who are entirely deforestation and conversion-free.

FINAL WORD

Soy driven deforestation in South America, including in the Cerrado - an ecosystem vital to global biodiversity and climate - must end if we are to fight against climate change and nature loss. The UK has a significant overseas footprint for soy and so has a key role to play. We at WWF-UK urge retailers to go as far as they can to make progress towards conversion free soy in the final run up to 2020.

WWF wants businesses to accelerate and amplify their action on tackling deforestation and conversion by setting clear, ambitious and robust commitments to eliminating deforestation and conversion in food as quickly as possible with a robust global implementation plan and regular, transparent progress reporting. Where possible, businesses should work collaboratively with all relevant actors towards implementing solutions to eliminate deforestation and conversion from food production and restoring nature.



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BOX 1

WHAT ARE LANDSCAPE APPROACHES AND HOW COULD THEY HELP TO TACKLE DEFORESTATION?

A landscape approach to halting deforestation entails working across sectors and beyond the scale of individual farms, forest management units and protected areas to secure food, fibre and energy production, improvements in livelihoods and ecosystem conservation.

Landscape-level approaches have strong potential to turn the tide on biodiversity loss, climate change and social inequity, as well as enabling companies to scale up their efforts to tackle deforestation in a way they cannot do on their own. Thereby helping them to meet their own deforestation-free commitments as well as those under the Consumer Goods Forum, New York Declaration on Forests and Sustainable Development Goals.



FRONT COVER: A LONE TREE STANDING IN A SOY FIELD IN THE CERRADO, BRAZIL. © PETER CATON / WWF-UK
BACK COVER © ANA PAULA RABELO / WWF-UK