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**Study for a Sustainable Development of the Family Agriculture in  
the Region of Vale do Rio Pardo/RS/Brasil**

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**Abstract**

The region of Vale do Rio Pardo, in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, presents approximately 45% of its population living and working in the rural area, in family units of production. The main culture is tobacco, which, in its productive process, absorbs intense labor force and great quantities of agrotoxics.

It is in such context that several initiatives, concerned with the development of the region, have turned to the study of viable alternatives to the tobacco.

This text tries to evidence the insustainability of modern agriculture, and presents, as an alternative to the rural development, the agro ecological model. In such context, experiences already under development in Vale do Rio Pardo/RS were investigated, in order to analyze the agents responsible for the development of the agro ecological model in the family units of production, as well as the socio-spatial changes, in order to contribute to the sustainable rural development of the region.

The major evidences of the researches allow us to statement that one of the basic conditions feasible for agro ecological practices in family agriculture is the commitment of the community involved in the process, once their achievement demand multiple information and great determination to accomplish results. In order to reach success, the organization of associations and/or rural workers cooperatives gain special importance, once they produce, in addition to mutual support, the exchange of experiences, which consist in strategies to overcome difficulties in two phases, the phase of crop growing and the phase of commercialization.

It is also essential to identify the natural environment where the agro ecological practice is developed, such as: climate, soil, landscape, flora, fauna, and others, once ecological control of illnesses and plagues is extremely vulnerable to these conditions.

It is also necessary to stimulate and prize the use of fertilizers produced in the property, in order to minimize the external dependence, reflecting in a reduction of the production cost.

**Keywords:** Agro ecology, family agriculture, sustainable agricultural development