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SMALL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION – ITS INCENTIVE POLICIES IN QUIRINÓPOLIS: CHARACTERISTICS AND GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

Quirinópolis, in the southwest of Goiás, had its economy transformed in the 2000s with the installation of sugarcane plants, intensifying the cultivation of sugarcane and reducing the participation of family farming, which faces challenges such as limited access to credit and competition with agribusiness. This study uses bibliographic research to analyze small agricultural production in the municipality, focusing on incentive policies, characteristics of small producers and the impact of agribusiness, highlighting its importance for food security and sustainability.

Keywords: Small production. Family farming.

INTRODUCTION

The municipality of Quirinópolis, located in the southwest of Goiás, has its history marked by different phases of economic development. Its occupation began in 1832, with the arrival of the first pioneers, but political emancipation only occurred in 1943, when it was dismembered from Rio Verde. However, it was in the 2000s that Quirinópolis gained notoriety with the installation of two sugarcane plants, boosting the expansion of sugarcane production in the region and significantly transforming its production structure.

Historically, Quirinópolis has undergone an important economic transition, divided into two moments: before and after the installation of the sugar and alcohol mills. According to Rodrigues (2024), previously, the local economy was mainly supported by extensive livestock and the production of grains, such as soybeans and corn. Agricultural mechanization was still limited, and access to new technologies, inputs, and credit was limited. The land structure, characterized by the concentration of land, made it difficult to diversify production and strengthen family farming. With the arrival of the mills, the economic dynamics were changed, intensifying the cultivation of sugarcane and reducing the participation of small producers in the production chain.

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Small agricultural production in Quirinópolis is characterized, to a large extent, by family farming, which plays a fundamental role in food security and the maintenance of agricultural biodiversity. However, this production modality faces structural challenges, such as restricted access to credit and technical assistance, in addition to competition with agribusiness, which dominates the local economy. As Cezarino (2012) points out, the expansion of sugarcane not only reconfigured the rural space, but also brought environmental and socioeconomic impacts. The conversion of natural areas into extensive plantations has led to soil degradation, contamination of water resources and increased greenhouse gas emissions, while small producers have less space and opportunities in the market

In this context, this article seeks to deepen the knowledge about small agricultural production in Quirinópolis and its local dynamics. For this, bibliographic research will be used, addressing the characteristics of small production, the impact of agribusiness, public policies aimed at the sector and their application in the municipality, in addition to presenting statistical data on small producers.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to know the incentive policies for small agricultural production in Quirinópolis.

METHODOLOGY

This study will use bibliographic research.

DEVELOPMENT

According to (Ciprandi et al., 1996, p. 135-141), small rural production is carried out by smaller properties, generally managed by families that predominantly use family labor.

These growers operate with limited resources and simple technology, focusing on crop diversification and environmental sustainability. Small rural production and family farming, although often associated, have relevant conceptual differences. Small rural production refers to agricultural activities developed on a small scale, and may involve different forms of organization and labor, without the obligation that they be conducted exclusively by members of the same family. Family farming, on the other hand, is legally defined by the predominant use of the family's labor force, by the limit of the exploited area and by the linking of most of the income to agricultural activity (Law No. 11,326, 2006). In this study, the concept of small rural production will be adopted as the basis of the analysis.

However, for statistical purposes and in order to demonstrate the importance and impact of this segment, data on family farming may be used whenever relevant, given its relevance in the Brazilian rural scenario.

In addition, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2017) highlights that family farming, which represents 76.8% of agricultural establishments in Brazil, plays an essential role in food security and environmental preservation, and it is necessary to encourage sustainable agricultural practices to ensure their resilience and competitiveness. Small producers are responsible for approximately 70% of food production in Brazil, with emphasis on essential items such as beans, cassava, milk and other basic products of the Brazilian diet.

To characterize Brazilian agricultural properties, there are two methods, one by property size and the other by revenue. In the first case, it is necessary to observe what is provided for in Law 8.629, of February 25, 1993, where the parameters of size of the areas are divided as follows:

- Minifundium: rural property with an area less than the Minimum Fraction of Parceling;
- Small Property: property with an area between the Minimum Fraction of Installment and 4 fiscal modules;
- Medium Property: rural property with an area greater than 4 and up to 15 fiscal modules;
- Large Property: rural property with an area greater than 15 fiscal modules.

In the state of Goiás, the sizes of the fiscal modules per hectare vary from 5 to 20 ha to 70 to 80 ha, in the municipality of Quirinópolis the fiscal modules are 30 ha.

In addition to the characterization by size of the property, it has the classification by income of the rural establishment, established by the National Monetary Council (CMN), this is a measure used by banks and financial institutions when analyzing registrations for granting rural credit. This classification categorizes agricultural establishments according to their annual gross income, allowing small, medium and large producers to be differentiated objectively, according to economic potential and scale of production.

The National Monetary Council (CMN) classifies rural establishments into three main categories, based on annual gross income, as established in CMN Resolution No. 4,776/2019 and in regulations of the Rural Credit Manual (MCR) of the Central Bank of Brazil:

1. Small Producers: Establishments with annual gross income of up to R$360 thousand. This group generally encompasses family farmers and small rural

properties, with production predominantly focused on subsistence or local markets, and with priority access to programs such as PRONAF (National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture).

2. Medium Producers: Establishments with annual gross income between R$360 thousand and R$2.4 million. These producers have a greater capacity for expansion and productive diversification. However, they may still face challenges in competing with large producers, due to limitations in access to technologies and markets. This category is supported by programs such as PRONAMP (National Program to Support Medium Rural Producers).
3. Large Producers: Establishments with annual gross income greater than R$2.4 million. These producers operate on a large scale, have privileged access to advanced technologies and financing, and are oriented towards high-efficiency production, often with a focus on the export market.

For this work, the CMN classification will be adopted to distinguish between small and large producers. This distinction is relevant to assess the possibilities and limitations of small-scale agriculture in the context of Quirinópolis, where smallholders face challenges in accessing credit and inputs that differ significantly from large producers.

DATA ON AGRICULTURE AND SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION IN BRAZIL

The 2017 Census of Agriculture provided data on agriculture in Brazil, highlighting the relevance of this sector to the economy. According to table 01, family farming is fundamental in Brazil, approximately 10.1 million people are involved in agriculture. In Goiás, about 1 million small producers contribute significantly to the state's agricultural workforce. The census revealed that the area occupied by agricultural establishments in the country totals 80.9 million hectares, of which 3.9 million hectares are dedicated to family farming, with small producers in Goiás occupying 2.8 million hectares.

In Goiás, family farming makes up 62.9% of rural establishments, with a total of 95,684 production units, reflecting its importance in the local agricultural sector and its economic relevance. In addition, family farming accounts for about 23% of national agricultural production, highlighting its fundamental contribution to food production in Brazil.

These data underscore the essential role of smallholder farming, not only for food security, but also for the economic sustainability of rural communities. The significant percentage of agricultural production indicates the need for public policies focused on supporting and strengthening this sector.

These numbers highlight the importance of small-scale agriculture, both in the

occupation of the territory and in the contribution to Brazilian agricultural production.

TABLE 01 – Agricultural data from Brazil and small producers in Goiás, 2017.

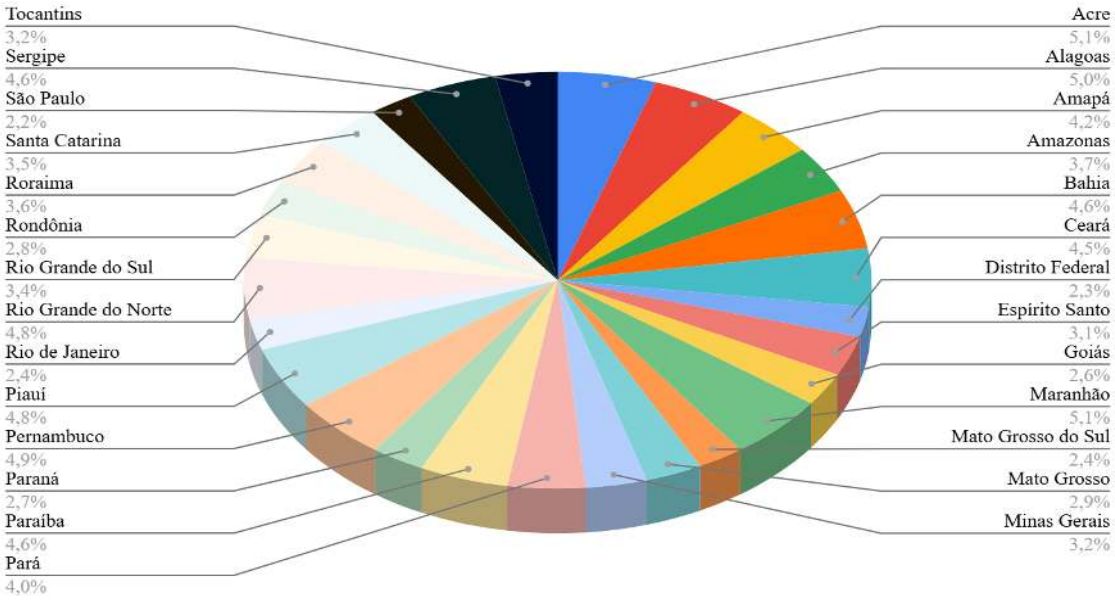
INDICATOR	BRAZIL
People involved in agriculture	10.1 million
Total area of agricultural establishments (hectares)	80.9 million hectares
Family farming establishments	3.9 million
Percentage of value of total production of family farming	23%

Source: IBGE - Agricultural Census 2017

Also, according to Oliveira (2025), the municipality of Quirinópolis has 711 establishments classified as belonging to family farming, of which 96 participate in public policies, such as the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture (PRONAF) and the Food Acquisition Program (PAA). The inclusion of these establishments in government programs demonstrates the importance of encouraging and supporting small productions, ensuring their permanence and growth within the local agricultural economy.

In Graph 1, it is possible to see the percentage of each state, in relation to family farming, the state of Goiás has 2.6% of establishments considered as family farming, according to the Statistical Yearbook of Family Farming 2023, published by the National Confederation of Rural Workers Farmers and Family Farmers (CONTAG). According to the 2023 Agricultural Census, the value of family farming production in the state of Goiás is approximately R$ 4 billion, this census revealed that family farming in Goiás represents about 10.5% of the total value of agricultural production in the state (IBGE, 2023).

GRAPH 01 - Percentage of participation by State in Family Farming in Brazil (%)



Source: CONTAG, 2023.

PUBLIC POLICIES FOR SMALL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

The list of public policies aimed at the agricultural sector at the federal, state and municipal levels are fundamental to face the challenges of rural development, as they offer credit instruments, technical assistance and support for commercialization, especially for small farmers who face greater difficulties in accessing resources and markets (Schneider, 2016).

According to Table 01, the Federal Government implements public policies aimed at strengthening small-scale agriculture, offering credit lines and institutional support. To access these benefits, it is necessary to present supporting documents, such as the rural producer declaration, technical project and proof of income. These initiatives have as their main purpose to promote specialized technical assistance, ensuring greater productive efficiency, sustainability and socioeconomic development in the agricultural sector.

TABLE 01 - Federal Public Policies - Small Agricultural Production

Public Policy	Law / Decree	Guidelines	Scope
National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture (PRONAF)	Decree No. 1,946/1996	- Financial support for family farming - Credit with special conditions - Stimulating sustainable production - Productive inclusion	- National, serving family farmers with DAP - Resources for modernization and sustainability
Food Acquisition Program (PAA)	Law No. 10,696/2003	- Support for family farming - Fair price guarantee - Promotion of food safety - Stimulating sustainable and local production	- National, with decentralized execution - Family farmers, traditional peoples and assistance entities - Federal, state, and local governments
Family Farming Support Program (PAAF)	Law No. 10,696/2003	- Incentive to family farming - Facilitation of credit and financing - Promoting sustainability - Promotion of food production	- National, with articulation between the federal government, states and municipalities - Benefits family farmers, agrarian reform settlers and traditional communities - Integrates other programs such as PRONAF and PAA
General Law for Rural Producers and Family Farmers	Law No. 11,326/2006	- Definition of criteria to recognize family farming - Promotion of sustainable rural development - Guarantee of social rights	- National, with regulation of actions in all spheres of government - Covers family farmers, traditional communities and settlers
National School Feeding Program (PNAE)	Law No. 11,947/2009	- Guarantee of healthy and adequate food in schools - Support for local production - Food and nutrition	- National, implemented by states and municipalities - Food purchases from family farming - Benefits students from the public school system

		education	
National Policy for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (PNATER)	Law No. 12,188/2010	- Free and universal technical assistance - Stimulating innovation and sustainability - Valuing local knowledge	- National, articulating the Union, states and municipalities - Focus on family farming, traditional peoples and populations in vulnerable situations - Implementation by public agencies and accredited private entities

Source: The authors, 2024.

1. National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture (PRONAF) – Aims to offer low-interest credit to family farmers, encouraging investment in sustainable technologies and promoting the expansion of production. (BRAZIL, 2006).
2. Food Acquisition Program (PAA): Created in 2003, the PAA purchases products from smallholder farmers to provide for food security programs, strengthening the rural economy. According to Oliveira and Mendes (2019), "the PAA boosts sustainable production by ensuring the commercialization of family farmers' products, promoting food security and local development" (Oliveira & Mendes, 2019, p. 102);
3. Family Farming Support Program (PAAF) – Established in 2003, it promotes the direct purchase of products from family farming, strengthening small farmers and ensuring food security for vulnerable populations, in addition to supporting local economic development. (BRAZIL, 2003)
4. General Law for Rural Producers and Family Farmers: Sanctioned in 2006, known as Law No. 11,326/2006 in Brazil, it aims to recognize, protect and promote small-scale agricultural activity, in addition to improving the living and working conditions of family farmers;
5. National School Feeding Program (PNAE): established in 1954, it acts in the transfer of funds from the Federal Government to the Federation, the Federal District, the States and the Municipalities in order to ensure a healthier diet for students duly enrolled in public high school and elementary education institutions, attesting that 30% of the amount transferred for school meals is directly linked to family farming. This strengthens the economies of the regions adhering to the program;
6. National Policy for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (PNATER): Created in 2010, PNATER seeks to improve sustainable production through free technical assistance to small farmers. According to Santos and Ribeiro (2018),

"the technical assistance provided by PNATER has been essential to train farmers in sustainable practices, increasing productivity without compromising the environment" (Santos & Ribeiro, 2018, p. 64).

State public policies play an essential role in strengthening family farming and the sustainable development of the rural sector. In Goiás, several initiatives were implemented to complement national actions and meet the local specificities of small producers. These policies include programs aimed at technical assistance, rural credit and commercialization, ensuring better working and living conditions in the countryside, as shown in Table 02 of this study.

TABLE 02 - State Public Policy - Small Agricultural Production (Goiás)

Public Policy	Law / Decree	Guidelines	Scope
Goiás Family Farming Incentive Program	Law No. 18,191/2013 (Goiás)	- Promote the strengthening of family farming in the state of Goiás - Stimulate the commercialization and aggregation of value to family farming products - Ensure the food and nutritional security of the population - Provide technical assistance and capacity building to family farmers - Encourage sustainable and environmental conservation practices	- Benefits family farmers, agrarian reform settlers, traditional peoples and quilombolas in Goiás - Promotes integration with federal programs such as PAA and PNAE - Encourages partnerships with local municipalities and cooperatives for logistical and operational support - Facilitates access to credit and sustainable rural development programs

Source: The authors, 2024.

1. Goiás Family Farming Incentive Program – Created in 2013, it supports family farming in Goiás, offering subsidized credit, technical assistance and marketing incentives for small producers. (GOIÁS, 2013).

The municipal public policies of Quirinópolis play an essential role in strengthening family farming and supporting small producers. The municipality has invested in programs aimed at technical assistance, access to rural credit and incentive to commercialization, aiming to increase productivity and ensure the sustainability of rural properties. These initiatives seek not only to improve working conditions in the countryside, but also to foster local economic development. For a more detailed analysis of the policies implemented in Quirinópolis and their impacts on family farming, Table 03 of this study presents a comprehensive survey of these municipal actions.

TABLE 03 - Municipal Public Policy - Small Agricultural Production (Quirinópolis)

Public Policy	Law / Decree	Guidelines	Scope
Municipal Family Farming Incentive Program (PMIAF)	Municipal Law No. 1,987/2018 (Quirinópolis)	- Support family farmers, with a focus on increasing food production and sustainability. - Ensure the generation of employment and income in rural areas. - Encourage the use of sustainable farming techniques. - Stimulate the commercialization of family farming products through fairs, markets and public procurement programs. - Offer technical assistance and training to local producers.	Family farmers in Quirinópolis and region

Source: The authors, 2024.

1. Municipal Family Farming Incentive Program (PMIAF) – Implemented in 2018, it encourages family farming production in the municipality of Quirinópolis, offering subsidies and technical support for small producers. (QUIRINÓPOLIS, 2018).

Coordination between these levels is essential to address the challenges of the agricultural sector, such as environmental degradation, the economic vulnerability of farmers, and the need for technological innovation. According to Pereira and Figueiredo (2020), the effectiveness of these policies depends on the integration and collaboration between the different levels of government, as well as the active participation of civil society. This comprehensive approach is crucial to ensure that policies are adapted to local realities and can truly promote sustainability and productivity in agriculture.

Above all, the Municipality of Quirinópolis offers support to the class of small producers in the region through the Municipal Department of Agriculture. This support includes technical assistance, with guidance on cultivation, pest management and production techniques. In some situations, the city hall provides agricultural tools and equipment, facilitating work in the field.

In addition, lectures, seminars and specific courses are promoted on agroecological practices, crop rotation, sustainable soil and water management, and rural property management. The City Hall also offers credits and subsidies to small producers, helping to finance agricultural projects and improvements in production.

Another important initiative is to support the organization of local fairs and markets, allowing small producers to sell their products directly to consumers, ensuring better prices and sales conditions.

In addition to the support of the City Hall, the Municipality also has credit cooperatives that aim to support small rural producers in their agricultural demands. Santos et al. (2017), says that the companies that most bought and sold peasant products were the

Mixed Cooperative of Rural Producers of the Paranaíba Valley (AGROVALE), which purchased grains and milk, and the slaughterhouse that was in the municipality that bought cattle, in addition to this, there is also the Agricultural Cooperative of Quirinópolis (Coopaquiri), which offers technical support, marketing and access to inputs for local producers; the Cooperative of Rural Producers of Quirinópolis (Coopervale), focused on family farming, the cooperative offers assistance and help in the marketing of products; and Credit unions, some credit unions in the region may offer specific lines of financing for smallholder farmers. These cooperatives play an important role in strengthening local agriculture, promoting sustainable practices, and facilitating access to markets. However, from 2003/2004 onwards, with the arrival of large agribusiness companies in the sugar-energy sector in the municipality and the closure of the slaughterhouses, the agrarian scenario in the municipality went through another phase of transformation and many peasants were unable to continue with their activities.

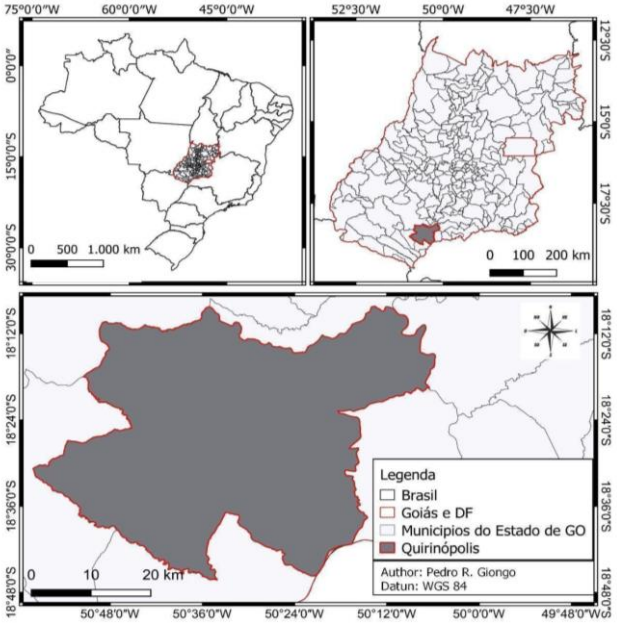
In view of this, municipal policies, such as those of Quirinópolis, demonstrate the crucial role of local administrations in complementing federal and state actions, adapting them to the specific needs of their communities. In this way, these public policies in their various spheres play an essential role in promoting a rural development model that is both inclusive and sustainable (Silva, 2019).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITY OF QUIRINÓPOLIS

GEOGRAPHICAL AND LOCATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF QUIRINÓPOLIS

The Municipality of Quirinópolis is located in the state of Goiás, in the Central-West region of Brazil, South Goiás mesoregion, in the Southwest of the state of Goiás (SEPLAN-GO) according to Figure 01. Its geographical position is determined by the coordinates 18º26'52" south latitude and 50º27'07" west longitude. The municipality is located at an average altitude of 541 meters and contains a territorial area of 3,786.026 km² (IBGE, 2023).

FIGURE 1 - Location of the municipality of Quirinópolis. – Goiás



Source: Map made by Pedro R. Giongo, with data from IBGE, 2024.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Small-scale agricultural production plays a key role in the global and national context, contributing significantly to food security, job creation and environmental sustainability. Generally characterized by smaller-scale family farms, these producers face challenges such as limited access to credit, technologies and agricultural inputs, as well as vulnerabilities associated with climate change and market fluctuations.

To mitigate these challenges, public policies play an essential role by providing support through rural financing, technical assistance, and subsidies. The organization of small producers into cooperatives is also an important strategy, as it improves market access and strengthens negotiation capacity. In addition, encouraging sustainable agricultural practices, such as crop rotation and agroecology, contributes to the conservation of natural resources and increased productivity. Efficient irrigation technologies and soil conservation are equally fundamental to ensure the sustainability of agricultural activity.

According to Embrapa, the diversification of agricultural production and the implementation of good management practices are essential to mitigate negative impacts, ensuring a balance between economic growth and environmental preservation. In addition, public policies should not only encourage the expansion of agribusiness, but also foster sustainable agricultural alternatives, ensuring the continuity of activities in the field without compromising essential natural resources for future generations (Embrapa, 2017; Silva et al., 2018). In this way, the experience of Quirinópolis demonstrates that, with adequate incentives and technological innovation, small agricultural production can coexist and

prosper alongside large enterprises, promoting a more balanced and inclusive rural development.

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