

60% of deforested Amazon used for cattle: study

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Trees of the Amazon rain forest burn. More than 60 percent of deforested areas of the Brazilian Amazon forest are used for grazing cattle, while only five percent is used for agriculture, a new government study said.

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From research of [satellite imagery](#), Brazilian officials found of the 719,000 square kilometers (277,000 square miles) cleared up to 2008, a whopping 62 percent was left as just grass, and that the use amounted to on average one cow per hectare, roughly the size of a football field.

"Having less than one head of cattle per hectare is unacceptable," said Environment Minister Izabella Teixeira in comments quoted by the

Brazilian press Saturday.

"It's a waste, because the forest is being replaced by something that does not generate income or growth," she lamented.

While five percent of the land goes to agriculture, some 21 percent is effectively abandoned and left to its own regeneration.

Brazil, which has jurisdiction over most of the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, has committed to drastically reduce deforestation by 80 percent by 2020, though preliminary data indicates that in the last 12 months the process has in fact increased by some 15 percent, according to government figures.

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