




## THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY CERTIFICATIONS IN THE COMPETITIVENESS OF BRAZILIAN AGRIBUSINESS

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### ABSTRACT

This scientific article aimed to analyze the importance of quality certifications to increase the competitiveness of Brazilian agribusiness in the global market. Certifications represent a relevant strategy for Brazilian producers to gain easy access to demanding international markets, offering guarantees related to food safety, environmental responsibility, and economic sustainability. Aspects such as the direct economic benefits obtained by the adoption of these certifications, the positive impacts on Brazil's international image, and the difficulties faced by rural producers for the effective implementation of the required standards were addressed. The need for specific public policies to financially and technically encourage Brazilian farmers, especially the smaller ones, to overcome the administrative, technological, and structural obstacles identified was highlighted. The methodology adopted consisted of a detailed bibliographic review, with a qualitative approach, using authors specialized in the subject. It is concluded that international certifications are fundamental to economically strengthen Brazilian agribusiness and ensure its consistent insertion in strategic international markets.

**Keywords:** Brazilian Agribusiness. Quality Certification. International Competitiveness. Sustainability.

## INTRODUCTION

Brazilian agribusiness presents itself as a fundamental sector for the country's economy, standing out for its diversified production and significant performance in the global scenario, however, for this relevance to be maintained and expanded, it is essential to ensure that products are internationally recognized not only for the quantity produced, but for the attested and certified quality, a condition that favors the expansion of markets and substantially increases competitiveness of Brazilian companies in this economic segment (Souza; Silva; Oliveira, 2016).

In this context, it is clear that quality certifications have been gaining prominence as essential strategic tools, allowing the productive sector to achieve greater recognition in demanding foreign markets, by proving that Brazilian agricultural practices follow rigorous, ethical and sustainable standards, especially in European and North American countries, in which the requirement for formal proof of quality and sustainability is increasingly recurrent for performance and opening of new commercial partnerships (Sebrae Goiás, 2024).

These certifications provide Brazilian agricultural products with a clear differentiation in the international market, valuing them especially before consumers concerned with environmental and social issues, as well as investors interested in compliance with ESG criteria, that is, environmental, social and governance, criteria that directly influence the purchase decision and the choice of suppliers in sophisticated international markets, boosting the Brazilian presence in these markets (Perfect Daily Grind, 2022).

In addition to providing greater visibility and international acceptance, certifications stimulate internal improvements in the production processes of agricultural organizations, promoting the implementation of strict management standards, operational efficiency, waste reduction and resource optimization, resulting in direct benefits to the productivity and economic sustainability of rural properties, decisive factors to achieve lasting competitive advantages and sustainably reduce operational risks. Environment of high global competition (Souza; Pereira, 2023).

In this regard, the impact of certifications in terms of marketing and strategic positioning is remarkable, as they allow companies to effectively communicate their commitment to sustainability and quality, strengthening their reputation with consumers and target markets, especially in the face of the growing demand for certified, healthy and safe products, which considerably increases added value and significantly improves profit margins on exports (Aiko, 2023).

Another highlight is the strengthening of the country's institutional image abroad through these certifications, projecting Brazil as an international reference in good

agricultural practices, committed to food and environmental safety, essential factors for negotiation in demanding markets that impose technical and regulatory barriers, and that value supplier countries capable of demonstrating traceability and socio-environmental responsibility in their production chains (CropLife Brazil, 2023).

However, to ensure these strategic advantages, it is essential to face some challenges related to the implementation of certification processes, especially those related to financial costs and operational complexity, since obtaining and maintaining certifications requires high investments in infrastructure, constant training of rural workers, and frequent audits to ensure continuous compliance with internationally required standards. This is a significant barrier for smaller producers (Souza, Mendes, Carvalho, 2020).

However, even in the face of these initial obstacles, the benefits of certifications are shown to outweigh the costs, especially in the medium and long term, given that certified producers access exclusive, often more profitable markets, increase the trust and loyalty of international customers, and achieve greater economic resilience in the face of global market fluctuations, thus compensating for the investments made and favoring a more stable and sustainable profitability (Sequeira, 2025).

In addition, the traceability provided by certifications ensures transparency and trust in international trade, allowing end consumers to fully follow the trajectory of food from production to consumption, an aspect considered indispensable in the European and North American markets, where food safety and guarantee of origin are central criteria for the acceptance and valuation of imported products. Directly favoring the competitiveness of Brazilian exports (Souza; Lima, 2021).

In this sense, certifications also favor a more effective integration of Brazilian agribusiness into global value chains, facilitating the country's participation in complex international trade negotiations and significantly expanding the possibilities of bilateral or multilateral trade agreements, given that the demonstration of socio-environmental responsibility and certified quality simplifies bureaucratic processes and reduces regulatory obstacles in trade relations (Program E, 2024).

Therefore, it is important to observe the strategic role of digital and innovation technologies, such as blockchain, which have been incorporated into certification processes to ensure authenticity, transparency, and efficiency in the quality management of agricultural products, allowing Brazilian companies to offer the global market indisputable proof of the origin and safety of their products. Further expanding international confidence in Brazilian agricultural commodities (Lucena et al., 2018).

In this way, it is evident that the adoption of certifications in Brazilian agribusiness transcends merely technical issues, configuring itself as a decisive strategy for the economic survival and growth of national agricultural companies in an increasingly competitive and demanding global context, especially because such certifications respond directly to the expectations of international consumers for safe food, sustainable and socially responsible, indispensable elements for long-term competitiveness (Masterplanti, 2025).

Therefore, the in-depth study of the relevance of these certifications, their economic, operational and strategic impacts, and the challenges involved in their implementation becomes essential to guide public policies and business strategies that favor the sustained and competitive growth of the Brazilian agricultural sector, promoting its consolidation in highly disputed global markets that are sensitive to ethical and environmental issues (Sebrae Goiás, 2024).

In this context, the main objective of this article is to analyze in detail the importance of quality certifications in the competitiveness of Brazilian agribusiness, identifying the main strategic, economic and environmental benefits provided by them, as well as pointing out the challenges faced by the sector for the effective implementation of these standards, aiming to contribute academically and pragmatically to the improvement of national agribusiness strategies (Souza; Silva; Oliveira, 2016).

## **QUALITY CERTIFICATIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE COMPETITIVENESS OF BRAZILIAN AGRIBUSINESS**

Quality certifications currently represent a decisive strategic factor for strengthening the competitiveness of Brazilian agribusiness in the global scenario, because, by ensuring internationally recognized standards, they enable national agricultural products to be accepted and valued in demanding markets, thus boosting commercial expansion and providing concrete advantages over competitors that do not adopt such procedures or are unable to prove their commitment to quality and sustainability (Souza; Pereira, 2023).

In this sense, it is observed that quality certification acts directly on the commercial valuation of Brazilian agricultural products by formally attesting to aspects related to food safety, environmental sustainability and social responsibility, allowing Brazil to reach premium markets, especially in Europe and the United States, where the concern with socio-environmental issues is particularly accentuated and significantly influences consumer choices and social responsibility. Requirements of international importers (Perfect Daily Grind, 2022).

Certifications promote the continuous improvement of production processes in agricultural companies, requiring producers to implement strict and documented standards, which induces the improvement of agricultural practices, generating benefits such as waste reduction, greater operational efficiency and increased productivity, fundamental aspects to ensure not only profitability, but also the economic sustainability of rural properties in the long term (Masterplanti, 2025).

These certifications also have a significant positive effect on the image and reputation of Brazilian companies abroad, contributing to consolidate the country as a leader in responsible and sustainable agricultural production, a factor that facilitates the conquest and maintenance of strategic international markets, especially in the face of restrictive trade policies, non-tariff barriers and strict regulatory requirements, common in developed and emerging countries that import commodities (CropLife Brasil, 2023).

However, it is necessary to consider that, despite these clear benefits, obtaining certifications involves high initial and operational costs, including expenses with audits, labor training and adaptation of production processes, which can be a significant obstacle especially for small and medium-sized producers, imposing additional challenges for a broad adherence to certifications in the Brazilian context and requiring public policies that financially and technically the producers to be certified (Souza; Mendes; Carvalho, 2020).

The experiences reported by several agribusiness companies that have obtained certifications demonstrate that such initial costs are offset by the gains obtained later, especially in terms of privileged access to differentiated international markets, improved productivity and product valuation, providing economic results superior to the investments necessary for certification, which has encouraged more and more companies to seek such international standards (Sequeira, 2025).

In addition, quality certifications are valuable tools to ensure full traceability of the agricultural production chain, ensuring complete transparency to the end consumer about the origin, safety and integrity of the products they consume, this being an aspect increasingly valued by international consumer markets, especially in the food and agro-industrial sectors, where food safety is an indispensable condition for entry and permanence in markets (Souza; Lima, 2021).

In this context, it is important to highlight the growing use of digital technologies, such as blockchain, which have been incorporated into the certification and traceability process in Brazilian agribusiness, allowing the immutable and transparent registration of information on the production and marketing of agricultural products, ensuring additional

confidence in the international market and further strengthening Brazil's competitive position as a supplier of safe and certified food (Lucena et al., 2018).

The implementation of these innovative technologies not only improves the efficiency and security of certified information, but also reinforces the confidence of importing markets, which become more certain about the authenticity of the information presented by Brazilian companies, expanding the country's international credibility and resulting in greater ease of commercial negotiation and expansion into new demanding and profitable markets (Lucena et al., 2018).

Studies show that certified products have achieved higher prices in international markets, due to the positive perception generated by the formal guarantee of quality, safety and sustainability, allowing national agricultural companies to achieve profit margins higher than those obtained by competitors that do not have certifications, which reinforces the relevance of these strategic initiatives for the competitiveness of the Brazilian agricultural sector (Aiko, 2023).

Certifications also generate positive impacts in socio-environmental terms, encouraging more responsible agricultural practices, which contribute to the preservation of the environment and promote better social conditions for local communities, factors that are widely valued by contemporary consumers and help consolidate long-term business relationships with international partners committed to similar values (Program E, 2024).

It is also observed that these certifications have the potential to stimulate a significant cultural change in the Brazilian agricultural sector, inducing producers and rural entrepreneurs to incorporate sustainability and social responsibility criteria into their production routines, which, in turn, tends to strengthen the perception of Brazilian agribusiness as a global reference in sustainability and socio-environmental responsibility, opening new trade opportunities and strengthening Brazil's position on the global agricultural scene (CropLife Brasil, 2023).

Therefore, given the numerous benefits identified, quality certifications become more than a simple technical requirement, constituting an essential strategy for strengthening the competitiveness of Brazilian companies in an increasingly demanding, complex global market that is sensitive to issues of quality, food safety and socio-environmental sustainability, determining factors for long-term commercial success (Masterplanti, 2025).

Given this, it is evident there is a need for public policies and strategic actions by organizations in the agricultural sector that encourage the wide adoption of these certifications in the country, enabling Brazil to continuously expand its participation in

sophisticated international markets and consistently strengthen its global competitiveness in agribusiness (Sebrae Goiás, 2024).

From this perspective, certifications are fundamental instruments to ensure that Brazilian agribusiness remains competitive, sustainable and economically viable in the face of the constant demands and challenges of the international market, allowing the sector to achieve positive and sustainable results in the long term, thus consolidating its strategic relevance in the national and world economy (Souza; Silva; Oliveira, 2016).

## **BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATIONS FOR THE IMAGE OF BRAZILIAN AGRIBUSINESS IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET**

Quality certifications generate significant impacts on the way Brazilian agribusiness is perceived abroad, since they act directly on the country's institutional image, allowing the sector to present itself as a reliable and responsible supplier in demanding international markets, contributing significantly to Brazilian agricultural commodities having preference in trade negotiation processes, especially in countries with high socio-environmental and regulatory standards (CropLife Brasil, 2023).

Thus, it is possible to say that these certifications are strategic to consolidate the credibility of Brazilian agricultural products, as they signal to international buyers that the country is committed not only to productivity, but also to quality, sustainability and food safety, elements considered essential in developed markets such as Europe and the United States. where consumers are increasingly judicious and attentive to the agricultural practices that involve the products purchased (Souza; Silva; Oliveira, 2016).

At the same time, the certifications also strengthen the institutional communication of the Brazilian agricultural sector in the global market, allowing companies to present to the international public clear and documented evidence of their commitment to good agricultural and environmental practices, resulting in the continuous improvement of the country's international reputation, something particularly important in contexts where image and trust are decisive factors to win or maintain business relationships (Sebrae Goiás, 2024).

In addition to positively influencing external perception, these certifications offer a relevant competitive advantage in the international scenario, directly contributing to certified Brazilian products being preferred by foreign consumers and companies that prioritize transparent, responsible production chains committed to sustainability, increasing Brazilian competitiveness about international competitors that are unable to attest to such guarantees (Aiko, 2023).



Another considerable advantage is the potential for economic appreciation provided by such certifications, since international markets are often willing to pay higher prices for certified agricultural commodities, mainly due to the formal guarantee offered on the sustainability, quality and food safety of the products, allowing Brazilian companies to increase their profit margins and significantly increase profitability in international operations (Perfect Daily Grind, 2022).

Certifications also positively impact Brazil's relationship with foreign organizations and governments, as they demonstrate alignment with international criteria of quality, sustainability, and social responsibility, facilitating negotiations on trade agreements and reducing the risk of restrictions or embargoes related to environmental or labor issues, something particularly relevant in complex geopolitical contexts (Program E, 2024).

These certifications also directly favor the entry and consolidation of Brazilian products in emerging markets, such as Asia and the Middle East, where consumers are gradually becoming more demanding regarding food safety and the origin of agricultural commodities, providing Brazilian companies with strategic advantages in markets with growing consumption potential and significant economic expansion (Masterplanti, 2025).

In this sense, it is noteworthy that the traceability required by certifications reinforces international confidence in Brazilian products, as it provides complete visibility of the production process, ensuring total transparency and allowing final consumers and foreign regulatory bodies to verify in detail each stage of the production chain, a decisive aspect to ensure access and permanence in highly demanding international markets (Souza; Lima, 2021).

Also in this context, it is notable that the growing use of digital technologies, such as blockchain, in the certification process significantly increases international confidence in Brazilian agriculture, by ensuring secure, accurate, and inviolable information on the origin, quality, and sustainability of agricultural products, offering the international market the necessary security for the maintenance and expansion of trade relations with Brazil (Lucena et al., 2018).

In addition to strengthening trade, certifications play an important role in promoting the sustainable and social development of producing regions in Brazil, favoring inclusive economic growth and generating a positive impact on local communities, improving social and environmental conditions, which contributes decisively to improving the international perception of the social responsibility of Brazilian agricultural companies (Program E, 2024).



Thus, it is observed that the widespread adoption of certifications by Brazilian producers tends to create a solid and reliable institutional image for the country in the global market, promoting it as an international reference in agricultural sustainability and social responsibility, which brings concrete benefits both in commercial and diplomatic terms, expanding the Brazilian presence in international discussions on agricultural sustainability and global food security (CropLife Brazil, 2023).

Despite the clear benefits, it is important to consider that to maintain this positive image, Brazil needs to continuously ensure the credibility of certifications, maintaining strict standards of inspection, auditing, and compliance, avoiding failures or inconsistencies that could compromise the reputation of the national agricultural sector and harm its international trade relations, especially in the face of markets that are increasingly attentive and demanding in terms of transparency and compliance regulatory (Souza; Mendes; Carvalho, 2020).

Therefore, the strategic use of certifications in Brazilian agribusiness should be seen as an essential investment to continuously strengthen the country's image and reputation abroad, ensuring not only immediate commercial advantages, but also providing sustainable and stable growth in the long term, something indispensable in the face of the constant evolution of international requirements regarding socio-environmental responsibility and production quality (Sequeira, 2025).

Given these considerations, it is clear that certifications are fundamental not only for the commercial and economic strengthening of Brazilian agribusiness, but also for the country's positive projection on the international scene, ensuring that Brazil is positioned in a privileged way as one of the main global players in the sustainable and responsible supply of agricultural commodities (Souza; Silva; Oliveira, 2016).

Therefore, Brazilian companies and authorities must continue to invest in the wide dissemination of these certifications, making producers aware of their strategic importance for the economic and social development of the sector, in addition to ensuring public policies that effectively support certification as a priority strategy for the international expansion of Brazilian agribusiness (Sebrae Goiás, 2024).

## **OBSTACLES FACED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTIFICATIONS IN BRAZILIAN AGRIBUSINESS**

The high financial costs involved in obtaining international certifications are often a significant obstacle for Brazilian rural producers, especially for those who own smaller properties and face limitations in access to credit, preventing them from making the

necessary investments for the technological and structural adequacy required by certifying bodies (Souza; Mendes; Carvalho, 2020).

The administrative bureaucracy associated with certification processes usually requires a high level of documentary detail and management procedures that many Brazilian farmers are unable to meet without hiring external specialized services, something that further increases operating expenses and ends up driving away several producers, especially those with a reduced management structure (Sebrae Goiás, 2024).

Many rural properties are located far from large urban centers, which makes it difficult to access technical information on international certifications, generating a lack of knowledge regarding the necessary procedures, concrete benefits, specific certification criteria, and better strategies for implementing these standards in their production routines (Program E, 2024).

Inadequate logistics infrastructure in several Brazilian regions directly compromises the maintenance of the quality of agricultural products during transport and storage, negatively interfering with the ability of rural producers to fully meet the criteria required by international markets, especially those related to food safety and product sustainability (Souza; Lima, 2021).

The low technical training of the Brazilian rural workforce can significantly interfere with the ability of producers to adapt to the rigorous international standards required by certifications, since these standards require advanced technical knowledge of modern agricultural practices, detailed administrative procedures and constant use of innovative technologies, aspects that require investment in training and continuous education (Masterplanti, 2025).

In many Brazilian regions, a traditionalist agricultural culture persists, with resistance to significant changes in production methods, which makes it difficult for rural producers to adhere to the new practices required by international certifications, especially in locations where family farming is predominant and agricultural techniques are transmitted between generations without major innovations or changes in processes (Aiko, 2023).

The absence of clear and efficient public policies aimed at economically encouraging Brazilian rural producers to adopt international certifications represents a considerable barrier since the lack of specific subsidies or financing generates financial uncertainty and can lead farmers to postpone or even give up on these certification processes (CropLife Brasil, 2023).

Brazilian smallholders often do not have sufficiently robust administrative structures to meet the constant audit criteria required by international certifications, creating a scenario

in which many of them give up after initial certification, as they are unable to maintain the high standards required in the long term due to the ongoing costs and operational complexity involved (Sequeira, 2025).

Brazilian producers, especially small ones, often have difficulties in keeping up with the constant updates of the standards required by international certifications, generating the need for continuous investments in specialized consulting and additional training, factors that end up considerably increasing operating costs and discouraging the maintenance of certifications already achieved (Souza; Pereira, 2023).

The insufficiency of specialized and regular technical assistance compromises the possibility of expanding international certifications on Brazilian rural properties because, without constant guidance, producers with less technical capacity face serious difficulties in implementing and maintaining the rigorous production standards required by international certification bodies (Program E, 2024).

Brazilian rural producers are often in a situation of legal vulnerability about international requirements, since any sudden change in external standards or regulatory requirements can quickly make significant investments previously made in infrastructure and technological adaptation to meet international certifications obsolete (Souza; Silva; Oliveira, 2016).

The low penetration of the latest digital technologies in Brazilian rural properties prevents many producers from being able to adhere to certifications that require advanced traceability, absolute transparency, and accuracy in the information transmitted to the international market, especially in the case of digital systems such as blockchain, necessary to reach highly demanding and differentiated markets (Lucena et al., 2018).

Agricultural cooperatives and sectoral entities, which could provide essential support to rural producers for the implementation of international certifications, still participate insufficiently in this process, reducing the chances that small and medium-sized farmers will be able to share the technical, financial and logistical resources necessary to implement the certifications in an efficient and economically viable way (Perfect Daily Grind, 2022).

The risks inherent to the volatility of international markets also represent a factor of concern for rural producers considering joining certifications, as any variation in external commercial conditions can significantly compromise the return on investments made, becoming a relevant barrier to adherence by more conservative producers or those with fewer financial resources available (Sebrae Goiás, 2024).

Brazil still faces challenges related to the development of effective institutional strategies that make it possible to reduce the financial, technical, and cultural obstacles

faced by rural producers in the implementation of international certifications, a fundamental aspect to ensure greater global competitiveness of Brazilian agribusiness and provide consistent access to more profitable and sustainable international markets (CropLife Brasil, 2023).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

International certifications are strategic instruments to strengthen the position of Brazilian agribusiness in global markets, expanding commercial opportunities by ensuring that agricultural products are aligned with international requirements related to sustainability and quality.

Rural producers who invest in obtaining these certifications perceive significant improvements in the management of their properties, increasing operational efficiency, reducing waste, and raising the overall quality of the products offered, essential factors to obtain higher economic valuation abroad.

However, there are economic limitations that hinder the implementation of these certifications, especially among small and medium-sized producers, who face difficulties in funding initial investments, including periodic audits, acquisition of modern technologies, and specialized technical training.

The cultural resistance that exists in some agricultural regions also represents a difficulty in adhering to international certifications, especially in properties that use traditional production methods, highlighting the need for specific awareness and professional training programs.

The deficient logistics infrastructure found in Brazil directly influences the country's ability to meet the international standards required by certifications since inadequate transportation or poor storage can compromise the integrity of certified agricultural products.

Continuous technical training programs for rural labor could significantly contribute to expanding the capacity of properties to meet the rigorous criteria required by international certifications, especially in aspects related to sustainability and food security.

The participation of sectoral entities, cooperatives, and rural associations has significant potential to help small producers overcome economic and technical barriers through the sharing of financial, administrative, and logistical resources, favoring large-scale adherence. Public policies aimed at offering facilitated credit and specific technical assistance could stimulate a broader adherence to international certifications, reducing the

financial uncertainties faced by producers and allowing a more balanced expansion of the sector.

The more frequent and widespread use of digital technologies, such as blockchain-based traceability systems, could also significantly facilitate compliance with certification requirements, ensuring greater reliability to international consumers about the origin and quality of Brazilian agricultural products. The development of clearer and more objective institutional strategies can help reduce the negative impacts of the bureaucracy required in certification processes, making them less costly and more accessible to rural producers, especially those who have financial or structural limitations.

The creation of specific institutional mechanisms, such as differentiated credit lines or government subsidies aimed at the certification process, would be an initiative that would encourage small and medium-sized producers to adopt these standards with greater ease and financial security. The widespread adoption of international certifications by Brazilian agribusiness could contribute significantly to consolidating a positive image of Brazil as a global leader in sustainable agricultural production, generating long-term economic, environmental, and social benefits.

It is recommended that research and rural extension institutions act directly in the continuous updating of agricultural practices, allowing rural producers to always be prepared to quickly meet changes in international criteria required by foreign consumer markets.

The continuity of academic research on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of international certifications can offer essential information for future decision-making on public policies and business initiatives that seek to strengthen the competitive position of Brazilian agribusiness in the international scenario.

Considering these observations, the relevance of international certifications is clear not only as an economic instrument but also as a strategic element for the integrated and sustainable development of Brazilian agribusiness, reinforcing its importance both in the domestic economy and in the international market.

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