

What you need to know about Suzano Papel e Celulose

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What is Suzano Papel e Celulose?

Suzano is a Brazilian multinational company that produces cellulose and paper products from eucalyptus plantations. It is one of the leading companies in this sector worldwide.

Suzano became Brazil's largest eucalyptus plantation company when it acquired its main competitor, Fibria, in 2018. Fibria, in turn, was created from the 2009 merger of two other companies, Votorantim Celulose e Papel and Aracruz Celulose. Since 2018, Suzano has also owned 50% of Veracel Celulose.

As a result, Suzano's eucalyptus plantations today take up a huge area, which includes several territories belonging to indigenous, quilombola and peasant peoples and communities that have been invaded by these companies.

Suzano is responsible for serious social, environmental and climate damages, including deforestation, water pollution and shortages, land grabs and the destruction of fertile lands that should produce food.

Read this booklet and find out important facts about Suzano – facts that are often hidden by this mega-company's propaganda machine.

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Brazil, April 2023 (updated in July 2023).



2,400,000 hectares of land

Suzano has stated that it owns 1.4 million hectares of eucalyptus plantations on fertile land in the states of Espírito Santo, Bahia, Mato Grosso do Sul, Maranhão, Minas Gerais, Pará, Tocantins, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and that further expansions are possible (1).

The company also controls one million hectares of areas designated “for conservation”, and portrays itself as the largest private forest protector in Brazil. And yet it forbids communities, whose survival depends on this, from entering these areas.

The 2.4 million hectares that Suzano controls in Brazil today are equivalent to 75% of the surface area of Belgium, a European country with more than 11 million inhabitants.

If Suzano’s 1.4 million hectares of plantations were used for land reform, this would be enough to ensure the survival of more than 115,000 families (2).

Land grabbing

A significant portion of the lands Suzano exploits is made up of public lands that it grabbed. In Aracruz municipality, to mention just one, the corporation holds 30 properties that were illegally acquired, as found by the Institute for Agricultural, Stock Raising and Forestry Defense (IDAF) of Espírito Santo state (3).



279 billion liters of water

In 2021, Suzano's 11 pulp/paper mills used 279 billion liters of water, a common good (4).

This amount is equivalent to the water consumption of a metropolis of 6.1 million people with a daily consumption of 125 liters per person.

Eucalyptus plantations also consume a lot of water, and often dry up the springs that communities need to survive (5).

In Conceição da Barra alone, which is a municipality in the state of Espírito Santo with 61,000 hectares of eucalyptus plantations, 156 streams have disappeared (6).

In times of drought, which are increasingly common, Suzano appropriates even more water by using tanker trucks to water the eucalyptus plantations. Meanwhile, communities often go without water.





717,000 kg of agrochemicals

Every year, 717 TONS of poisons from 25 different products are poured onto the 213,000 hectares of Suzano plantations in the state of São Paulo alone (7).

Nationwide, this means that several million kilograms of poisons are poured onto Suzano's plantations every year.

Among the agrochemicals applied to eucalyptus trees are the herbicide glyphosate, and the formicide sulfluramid. Both are linked to cancer and several other diseases, and are currently banned in several countries around the world (8).

Since it has used elemental chlorine in its pulp mills for a long time, Suzano is also responsible for dumping dioxins – some of the most toxic and persistent environmental pollutants known – into rivers and the ocean.

GE eucalyptus: Making profits at any cost

Suzano is the only company in Latin America that is allowed to plant genetically engineered eucalyptus commercially, even though this practice poses serious risks.

A eucalyptus tree becomes genetically modified when genetic material from a different species is inserted into it. This complex technique is highly risky, given that no-one can predict the exact consequences of planting genetically modified eucalyptus on a large scale.

At least seven of Suzano's genetically engineered eucalyptus trees have already been approved for commercial production in Brazil.

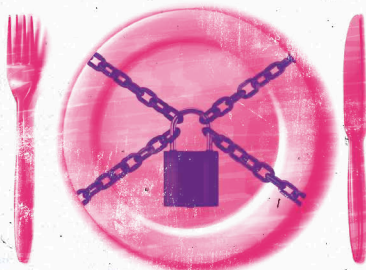
Most of them were modified to become tolerant to herbicides, chiefly, to glyphosate. This tends to cause an increase in the use of agrochemicals so that no plant other than eucalyptus develops in production areas (9). Other types include genetic engineering to become resistant to insects and to increase wood productivity by 20%.

One direct job for every 100 hectares

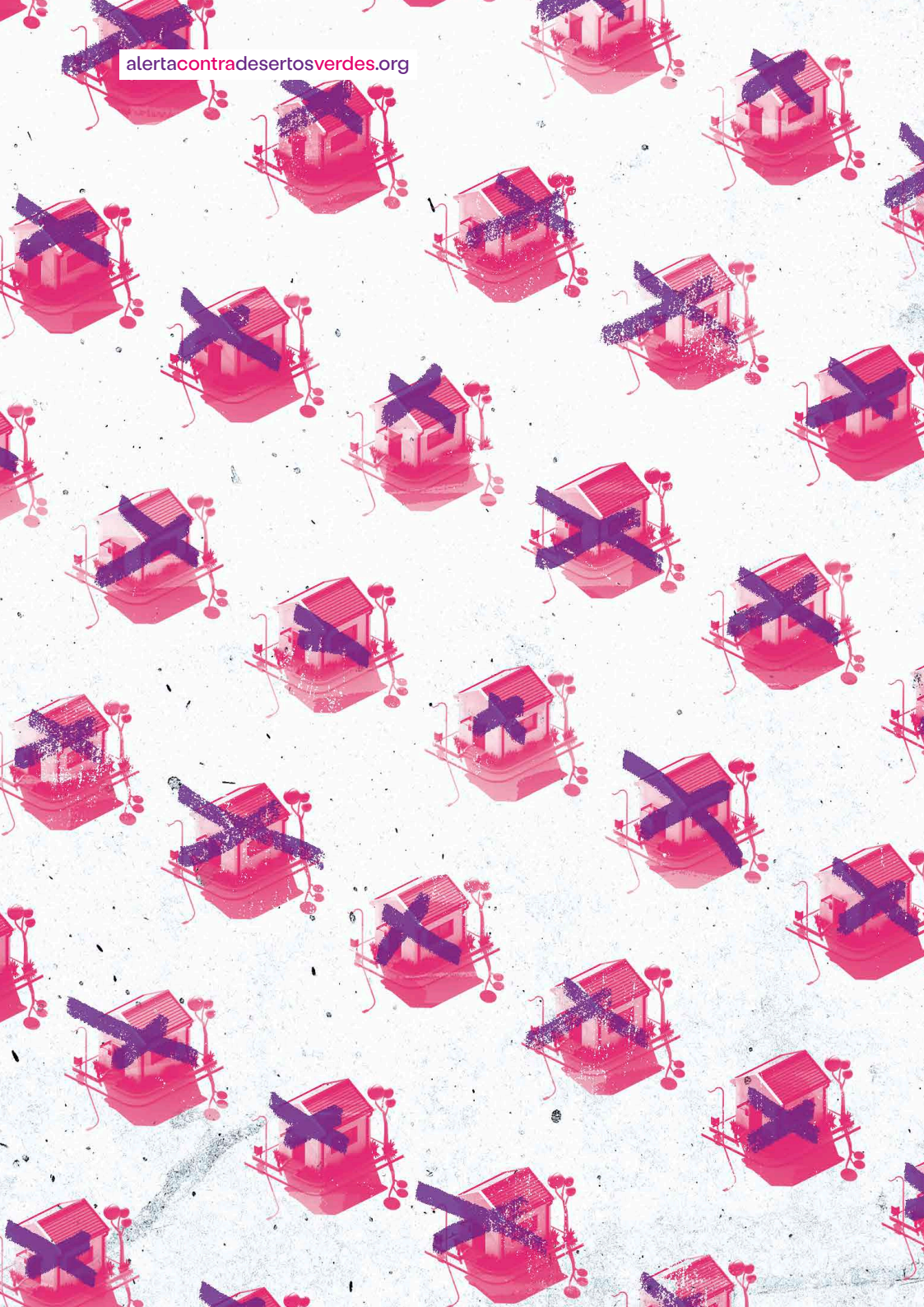
In regions where land reform is responsible for settling nine families per 100 hectares, Suzano creates, on average, only one direct job on the same 100 hectares (10).

Currently, the families of the Rural Landless Workers' Movement (MST) that occupied land belonging to Suzano in Espírito Santo – in their struggle for land reform and against the huge company estate – produce more than 100 tons of food per year.

Nobody eats eucalyptus, while more than 33 million families go hungry in Brazil (11).



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R\$1 billion in profits for its owners

The owners of Suzano pocketed R\$1 billion in dividends in 2021 (US\$195 million), partly from the sale of pulp and paper.

In land reform projects, this amount would be enough to build homes for 29,400 families (12).

The main owners and founders of Suzano, the Feffer family, have an even bigger net worth, of at least R\$32.5 billion (US\$6.5 billion) (12).

The company turns debt into new money

Almost 78% of the Brazilian population is in debt. Suzano also has a very large debt of R\$58 billion (US\$10.4 billion).

While the indebted population often does not know how to get out of debt, Suzano can turn some of its huge debts into new money by selling what it calls “green bonds”.

The company calls these bonds “green” because it claims that its plantations are “forests” and that it has many conservation areas – ignoring the destruction that its plantations have caused.

This is how Suzano obtained new loans from international banks, raising US\$1.5 billion in 2021 to buy more land and expand its plantations in Brazil (14).

A company that does not pay taxes

Brazilian legislation (the Kandir Law) exempts goods-exporting companies like Suzano from paying ICMS, the main Brazilian tax on the circulation of goods.

ICMS is the main source of revenue for state governments and their public services, such as health and education.

Brazilian citizens pay 17% ICMS on the products they buy, are not entitled to exemptions, and often struggle to access quality public services. But when Suzano pays ICMS, it has the right to be reimbursed by state governments.

By 2021, the total for the states of Espírito Santo, Bahia, Maranhão, Mato Grosso do Sul and São Paulo amounted to R\$1.36 billion. State governments were not able to reimburse this amount, effectively making them “hostages” of Suzano (15).



3,800,000 tons of CO₂ released into the atmosphere

Suzano's activities emit almost 4 million tons of CO₂ per year, thus worsening the problem of climate change.

There are 32 countries in the world that emit less carbon than Suzano (16).

And yet, Suzano alleges that it is "climate-friendly", claiming that by 2025 its plantations and forests will have removed and "stored" 40 million tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere (17).

This is a half-truth, because the trees' storing of carbon is only temporary. Sooner or later, the trees will be cut down, while the CO₂ that Suzano releases into the atmosphere each year has a permanent impact.

There is only one alternative to fight climate change: stop extracting and burning oil and other fossil fuels.




SUZANO

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