

Geographical Indications in Brazil: Possibilities for Small Farmers in the APA of Ibirapuitã

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INTRODUCTION: Agribusiness is an important sector to contribute the Brazilian trade surplus. The European Union and the United States are among the main destinations of agrofood products, taking part in 29.5% and 13.7% out of the exportations, respectively. The consumers, especially the Europeans, have presented themselves more demanding in what concerns farming products for human consumption, due to the nature of these products and the frequent food crisis. Thus, market segmentation based on information about the origin of the product and production process for differentiation and price attribution has become important, due to the fact that farming systems which are scale-based and linked to the production of commodities have become weakened beyond such markets. In this context, an alternative for development for certain regions is to consider regional/local specificities as factors that determine their identity, based on the concept of geographical indications. This scenario presents an opportunity for the small farmers located in the Environmental Protection Area (APA) of Ibirapuitã.

METHODS: The APA of Ibirapuitã is a conservation unit with direct use by farmers and IBAMA supervision situate in the Southern region in the Rio Grande do Sul state, in the counties of Alegrete, Quaraí, Santana do Livramento and Rosário do Sul, between coordinates 55°29'W to 55°53'W and 29°05'S to 30°51'S, with a total of 318,767.07 hectares. The research was realized with 34 farmers from Rincão do 28 locality, in the Alegrete County (represents 2.48% of APA total area with 7,914.17 ha.). It was adopted a quantitative approach, using survey and direct observations with farmers group.

CONCLUSIONS: This approach allows the origin of a product and/or its production processes to be valued, and to convert them into a differentiation and value aggregation factor, besides guaranteeing the products identified according to pre-established parameters in what refers mainly to environmental, social and sanitary issues, as an alternative to the new barriers present in today's economical negotiations.

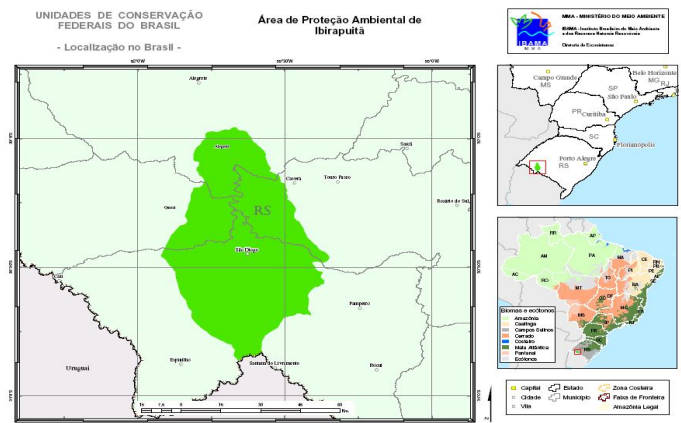


Figure 1. Localization of APA do Ibirapuitã.

RESULTS: More than 63.70% of farms has less than 100 ha (20.59% less than 10 ha, 29.41% between 10 and 50 ha and 13.70% between 51 and 100 ha), thus the farmers lack conditions to establish scale of production. For 85.29% of the farmers, beef cattle production is the main or the single activity, this demonstrate the historic tradition of extensive animal production system. Thus, this long-established economic activity could be considered as an important factor in geographic indication. The traditional aspect comes from historical facts, the arrival of the Jesuits in the region in 1626 which introduce beef cattle to be the source to supply food for priests and indigenes in the Jesuits mission. Another observation can be made about the presence of people in the farms. Some farms do not have any person living in what indicates rural exodus. One explanation to this problem is the actual economic perspective to beef cattle activity and also the perception of 32.35% of the families that points out the immigration of the next generation.