PROFITING FROM CRUELTY AND KILLING OUR WORLD
“If factory farming is the source of the greatest cruelty to animals in the world, the animal feed trade is its rocket fuel. Without global trade in unsustainable animal feed crops, factory farming would crumble.”

Jacqueline Mills
World Animal Protection head of animals in farming campaign
As you read this, billions of animals are suffering on factory farms. Closely confined and condemned to unimaginable suffering, their unhappy lives fuel the ever-increasing global demand for meat that is backed by big business and governments.

Within this unsustainable system, animals are caged, mutilated and pumped with antibiotics to keep them ‘healthy’ in unnatural stressful conditions. And meat chickens are bred to grow so fast that their bodies collapse under them. The fact that farmed animals are feeling, living beings – not machines – is invisible and ignored.

This cruel system severely affects wild animals too. It is behind the relentless fires in the pristine ecosystems of Brazil – the Amazon and Cerrado. Often deliberately set, these fires are destroying precious wild animal habitats at an alarming rate to clear land to grow soy and other grains to feed factory farmed animals globally. The statistics are shocking.
Destroying wildlife and their habitats

Destruction of the Cerrado spiked dramatically in the first six months of 2023. This area is home to 5% of the planet’s animals – including jaguars, anteaters, rhea birds, tapirs and armadillos – and rare trees and plants. The fires are also exacerbating climate change by shooting carbon into the atmosphere and destroying swathes of Amazon rainforest – the lungs of our world.
Big industry players like **JBS, the world’s largest meat production company**, are behind such desecration. Our investigations have firmly linked them and their factory farming activities and profits with deforestation, illegal farming and the exploitation of traditional communities.

To date JBS has refused to change their practices in response to the evidence of destruction and harm we have presented to them. They, and other industry big players, cannot be allowed to get away with it.

Together, we can hold them to account...
Global company – global destruction – making the links with JBS

JBS is the world’s biggest factory farming company and you’ve probably never heard of them. They provide 206 million meals around the world daily.

The JBS business arm exporting chicken and pork meat for profit around the world is called Seara. It has 30 chicken meat slaughterhouses and eight pig slaughterhouses in Brazil.

JBS chickens and pigs farmed in Brazil are fed grains kept artificially cheap off the back of unscrupulous business practice and the company exports meat around the world to:

- Europe
- Asia
- Americas
- Africa
Meat with JBS labels is bought by retailers worldwide. But the reach of this global giant doesn’t stop there. Meat produced by JBS around the world is also ‘hidden’ in supply chains and sold at supermarkets and fast-food companies without JBS branding. Consequently, the presence of JBS and its deforestation links is hidden from consumers at restaurants and supermarkets including... 

Across their global operations, JBS slaughters more than

- 13 million chickens
- 128,000 pigs
- 77,000 cattle around the world

EVERY DAY.
In 2022 we exposed that JBS destroyed habitat for animal feed from the Mato Grosso region in Brazil’s mid-west through our investigation with Repórter Brasil.

Despite such exposure the company has done nothing to eliminate deforestation in its animal feed supply chain.

Investigating intimidation, land stealing and grain laundering

Our new and even more shocking evidence shows that JBS meat is produced unethically and involves cruelty and habitat destruction...

A new World Animal Protection investigation with Repórter Brasil, reveals JBS links with Farmer X who registered neighbouring traditional community land in the threatened Cerrado as his own. Farmer X is a powerful farmer who owns three farms in the region totaling 12,500 hectares.

Image: A traditional small scale farmer finds his wire fence has been cut. Credit: World Animal Protection/Reporte Brasil/Fernando Martinho.
Our investigation tracked Farmer X’s sale of soy crops to grain trader Bunge, to the Bunge soy crushing plant, and on to a JBS Seara feed plant in Feira de Santana.

At Bunge’s soybean crushing plant in Luis Eduardo Magalhães in Bahia, an employee confirmed that the grain arrived from the farm in question “during all harvest season.” In addition, a truck driver also reported having already transported it from the farm to that location. An employee at Bunge’s plant in Luis Eduardo Magalhães and truck drivers confirmed that this unit supplies soy to the Seara/JBS plant in Feira de Santana in Bahia.

In the Cerrado region, farms are required to maintain 20% of their land for conservation.

But to make up for the land they have ‘lost’, unscrupulous farmers claim public land to set aside for conservation to allow them to plant as much grain as possible for profit on existing farmland.

And JBS is turning a blind eye…
Rule-dodging and destruction

Our research of contracts between Farmer Y and grain trader, Bunge revealed that Farmer Y had committed to provide 2.8 thousand tonnes of soybeans for the 2022 harvest. However, the supplying farm was not specified.

Our second investigation with Repórter Brasil, uncovered JBS’ links with ‘grain laundering’. Some farmers adopt this illegal practice to profit from growing grain on prohibited land. It enables them to evade government bans designed to allow vegetation to regenerate following previous unauthorised land clearance.

Bunge - a JBS soy supplier - bought animal feed crops from Farmer Y who disguised its illegal origins. This was revealed in the farmer and crop purchaser contract which showed a much higher volume of crops than would ordinarily be possible to grow on the farmer’s legal lands.

Like Farmer X, Farmer Y is a large-scale farmer in the Cerrado ecosystem. He and his family have been fined multiple times over the past five years for illegally clearing land and growing crops in prohibited areas. And despite a 2018 ban to stop Farmer Y from growing grain on more than 2,500 hectares, authorities discovered he had violated this in 2020 and as recently as 2022.

Our research of contracts between Farmer Y and grain trader, Bunge revealed that Farmer Y had committed to provide 2.8 thousand tonnes of soybeans for the 2022 harvest. However, the supplying farm was not specified.
We also traced a contract with another grain buyer committing Farmer Y to produce even more grain. Again, it would not ordinarily be possible to produce sufficient grain to satisfy both contracts on the area of land authorised for grain production.

And the examination of the boundaries of the properties of farmer Y showed there was evidence of insufficient land authorised to grow grain to meet the terms of the contract. This suggests the grain must have come from elsewhere – most likely from prohibited areas – and this lack of contract specificity facilitates grain laundering.

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Evidence from multiple people interviewed in the supply chain showed that grain from Farmer Y went to a Bunge facility and on to JBS Seara in Feira de Santana.

A previous investigation by World Animal Protection and Repórter Brasil also showed that Bunge sells grains to JBS Seara.

Reference: https://reporterbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/220927-Monitor-Ra%C3%A7%C3%A3o-Animal-EN-03.pdf
Holding JBS to account

JBS responded to Repórter Brasil, claiming it does not have a current supply relationship with Farmer X. The company has not responded objectively to the evidence presented to it on Farmer Y, stating only that “the information is incorrect” without specifying exactly what it was referring to. It has not denied nor confirmed a supply relationship. Bunge did not respond to the specific evidence but stated that they avoid buying from farms that deforest.

JBS is well known as an ethically bankrupt company and our new evidence is only the last in a long list of criticisms and scandals. The company was recently denounced after a US advertising watchdog accused them of making misleading claims about their environmental track record. The watchdog found the company had no plausible plan to achieve their ‘climate net zero’ promise. Since then, JBS has had to pare back its marketing of green credentials.

Although JBS claims it is doing all it can to end habitat destruction, it has no plan to end the devastation when sourcing animal feed. A credible public plan to stop the deforestation that destroys animals’ habitats and exacerbates climate change is urgently needed.

And it’s not just JBS. All global factory farming giants must reduce the amount of meat they produce, and instead embrace humane and sustainable plant-based food. This is for the sake of people, animals and our climate crisis.

Holding JBS to account

Image: Forest fires in SINOP municipality in Brazil adjacent to land planted with corn for animal feed.
Credit: World Animal Protection / Noelly Castro
Stepping up for change

The UAE is hosting this year's UN climate conference, known as COP28, in November. It has said that it wants all governments to integrate agriculture and food into their plans to address climate change. But most haven't yet done so.

DESTROYING OUR WORLD IN NUMBERS

Factory farming, supported by finance institutions and governments is...

Inflicting horrendous suffering with more than 80 billion animals cruelly farmed each year

Releasing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 36 million cars on the road annually, from the top 5 companies alone

Creating ideal conditions for the next pandemic, with bird flu currently rampant in the world’s factory farms, which can jump to humans and kill

Responsible for one million superbug deaths every year with the toll set to double by 2050

Consuming the world’s resources and driving 30% of global biodiversity loss

Undermining food security with three-quarters of the world’s soy crops feeding farmed animals not people
Stopping factory farming’s relentless spread....

Governments using their power to rein in unethical companies like JBS is critical to stop factory farming’s devastation.

The Brazil government has pledged to end deforestation in that country by 2030, but JBS wrongdoing puts the government’s promise at major risk.

And this is not only about Brazil. Factory farming continues to spread across our planet. Increased demand for meat and animal feed drives what happens on the frontlines of habitat destruction.

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In September, world leaders converge on New York city to tackle climate change at a special summit. We are pushing for them urgently to tackle greenhouse gas emissions from factory farming.

Governments globally must say no to new factory farms. This is the only way to stop billions more animals being born into a lifetime of suffering and to end the decimation of wild animal habitats.

It’s vital that the UN and all its member states acknowledge factory farming’s role as a major contributor to climate change and prevent its relentless habitat destruction.

A worldwide moratorium on factory farming will improve global food security and stop billions more farmed animals being born into the suffering of factory farms.

**We don’t need factory farming to feed the world.**

The future of food needs to be sustainable, mostly plant-based diets and a small number of high-welfare farming systems. Better for animals, people and our planet.
A mother pig bites the steer bars of her cage in distress on a factory farm in South America.

Credit: World Animal Protection / Emi Kondo
About World Animal Protection:
World Animal Protection is an international animal welfare organization whose mission is to create a better world for animals. Farm animals experience relentless suffering at the hands of factory farming, and World Animal Protection works tirelessly to ensure these animals live good lives by transforming the global food systems and attitudes towards farm animal welfare. As an organization, we believe a moratorium on factory farms is urgently needed to safeguard farm animal welfare, our climate, health and the environment. World Animal Protection is registered with the Charity Commission as a charity and with Companies House as a company limited by guarantee. World Animal Protection is incorporated in the United Kingdom.