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Benefits of agroecological agroforestry systems as perceived by family farmers for adding value to products

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Abstract

A major challenge to overcome in order to maintain and expand the scale of production of agroecological agroforestry systems is the marketing of their products at a fair price that remunerates family farmers who produce healthy food in systems that promote positive socioeconomic and environmental impacts. The project "Design for biodiversity: co-design as a participatory tool for the consolidation of agroforestry systems in the state of São Pauloäims to build, in a participatory manner, using co-design process tools, design solutions to improve the communication of benefits generated by agroecological agroforestry systems and improve the presentation to consumers through a new visual identity of their products. This summary presents one of the stages of this project, which aimed to define these benefits in the perception of family farmers from four organisations in different regions of the state of São Paulo that have implemented, produce, and market products from their agroforestry systems. Three workshops were held in each region to define and prioritise the benefits, with the participation of farmers from the Cooperativa da Agricultura Familiar de Sete Barras – Coopafasb (southern region); From the Rural Producers Cooperative of Ipanema and Region - Coprir and the Association of Agroecological and Biodynamic Producers of Family Farming in the Sorocabana Region - APBio (south-central region) and the Association of Agroforestry Farmers of the Sepé Tiaraju Settlement (northeast region). The definition of benefits was guided by five dimensions: ecological; social; productive; immaterial/ethical and economic. Farmers were invited to record up to three benefits for each dimension on cards, later grouping similar benefits and naming a single benefit. After systematizing the results of the workshops in the three regions, farmers were invited to prioritise benefits, resulting in 17 benefits. Among these, seven benefits were selected for communication to consumers, in the dimensions: ecological - conserving nature; productive: polyculture, knowledge on the plate, produced without pesticides, living soil; and immaterial/ethical: cultivating happiness and beauty. The next step involved developing a protocol with parameters for identifying these benefits being promoted by the agroforestry systems of these and other organisations that wish to add value to their products.

Keywords: Agroecology, agroforestry, socioeconomic and environmental impacts, value addition

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