



**BUILDING RESPONSIBLE
GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS
FOR SUSTAINABLE
TROPICAL FRUITS**

Technical webinar series on avocado and pineapple value chains

Webinar #3: How the tropical fruits sector can tackle deforestation and contribute to forest positive value chains

Summary report

21 October 2021, 16.30-18.00 (UTC+2), on Zoom

BACKGROUND

This was the third event in a series of technical webinars being organized by FAO's Responsible Fruits project in response to the priorities and interests of participants from the private sector. The webinars provide an opportunity for peer learning on precompetitive issues, including sharing of good practices. To facilitate open discussion, there is no webinar recording and the event's report follows the Chatham House Rule of not identifying individual speakers. The exception being for the main presenters (in this case three individuals) who have consented to share information in advance.

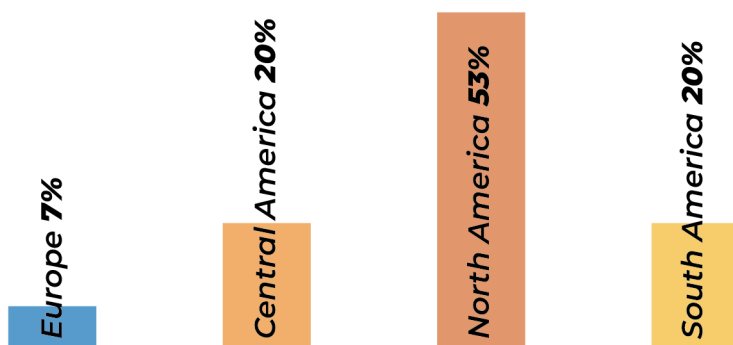
Participation

Fifteen participants joined the webinar, representing producers and their organizations, packers, processors, exporters/importers and distributors based in Central, North and South America, and Europe.

Gender



Geographic origins



Industry groupings

Producers and producer associations 60%

Importer/distributor 20%

Vertically integrated from production to distribution 13%

Other 7%

Organizing this peer learning event online avoided the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that would normally be associated with travel for a face-to-face event. A preliminary estimate using the ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator¹ indicates that this event saved over 14,060 kg of CO₂ emissions.

Summary

The event agenda is presented in Annex 1.

- **Welcome and introduction**

Participants were welcomed to this technical webinar organized by FAO's Responsible Fruits project. The objective of the webinar was to exchange knowledge and experiences on how tropical fruits value chains can address deforestation risks and contribute to forest positive value chains, while continuing to provide consumers with healthy products and to thrive commercially. This peer learning event brought together industry players and subject matter experts to share good practices, consider the current policy and legal environment, and discuss the opportunities to be gained with forest positive value chains.

- **Nexus between agriculture and forest: the challenge of decoupling commodity production from deforestation and forest degradation** – Caroline Merle, Forestry Officer, REDD+/NFM Cluster, Forestry Division, FAO

The speaker explained trends in forest loss and the direct drivers of deforestation. This included an analysis of the links between deforestation and agricultural production and trade. It was noted that tropical fruits are not in the top five agricultural commodities linked to deforestation. (Details and data can be found in the speaker's presentation in the Annex.) In this context, the concept of "imported deforestation" was introduced. The speaker noted how changes in regulation in important import markets are currently working to address this issue and the potential implications of these changes in the longer term for the tropical fruit industry.

At the global level, there has been significant dialogue and commitments by both the public and private sector on the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions related to deforestation. A table summarizing more than 10 years of agreements was presented. While at the moment tropical fruits, including avocado and pineapple, are not specifically targeted in expected legislation, it was observed that commodity lists could be extended to other agricultural value chains. Thus, it would be important for companies to be prepared in order not to risk losing access to important markets. The importance of definitions in monitoring forests (including the definition of "forest") and related emissions was described and discussed, and the concept of "cut off dates" and its impact on deforestation due diligence was discussed with participants.

The speaker highlighted that building solutions to deforestation requires multistakeholder collaboration and that both the public and private sector have key roles to play. Additional resources can be found at:

- New York Declaration on Forests: <https://forestdeclaration.org>
- Collaborative Partnership on Forest statement on deforestation: <http://www.cpfweb.org/50449-0941d79c54a6810d4c9eb2f45bbcb25f7.pdf>
- FAO Forest Resource Assessment report: <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/es/c/CA9825EN>

- **Quick poll on existing strategy**

A quick poll asked the participants, "Does your company or organization have a strategy for addressing deforestation and forest degradation risks?" Data was collected anonymously. The poll results indicated:

¹ See <https://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Carbonoffset/Pages/default.aspx>

- 60% said YES
 - 40% said NO
- **A practical tool for business to identify and address deforestation and forest degradation risks in agricultural supply chains**
– Tomislav Ivančić, Advisor on Responsible Business and Investment, Markets and Trade Division, FAO

The speaker presented the OECD-FAO Business Tool on Deforestation, Forest Degradation and Due Diligence in Agricultural Supply Chains, a business support tool currently being developed to address deforestation and forest degradation in agricultural supply chains, based on the [OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains](#). The tool will support the identification and mitigation of deforestation impacts in upstream and downstream business in the agricultural sector. In terms of its functionality, it will feature practical steps that companies can take in reducing deforestation risks in cooperation with suppliers, according to the OECD-FAO Guidance and its 5-step framework for risk based due diligence. It will also introduce forest positive sustainability strategies and actions that companies can consider in exercising risk-based due diligence. The tool will complement existing and pipelined legislation on responsible supply chains, due diligence and deforestation-free products. The final version of the business, deforestation and due diligence tool will be launched in early 2023. (The speaker's presentation is included in the Annex.)

For further information on FAO activities governing Responsible Global Supply Chains in Agriculture please visit: <https://www.fao.org/responsible-business-conduct-in-agriculture/en/>

- **Forest and avocado:** The threat of deforestation and the actions that APEAJAL implements for its mitigation - Armando García Angulo, Coordinator of the Environment and Sustainability Area, APEAJAL.

The speaker presented the background and current status of the Avocado Producers and Exporters Association of Jalisco (APEAJAL). He highlighted that deforestation is considered a strategic risk for avocado production and trade in Jalisco and made a clear link between deforestation and climate change impacts. This was framed with information on the export markets, including the EU "Farm to Fork" and an expected USA "new green deal". Taken together, this formed the basis for a call to act to address deforestation.

He shared three practical actions that APEAJAL is taking to reduce this risk. The organization is employing a virtual application of spatial analysis to monitor and identify areas of deforestation, adoption of certification systems (Rainforest Alliance) and ongoing education of producers. In parallel, they have undertaken a reforestation programme and have established a guideline to manage forest fires and soil degradation.

- **Q&A and discussion**

Following each of the three presentations, there was a discussion among the participants and presenters about questions and good practices to address deforestation and forest degradation.

The importance of companies complying with government regulations to demonstrate that the value chains are not having a negative impact was highlighted by the speaker from FAO. With this, she mentioned that it is necessary to look for opportunities to create dialogue so that companies and governments can share in a joint action to protect forests. The speaker from APEAJAL noted that compliance with laws could help producers to achieve a sustainable business.

One participant commented on the ongoing work to address deforestation by pineapple growers in his country. He shared that the country is currently advancing with legal and environmental requirements. Due Diligence is a very common practice in company mergers and acquisitions. More than 95% of the producers are part of the national producers' organization,

meeting national and international requirements, international certifications, European market requirements, security and logistics standards, especially to avoid issues that might affect the security and logistics of exports.

Additional participants provided further details on efforts to address deforestation in the avocado value chain. This included a combination of self-regulation and tree planting. It was noted that the company recognizes forests as seed capital and that they have forest conservation and forest mitigation projects carried out by the producers in cooperation with the national government and civil society organizations. A particular example was provided of cooperation that has led to more than one million trees being planted.

The participants offered to share presentations on a future occasion.

- **Wrap-up and next steps**

Over the past several months FAO conducted a baseline survey looking at sustainability, due diligence and resilience practices and challenges in the avocado and pineapple sectors. Thirty-five companies from these sectors completed the survey. It was announced that the fourth webinar of this series would present the results of the baseline business survey on 7 December 2021, with further information to be provided by email.

In closing, participants were reminded that they are encouraged suggest topics for the peer-learning webinar series, including if they wish to present on a particular topic by contacting the project team at any time (at the email address below).

Working languages

English and Spanish with simultaneous interpretation.

Agenda

Section title	Speaker/Facilitator
Housekeeping and announcements	Valentina Perez-Mardones , Outreach Specialist, Markets and Trade Division, FAO
Welcome and introduction	Valentina Perez-Mardones
Nexus between agriculture and forest: the challenge of decoupling commodity production from deforestation and forest degradation Presentation 1	Caroline Merle , Forestry Officer, REDD+/NFM Cluster, Forestry Division, FAO
Q&A and discussion	Michael Riggs , Technical Advisor, Markets and Trade Division, FAO
A practical tool for business to identify and address deforestation and forest degradation risks in agricultural supply chains Presentation 2	Tomislav Ivančić , Advisor on Responsible Business and Investment, Markets and Trade Division, FAO
Q&A and discussion	Jesper Karlsson , Project Officer, Markets and Trade Division, FAO
Forest and avocado: The threat of deforestation and the actions that APEAJAL implements for its mitigation Presentation 3	Armando García Angulo , Coordinator of the Environment and Sustainability Area, APEAJAL.
Q&A and discussion	Valentina Perez-Mardones
Wrap-up and next steps	Marlo Rankin , Senior Researcher, Markets and Trade Division, FAO
Closing	Valentina Perez-Mardones

For more information about the project or the webinar series, please contact: Responsible-Fruits@fao.org

ANNEX

- Presentation 1
- Presentation 2
- Presentation 3