Certification, forest conservation, and cattle: theories and evidence of change in Brazil

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Global Land Project Open Science Meeting
March 20, 2014
Voluntary certification programs

Non-state market governance

Comparable across contexts and commodities

Critiques

1. Failure to set rigorous standards

2. Failure to achieve impact at scale
How can program design and implementation lead to sustainability?

Semi-structured interviewees (N = 46)

Multiple ‘steak’holders

The SAN cattle certification program
The SAN program sets high sustainability standards

Higher forest conservation standards than the forest code

Full traceability through the supply chain
Certification ‘raises the bar’ for sustainability in the cattle supply chain

Degree of sustainability

Lower

Higher

Current ‘bar’

New ‘bar’

Farms that...

...participate in voluntary certification programs

...participate in private sector incentive programs

...operate with agricultural best practices

...comply with national environmental laws

...do not comply with national environmental laws

Interventions

[Logos of Rainforest Alliance, MARFRIG, Embrapa, BOAS, CAR]
Conclusions

1. The value of comparing interventions across countries and commodities

2. Certification may influence supply chains more widely