
Background
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) are procedures to obtain agricultural products, pursuing sustainability in the social, environmental and economic aspect. In Good Dairy Practices (GDP), the aim is sustainable milk production
- Animal welfare (AW) is a main topic for GDP. It has a direct impact on growth, reproduction and production rates, leading to a superior animal performance
- Ethical animal handling, sanitary safety, quality of dairy products and environmentally friendly practices are new consumers and market demands, that challenge dairy farming
- Traditional milking practices, low milk yields, adverse environmental conditions, misuse of natural resources and poor infrastructure of small dairy farmers, obstruct good quality and constant milk production
- In the study area Itaiva, Rio de Janeiro State - Brazil, both constraints and potentials were identified to implement GDP, support farmers to increase production, achieve higher milk quality and improve their livelihoods. Figure 1.

Methods
- Conceptual framework: Dairy farming main production activities with major influence on AW, essential to have an efficient, sustainable, productive and profitable dairy farm
- Farming systems analysis, centered on the livestock component
- Data collection: through semi-structured interviews, March to May 2015
- Data Analysis: through a parameters and indicators system, scoring from 1 (very bad state) to 5 (very good state). Figure 5.

Conclusions and Recommendations
- The application of AW practices represent a useful method to alleviate the constraints of small dairy farmers to accomplish the standards established by legislations, consumers and market, while protecting the environment
- It is important to promote a change of inappropiate habits and procedures of small dairy farmers using technical support and guidance along the production process for the implementation of AW and GDP measures
- The small dairy farmers associations, their willingness to improve and good community-based management, are their strongest potentials. These are the characteristics that give them the resources to compete and to achieve enduring access to a more and more demanding market

References