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Perspectives of Organic Farming in the Ucayali Region of Peru - Institutional Approach

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Abstract

Organic agriculture in the Ucayali region is more than 10 years a stagnated sector. Organic certification and marketing of organic products are absent here. The study is focused on the state of the art of organic agriculture in the study area from point of view of institutional economy and evaluating the social capital in the communities is looking for the answer of stagnation of organic agriculture in the region. Semi-structured interviews and PRA monitoring were used to collect the field data in the six different chosen communities, near Pucallpa, the capital of the region. Contacting of key informants of organic agriculture in Peru by questionnaire was also used and on the base of this information the actual state of organic agriculture in the region was evaluated, like the size of available and used areas, marketing of the products and the major problems of the agricultural systems in the area. To describe the actual situation, case study of organic product unit is presented in the study and its certification cost and evaluation of marketing possibilities are discussed. The results showed that organic agriculture is underdeveloped in the Ucayali region and is lacking of market. The institution of organic agriculture is not yet efficient. The informal constraints of the institution are inhomogeneous by the diversity of its inhabitants. The formal constraints are not yet involved. The social capital, which is the precondition of economic and social development, as well for organic agriculture development, was on different level, mostly low. Disparity of informal constraints, absence of formal constraints and low social capital, first of all the low trust among the inhabitants of the communities, are the main reason of organic agriculture stagnation in the region. Implementation of certification process as the formal constraint of the institution, which allows entering in the biomarkets, establishment of the product unit to reduce the transaction costs and cooperation with the farmers with high social capital could allow the development of organic agriculture in the region.

Keywords: Formal and informal constraints, institutional economy, institutional xerox, pucallpa, social capital