Palm Oil EUDR Overview — Colombia

EUDR Context

Field	Value
eudr_commodity	palm
country_focus	Colombia
deforestation_risk	medium
last_updated	2026-05-26

Overview

Oil palm is one of Colombia's most significant agricultural commodities under the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Colombia ranks as the fourth largest palm oil producer globally and the leading producer in the Western Hemisphere, with approximately 596,000 hectares under cultivation distributed across 161 municipalities in 21 of 32 departments. In Q1 2026, Colombia produced 560,000 metric tons of palm oil, representing a 3% gain over the same period in 2025. Fedepalma projects total annual production could reach 2.5 million metric tons by 2028 if sustainable aviation fuel markets develop.

The EUDR classifies palm oil as one of seven regulated commodities (Article 1), requiring all operators placing palm oil or derived products on EU markets to demonstrate that production did not contribute to deforestation after December 31, 2020. For Colombian exporters, this creates both compliance challenges and competitive advantages given the country's relatively strong sustainability track record compared to Southeast Asian producers.

More than 6,000 oil palm growers operate across Colombia's four production zones (North, East, Central, and South-West), with 85% classified as small-scale producers cultivating fewer than 50 hectares each. The sector generates over 177,000 jobs and has been a critical engine of rural development, though concerns about land concentration and displacement in conflict-affected regions persist.

Colombian Context

Colombia's palm oil sector is concentrated in the Llanos Orientales (Meta, Casanare), the Caribbean coast (Cesar, Magdalena), and the Pacific lowlands around Tumaco (Nariño). The Tumaco corridor is the most sensitive from a deforestation standpoint, as expansion has historically occurred at the forest frontier and in areas affected by armed conflict and forced displacement. In the eastern plains, palm plantations have largely replaced

degraded pastureland rather than primary forest, presenting a lower deforestation risk profile.

Fedepalma, the national federation of oil palm growers, coordinates sustainability efforts through 68 production centers (núcleos palmeros) and actively promotes RSPO certification. Over 20% of Colombian palm oil production is RSPO-certified, and the sector claims that 99% of certified crops are verified deforestation-free. Colombia's 44-million-hectare agricultural frontier—of which only 15% is currently cultivated—positions the country as one of eight nations capable of expanding agricultural output without additional deforestation, though this potential requires rigorous land-use planning.

EUDR Compliance Requirements

Operators exporting palm oil to the EU must comply with the following under the EUDR:

- **Geolocation mapping**: Provide polygon coordinates for all plantations supplying the export chain, traceable to individual plots.
- **Deforestation-free verification**: Demonstrate via satellite imagery or equivalent monitoring that no deforestation occurred on the sourced land after December 31, 2020.
- **Legality proof**: Confirm production complied with Colombian national law, including environmental permits, land titles, and labor regulations.
- **Due diligence system**: Maintain a documented due diligence process covering risk assessment, risk mitigation, and annual reporting.
- **Traceability to mill**: Map supply chains from plantation through extraction mills to export, ensuring no mixing with non-compliant sources.

Fedepalma has been working with supply chain members since 2018 to build traceability infrastructure. The main compliance challenges for Colombia are managing the large number of smallholder suppliers (who may lack formal land titles) and ensuring transparency across the estimated 68 mill catchment areas. High-oleic hybrid varieties, which now cover 110,000+ hectares (18.5% of planted area), represent an emerging premium segment where EUDR compliance can command price premiums in European markets.

Revisión #1
Creado 2026-05-27 03:56:50 UTC por Gideon Blaauw
Actualizado 2026-05-27 03:56:50 UTC por Gideon Blaauw