

What is the Dutch Soy Coalition?

The Dutch Soy Coalition is made up of ten Dutch organisations: Both ENDS (secretariat), Cordaid, FairFood, Greenpeace Netherlands, ICCO, IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands, Kerkinactie, Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth Netherlands), Solidaridad and WWF. AIDEnvironment, a non-profit research and advisory bureau, acts as a centre of expertise.

The worldwide soy problem requires worldwide solutions. Therefore the Dutch Soy Coalition works with a large number of organisations in South America, Europe, the United States, India and China. In doing so, it maintains contacts with South American farmers' organisations, local communities which have been driven away as soybean cultivation has advanced, small soy farmers, organisations that lobby against the agricultural politics of the World Trade Organisation, and organisations that

devote themselves to discussions concerning genetically modified soy.

What does the Dutch Soy Coalition want?

Taking into consideration the magnitude and the pressing nature of the problems, the Dutch Soy Coalition urges all relevant players to contribute towards the reduction of the impacts caused by the production, transport, processing and consumption of soy. On the one hand, this can be accomplished by striving to make soy production responsible and guaranteeing a sustainable production chain. On the other hand, it can also be achieved by initiating discussions concerning the roles that our intensive livestock production and meat consumption play in this issue. The coalition targets consumers, the business sector and policy makers, calling attention to the adverse effects of the cultivation of soy. It also encourages and supports these players in their search for solutions.



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What is the problem?

Over the last number of years, soy has become one of the most important worldwide commercial crops. The Netherlands is the second largest importer of soy in the world after China. As a large soy processor, it is an important player in the world market. Soy is very rich in protein and in Europe it is used mainly for the production of animal fodder.

Large areas of tropical forests and grass-lands are cut down in South America to make way for the cultivation of soy. This means that soy has become a major cause for the destruction of the natural environment. The expansion of soy cultivation all too often goes hand in hand with conflicts over land rights, the violation of workers' rights, environmental pollution, soil erosion, health problems and the loss of local food security and job opportunities in South America.

Dutch intensive livestock production uses soy that has been produced in South America on a large scale. Ninety percent of all imported soy is processed as animal fodder. Those who profit the most from the cheap imports of soy are those who raise cattle, pigs and chicken for meat production. As a result the Netherlands is faced with a serious excess of manure production, while in South America the soil nutrients must be replenished by using vast amounts of polluting artificial fertilizers. Moreover, soy imports are so cheap that there is no incentive to develop any sort of regional or national production of animal fodder. It is simply not possible to compete with the cheap soy from South America.



- every year, 1.5 to 2 million hectares of tropical forests and grasslands disappear due to the cultivation of soy (equivalent to half the total area of the Netherlands);
- small farmers and local communities are driven from their land in order to make way for the large-scale cultivation of soy;
- the cultivation of soy generates hardly any employment opportunities; at the same time, in some production areas the labour conditions are very poor;
- soy is produced for export and thus does not contribute to the production of food for the local market;
- ninety percent of all soy is destined for the production of animal fodder, which means that it constitutes an important motor behind intensive livestock production. This type of production is characterised by the serious contamination of the environment, the suffering to animals that it causes and its effect on the uneven distribution of food;
- the use of genetically modified seeds is steadily increasing. Not only is genetic manipulation an unpredictable technique, it is also accompanied by an increase in the use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides. Consequences include more erosion, higher levels of water contamination and health problems.

What can you do?

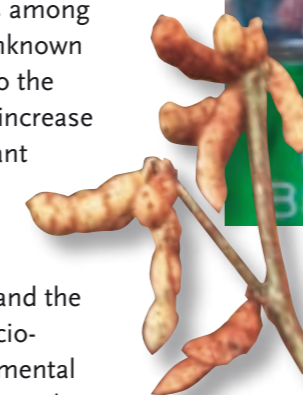
Consumers

Through public campaigns, the coalition raises awareness among consumers of the often-unknown negative effects intrinsic to the cultivation of soy and the increase thereof. The most important aspects are:

- the relationship between Dutch consumption of meat and the deterioration of the socio-economic and environmental situation of the countries where soy is produced. By eating meat less or more consciously (for example, organic meat) everyone can contribute;
- by adopting purchasing criteria, importers and processors of soy can contribute towards a more responsible cultivation of soy. Together with the organisations of the Dutch Soy Coalition, consumers can exercise pressure on these companies;
- by asking questions regarding the origin of the soy, for example in supermarkets or to companies, consumers can exercise pressure to ensure that corporate social responsibility is taken seriously.

Companies

Companies also have their share of responsibility. A broad coalition of Brazilian non-governmental



organisations worked together to define a set of minimum social and ecological criteria for the production of soy. These minimum requirements are the building blocks of the discussions that the members of the Dutch Soy Coalition engage in with companies, multinationals and banks established in the Netherlands.

The minimum criteria that have been defined are:

- soy is produced taking local legislation concerning land ownership, workers' rights, the environment and the right to free association into consideration;
- soy production and transport have not had adverse effects on rich ecological areas, such as tropical rainforests, grasslands or marshlands;
- soy production meets the national and international environmental requirements concerning the use and management of water and soil;

- soy is produced in plots of up to a certain size (the aim of this is to protect biodiversity and local farmers, as well as to prevent erosion);
- in order to prevent further deforestation, soy may not be sourced from land that has been deforested after a specific date in time;
- Small-scale producers are able to access markets;
- soy has not been genetically modified.

Policy makers

National governments have a crucial role to play. They should establish policy measures that oblige all companies to take concrete steps. Those who lead should be rewarded, while those who lag behind should be discouraged. The business world itself also benefits from clear regulation that is applicable to all companies – a level playing field. Only governments can guarantee this. The Dutch Soy Coalition promotes the development of these regulations.