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Amazon logging industry declines

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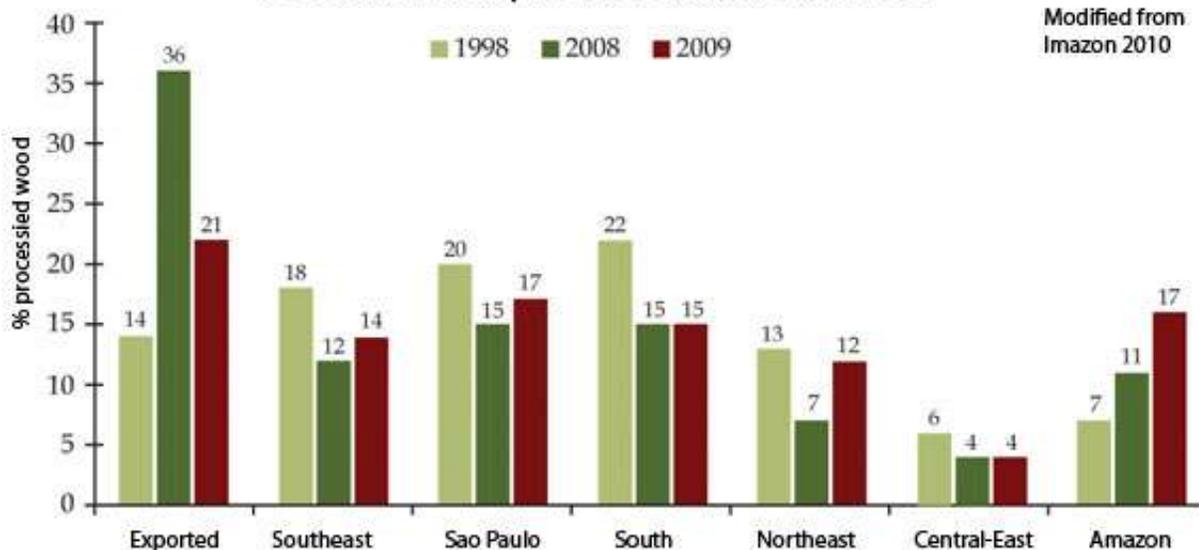
The global economic crisis and increased environmental law enforcement have taken a toll on the Amazon logging industry in Brazil, reports a major new assessment conducted by Imazon and the Brazilian Forest Service.

The report, "Logging in Brazilian Amazon: production, revenues and markets" ([Atividade madeireira na Amazônia brasileira: produção, receita e mercados](#) [PDF-Portuguese]), found consumption of roundwood in the Brazilian Amazon fell from 28.3 million cubic meters in 1998 to 24.5 million in 2004 to 14.2 million cubic meters in 2009. Replacement of natural timber with synthetic wood and eucalyptus from plantation forests may have also been a factor in the drop.

"Over the past three years, the intensification of enforcement actions against deforestation and combat illegal logging... seems to have been the main factor in reducing consumption of Amazon timber," said Denys Pearce, a researcher at Imazon who was a co-author of the report. "It is likely that the national market is gradually replacing the Amazon timber for similar products."

Last year's consumption of the equivalent of 3.5 million trees resulted in the production of 5.8 million cubic meters of processed wood, most (72 percent) of which into low-value sawn wood. 79 percent of Amazon timber was sold in the domestic market.

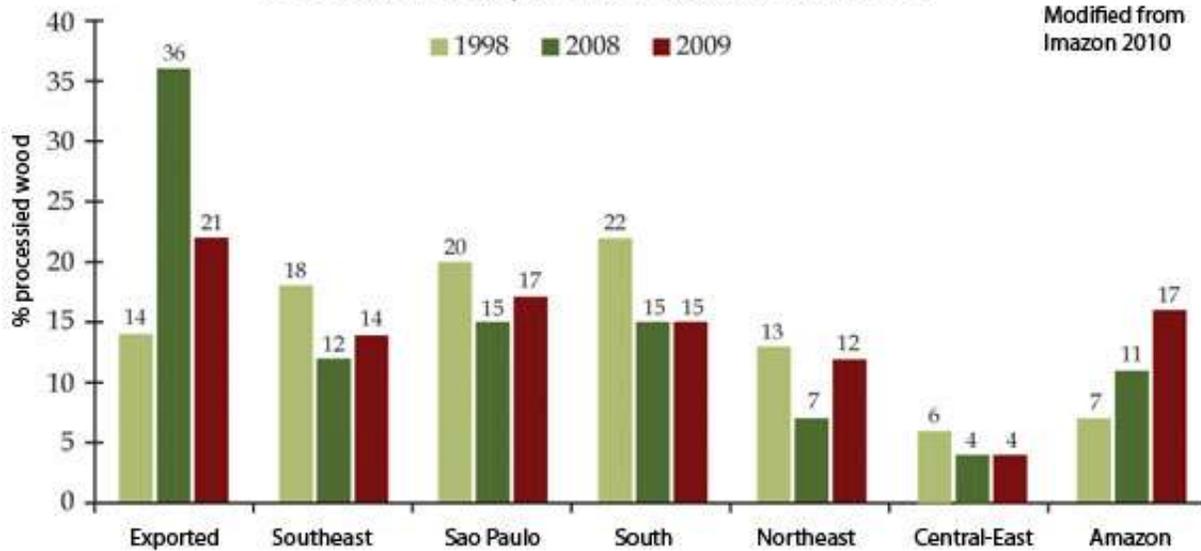
Destination of processed Amazon wood



The study was based on interviews with 846 of the 2,227 timber companies identified in the Amazon. Total revenue for the sector was estimated at 4.94 billion reais (\$2.75 billion), roughly 43 percent of which was generated in the state of Pará, followed by Mato Grosso (33 percent) and Rondonia (15 percent).

The Amazon timber industry employs about 204,000 people, including 66,000 in direct jobs (processing and logging) and 137,000 in indirect jobs.

Destination of processed Amazon wood



Logging in the Brazilian Amazon accelerated in the 1970s with the construction of two highways that opened up the region to settlement and development. Saw mills mushroomed along roads, attracted by cheap and abundant supply. The industry had little oversight until the past decade.

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