

# Animal Agriculture's Impact on Biodiversity Loss and Deforestation

**We are in the middle of the 6th great mass extinction of the planet's history, where species are being lost at 100 times the natural rate of extinction.<sup>1</sup> ([source](#))**

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## Land Use Change

40% of the earth surface has been cleared for agriculture.<sup>2</sup> ([source](#))

80% of global deforestation is driven by agriculture.<sup>3</sup> ([source](#))

During the last 50 years, agricultural land has expanded by roughly 500 million hectares (1.2 billion acres). More than 75 percent of that is used to produce meat and dairy.<sup>4</sup> ([source](#))

Nearly 1/3rd of the earth's land surface is dedicated to raising livestock. That's equal to all of North America and 2/3rds of South America combined.<sup>5</sup> ([source](#))



## Ecosystem Health and Indigenous Homelands

The world's 25 most bio-diverse regions—and home to more than 1/3rd of the world plants and animals—used to cover 12% of the planet. Now it is less than 2%.<sup>6</sup> ([source](#))

1.6 billion rural people are dependent upon forests to some extent. There are an estimated 500 million forest-dependent people of which 200 million are indigenous peoples.<sup>7</sup> ([source](#))

Eating animals drives the increase of pesticide- and fertilizer-intensive monoculture crop production, since most animals raised for human consumption are fed monoculture grains such as corn and soybeans.<sup>8</sup> ([source](#))

Modern agriculture only uses a few of the many species of plants and animals available for human consumption. According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, only 12 plant species provide 75% of our total food supply, and only 15 mammal and bird species make up over 90% of livestock production.<sup>9</sup> ([source](#))

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## Rainforests, the Lungs of the Planet

Each day, we lose upwards of 80,000 acres of tropical rainforest.<sup>10</sup> ([source](#))

With that disappears about 135 plant, animal and insect species every day—that's about 50,000 species a year.<sup>10</sup> ([source](#))

These rich ecosystems play a key role in the basic functioning of the planet and they help maintain the climate by regulating atmospheric gases and stabilizing rainfall.<sup>10</sup> ([source](#))

In Brazil, animal agriculture is responsible for between 70-80 percent of Amazon forest loss.<sup>11</sup> ([source](#))

## Resource Usage

Today, more than a third of the crops grown on the planet go to feeding livestock.<sup>12</sup> ([source](#))

Beef uses 20 times more land than beans (per gram of protein).<sup>13</sup> ([source](#))

Beef also uses about three-fifths of the world's agricultural land for pasture or for feed, although it only produces 5 percent of the planet's protein and less than 2 percent of its calories.<sup>14</sup> ([source](#))

## A Plant-Based Approach

On average, two football fields (2.6 acres total) per year can feed one person a standard American diet or 14 people a plant-based diet.<sup>15</sup> ([source](#))

Research on ecosystems degraded by grazing animals has shown that “biodiversity will flourish as soon as we remove the offending agent ...in this case, livestock.”

—Bill Ripple, PhD <sup>16</sup> ([source](#))

***“Trading tropical forest for farmland is one of the most destructive things we do to the environment, and it is rarely done to benefit the 850 million people in the world who are still hungry.” —Jonathan Foley<sup>17</sup> ([source](#))***





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## Appendix

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