

# FOOD, NATURE, CLIMATE MEDIA ANALYSIS INSIGHTS

## *Nature gets burnt*

*This newsletter tracks narrative and real progress in the climate, food and nature nexus in relation to four benchmarks of success co-designed with a number of partners.*

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(↑) = gaining momentum

(-) = still contested

(↓) = losing momentum

## (-) Land use is considered central to the climate solution

*Total of 1.3K articles in the media we are monitoring. Media interest is up 5% compared to the last 7 weeks.*

- **Burning season in the Amazon:**

For the first time, scientists have found that parts of the rainforest are now turning from a [sink to a source of emissions](#). The chances of [reversing](#) this trend are grim, with Brazil's new plan to tackle [forest fires](#) facing [controversy](#) and the agency tasked with fighting illegal deforestation being undermined at every turn - it will soon have just [half of the workforce](#) it did a decade ago. Even though Ricardo Salles [is now gone](#), the new environment minister has links with the [agribusiness lobby](#). An FT editorial argued that Brazil should [pay](#) for allowing deforestation to continue and that investors should divest from their Brazilian holdings.

- **Biodiversity summit:**

Covid-19 has already [postponed](#) the UN biodiversity conference CBD COP15 twice, and it's

currently scheduled for October. But rumours suggest it could be delayed yet again, [till early 2022](#). The latest [draft](#) of the new biodiversity framework sets out a plan to cut the extinction [rate of biodiversity by a factor of 10](#) and proposes goals that significantly shift food production. But some [officials and observers](#) have criticised this draft for its [lack of binding obligations](#), warning that [China must step up its efforts to help](#) secure an ambitious global biodiversity framework.

- **Biomass gets burnt:**

News of the EU's policy on biomass received a lot of criticism. The media narrative around the topic is increasingly aligned to campaigners' objections, with mainstream outlets like the [FT](#) questioning its [greenness](#). [Mongabay has provided an overview of the science](#). The EU's [new forestry strategy](#), part of its "Fit for 55" legislation, sets a goal to plant three billion trees across the EU by 2030. But critics say the new law is [harmful](#) to forests as it allows [continued burning](#) of trees for fuel. Meanwhile, a [new report has found](#) that, over the last decade, EU demand for biofuels is likely to have led to the deforestation of an area roughly the size of the Netherlands in Southeast Asia and South America.

- **Science speaks up on climate and nature:**

- The [IPCC/IPBES](#) have warned that we're not treating climate and nature together, and some climate actions are harmful to nature.
- [Nature](#) has reported that without substantial changes in farming practices, rising emissions from human land use will jeopardise the goals of the Paris climate agreement.

- **Carbon markets scale up as net zero becomes the lens for climate action:**

- The Taskforce on Scaling up Voluntary Carbon Markets (TSVCM) led by Mark Carney has recommended establishing a permanent governance mechanism to scale up the voluntary carbon market. It was criticised for doing so by [environmentalists](#) and the [financial press](#).
- The US Senate has approved a [bill](#) to help farmers make money by selling carbon credits for [storing carbon in the soils](#) through [climate-friendly practices](#). So far, only a [few farmers have adopted](#) them - many are still [unsure](#) as carbon prices are too low. Green groups have also [called on the USDA](#) on the USDA to set stricter standards.
- More scandals have exposed compliance markets in [Colombia](#) and [Gabon](#) and their failure to reduce emissions. A report by EDF [reviewed a dozen](#) nongovernmental standards and found there was no agreement on what, exactly, makes a carbon credit legitimate.
- The Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) [has launched](#). A group of concerned voluntary carbon market buyers, sellers and campaigners are joining forces with experts and frontline communities to ensure integrity. It aims to debate and scrutinise the failure of carbon markets to deliver for climate, nature and people and, in due course, to outline a set of recommendations and guidelines for how a high-quality voluntary carbon market should operate.
- [Reports have shown](#) that [offsets are being put at risk by wildfires](#) that have probably been caused by climate change.

- **Drought and agriculture take centre stage:**

The UN has sounded the alarm that drought is a [hidden global crisis](#) that can lead to "the next pandemic". The [US](#), parts of [Eastern Europe and Siberia](#) are suffering from record heatwaves and droughts, increasing the risk of [wildfires](#). [Madagascar](#) and [Brazil](#) are facing the worst drought in decades. Carbon Brief shares a piece on how two-fifths of EU agricultural imports could be "[highly vulnerable](#)" to drought by 2050.

## (↑) Galvanising new leaders / voices on food and nature resources

- **Legal profession:**

Distinguished lawyers have drawn up a new definition called “ecocide”. It is [intended](#) to be adopted by the International Criminal Court to prosecute offences against the environment, becoming the [fifth](#) offence the court prosecutes.

- **Health professionals:**

The Global Climate & Health Alliance’s new [report](#) draws the links between COVID-19 and the impacts forest fire smoke has on human health. The WHO chief authored an op-ed asking the G20 to invest in a “[healthier, greener, post-pandemic world](#)”.

- **Asset managers:**

[AXA Investment Managers](#) has banned investment in companies behind major biodiversity damage linked to the production of soy, beef and timber. [Storebrand Asset Management](#) is redirecting its activism and targeting corporations after Brazil moved “further away” from protecting its forests. Meanwhile, the food industry is showing a growing [appetite for green finance](#), with new standards driving a surge in sustainability-linked loans.

## (-) Food / Nature as part of the Covid recovery

*Total of 157 articles in the media we are monitoring. Media interest is down 55% compared to the last 7 weeks.*

- **Governments fail to fulfill promises of a green recovery:**

Only [about a tenth](#) of the USD 17 trillion in bailouts since the start of the pandemic was spent on activities that tackle the climate crisis or restore nature, [analysis from Vivid Economics](#) has shown.

- **Forests, Nature and Finance, the good and the bad:**

- [Funding](#) for global forests has more than doubled in the last four years, but forest carbon finance is still insufficient to counter deforestation and climate change, a report has found. Meanwhile, [banks were scolded](#) for inaction and increasing investments into forest-risk commodities, especially in South East Asia.
- Argentina and Pope Francis have pitched a debt swap for [nature for poorer countries to](#)

[respond to the pandemic and address the climate crisis.](#) However, [critics](#) are “wary of commodifying nature and sceptical of how rigorously the environmental benefits will be counted”.

- **Food prices continue to rise:**

Soaring food prices are [squeezing family budgets](#) from India to Costa Rica. Agricultural commodities prices are expected to [keep rising](#) and global food prices have [rallied to multi-year highs](#), with the [poorest taking the biggest hit](#). However, [the FAO and OECD](#) said prices are likely to [fall](#) in the decade ahead, with no super-cycle in food prices.

## (-) 'Business as usual' in agriculture is not a safe economic bet

*Total of 253 articles in the media we are monitoring. Media interest is down 18% compared to the last 7 weeks.*

- **EU common agricultural policy (CAP) reform u-turn:**

A new five-year CAP has [provisionally been agreed](#) by the EU and its member states. Despite some improvements in funding for climate-friendly agriculture and protection for biodiversity, [critics say](#) there remains insufficient support for smaller farmers and too much wriggle room for governments over green spending commitments. Environmental groups have [urged](#) the EU to scrap the new CAP as it does not go far enough in reducing emissions. Meanwhile, the European Court of Auditors has [found](#) that previous CAP funding for climate action has been ineffective and has criticised inaction on livestock farming.

- **UK's first ever integrated National Food Strategy:**

The UK has published its first ever integrated National Food Strategy looking at food security, access, nutrition, health, rural livelihoods and environment. It was broadly welcomed by [health](#) and [environmental](#) campaigners and [commentators](#). The government is expected to consider the recommendations over the summer and publish a response [early next](#) year. Meanwhile, a report has found that healthier food is [three times](#) more expensive in Britain, with the poorest people needing to spend 40% of income to eat well.

- **Risks of investing in animal agriculture continue to rise:**

- **Livestock is still driving diseases in humans.** Bird flu outbreaks in Poland are being [linked](#) to unchecked growth and the high density of farms. Meanwhile, [UK pig farms](#) are doubling the use of antibiotics, increasing concern over the emergence of [drug-resistant bacteria](#). Indeed a [report](#) has shown that none of the largest 10 publicly-listed animal health companies – roughly 40% of the sector – have a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the impact of antimicrobial resistance.
- **Brazil's efforts to track deforestation in cattle farming:** The country is [reviewing](#) a new law to increase the visibility of cattle supply chains to curb deforestation, following [growing risk](#) from disinvestment by European financiers. The Pará state is also trailing a [public digital](#)

[platform](#) that lets buyers know if the cattle purchased were raised on illegally-deforested land.

- **Increases in meat prices and the plant-based boom are threatening meat sales in many countries:** Increasing [meat prices](#) from Brazil to the Philippines are making people buy less meat. As a broader move to plant-based eating is gaining traction, some experts believe the meat sector is under threat. In the US, rising beef prices aren't [being evenly distributed](#) and ranchers blame the big meatpackers. The [Times](#) and [SCMP](#) shared articles about how people should eat more lab-grown meat in the UK and how it can solve China's pork and food security crisis. Nestlé is now [considering](#) jumping into the cultured meat market.

- **Continued hype for regenerative farming:**

Potato producer McCain Foods, one of the largest frozen food companies in the world, [has announced](#) it intends to work only with farms that use regenerative agriculture. [Bayer](#) is setting programs to help farmers store carbon in soils. It is also becoming a [solution](#) for fashion brands. But, [critics say](#), regenerative farming needs clear rules to ensure it reduces emissions.

## NEW AND/OR INTERESTING

- **An investigation by [Desmog](#) has found that the global meat industry is borrowing tactics from tobacco companies** to downplay their role in driving climate change. It is also [copying tricks](#) used by fossil fuel companies to try and “confuse and delay regulation”.

- **Nature friendly beef production in the Amazon can be [profitable](#) and keep [forests standing](#).** The state-owned Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) created a certified brand of [Carbon Neutral Beef](#) by combining cattle with tree-planting to counteract emissions. Meanwhile, two articles have shown how Amazon farmers can [earn nine times more](#) by stopping [deforestation](#).

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This dashboard shows statistics and top articles in the climate, food and nature nexus in relation to three

benchmarks of success

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