

Deforestation and Erosion

How the landscape changes because of animal-based diets

Cattle-ranching is a primary cause of deforestation in Latin America. Trees are cleared to make room for livestock.

Just one quarter-pound hamburger imported from Latin America requires the clearing of 6 square yards of rain forest and the destruction of 165 pounds of living matter including 20-30 different plant species, and dozens of bird, mammal, and reptile species.

Soil erosion and desertification is caused directly by cattle and other livestock overgrazing.

Polluting fertilizers, toxic pesticides, and intensive farming methods also contribute to erosion and topsoil loss.

Cattle degrade the land by stripping vegetation and compacting the earth.

Cows powerful hoofs trample vegetation and crush the soil with an impact of 24 pounds per square inch.

Each cow foraging on the open range eats 900 pounds of vegetation every month.

About 54 percent of U.S. pastureland is overgrazed: erosion is the result.

Plant-based food production requires only 5% of the farm land needed for animal-based production.

Each pound of feedlot steak costs about 35 pound of eroded American topsoil, according to the Worldwatch Institute. The average American consumes nearly twice his or her weight in meat each year. (World Watch Institute)