ETHICAL TRADE DENMARK

SOY RISK BRIEF

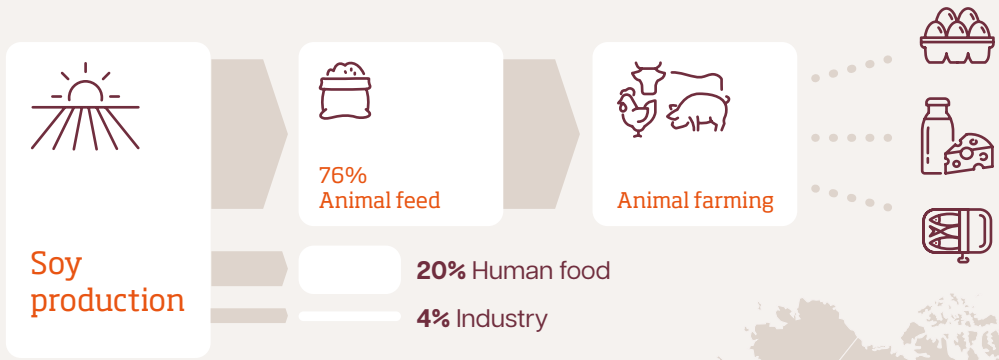
The soy hidden in your chain

Over two-thirds of food products contain soy or are produced using soy, in the form of animal feed, thereby making it an important ingredient in many food supply chains. Soy production can carry significant sustainability risks, impacting your environmental footprint and social performance.

6 EGGS — 166g SOY USED

Did you know...

Did you know that 76% of all soy produced is used for animal feed, while just one-fifth ends up as products on our plates, such as tofu, soy milk, tempeh, or edamame?



1kg BEEF MEAT — 379g SOY USED

Where does soy come from?

In 2024, global soy production reached 395 million tonnes, with Brazil, the United States, and Argentina accounting for 80% of the total. Soy output has steadily climbed for decades, driven mainly by growing demand for animal feed.

113M TONNES PRODUCED

152M TONNES PRODUCED

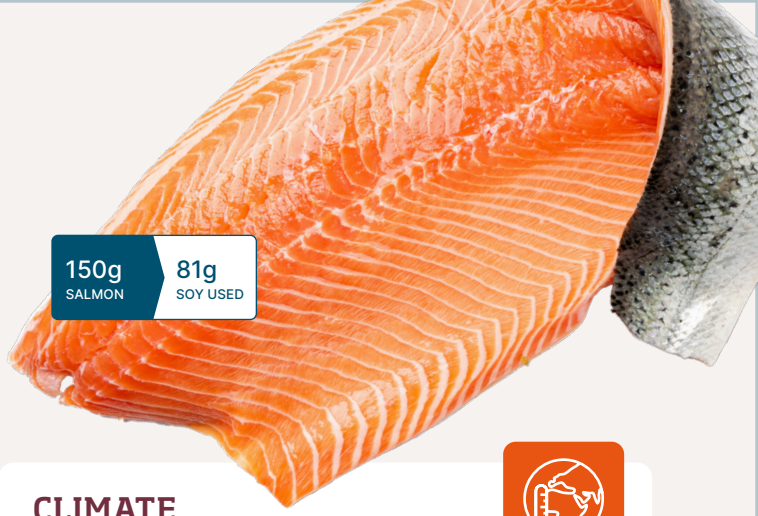
25M TONNES PRODUCED

Since 2019, soy cultivation has grown by 12%, expanding into new agricultural frontiers. This expansion comes at the cost of vital ecosystems like the Amazon, Cerrado, and Gran Chaco, which play a crucial role in climate regulation, biodiversity, and water supply.

250g BUTTER — 51g SOY USED

ESG risks in soy

Soy production may negatively impact climate, biodiversity and human rights. Being informed about the risks helps you make choices that matter.



DEFORESTATION & CONVERSION

Rising soy demand is driving the conversion of tropical forests, savannahs, and grasslands, especially in South America, threatening wildlife and local communities. In 2024 alone, around 60,000 hectares of natural ecosystems in Brazil were cleared for soy cultivation in the Cerrado and the Amazon. This corresponds to 84.000 soccer fields.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Soy contributes to your scope 3 emissions, via 'purchased goods and services'. Soy is a major component in animal feed and, as such, a significant contributor to the carbon footprint of animal products. In chicken and pork, soy can account for up to 70% of total emissions. In dairy, it is a lot lower, but soy can still contribute up to 30% of the total emissions. Through the soy in feed, you can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of your end product.

VIOLENCE & LAND CONFLICTS

The absence of well-established and enforced land ownership in Brazil results in land conflicts and violence against human rights and environmental defenders. Also, in other countries, violent conflicts over water and land are present. Indigenous peoples are frequently threatened by companies expanding soy production.

AGROCHEMICAL USE

Pesticides used in soy farming are harmful to the soil, water, and biodiversity. Studies also show that agrochemical use, for example, through aerial spraying, causes serious health problems for farmers, workers, and communities living near soy fields.

Take action

Your choices matter, even if you're not directly involved with soy. By joining forces with others, you can help transform the soy supply chain.

- Understand your soy footprint using tools like the RTRS conversion calculator.
- Ask your suppliers to ensure that the soy used as feed for meat-, seafood- and dairy products is deforestation and conversion-free and responsibly produced.
- Work with suppliers to find alternatives to the soy used as feed, but use solid data to avoid unintended environmental harm.
- Join collaborative efforts like the Danish Alliance for Responsible Soy under Ethical Trade Denmark to support industry collaboration.

Jointly we can protect biodiversity and vital ecosystems and move us all towards a more sustainable food system.

Learn more?

Visit www.etiskhandel.dk/aktiviteter/projekter/soy-risk-brief/

Data sources: RTRS Conversion factors, FAO STAT, Our world in data

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