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From Campanha to the City: the family farming markets in Santana do Livramento (RS)¹

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Abstract

Commercialization in farmers' markets is an important strategy for reproducing family farming and promoting regional development. In Santana do Livramento (RS), the lack of political support contribute(d) to the consolidation of short marketing channels. In this sense, the study aims to analyze the dynamics of production and commercialization of farmers' market sellers in Santana do Livramento (RS). Methodologically, the research is characterized as qualitative, carried out from a bibliographic review, interviews and non-participant observation. Data were obtained during the second half of 2019 through semi-structured interviews with 10 farmer's market sellers and observations at four farmers' markets in the municipality. As a result, the analyzed farmer's markets can be divided into two groups, the farmers' markets linked to the Association of Horticultural Producers of Santana do Livramento (ASPH) and the farmers' markets linked to the Landless Workers' Movement (MST). Each farmers' market is held on specific date and location and has a different organization and planning strategy for commercialization. Despite the precarious conditions of infrastructure, the farmers' markets are maintained by the relationships of trust and the reciprocity that exists between sellers and consumers. Finally, the expressive resilience of family farmers in the face of local socioeconomic adversities is noted.

Keywords: Short agrifood supply chains. Proximity markets. Campanha Gaúcha.

Da “Campanha” para a Cidade: as feiras da agricultura familiar em Santana do Livramento (RS)

Resumo

A comercialização em feiras é uma importante estratégia de reprodução da agricultura familiar e promotora do desenvolvimento regional. Em Santana do Livramento (RS), a falta

¹Partial results of the research were presented at the 58th Congress of the Brazilian Society of Economics, Administration and Rural Sociology, SOBER, 2020. Foz do Iguaçu, from October 26 to 28, 2020.

de apoio político contribui(u) para a consolidação dos canais curtos de comercialização. Nesse sentido, o estudo visa analisar a dinâmica da produção e comercialização dos feirantes de Santana do Livramento (RS). Metodologicamente a pesquisa caracteriza-se como qualitativa, realizada a partir de revisão bibliográfica, entrevistas e observação não participante. Os dados foram obtidos durante o segundo semestre de 2019 através de entrevistas semiestruturadas a dez feirantes e observações em quatro feiras do município. Como resultados, tem-se que as feiras analisadas podem ser divididas em dois grupos, a dos feirantes ligados à Associação Santanense de Produtores Hortigranjeiros (ASPH) e dos feirantes vinculados ao Movimento dos Sem Terra (MST). Cada feira possui data, local, bem como estratégia de organização e planejamento distintos para a comercialização. Apesar das precárias condições de infraestrutura, as feiras se mantêm pelas relações de confiança e a reciprocidade existente entre feirantes e consumidores. Por fim, nota-se a expressiva capacidade de resiliência dos agricultores familiares frente às adversidades socioeconômicas locais.

Palavras-chave: Cadeias agroalimentares curtas. Mercados de proximidade. Campanha Gaúcha.

De la “Campanha” a la Ciudad: las ferias agrícolas familiares en Santana do Livramento (RS)

Resumen

La comercialización en ferias es una importante estrategia de reproducción de la agricultura familiar y de desarrollo regional. En Santana do Livramento (RS), la falta de apoyo político contribuye a la consolidación de los canales cortos de comercialización. En este sentido, el estudio tiene como objetivo analizar la dinámica de producción y comercialización de los comercializadores en Santana do Livramento (RS). Metodológicamente, la investigación se caracteriza por ser cualitativa, realizada a partir de la revisión bibliográfica, entrevistas y observación no participante. Los datos se obtuvieron durante el segundo semestre de 2019 mediante entrevistas semiestruturadas a diez comercializadores y observaciones en cuatro ferias del municipio. Como resultados, tiene que las ferias analizadas se pueden dividir en dos grupos, las ferias vinculadas a la Asociación Santanense de Productores Hortícolas (ASPH) y las ferias vinculadas al Movimiento Sin Tierra (MST). Cada feria tiene diferentes fechas, lugares, así como diferentes estrategias de organización y planificación de la comercialización. A pesar de las precarias condiciones de la infraestructura, las ferias se mantienen gracias a las relaciones de confianza y reciprocidad entre comerciantes y consumidores. Por último, cabe destacar la importante capacidad de resistencia de los agricultores familiares frente a las adversidades socioeconómicas locales.

Palabras clave: Cadenas agroalimentarias cortas. Mercados de proximidade. Campanha Gaúcha.

1 Introduction

The driving force behind the economic development of the municipality of Santana do Livramento is based on the exploration of agricultural activities. According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, 2,962 agricultural establishments were identified, occupying an area of 673,164 hectares. In this context, 1,746 establishments (approximately 58% of the total) fall within the dynamics of family farming, which occupy an area of 56,494 hectares (SIDRA, 2019). Although family farms are more numerous, the municipality is regionally recognized for extensive livestock farming and large land extensions (TROIAN; BREITENBACH, 2018).

There are many challenges to the socioeconomic reproduction of family farming in the Campanha Gaúcha region, including the precarious infrastructure and the fragile web of local incentives. However, the number of difficulties in generating income is minimized by the collective effort to sell production through short marketing channels. As in the rest of Brazil, in the same logic of the traditional forms of exchange characteristic of family farming, producers in Santana do Livramento organize themselves at farmers' markets in the downtown city to sell their production. By entering local markets, family producers strengthen the social and productive fabric of regional development.

The existing connection between those who produce and those who buy enables product reliability, making it a differential for the commercialization of family farming, besides promoting the preservation of regional culture (SCHNEIDER; ESCHER, 2011). However, due to competition with supermarket chains and the fragility of public policies that encourage development, farmers' markets in Santana do Livramento are susceptible to vulnerabilities of different natures, which threaten their performance and food supply capacity. In this sense, this research aims to analyze the dynamics of production and commercialization of farmers' market sellers in Santana do Livramento (RS). The relevance of the study lies in understanding the challenges that family farming experiences in the municipality in relation to access to markets, as well as contributing academically to the creation and strengthening of municipal public policies.

2 Markets and short chains in family farming

Family farmers are characterized by belonging to a unique social structure, in which the family unit participates in production both for subsistence and for purchase, sale, exchange and accumulation in a small space of land (SCHNEIDER, 2016). According to Law nº 11.326, enacted on July 24, 2006, family farmers are recognized as all actors who occupy rural areas of up to four fiscal modules,² in which part of the family income comes from economic activities carried out in the respective rural establishment and that the direction and labor used are predominantly familiar (BRASIL, 2006). Family farming includes groups of "settlers from the agrarian reform, beneficiaries of the National Land Credit Program, quilombolas, indigenous people, artisans, artisanal fishermen, aquaculturists, foresters, among others" (BRASIL, 2019).

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in the 2017 agricultural census, 3.9 million out of 5 million rural establishments identified in Brazil belong to family farming, corresponding to 77% of the total. On the other hand, the establishments occupy only 80.9 million hectares of the total of 351 million hectares occupied by agricultural establishments throughout the national territory. As for rural producers, 67% of Brazilian producers are family farmers (10.1 million people).

² The measurement in hectares varies among Brazilian municipalities, According to the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), in Santana do Livramento, four fiscal modules correspond to 112 hectares.

The production of family farming has a heterogeneous character, and it is possible to observe from subsistence farming systems to specialized production systems. It is common to combine different agricultural activities, which include the production of food characteristic of self-consumption, inserted in formal commercial circuits through the intermediation of other agents, among others (WILKINSON, 2008). In addition to self-consumption, the results produced by family farming can be commercialized directly – with the help from intermediaries, middlemen, integration agroindustries –, and also destined for institutional markets and/or fair trade markets (SCHNEIDER, 2016).

In general, the connection between markets and family farming takes place via: i) local markets, based on relationships of proximity and reciprocity between producers and consumers; ii) the middleman’s active role, which has been gradually replaced by supermarkets; iii) intermediation by agroindustries, which demand from farmers high levels in terms of product quality and quantity, and iv) intermediation by institutions, which buy products from family agriculture through bidding processes. In this perspective, supermarkets, agroindustries, Non-Governmental Organizations, public authorities, and consumer associations are the main strategic intermediaries of family farming (WILKINSON, 2008).

Family farming is also part of new markets, which are characterized by alternative dynamics and involve niche and proximity markets with higher value-added products or that demand both traditional and artisanal products related to ethical and sustainable trade (WILKINSON; MIOR, 1999; SCHNEIDER, 2016; CASSOL; SCHNEIDER, 2017). Schneider (2016) defines that the relationships established between markets and family farming are based on the principle of supply, on the ways in which production is disposed of, and on the interactions between family farming markets and other markets. Such dynamics occur directly through the purchase of inputs for production, hiring of labor or technical assistance, and also indirectly, through the mediation of external actors, such as banks and professional associations, among others (SCHNEIDER, 2016; OLIVEIRA et al., 2020).

With regard to supply relations, as well as the forms of insertion in types of market, mercantile interactions tend to be in accordance with the geographic space in which the relations take place. In general, the exchange and commodification of family farming products are based on the principles of reciprocity, in which social relations are part of the material exchange process (CASSOL; SCHNEIDER, 2017; SANSSANOVIEZ et al., 2019). For Sabourin (2014), sales relationships are incorporated into the exchange process, in which the principle of reciprocity is established based on social interactions. Different from the characteristic exchanges of the capitalist model, reciprocity aggregates convictions that value human attributes, such as ethical, moral, affective, and territorial values inherent to the places where exchanges occur.

Reciprocity figures as a specific economic category in exchange relations, which generates *sui generis* market categories (SABOURIN, 2014). In this context, direct family farming markets are included, where the family farmer establishes linear contact with the consumer, such as sales at farmers’ markets. Short production chains “reconfigure the role of place and proximity relationships” (SCHNEIDER; FERRARI, 2015, p. 60). That is, short chains place producers facing consumers by reducing the influence of mediating agents, thereby stimulating added value in the territory while strengthening food production (SILVA et al., 2017).

According to Gazolla (2017), short chains represent 50.9% of sales to consumers. Normally, consumers access products at farmers' markets, streets, in direct contact with agroindustries or home deliveries. In short chains, family farming gains autonomy in commercial processes due to the shortening of the chain and the decrease in the middlemen participation (OLIVEIRA et al., 2020). In addition to giving autonomy, the development of short chains underpins social relations linked to a rural past (VERANO; MEDINA, 2019), since the interaction between farmer and consumer allows social values to also circulate in the territory. That is, the shorter the chain, the greater the existing proximity and trust relationship (POZZEBON et al., 2017; SANSSANOVIEZ et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, according to Wilkinson and Mior (1999), there is a predominance of informality in short chains, as production processes face obstacles as a result of fiscal and health standards established by the State. Gazolla (2017) argues that farmers often do not want to formalize due to costs. Furthermore, the close social relationships with consumers – based on trust – mean that farmers have their own mechanisms to sell family production. Tacit agreements between the actors involved (producer, consumer, and State inspection) allow the perpetuation of these relationships and the informal direct market (MARSDEN; et al, 2000; GAZOLLA, 2017).

The production of food with higher added value and regulation are, at the same time, privileges and challenges for family farmers, as they imply significant changes in the productive structure of the category (WILKINSON, 2008). Above all, recognition of short marketing chains by institutions, followed by readjustments in public policies, would minimize the vulnerabilities that family farmers face in order to enter markets (NIEDERLE, 2017).

The different types of short markets – such as farmers' markets and institutional markets – make it possible to diversify the relationships between producers and consumers. For Troian et al. (2021), selling food at farmers' markets is an important strategy for reproducing family farming, especially in territories with high levels of poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability, as is the case of Santana do Livramento. These are themes to be explored below, in the analysis of data collected from farmers' market sellers.

3 Methodology

The study has a qualitative approach, and the data collection techniques used were: literature review, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation. The bibliographical review was carried out from the survey on the specialized literature about the strategies of social reproduction of the familiar agriculture and the commercialization in short chains.

The interviews were carried out using a script previously prepared with 10 farmers' market sellers from Santana do Livramento, qualified in terms of time participating in the farmers' market, rural property and link with social movements, namely: four from 13 de Maio Street farmers' market (one of them being a seller at the Tamandaré Bus Station); five from the General Osório Square farmers' market, and one from the Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' market. The variables explored during the interviews sought to describe the farmers' market sellers' profile, the

characteristics of their rural establishments, the experiences of acting in short chains, and the productive and commercialization dynamics implemented.

Chart 01 – Interviewed farmers’ market sellers

Interviewees	Farmer's markets	Years of sales	Work dynamic	Income profile	Farm size	Location	Distance from the city
01	Treze de Maio Street	1,5 years	In partnership with other woman settlers	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market and complemented by the cosmetics sales	25 ha	Cerro dos Munhoz settlement	20km
02	Hugolino Andrade Street	24 years	Exclusively own production	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market	8 ha	Passo do Guedes locality	17km
03	Treze de Maio Street and Tamandaré Bus Station	1,5 years	Experiences acquired when working as a rural extensionist	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market	25ha	Cerro dos Munhoz settlement	20km
04	Treze de Maio Street	2 years	In partnership with her son, who is settled in São Gabriel/RS	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market and complemented by other sources	25ha	Cerro dos Munhoz settlement	20km
05		29 years	Articulator of the family farming market in the space provided by MST	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market	25ha	Cerro dos Munhoz settlement	20km
06	General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street	6 years	Articulator of the family farming markets in General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market and complemented by the family farming products store	0ha*	**	40km
07		12 years	Exclusively own production	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market	8ha	Passo do Guedes locality	17km
08		26 years	Exclusively own production	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market	**	Vigia locality	10 km
09		5 years	In partnership with they mother, who is farmer's market seller for the last 15 years	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market and complemented by other sources	80ha	Passo do Guedes locality	17km
10		23 years	Exclusively own production	Family income coming mostly from the family farming market	8ha	**	17km

* Resides in the urban area, but sells products from the family that resides on a property around the urban perimeter. ** Not informed.

Source: Survey Data (2019).

The farmers interviewed were chosen at random, based on representativeness and availability. Interviews took place at the farmers’ markets, during the product commercialization; some were scheduled in advance, others took place after the visit and presentation of the research. They were recorded and later transcribed; the definition of the number of interviewees was based on Minayo (1994), considering the sufficient number for the information recurrence (see Chart 01).

Non-participant observation was carried out at the farmers' markets, paying attention to the purchase and sale relationship in the identified short chains, the infrastructure, and the relationships established between sellers and consumers. The observations were used to complement the information obtained during the interviews. Both the interview and observation stages took place in October and November 2019.

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through the content of the farmers' market sellers' statements, based on the approach of Bardin (2011). In order to preserve the research participants' identity, the statements were presented considering the order in which the interviews were carried out, followed by the farmer's market in which the interviewee participates.

4 Commercialization of family farming in Santana do Livramento (RS)

The municipality of Santana do Livramento is part of the Campanha Gaúcha, on Brazil-Uruguay border. Located in the Pampa Biome,³ it has an estimated population of 75,647 inhabitants and an area of 6,946.407 km². It is the second largest municipality in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in terms of land area (IBGE, 2023).

In macroeconomic terms, in 2020 the municipality's gross domestic product (GDP) was R\$ 2.3 billion reais, while the GDP per capita was R\$ 30,208.59 – a value lower than the state average for the same year, which was of R\$ 41,227.61. Although the service sector is predominant in terms of participation in municipal gross value added (GVA), representing 45.5%, agriculture GVA had a share of 13.6% in 2020 (DEE, 2023).

The municipality's economy is based on commerce, livestock (beef and sheep), and agricultural activities, mainly rice and soy crops. More recently, fruit production has been expanding, with emphasis on olive growing and viticulture (FEE, 2018; SEBRAE, 2019). Family farming has always been present, although it has developed on the margins of agribusiness, since the municipality is recognized for its large rural properties and livestock production (TROIAN; BREITENBACH, 2018). Even though livestock and agribusiness are representative in the municipality, there are also families that classify themselves as family farmers.

In the context of Santana do Livramento, the farmers' families experience difficulties with regard to commercialization and access to municipal public policies. In this sense, the research identified four points of direct commercialization in Santana do Livramento,⁴ and 19 farmers sell directly to consumers in the four analyzed points, (see Chart 02).

In short, farmers produce and trade the same types of food, which are horticultural, seasonal (such as: oranges, bergamots and cowpeas in autumn; strawberries in late winter and early spring; figs in the summer; among others), eggs,

³ In Brazil, the Pampa Biome occupies 2.1% of the national geographic territory, and it is the only biome that is located in a single state. It is located in the southern half of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the *Pampa Gaúcho*, covering about 63% of its territory. It is a vast geographic space, which forms a complex system of creeping plants and grasses, in addition to shrub species (IBF, 2020).

⁴ The name associated with each farmers' market is unique and is linked to the place/street where commercialization takes place.

and honey. Also, bread, jam, *rapadura* and dairy products (yogurt, butter, cream, cheese, among others) are offered at the farmers’ markets.

Chart 02 – Specification of Family Farming Markets in Santana do Livramento (RS)

Family farming markets specificity	Treze de Maio Street farmers’ market	General Osório Square farmers’ market	Hugolino Andrade Street farmer’s market	Tamandaré Bus Station farmers’ market
Day of operation	Wednesdays	Tuesdays and Fridays	Saturdays	Fridays
Attendees	8 women farmers, who work in pairs	8 farmers, alguns com agroindústria	2 families	Only a woman farmer who represents other families that also comercialize at the Treze de Maio street farmer’s market
Producers’ origin	Farmers from Cerro dos Munhoz settlement (from agricultural reform), 20km from the urban perimeter (dirt road)	Family farmers from the localities Passo do Guedes and Vigia, 15km - 20km from the urban perimeter (paved road)	Family farmers from the localities Passo do Guedes and Vigia, 15km - 20km from the urban perimeter (paved road)	Woman farmer from Cerro dos Munhoz settlement (from agricultural reform), 20km from the urban perimeter (dirt road)
Background	The family farming market is a cooperation between a group of market traders	Organized by ASPH and Emater	Organized by ASPH and Emater. Space acquired through municipal through public policy	Represented by only one street stand, the family farming market has existed since early 2018
Strategic location	Near a large supermarket	Space with wide circulation of consumers	Poorly located space, as it has a low flow of people circulation	It is located on the corner of a large fruit stand
Payment forms	Does not accept credit cards	Does not accept credit cards	Accept credit cards	Does not accept credit cards
Management organization	Profit and costs are divided among the producers	There is no cooperation in sales between the farmers, each one sells their own product – they are competitors	There is no cooperation in sales between the farmers, each one sells their own product – they are competitors	When the products of the Treze de Maio Street farmer’s market are sold, the profit is divided according to sales
Producers’ expectations	They are waiting for a municipal grant to open na agroindustry	The farming market receives technical assistance from Emater. However, there is more conformity in relation to the precarious conditions of the space	There is more conformity in relation to the precarious conditions of the space	Precarious space: no access to water and bathroom, and receives little shade. No technical assistance.
Implementation	Community	Individual	Individual	Community

Source: Survey Data (2019).

Commercialization at General Osório Square started in the late 1990s, with some fruit and vegetable producers founding the Association of Horticultural Producers of Santana do Livramento (ASPH). The producers have been formally organized via an association for approximately two years and decided to sell on public land provided by the City Hall, on Hugolino Andrade Street (next to a building materials store).

The farmers’ markets on 13 de Maio Street and at the Tamandaré Bus Terminal have their origins in social movements, more specifically, in the municipality’s rural settlers. Although it is possible and of the Landless Workers’ Movement’s interest that any settler trade at the farmers’ market, there is a predominance of producers

from the Cerro dos Munhoz settlement. The farmers' market that takes place on Tamandaré Street has been held for approximately a year and a half. It is carried out by two families of settlers, one with a history of more than 20 years selling directly to the consumer, in different parts of the city, and the other family that has been operating for a year and a half.

Although the farmers' markets work with a collective of farmers, the decision on the value of the products and the purchase of inputs is not always discussed among the sellers. During the interviews, it was possible to perceive that there are different forms of organization between the commercialization spaces in short chains in the municipality. Farmers who sell at the farmers' market on 13 de Maio Street, compared to other farmers' markets, tend to dialogue and combine, as far as possible, production and the establishment of the amounts to be charged.

When we held the meeting, we decided something like that "what do you have?" For example, I have cheese, I have honey, I have cabbage, so you have these products. "Interviewee 04, what do you have?", Oh, I have rice, organic rice that my son produces there in São Gabriel, then I say I can bring this organic rice, so there is organic rice, there are beans that my husband, which we produce and that are organic so we take beans, rice and some cornbread that I like to make, I take this stuff, it's not much, but I take it because in fact each person already knows what will bring [...] each one puts their price and we sell the stuff as it is sold [sic]. (Interviewee 04, 13 de Maio Street farmers' market)

As 13 de Maio Street farmers' market is weekly, taking place every Wednesday, two sellers are responsible for commercialization of the entire group (composed of eight farmers from the Cerro dos Munhoz settlement). Establishing and taking prices takes place respecting the value told by the producers.

We sell the product according to the value that the person told, for example, if there are a dozen eggs, one person told five and another told ten, we will sell one for five and another for ten. Cheese, also each person told a price, and we are taking seven reais for gasoline. (Interviewee 04, 13 de Maio Street farmers' market)

When asked about the prices of products sold at the farmers' markets, interviewees at farmers' markets held on Hugolino Andrade Street and at General Osório Square did not answer. They only sell what they produce, that is, they do not establish cooperative partnerships with other sellers, so they believe they do not need to combine values. Those interviewed at Rua 13 de Maio Street and Tamandaré Bus Terminal farmers' markets mention that there is no strict control over prices, but that the calculation is based on costs and market prices.

[...] we don't have it on paper, but we discussed a freight cost. A freight cost of seven reais each, we already discount it and we also have a partnership here with the movement, we give ten percent to the local people for lending the place to help them too, and the farmers' market here was only possible on their land, so we give them ten percent and seven reais for each from the freight Yeah, I think, I can't say for sure, but I think they've already researched how much it costs on the market, so I believe they do a calculation like this, at least Ana does it: "ah, I use this

amount of sugar, this amount of this, this amount of that, so I spent it, more or less. Nothing on paper.” (Interviewee 01, Rua 13 de Maio Street farmers’ market)

According to Fonseca (2018), it is producers’ habit to associate personal finances with production accounts, as in family farming there is no separation between business and family. Thus, logistical costs are determined empirically, as well as the prices of products sold are determined by observing similar products in conventional marketing networks. Regarding the existence of meetings to combine the dynamics of the farmers’ market activities, it was evident that the meetings took place for their planning, but, after they started, they became increasingly rare.

Just a few times. It’s been a year, so I already know what to do and I talk like this: “What are you taking? What do you have to take?”. It’s like, what you have, you bring, we talked at the beginning, now we don’t talk much, but because, because we are very involved in the work, a lot of work. You have to take care of the house, look after the vegetable garden, look after the grandchildren, look after the children, and a lot of things. (Interviewee 05, 13 de Maio Street farmers’ market)

According to Niederle and Wesz Jr. (2009, p. 81), the work activities of planting and harvesting, among others, are priorities for farmers, who – most of the time – understand the strategic activities of training and planning as a waste of time, as they generally require “ a level of economic stability that is not found in family or peasant agriculture.” It should be mentioned that some sellers in Santana do Livramento hold meetings to deal with other topics, such as the settlement, the MST, the process of creating agroindustries, among others, but not specifically to deal with issues related to the farmers’ market.

It is possible to notice that some meetings took place at the beginning of the mobilization of the farmers’ market implementation process, although currently they do not occur. As reported by two interviewees.

In fact, after we planned it, we just did it, we planned it and then we did it, because we have another group that is the agroindustry, which is with the same families, but there is one more family, then we just do it. (Interviewee 04, 13 de Maio Street farmers’ market)

We try to do, and we do like that, we have a lot of things and now with the agroindustry we get together a lot, but it’s not the farmers’ market group itself [...] we have the agroindustry meeting, then we discuss the things that have to be done, we have to discuss a little bit about the farmers’ market, who is going or something like the table, that I found the other table, and then we organize it, then we divide it, and then we get together and discuss it. (Interviewee 01, 13 de Maio Street farmers’ market)

In the farmers’ markets held via association, it is noticed that in addition to the fact that there are no meetings to plan the activity, there has been no commitment or care for the space. Sellers, in general, have had difficulties in organizing themselves to make collective decisions, as well as cleaning up the places, where there is lack of cooperation and necessary feeling of belonging for the development of the collective enterprise.

I went to the farmers' market and it was dirty, after that storm and everything a tall grass, ugly garden, it really demotivates you, when you see that colleagues don't give the same importance to that, they come and sell but do not help to take care of the place. So self-management has to, has to be worked on to see if the people embrace it together, I let them make all the decisions. (Interviewee 06, Hugolino Andrade Street and General Osório Square farmers' markets)

In view of the above, the farmers' markets can be classified into two groups: sellers linked to the MST and sellers linked to the ASPH. However, in both groups there are difficulties in the operationalization of collective decisions. Such characteristics are more evident among the sellers at General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street. In turn, MST-linked sellers do not usually hold specific meetings to define the production and/or prices of the products offered at the farmers' market, although they show greater complicity and a sense of belonging, identifying themselves as a political-social group.

Despite being located in points of great circulation of people in Santana do Livramento downtown, the farmers' markets operate in spaces with precarious infrastructure conditions, close to supermarkets and fruit shops. Even so, the sellers have a steady clientele, with relationships based on trust and reciprocity. For these reasons, it is inferred that there is a high sellers' resilience capacity in the face of structural and economic adversities that are presented to them. Likewise, by expressing positive feelings in relation to direct contact with consumers, farmers feel fulfilled for contributing to food security in the municipality.

Personal fulfillment and commercialization at farmers' markets in Santana do Livramento (RS)

The interviewees were asked about the importance of the income obtained from sales at farmers' markets for promoting their families' quality of life. For seven of the 10 interviewees, the income obtained through sales at the farmers' market changed their families' well-being by providing more comfort and financial freedom, especially for women. Still, it is often the income obtained at the farmers' market that allows the farmers' children to access educational services.

I raised all my children at the farmers' market, and I tell them, of course they always helped me, my husband helped, he came along until last year, now he doesn't want to come much. But I like it and I insist on coming, because that's when you sell in the city, where you consume your food, it's the city that consumes it, there everyone has almost the same things, and not here, so I like money that is different from the husband's money, I raised my children studying, in college [...]. (Interviewee 05, 13 de Maio Street farmers' market)

For the ten interviewees, the farmers' market, in addition to providing better living conditions (providing income to buy a car, improve the house, among other things that provide comfort), is advantageous for the relationship with consumers and, above all, for eliminating middlemen. In this way, it is possible for the farmer to develop a higher profit margin.

Look, it's changed a lot. It has changed a lot, I tell you, in everything. And you see that, even in relation to the house, car, we didn't have anything! People's lives have become much better than they were, you know? For the farmers' market, because the farmers' market...everything we bring here is sold for a good price and it's direct, there are no middlemen. So for me this farmers' market is a blessing [...]. (Interviewee 07, General Osório Square farmers' market)

Similar results were pointed out by Chuquillanque et al. (2018) regarding the income obtained by family farmers and the elimination of intermediation in commercialization processes. The authors studied the productive and socioeconomic situation of 14 sellers in São Lourenço do Sul (RS) and, as a result, concluded that the sellers identified the elimination of the middleman as the main advantage of commercialization at farmers' markets.

However, in the course of this research, there was an interviewee who mentioned that the income obtained at farmers' markets did not change the family's life and/or is not relevant for the promotion of family well-being. Although selling at the farmers' market, one interviewee mentions that she still needs to work as a cleaning woman, because the volume of production sold is small.

No, not much has changed, no. Look, it can even improve, but it's not a big deal, really. I work out too. When I'm not here at the farmers' market, I'm doing my cleaning, doing this, doing that. When I'm not working as a cleaning woman, I'm at the farm, helping him (husband). (Interviewee 08, General Osório Square farmers' market)

It should be mentioned that producers who have access to roads in trafficable conditions and establishments closer to the urban perimeter are producing and selling in greater quantity, in such a way that this space provides the family with a representative and important income for its socioeconomic reproduction. As for those who live far from the urban perimeter and/or have small properties, the income from the farmers' market has not been able to support the family. It should be noted that the municipality's rural roads, in general, are in a poor state of conservation, a factor that prevents the school bus from passing through it on rainy days and farmers from transporting their production (FERRON, 2019).

With regard to the feeling of accomplishment for the activity developed at the farmers' market, the statements were diverse. Most of those interviewed answered quickly and happily that selling at farmers' markets makes them feel fulfilled. “Yes! Ah, because I have my job here at the farmers' market, I have my money, I can buy my little things, I help at home” (Interviewee 10, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' markets). However, there were also situations in which farmers complained about neglect and lack of conditions and recognition, which made them dissatisfied and discouraged.

Those who are buying from us are people who value us, who value our work, who look for us. Me actually, if I feel accomplished? It's kind of hard to say because I'm still in the process, I'm just starting out, but I've always sold my products through cooperatives with my mother and Vani, but I don't feel valued. (Interviewee 03, 13 de Maio Street and Tamandaré Bus Station farmers' markets)

The interviewee's demotivation due to the lack of recognition on the part of local consumers is added to the lack of support from government officials and of partnership between sellers themselves, as can be seen in the following statement:

[...] so I feel really unmotivated, because so much more could be done and people don't appreciate it, I go to the radio, I go, I talk, I face the situation, ask the others to go and the others don't go, I'm already begging people to go to the farmers' market and that's complicated, we're already begging for things to happen. And in any city where you say that you have homemade products, you go to the family farming markets inside the exhibitions, everything is there, there are so many people producing, there are so many people, so many women involved, so many men involved. (Interviewee 06, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' markets)

Municipal public authorities' precarious performance, identified in the research, was also observed by Verano and Medina (2019) in other locations. In the research carried out in 201 municipalities in the state of Goiás, the authors verified that the farmers' markets need support from the public authorities. That is, just like in Santana do Livramento, in the municipalities of the state of Goiás, farmers' markets take place independently of public policy stimuli and result from the need and commitment of the agents involved.

Although the sellers' personal fulfillment in relation to the farmers' markets has occurred at different levels, in Santana do Livramento the direct sale to consumers stands out as a positive aspect. "You can sell your product directly to the consumer, at a different price" (Interviewee 09, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' markets). In other words, as sales at farmers' markets eliminate middlemen, the price received for products tends to be higher (SCHNEIDER, 2016).

Also, most sellers feel happy and fulfilled when participating in this exchange channel, since the income obtained through sales at farmers' markets has improved the family's living conditions, by enabling the acquisition of cars and paying for the children's studies, among other things. Nevertheless, there are dissatisfied interviewees, who feel disappointed with the producers' indifference and lack of involvement, with public authorities' and even consumers' lack of interest. Therefore, reflection is promoted on the obstacles to commercialization at farmers' markets in the municipality of Santana do Livramento, topics addressed in the following section.

Barriers to commercialization at farmers' markets in Santana do Livramento (RS)

The survey on primary data made it possible to identify one of the main obstacles to commercialization at farmers' markets in Santana do Livramento, namely, the lack of habit and/or local culture in buying and consuming products directly from family farmers. The low levels of development in the municipality are correlated with the inability of social and economic agents to generate political, productive, and commercial synergies, in order to integrate sectors and promote population's better quality of life. Thus, the scope of family farming in the municipality's development process is repressed in the face of this reality (MACIEL, 2022).

Inside Hugolino we have some, but they are very few, on some days there are ten customers, this is too little the kids pick the vegetables and those vegetables go back to the trash, you go, you get tired, you sell one hundred reais, and you got tired, you went out, people often walk kilometers to come. [...] you spend money to come and you have no return and this has happened a lot, people come and don't sell and then people say there's no farmers' market in Livramento, Livramento has nothing like that, but we have been here for two years, apart from the other ten years that people have been selling at other points, at General Osório Square. (Interviewee 06, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' markets)

In the interviewee's statement, it is evident the difficult access to basic capabilities, in addition to the low consumer demand. The difficulties faced by farmers who live far from the urban perimeter – including the distance to be traveled, dependence on bus schedules offered by public transportation, in addition to the perishability of agricultural products – mean that there are fewer and fewer producers selling at farmers' markets.

In addition, the lack of habit of attending farmers' markets and the easiness found in formal markets, such as sales with debit and credit cards without the need for physical money end up becoming an obstacle for farmers who sell in farmers' markets. “Yes, the habit of visiting more the farmers' market (laughs). It's just a question of the public, people don't have the habit of going to the farmers' market; maybe due to the supermarkets. I believe they have the cards and tend not to” (Interviewee 07, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' markets).

The lack of adequate space for the integration between sellers and consumers was also identified as an obstacle to short chain sales in the municipality. The existing farmers' markets in Santana do Livramento do not have the infrastructure to display products, as well as they do not have the minimum conditions for sellers or consumers, such as running water, electricity, bathrooms, among others. Interviewees also highlighted that farmers' markets need to be closer to consumers:

[...] firstly, we need an adequate space, we have been trying for more than two years to create a parliamentary amendment that we managed to get for two hundred and fifty thousand reais and that must be locked either in the planning or in the box again [sic], if by December we don't conclude the bidding, we lose. It is a wonderful structure, a large pavilion, with a bathroom, a kitchen, benches, electricity, water, everything that we deserve, both the customer and the consumer [sic], because if we have to go get wet, get cold we go, but you know everything a farmer goes through in the field to produce and see him as I saw, Friday again, Friday not Tuesday that it rained, I saw Interviewee 07 wet from head to toe, Interviewee 02, Interviewee 10, everyone wet it is very complicated, it discourages us. (Interviewee 06, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' markets)

The local government's lack of involvement in promoting short marketing chains is evident. In this sense, the local executive power could develop actions and policies aimed at strengthening family farming and local development through the promotion of short production and marketing chains. According to the interviewees,

involvement is lacking and, more seriously, policy makers visit and recognize farmers' markets only when this can be used for self-promotion.

But there is no greater involvement, there is not something that really drives us, there's no secretariat for agriculture, there's no participation, if you consider when our mayor visited the farmers' market, if he went one day to take a picture. (Interviewee 06, Hugolino Andrade Street and General Osório Square farmers' markets)

Furthermore, as barriers to the development of farmers' markets, the difficulty of farmers in complying with the health standards in force in the legislation emerges. Such an obstacle appears in the discourse of four of the ten sellers interviewed, since, in general, opting for informal markets represents a rational alternative for farmers to maintain productivity and obtain income (WILKINSON, MIOR, 1999).

I think that the obstacles for the farmers' market is [the health] surveillance [body] this cheese thing, and other products without a label that we sell, we can't, but we don't have conditions to do agroindustry and stuff, we try to do everything hygienically, but it's not the standard (which the law sets). [...] this legislation, it's not so much [health] surveillance body], but the legislation in force, which was made [sic] for the big ones, it's no use for the small ones, this is the biggest obstacle. (Interviewee 01, 13 de Maio Street farmers' market)

The lack of disclosure of the farmers' markets spaces and products offered was also listed as an obstacle to the development of farmers' markets in the municipality:

Oh, I don't know, here there is little publicity about the farmers' markets. I think that's basically it, we work kind of alone, like this. Each one doing their ads, you know? If people were more united, I think it would be better. (Interviewee 09, Hugolino Andrade Street and General Osório Square farmers' markets)

Also, together with the lack of publicity, the lack of manpower for producers was mentioned as an obstacle to the development of spaces for integration between producers and consumers. According to an interviewee, farmers need to plant, harvest and pack their products; otherwise they won't have what to sell at the farmers' markets. At the same time, consumers need to know what is produced, where and on which days it is sold, and farmers also need to disclose it.

[...] we made handbills trying to publicize the farmers' market, there is no one to distribute these handbills to us on the street, so eight thousand handbills and there is no one to distribute them. You have to produce, sometimes a couple with a child, then the child studies and the couple has to produce, they have to harvest, pack, arrange in the [right] conditions, bring the stuff, sell at the farmers' market and come back, then the couple goes out on Tuesday, goes out on Friday and on Saturday, when it is the couple that produces, while the couple is at home, they still have to harvest, so things get harder, then you try to adjust everything so that they

can continue producing and can also sell. (Interviewee 06, Hugolino Andrade Street and General Osório Square farmers’ markets)

With regard to the obstacles to the functioning of the farmers’ markets, the producers cited prejudice against the settlers and family farming in general. According to the interviewees, the producers who accessed the agrarian reform policies – since the implementation of the settlements – have been going through the process of social acceptance, whether at school, in stores, or in other spaces. Santana do Livramento, as it is a region of large livestock holdings, with conservative characteristics, presents some resistance to accepting the way of life and production of settled farmers, which implies the search for appropriate public policies (FERRON, 2019).

[...] I clearly remember that we suffered a lot of prejudice at the school when we came to high school, the teachers met several times because the mayor at the time did not want to put transportation in the rural area, there were many young people that needed to study, there were young people already inside the settlements and he didn’t want to provide transportation for high school [...] no school wanted to receive landless settlers. (Interviewee 06, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers’ markets)

In this sense, interviewees were asked about what could be done to improve the sellers’ quality of life and work in Santana do Livramento. To this end, the following stand out: i) communication between city hall, farmers and the health surveillance body; ii) improvements in infrastructure in general, from the roads to the physical space of the farmers’ markets, and iii) the elimination of prejudice against small-scale production, developed by local family farmers.

With regard to health surveillance body norms, the interviewees consider greater city hall participation relevant, helping them in processes, from training and qualification to facilitating the agro-industrialization of products. As one interviewee reports: “I think it would be this communication between [health] surveillance [body] and the city hall, we have communication, but it’s that thing kind of poor” (Interviewee 01, 13 de Maio Street farmers’ market). It is still possible to verify in the interviewees’ statements the need for differentiated norms for family farmers.

Everything would be better if they did not forbid so many things You cannot sell an egg. You can’t do it, there are several things that you can’t do. They forbid a lot! For example, we sold peeled beans; you can’t, banned. In fact, they don’t want you to sell any peeled product. I sold peeled cassava, they don’t want it either. The problem is that people don’t want products with peel so it’s more difficult for us. If you plant, you harvest and you come, bring it here, you have to take it back! (Interviewee 10, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers’ markets)

With regard to infrastructure, it is clear that this is a demand from sellers. According to the interviewees, there is pressure from local trade and this weakens the farmers’ markets and lacks public support. Local supermarket chains, with bargaining power and renowned before society and local politicians, have historically been devaluing production and boycotting the commercialization by family farmers.

[...] this infrastructure issue already exists and people say that we don't participate and everything else, but what happened to us and why we stopped participating in these farmers' markets. [...] we started the farmers' markets in Santana do Livramento together with Emater⁵ and the small producers here in the region, so ... many places were exchanged for this reason, the local trade, the supermarkets made the public authorities take us out of that place, so as not to interfere with market sales. (Interviewee 03, 13 de Maio Street and Tamandaré Bus Station farmers' markets)

With regard to breaking prejudice, the public university's role (with plural knowledge) stands out in disseminating the work carried out by family farmers and, mainly, in the effort to raise social awareness, breaking down rooted and erroneous conceptions about rural settlements, family farming, and local food production. Above all, the role of Universidade Federal do Pampa, Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Sul and Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Sul-rio-grandense, all with campuses in Santana do Livramento, stand out.

I talked to Alessandra (professor at Universidade Federal do Pampa) that day ⁶that I thought was very important, because you are showing it at a university, society maybe has a prejudice with the settler, maybe he [settler] faces the farmers' market from another point of view, because he is inside a university, you have a young audience that will see and that sometimes consumes and maybe also doesn't know... people from outside and that maybe this becomes a routine at the farmers' market. (Interviewee 06, General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street farmers' market)

Despite the advances made over the last few years, it is perceived that there is much to be done in order to consolidate and multiply sales at farmers' markets in the municipality. The possibility of purchasing fresh food, produced in the region and that respects the reproduction dynamics of ecosystems, is fundamental to development. Ensuring food sovereignty and security in the Campanha Gaúcha permeates the debate on the health aspects of food production, as well as on the capacity of local production chains to generate work and income.

⁵Emater is the state technical assistance and public rural extension agency. The body is focused on family farming, acts mainly to increase production, productivity and product quality, in the planning and management of properties, based on productive diversification and agro-industrialization. In Santana do Livramento, Emater plays an important role in strengthening family farming, by encouraging diversified production and organizing producers in associations and marketing in short chains, both in the organization of farmers' markets and in institutional programs.

⁶ Scientific event "*Conversas Produtivas: produção orgânica e mostra de produtos orgânicos e agroecológicos*" [Productive Conversations: organic production and exhibition of organic and agroecological products], held at Universidade Federal do Pampa. It is noteworthy that Universidade Federal do Pampa (Unipampa) and Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS), through the professors and students of Santana do Livramento campuses, have carried out a series of activities with local family farmers, where research and the extension with the sellers stand out.

5 Final considerations

With a population of approximately 83,000 inhabitants, it was possible to identify only four points of direct commercialization between family farmers and consumers in the municipality of Santana do Livramento. Both emerged from collective and institutional initiatives promoted with the help from Emater, the association of rural producers and the MST.

The farmers’ markets at General Osório Square and Hugolino Andrade Street are the result of ASPH, and farmers’ market on 13 de Maio Street is supported by the MST. The farmers’ market held at the Tamandaré Bus Terminal, despite being held by agrarian reform settlers, has certain autonomy and is carried out without the support or participation of public bodies or social movements. The latter is also carried out in a more precarious space from the point of view of infrastructure (place where products are displayed on the street, without coverage and/or protection against sun, rain and/or wind) and sellers’ working conditions (no water, no bathroom or any supporting location).

The mode of commercialization and relationship is different between the spaces studied. At 13 de Maio Street and Tamandaré Bus Terminal farmers’ markets, there is a cooperative relationship between producers, who feel they belong to the movement to promote short marketing chains and, therefore, to collective work. At Hugolino Andrade Street and General Osório Square farmers’ markets, certain individualism can be seen in the actions promoted by farmers. Regarding the implications caused by individualism, conformity with the weaknesses farmers’ market and the lack of specific public policies for family farming stand out. The lack of articulation on the part of the sellers, especially in times of adversity, ends up contributing to the invisibility of the social category before the government and, therefore, to the low support for improvements in the space of the farmers’ markets.

In general, there is no strict control over what each seller produces, nor over the sale price and production cost. There is a relative lack of dialogue and commitment between sellers when establishing the activities of the farmers’ market, including the maintenance of the space, especially when it comes to the sellers on Hugolino Andrade Street.

Among the actions that can be implemented with a view to the development of local markets and short marketing channels in Santana do Livramento, mention should be made of efforts in publicity and communication of the activities carried out by the sellers, in order to provide greater visibility to the groups and, in this way, to improve the quality of life and the result of the works exhibited there. Furthermore, social awareness, through educational and training actions, can help the society recognize the role played by local actors in development.

Finally, it should be noted that in the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing measures created restrictions and prevented the operation of farmers’ markets in the municipality. However, in this period, most sellers adopted as a social reproduction strategy the sale on applications and home delivery. An important group that was consolidated and remains until the present day is made up of family farmers linked to social movements, called *Grupo de Economia Solidaria Feminista* [Feminist Solidarity Economy Group] – Riveramento. Furthermore, a relevant

achievement was consolidated for the ASPH sellers, who recently received funds to improve the physical space of the farmers' market on Hugolino Andrade Street.

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