



2020 RTRS FIELD
TRIP TO SORRISO,
MATO GROSSO,
BRAZIL

2020 RTRS Field Trip

From February 9 to 12, 2020, the Round Table on Responsible Soy Association (RTRS) hosted a field trip for interested parties to Sorriso, in Mato Grosso, Brazil.

Participants visited RTRS-certified properties and associated projects and witnessed soy harvesting and corn planting closely in a state that features the largest grain production in the country and spans two different biomes: Cerrado and the Amazon. Clube Amigos da Terra de Sorriso (CAT Sorriso) hosted the event and participants.

There were 30 representatives from nine countries: Germany, Argentina, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and Switzerland, as well as other regions of Brazil.



The RTRS field trip is part of the multi-sector initiatives organized by RTRS to bring together the different stakeholders in the soy value chain and promote connections and spaces for dialogue.

The value of meetings like this field trip is to showcase what is being done in the region for soy production and agricultural production in general, and see how the public and private sectors come together in concrete actions to achieve sustainability goals, in alignment with the demands from international markets.



During the visit

- Information was shared about the soy production process, implementation of RTRS certification and its social and environmental impacts;
- The relationship with the local communities as a result of certification was presented;
- Data was shared on agricultural production and Sorriso's potential, integration with logistics and partnerships with local governments.

According to **Marina Born de Engels**, President of RTRS, going to events in the field is extremely important. "We hear a lot of negative news about the activities carried out in the Cerrado region. That is why people from Europe and other countries and regions must see the professional work carried out here, especially in cities like Sorriso, which is considered the core of Brazilian agribusiness", she stated.



"The objective was to once again connect the players in the soy value chain, and to link supply and demand for sustainable soy in order to provide a better and more visual understanding of the concrete and positive impacts of implementation. Sustainable production has already become a trend in Brazil and other regions of the world. It is at the core of what we do to share best practices in order to improve the association's learning process and help the supply chain to implement at the needed scale", said **Marcelo Visconti**, Executive Director of RTRS.



About Sorriso, Mato Grosso

The city of Sorriso is located in the northern region of the state of Mato Grosso, where 8% of all the world's soy is produced. The city of Sorriso alone produces more than 5 million tons of soy and corn per year (2018 harvest). Of its total territory of 900,000 ha, 607,000 ha are used for crop production and 285,000 ha are devoted to native vegetation conservation. Currently, most of its products go out through ports in the Northern Region, in the state of Pará.

At a meeting held at City Hall, **Ari Lafin**, Mayor of Sorriso, said that the field trip was a positive experience for the city, as it showcased everything that is done locally in terms of productivity and, especially, environmental responsibility. “That has always been a focus of the agriculture sector in Sorriso, through the Rural Union. These are men and women who,



since casting their first seeds on the earth, have always shown responsibility towards the environment. This is something the entire world increasingly expects from us. We leave nothing to be desired here: we monitor the technology used in the sector and also responsible relations with the people working in the field. Sorriso is an extremely young city, only 34 years old, and it is prepared to feed the world the right way", the Mayor explained.



About Associação Amigos da Terra - CAT SORRISO



Throughout its 17-year history, Associação Amigos da Terra (CAT) has worked on initiatives aimed at recognizing and valuing producers who implement good agricultural practices, promote the transfer of technologies and make the transition to sustainable agriculture through no-till farming methods to protect the soil, in addition to the implementing the RTRS international certification standard in medium and large-sized farms.

The Association's mission is to "generate wealth while preserving life", raise awareness and support good practices to promote social, economic and environmental development. Partners assist in sustainability-related work.

CAT also offers technical assistance to small producers of organic and dairy products, encourages children to preserve the environment through environmental education projects and promotes the participation of women in rural activities.

CERTIFIED FARMS	TOTAL PLANTED AREA (HA)	SOY PLANTED AREA (HA DE)	LEGAL RESERVE (HA)	CERTIFIED SOY PRODUCTION (TON)
27	104.335	72.204	35.475	235.493

Dudy Paiva, President of CAT Sorriso, had this to say about the field trip: “[We want foreign representatives to see that it is we, the producers, who take care of the environment.](#) Concerns about destruction have been allayed because they came here and saw the situation for what it really is”.





Day 1

Nutribras

On the first day of the Field Visit, participants got to visit the facilities at Nutribras, a pioneer company in the introduction of the self-sustainable pig farming model in Brazil, which produces food without compromising natural resources.

The company features a complete and 100% sustainable cycle: pig farms and biodigesters that produce biological fertilizers used in agriculture and biogas used in the feed mill and also in pig farms.



Jonas Steffanello, veterinarian at Nutribras, said that a culture of “sustainable thinking” has been a part of company from the very beginning. “We have believed in this for a long time and we see that now the world is opening its eyes to the need for the agribusiness sector to invest in technology to increase food production without the need for deforestation”.



Product certification is due to start soon, he adds. “We are moving in that direction. We know that we have the conditions to guarantee the origin of food products; this will add value to our products and to all production in the region”, explained **Steffanello**.

The social impact of RTRS certification

As a requirement of the RTRS Production Standard, certified producers must execute actions that demonstrate responsible practices with the community. Thus, several initiatives were presented within the framework of the RTRS certification projects led and facilitated by CAT Sorriso in the city of Sorriso.

A visit was made to the **Ivete Lourdes Arenhardt School**, considered a national benchmark, and the participants learned about the two projects taking place on site: Recycling and Composting Projects (Dando Vida à Horta), such as the Crostas Cartago Theater of Good Agricultural Practices.



The project's objective is to raise environmental awareness and instruct new generations about the environment. The School currently has 1,300 students enrolled.

There was also a visit to the campus of the **Federal Institute of Mato Grosso (IFMT)**, where research and implantation of different crops is carried out in partnership with CAT Sorriso for the purpose of rotating with soy production; participants were shown how this is, indeed, feasible.





Day 2

The second day was devoted to visits to farms certified by RTRS that are also members of CAT Sorriso.

The **Santana Farm** began RTRS certification in 2015. It currently works with soy and corn in an area spanning thousand hectares of cultivated area and more than 1,400 hectares of preserved native forests.

The property uses no-till planting and crop rotation, harvesting RTRS-certified soy and sowing corn, which preserves soil quality and avoids problems related to degradation and erosion.



The farm employs agronomic practices and methods of applying agrochemicals in the production cycle that underscore its care for the soil and the water. It has strategies in place to reduce accidents, ensuring the use of appropriate equipment and proper fire prevention (especially during the dry season).

There was also a visit to the **Santa Maria da Amazônia Farm**, with seven thousand hectares of planted area and five thousand hectares of legal reserves. **Júnior Ferrarin**, one of the owners, commented on what it was like to host the representatives. *"It is always a pleasure to have people here and show them the work done in our region. It is an opportunity to correct some of the misconceptions about agriculture in Brazil".*



Certification has brought several benefits to the farm, such as: increasing sustainability in the production chain, improving installations and roads in the property and protecting the environment, as well as preserving water courses and the local fauna and flora.



Also according to **Ferrarin**, producers are organized and ready to be certified. “Producers who engage in this project are helping the country prepare to meet international demands. RTRS is a globally recognized organization; being a part of it significantly enhances our profession”.

Environmental and social projects included in the RTRS certification process:

Environmental projects

• Sorriso Vivo

This is an environmental education program at the Santa Maria da Amazônia Farm, conducted together with CAT Sorriso, which, to date, has recovered three thousand degraded hectares and a natural dam, as well as five thousand samples of 100 types of natural species. It involves pre-school and primary education students.



Family Farming

A number of social projects are developed within the scope of RTRS certification with joint participation and support from the Secretariat of Agriculture of Sorriso.

• Via Láctea Farm

This is a family-owned farm belonging to Rita De Cassia Hachya. The farm started in the dairy business ten years ago with just six animals; since 2014, the farm has been certified

as free of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis - the first farm in the state to receive such certification.

In addition to cattle, the farm also produces cheese. The cheese and milk produced at the farm are sold for use in school meals in the region.



• Guaraciaba Farm

The farm spans nine hectares and grows organic produce. Owners Adriana and Gilberto Cevedine showed the participants the seedling nursery and the vegetable garden, treated and cared for by them. The site has a production seal and is certified as an Organic Producer. With assistance from CAT and Sebrae, the produce is sold for use in school meals in the region.





The PCI - Produce, Conserve and Include - STRATEGY IN SORRISO



RTRS-certified farms can be strengthened and multiplied by the PCI (Produce, Conserve and Include) Strategy in Sorriso.

RTRS is one of the tools under the PCI Strategy to promote the production, processing and trade of responsible soy on a global scale.

In June 2019, RTRS signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CAT Sorriso, IDH and several municipal agencies and companies to encourage sustainable soy production in Sorriso, Mato Grosso, through a new jurisdictional approach.

This cooperation initiative aims, among other goals, to support farmers and traders in the region who are involved in responsible soy production and help develop a jurisdictional market approach to achieve 100% responsible



production in the city; this initiative includes increasing the area devoted to RTRS-certified soy production to 150,000 hectares by 2024.

"RTRS is expecting widespread growth, as uncertified neighbors see what is happening and want it also for themselves. Improving the farms involves an entire process. We want to grow. There are many purchasing companies in Mato Grosso, the largest producer state. We believe growth is the way forward, not only because of the organization's objectives but also because that is what producers want", said

Cid Sanches, RTRS External Consultant in Brazil.

"Certification provides a host of benefits. As a certified producer in Argentina and Uruguay I can tell about the benefits. It has helped in many areas, reducing insurance costs and accidents at work. There is a lot more value than that. But you won't see all that value unless you trail the path", stated **Marina Born de Engels**, President of RTRS.



What did the participants have to say about the field trip?

“All the work involved in certification demonstrates a structured production process. When it comes to product certification, this is one of the ways to make the origin of food products clearer to people. When looking at our product chains, we want the origin to be a part of the history of the products offered to our customers. Our goal is to make access to information about food more democratic, so that people can assign more and more value and contribute to sustainable production”.

Lucio Vicente, Director of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability at Carrefour Brasil.



"It was very interesting and inspiring to see soy producers and the cultivation process up close, talk about sustainability and see it applied in the field. What surprised me most, however, was seeing the social impacts enabled by certification, the social projects and the number of producers involved. Certification is a way of being aligned with our customers and the market. We support sustainable and responsible soy production".

Gesineke Borghuis, CSR Coordinator - Royal Agrifirm Group - The Netherlands.

"It was a great learning experience about soy production in the Sorriso region. The biggest highlight was seeing the soy harvest in the field and spending time with producers, listening to their points of view and understanding their challenges. As a member of RTRS, the Compass Group provides full support to achieving the Association's objectives and is proud of its achievements".

Chris McCrystal, Supply Chain Integrity Manager | Group Health, Safety and Environment - Compass Group PLC - United Kingdom.



"Rural producers are increasingly looking to improve their production standards and our role is precisely to influence large companies to engage in more sustainable production chains, be it through certification or good practices for continuous improvement. We try to encourage big international buyers and big soy buyers to ensure full traceability of the grains they consume and their respective chains".

Gustavo Souza, Public Policy Manager - CDP - Brazil.

"The Field Visit provided an interesting view of agriculture in Brazil. I was struck by the innovation of the farmers, the integrated farm systems on display, and how farmers use cattle as part of land management. Responsibility and passion for agriculture seems to be a part of the local culture and people, as they are deeply rooted in the community. Morrisons wanted to better understand the local situation in countries whose farms supply to Morrisons. It was a great learning trip; it has expanded my knowledge of RTRS and the credit system. It is important for our customers to know that the products they are buying are grown according to the standards they expect to be followed".

Sophie Throup, Head of Agriculture, Fisheries and Sustainable Purchasing - Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc - United Kingdom.





"As a member of RTRS, we have to be involved in events like this to understand how we can collaborate in order to improve. It is very important to go to the field and learn about the demands of producers, as well as the impact of certification on soy production in the region and on the management of the property as a whole. Solidaridad works with rural producers; sustainable production based on their technical knowledge is needed to strengthen producers even further. This is very important to ensure efficient land use and reduce the need to open up new areas. Producers must also draw on collaboration to meet the demands of the market, which are especially stringent in the foreign market".

Juliana Monti, Soy Project Coordinator in Brazil - Solidaridad Network.

"It was a truly unique life experience for me. I gained a better understanding of the status of soy cultivation in Brazil. The more you learn, the more you realize that the challenges are much more about sustainable land management than just soy as an agricultural commodity. I acquired a new perspective on how to deal with the moral compass that helps us decide what is right or wrong, good or bad, positive or negative. As a European citizen, I believe we should be less critical and try to better understand the local and historical context. I also learned more about the inner workings of RTRS and look forward to the new strategy to guide the organization in its ambitions to continuously progress".

Anton van den Brink, Senior Policy & Communication Manager - FEFAC - Brussels.





Thank you!

