

Soybean Is Spreading and Destroying Brazil's Savannah

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A survey by Brazil's Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC) contends that soybean production in the Brazilian states of Roraima, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará, Maranhão, Goiás, western Minas Gerais, Bahia, and Piauí is destroying the savannah's native flora and fauna and the plantations of family farmers.

"Not even local indigenous communities, with territories demarcated by the National State, are free of pressure to give up their lands for the implantation of soybean monoculture," the document reveals.

Legal recognition of the savannah as one of Brazil's biomes - which would help in its preservation - is one of the nearly 3,800 proposals drafted during the Municipal, Regional, State, and Sectorial Conferences on the Environment, informed the executive coordinator of the 2nd National Conference on the Environment, Eugênio Spengler. The national conference ends today.

According to the INESC survey, Constitutional Amendment Bill nº 115/95, which provides for the inclusion of the savannah as part of the national patrimony, remains stalled in the National Congress.

"Two years after the minister of Environment, Marina Silva, announced that a specific program would be created for this biome (the savannah), very little or nearly nothing has gotten off the drawing board," the study affirms.

"Pressure from the rural bloc and the agribusiness 'grassroots' have, unfortunately, been more adroit and persuasive, imposing their interests on an Administration that is, unfortunately, a hostage of the neoliberal financial formula and its commitment to generating a primary surplus," the Institute contends.

INESC data show that the savannah occupies 315 million hectares, 37% of Brazilian territory.

Every three months the INESC publishes reports analyzing how well government policies are fulfilling the socioenvironmental agenda.

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