

Palmas – TOCANTINS STATE - BRAZIL, July 2019

Rural producers and institutions party to this document held the Seminar “Responsible Soy - Producing Soy with Sustainability” in the municipality of Palmas, on July 15, 2019. The event was an accomplishment of Aprosoja Brasil in partnership with Aprosojas Tocantins, Mato Grosso, Goiás, Maranhão, Piauí and Bahia and with the Secretary of Agriculture of Tocantins. Farmers from the Cerrado region, academic researchers, legislative representatives, state and federal authorities attended the agenda.

The objective was to affirm and promote the sustainability of Brazilian soybeans, especially in the MATOPIBA region (comprising the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí and Bahia), through a transparent debate with the participation of public and private actors in the soy production chain.

The seminar is a response to the recent offensive of NGOs and members of the European soybean import network, consolidated in the [Rotterdam Declaration](#), as well as a response to a [statement from Cargill company](#), which will invest US\$ 30 million to avoid deforestation of the Cerrado biome in the MATOPIBA region.

During the event, information provided by Embrapa (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation) revealed that approximately 30% of the MATOPIBA region is bound to preserve native vegetation within rural properties. In addition to that, about 10% of the area is protected by law through Conservation Units and Indigenous Lands. Therefore, 40% of this territory is already protected or preserved by national laws and by Brazilian forest code. Thus, it became clear that:

1. The soy moratorium is not linked to the fall in deforestation in Brazil, which has intensified since 2004, before the moratorium, and stabilized with levels close to zero, specially after the beginning of the discussion on the new Brazilian forest code and its promulgation;
2. The moratorium is an international advertising campaign that greatly undermines the image of Brazilian soybean farmers, going in the opposite direction to what the Government intends to do, which is to communicate and promote the sustainability of the national agribusiness abroad;
3. The Brazilian Cerrado is not threatened with extinction and soy is not a relevant factor in deforestation, neither in this biome nor in the Amazonian biome;
4. The Cerrado of MATOPIBA is 72% preserved, with agriculture occupying only 5% of its area, while soybean covers 3% of the area originally occupied by the biome in the region;
5. Consequently, the soybean area in the Cerrado of MATOPIBA can double without threatening the preservation of the biome, contrary to what is said by Europeans and their NGOs.

As one of the results of the agenda, the participants of the seminar address national and international public authorities, financial institutions, traders and companies that purchase soybeans from Brazil, as well as financial institutions, to say that:

1. The reasoning that soy producers put at risk the preservation of the environment in Brazil is irresponsible and devoid of valid arguments;
2. Brazilian soybeans are the most sustainable in the world, either because of good agricultural practices or because the national soybean farmers are the only ones in the world that preserve native vegetation on their properties, bearing the cost of the entire society, without losing competitiveness;
3. The production of soybeans can and will grow in the MATOPIBA region, within legal practices, and is still able to double its area without threatening the native vegetation;
4. Brazilian soybean producers are in their totality against illegal deforestation;
5. Soy producers do not negotiate with Non-Governmental Organizations.

We call on those who wish to promote efforts and foment resources to maintain the sustainability of Brazilian soybean production to join the parties of this document to contribute to sustainability projects, such as:

- a. Soja Plus – project in the states comprising MATOPIBA (through local Aprosojas);
- b. Project for the soybean chain of forest assets by Embrapa Corporation (private resources);
- c. Project to promote sustainability of soy in the European countries that are part of the Rotterdam declaration.

