



Tropentag, September 18-20, 2019, Kassel

“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

Socioeconomic and Technological Profile of Rice Growers in São Mateus do Maranhão Municipality, Maranhão State, Brazil

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Abstract

This study aimed to study the socioeconomic and technological profile of rice growers in São Mateus do Maranhão, Maranhão state, Brazil. Therefore, structured questionnaires were applied, as well as the use of secondary data with bibliographical and documentary research. In order to determine the number of producers that would be interviewed, a sample was defined based on IBGE's agricultural census data (2017), which pointed out that the municipality of São Mateus do Maranhão has 269 rice growing farms. From this population, a sample of 75 farmers were interviewed (95% of confidence level, with 10% error). With the data collection, it was possible to observe that the activity of rice production in São Mateus do Maranhão municipality is developed by small, medium and large producers. From interviewed rice growers, 73% are organised in associations, 24% in societies of limited responsibility, and 3% in isolated family business. From all interviewed farmers, 31% grow rice on leased land. Also, 12% of rice growers lease part of their land to other farmers to grow rice. Rice growers use two cropping systems: (a) the rainfed paddy cultivation in areas with favourable rainfall distribution (96%); and (b) the irrigated paddy rice (4%). The results show that the marketing of production and acquisition of new technologies represent the main obstacles for producers, especially the small ones, who have difficulties in obtaining technologies to improve the activity and little access to marketing channels available in the region. This shows to the need for public policies related to technical assistance directed at marketing channels and, above all, effective technical monitoring.

Keywords: Associations, marketing, technological innovation, rice cultivation