

3-11-1992

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## Recommended Citation

Harding, Erika. "Brazil: Desertification In Northeastern Region." (1992). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur/8699>

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## **Brazil: Desertification In Northeastern Region**

*by Erika Harding*

*Category/Department: General*

*Published: Wednesday, March 11, 1992*

According to a recent study by the Northeast Desertification Research and Control Nucleus (DESERT), inappropriate use of modern agricultural techniques is the main cause of rapid desertification in the region. Of the 227,728 sq.km. affected, 50,000 are considered to be in a "critical" state. Waldemar Rodrigues, DESERT coordinator and Piau Federal University professor, said the situation is aggravated by the cyclical droughts affecting the entire northeastern region, described as semi-arid. Drought conditions have prevailed for the past eight months. Rodrigues said the region's state governments would have to invest US\$2.126 billion over the next 20 years in order to recover land area lost to desertification. If the process continues, damages of about US\$359 million per year are expected. An average annual investment of US\$106 million could reverse the process, according to Rodrigues. [Sources: Jornal do Brasil, Agence France-Presse, 01/27/92; Prensa Latina (Cuba), 01/30/92]

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