



## German pet food linked to indigenous rights abuses in Brazil

**May 11, 2022, London** – German pet food producers supplying major European retailers source chicken products linked to indigenous rights abuses in Brazil, an investigation can reveal.

*'There Will Be Blood'*, published today, has linked some of the continent's best-known retail chains to the ongoing repression of an indigenous group forcibly evicted from its ancestral land.

The investigation by Earthsight, a London-based environmental group, and De Olho nos Ruralistas, which monitors agribusiness in Brazil, uncovered the complex supply chains of Saturn Petcare and Animonda Petcare.

Major retailers including Aldi Nord, Aldi Süd, Lidl, dm-drogerie markt, Edeka, Netto Marken-Discount, Rewe Markt and Rossmann sell Saturn's pet food under their own brand names. Animonda products can be found at Fressnapf, Europe's largest pet food seller, and online vendors Zooplus, Medpets and Vetsend.

Rubens Carvalho, Earthsight's head of deforestation research, said: "The findings show the European Union must ensure that upcoming legislation aimed at preventing the import of soy, beef and other commodities linked to deforestation also covers chicken and includes strong provisions on indigenous land rights in accordance with international standards."

The researchers found that one of Saturn and Animonda's suppliers of poultry products, Hamburg-based Paulsen Food, is a major buyer of chicken connected to a controversial farm in Brazil's Mato Grosso do Sul state.

The 9,700-hectare farm, Brasília do Sul, is built on the ancestral land, known as Takuara, of the Guarani Kaiowá indigenous group, which was forcibly evicted in the early 1950s to make way for agribusiness.

Carvalho added: "Businesses in Europe have failed to cut ties with Brazilian producers implicated in the violence, making us consumers unwitting participants in tragic stories like that of the Guarani Kaiowá."

Cattle baron Jacintho Honório da Silva Filho, famed for helping to transform the country into an agricultural powerhouse, bought Brasília do Sul in 1966, ushering in a period of intense deforestation of Takuara, which had remained largely forested until then. The farm's prosperity further cemented his power and political influence.

Meanwhile, the Guarani Kaiowá's attempts to regain access to their ancestral land have been brutally suppressed, including through violent evictions and the aggressive use of the courts to stymie them.

The violence culminated in the 2003 murder of Kaiowá leader Marcos Veron, who was beaten to death when armed Brasília do Sul workers and hired gunmen attacked the camp the indigenous people had set up on the disputed territory.

Three were convicted for the attack, but da Silva Filho never faced justice. He died in 2019 aged 102. No-one was ever sentenced for Veron's murder.

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The Guarani Kaiowá's constitutional rights continue to be suppressed by a hostile government, inequality in the justice system and powerful farming interests.

Meanwhile, da Silva Filho's children control Brasília do Sul, which now produces soy – one of the main ingredients in modern animal feed.

Local sources told Earthsight and De Olho nos Ruralistas the soy is sold to large cooperatives and traders, including Lar Cooperativa Agroindustrial, one of Brazil's largest poultry producers. Trade records show Paulsen Food to be Lar's only major European customer for chicken products, buying about 14,000 tonnes of them between 2017 and 2021.

Brasília do Sul's soy is also linked to European consumers through another large Brazilian cooperative, Coamo, which was implicated in what became known as the "Caarapó massacre". The violent attack by over 70 gunmen linked to local farmers against a Kaiowá community killed one and injured six, including a child.

Between 2017 and 2021, Coamo exported 3.9 million tonnes of soy oilcake, a product derived from crushing soybeans and used in animal feed, to the EU and UK. Germany accounted for about half of these exports, and the Netherlands a further 36 per cent.

Earthsight also uncovered evidence linking Lar chicken products to British supermarkets and fast-food outlet KFC.

MEP Delara Burkhardt, shadow rapporteur for the Socialist and Democrats Group in the European Parliament, said: "The case of the Guarani Kaiowá as revealed by this report sadly illustrates why we urgently need EU rules against imported deforestation, not only for nature but also for people. Land-grabbing and violations of land ownership rights, especially of indigenous people, are common practices to gain land for agricultural production - also for European markets. It's an ecological catastrophe and a human tragedy."

Burkhardt is calling for the internationally recognised right to free, prior and informed consent to use and convert land to be made an integral part of the forthcoming EU deforestation framework to strengthen local communities.

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## Notes to editors:

- Earthsight is a UK-based non-profit organisation that uses in-depth investigations to expose environmental and social crime, injustice and the links to global consumption.
- *There Will be Blood: The ugly truth about cheap chicken* can be read [here](#).
- The report includes the companies' full responses to Earthsight's findings.
- The EU regulation mentioned above is the 'Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the making available on the Union market as well as export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010'. The proposal is currently under debate in the European Parliament and Council. More details can be obtained [here](#).
- Saturn, Rewe, Rossmann and dm denied links to Brasília do Sul's soy, without elaborating.
- Lar, Paulsen and OnlinePets, which owns Medpets and Vetsend, did not reply to Earthsight's requests for comment.
- The assailants of what became known as the "Caarapó massacre" reportedly met at a Coamo facility ahead of the attack, though there is no evidence Coamo was involved in planning it.

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- While soy is covered by the current EU Commission's Proposal for a regulation on deforestation-free products, chicken is not. This means chicken importers will not be under the same monitoring obligations. Campaigners have called on the EU to expand the scope of products covered by the regulation, both by adding commodities such as poultry to the list, as well as to cover all products that contain, have been fed with or have been made using any of the covered commodities.
- In addition, the current regulation proposal only considers national law as a basis for human rights monitoring in supply chains. This falls short of demanding that businesses take into account international treaties and customary law in assessing their exposure to communities' rights violations. This is important because not all producer countries have the necessary national legal protections in place to guarantee indigenous rights.

Photos, video and infographics can be downloaded [here](#).

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