
Myth No. 2: Tree plantations generate jobs

Large-scale tree plantations do not generate jobs because they always involve as much mechanization as possible. For example, the Veracel Celulose Company in Brazil generates 1 direct job per 130 hectares of eucalyptus. On the other hand coffee plantations, very common in Brazil, are able to create up to one job per hectare.

Seeking to profit, companies exploit the workers they employ, placing their health in jeopardy. Among the harvesting machine operators, who carry out five simultaneous functions, back and arm problems are common, as is renal insufficiency. Women working in tree nurseries producing seedlings also suffer from problems related with the repetitive efforts that cause hand and arm lesions. Outsourcing policies further reduce workers' rights and wages.

Jobs generated are also extremely expensive if compared with the cost of generating other rural jobs. For example, a job generated by Veracel Celulose has a cost of 2 million dollars. With this amount it would be possible to settle over 150 families in agrarian reform settlements, which would provide a future for these families and produce food to supply the cities instead of exporting pulp to produce disposable paper in Europe.

Winnie Overbeek, Brazilian Network Alert against the Green Desert