Insecure land rights create problems in rural areas throughout Brazil:

1. Land disputes among different interest groups, particularly in remote areas, often result in violence. Source: Comissão Pastoral da Terra, 2016


3. Increased deforestation. Poor titling makes it difficult for environmental agencies to identify land owners responsible for deforestation, impeding efforts to curb it.

4. Poor agricultural land goes to waste. At constant risk of losing their land, many farmers reduce investments in farming or plant less suitable crops. Moreover rental markets, which would otherwise capture investment in agriculture and create economic growth, do not exist in most areas in Brazil. The result is that land is less likely to be developed, leased, or used to its fullest potential.

5. Illegally occupied land makes up 24% of federal land. This equals the combined area of Spain and France. Source: Global Witness, 2016

6. Complex institutional system. The system for managing land rights involves many institutions, resulting in complexity and inefficiency. At the federal level alone, 11 executive bodies are accountable for governing different aspects of land property rights. Source: World Bank, 2014

7. Poor record keeping. Many people do not register their properties with the real estate registry, even though it is mandatory. Only properties registered after 2004 are georeferenced. Source: Global Witness, 2016

8. Little to no institutional integration. Agencies involved in land rights do not integrate their records. For example, Brazil does not have a universal database that includes both public and private properties. Source: Global Witness, 2016

9. Poor oversight. Lack of resources and capacity together with the remote location of some areas prevent effective governmental oversight. Source: Global Witness, 2016

10. Secure rural land rights would benefit the whole country. Challenges of managing public lands. Vacant lands are large public areas that the government has not formally identified and used and that often end up being illegally occupied by individuals. Source: Climate Policy Initiative, 2016

11. Illegally occupied land has expanded in Brazil more than anywhere else in the world. More environmental and land rights activists are assassinated in Brazil than anywhere else in the world.}

Why are Brazil’s land rights so insecure?

- Fewer than 50% of farms in the states of Pará and Piauí are registered.
- Insecure land rights create problems in rural areas throughout Brazil.
- Land disputes among different interest groups, particularly in remote areas, often result in violence.
- Increased deforestation.
- Poor agricultural land goes to waste.
- Illegally occupied land makes up 24% of federal land.
- Complex institutional system.
- Poor record keeping.
- Little to no institutional integration.
- Poor oversight.
- Secure rural land rights would benefit the whole country.