
[Brazil: Stopped in Espirito Santo, Aracruz wants to plant eucalyptus in Rio de Janeiro](#)

As a result of successful campaigning efforts in the state of Espirito Santo --where Aracruz Cellulose has its huge pulp mill and most of its eucalyptus plantations-- the state Parliament passed a law banning further eucalyptus planting until an agroecological study is carried out to decide where the tree can and cannot be planted.

The corporation has reacted in two different ways. On the one hand, it is trying to prove that the law is unconstitutional, but at the same time it is negotiating with the government of the neighbouring state of Rio de Janeiro to implement its plantations there. This latter move is aimed at both paving the way to ensure supply from new plantations in Rio and at putting pressure on the government of Espirito Santo to quickly finalise the agroecological mapping process in a manner positive to the company.

Negotiations with the Rio government are well under way and the company's plan includes an investment of some U\$ 38 million to plant 42,000 hectares of eucalyptus in the area of Macaé, Campos, São João da Barra and Cambuci. Contrary to other types of investment, this one would generate very little tax incomes given that 95% of Aracruz's production is exported and is therefore not taxable under the Brazilian tax system.

It is interesting to note that the project presented by the corporation to the government of Rio has the blessings of the state's Environmental Secretary André Corrêa, who declared that the viewpoints of environmentalists from Espirito Santo are mistaken and narrow while describing them as "ecochatos" (eco-ignorants). This conclusion was "scientifically" arrived at after his visit to Aracruz's plantations, from where he returned "positively impressed with what he saw." This one visit apparently enabled him to learn all about the issue and to state that plantations are socially and environmentally sustainable!

At the same time, those negotiations have put pressure on the pro-Aracruz state Secretary of Agriculture of Espirito Santo, Marcelino Fraga, who drew up a very tight timeframe for finalising the agroecological mapping which, according to him, must be concluded in 60 days. This move clearly aims at undermining the possibility of carrying out a participatory and serious process, trying to reduce it to a mere technical exercise.

Additionally, IBAMA (the Brazilian Environment Institute) says that there is no scientific proof regarding the environmental impacts of eucalyptus plantations and a forester from the Espirito Santo section of IBAMA recently declared that the lack of water is a result of the lack of rain! Must one assume that this is "scientific proof" about the lack of impacts of eucalyptus plantations on water?

Against all those odds, the Network Against the Green Desert --which includes all relevant actors in the state-- continues actively working to halt the spread of plantations and their numbers continue to increase as more and more people become aware about the social and environmental problems generated by them.

Article based on information from: 'Polêmica sobre plantio de eucalipto rumo ao Rio', 'Nasser: problema social é mais grave', 'Secretário carioca critica 'visão' do ES', Gazeta On line 06/01/2002, sent by Geise Pereira da Silva,