

Amazon Watch rejoinder to responses from Archer Daniel Midland and Bunge

21 February 2019

Amazon Watch submitted the following rejoinder to responses by ADM and Bunge:

“We were pleased to see the responses of Bunge and Archer Daniels Midland to our New York Times op-ed. However, the companies appear to have overlooked our key arguments and glossed over legitimate concerns. The op-ed contends that not only the corporate social responsibility policies and commitments of major international commodity traders and financial institutions, but also the rigorous application of these commitments, will play a fundamental role in either enabling or moderating the behavior of the Bolsonaro administration.

As two of the largest soy traders operating in Brazil, the supply chains of Bunge and Archer Daniels Midland are exposed to significant environmental and human rights risks, as evidenced by the charges and fines levied against Bunge in 2018 for activities connected to illegal deforestation in the Cerrado biome, which we cite in the op-ed. With Bolsonaro as president, risks of illegal deforestation and rights abuses in supply chains are mounting even further. This challenging scenario requires improved vigilance among commodity traders, especially those committed to eliminating exposure to such risks as Bunge and Archer Daniels Midland claim to be.

We believe that the behavior of leading commodity traders and financial institutions has the power to shape the comportment of their suppliers, ultimately sending signals to both Brazilian policymakers and local producers that the social and environmental rollbacks currently being enacted by Bolsonaro’s government will not be tolerated by international markets.

Finally, we must state our disappointment with the failure of the financial institutions cited in our op-ed to respond. Vanguard, State Street and BlackRock all play a key role in bankrolling some of the worst actors operating in the Brazilian Amazon, and as a result have the responsibility to address public concern with the critiques raised in our article.”