

# A GREAT OPPORTUNITY: THE UNIONS AND THEIR GREENING PROJECTS OF FAMILY FARMING

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## Introduction

The environmental subject has become one of the major issues of the contemporary period and has demanded answers from different stakeholders. Aware of this issue of family farmers organizations have included in their projects the prospect of supporting forms and production techniques that cause less environmental impacts, the return of old production and traditional knowledge practices, organic farming practices, they differentiate their strategies products with ecological and cultural appeal, among others. The Federation of Workers in Family Farming in the South region (FETRAF-Sul), rural unionism heir to the Workers' Unitary Central (CUT), which is one of the actors, since its inception in 1980, has sought to include in your political project these concerns, while it has also stimulated and guided practical actions of this agriculture format between farmers and their base organizations.

The construction of ecological agenda in the rural part of a diagnosis of the negative consequences of agricultural modernization process carried out in the decades of 1960-70, such as the destruction of natural resources, soil erosion, the water contamination, etc.; the rural exodus, impoverishment and the exclusion of small farmers; and the loss of traditional knowledge, know-how and ethnic biodiversity (Diegues, 2000). The realization of these perverse effects emerged proposals to recover ways of producing and relationship with the nature of the last farmers, seeking in them soffits to provide new ways to produce more harmonious with nature.

This attempt to rescue production techniques and forms of relationship with nature from the past - which received the assistance of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sectors of the Catholic Church - has been sought in the practices of a group of farmers, the so-called settlers which form the bulk of the social base of FETRAF-Sul (Picolotto, 2011). The settlers are seen as the descendants of European immigrants (Germans, Italians, Poles, and others) that formed colonies from the mid-

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-nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the regions of forests unsuitable for large agricultural holdings. In these regions, it developed the small property and a diverse agricultural scan format, dedicated to family subsistence and trade in some agricultural products (Roche, 1969).

Given this context the agricultural production model considered modern, the crisis of the military regime, the political opening process and the country consolidated democracy with the 1988 Constitution and the II World Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil (Eco-92) in 1992 have been afforded the “political opportunity” to be in different country “new actors” (Brandenburg, 2011) questioning the status quo. Among them, the environmental movement and the emergence of the environmental agenda (Alonso; Costa; Maciel, 2007).

The experiences of alternative technologies and ecological agriculture developed by farmers in southern Brazil, in that it was seeking ways to produce the last of the settlers and are thought from the difficulties faced in the contemporary period, can be read as ways to reinterpret or give new meanings to traditional ways of producing social group, updating them positively. Through the return of past practices, with new meanings of this time issues (environmental concerns), farmers sought to reach a new space recognition (Honneth, 2009) in today’s society for family farms and think, from his “experience” as a social group (Thompson, 1987), a new model of agriculture with lower environmental impacts.

The confluence between social and productive experience of the farmers group and the contemporary environmental concerns has constituted joints between representation organizations (such as FETRAF / CUT), sectors of the Catholic Church and NGOs seeking ways to reenter the settlers in the national society same time they were concerned about environmental issues.

The present text aims to analyze the process of incorporating the environmental dimension in the FETRAF unionism in the south. Of particular interest to analyze the incorporation of environmental issues helped redefine the agriculture project of this unionism throughout his career, took him as a “great opportunity” in the recent period. The information here systematized result of desk research and interviews with leaders and advisors of FETRAF-Sul.

## **Critics to the modernization of agriculture and training of an environmentalist agricultural network**

From the 1970s, there have been profound changes in the Brazilian countryside. The modernization policy benefited above all the dynamic denominated cultures, those products more directly linked to industry and exports (soybean, wheat, sugarcane, etc.) to the detriment of subsistence crops. Many areas for cultivation of basic food products have been replaced by plantations of monoculture, for the supply of agricultural industries or foreign market. This agriculture format started to produce on a large scale, those crops whose high prices in the market right guaranteed profit in such ventures. The state encouraged these competitive sectors, whereas virtually

abandoned crops such as beans, cassava and rice that made up the staple diet of Brazilians (Martine and Garcia, 1987).

This technical modernization process of agriculture has become strongly opposed from the late 1970s, either by farmers excluded from it and their representative organizations, whether for technical and scholars of the agrarian question. Unions, churches, NGOs and academy produced criticism of the authoritarian development model, exclusionary and unsustainable constituted by agricultural modernization policies during the military regime (Almeida, 1989; Brandenburg, 1997). The model of agriculture modernization showed its darker side to farmers in familiar South base in the 1980s Schmitt (2002) highlights the untenable situation and the impasse in which they found: excessive specialization, dependence on external inputs, poor integration between the different cropping and farming systems, the loss of locally adapted varieties, the erosion of knowledge on the management of local biodiversity, degradation of soil and water quality and the increasing devaluation of activities and products for the livelihoods of farming families.

The questioning of actions to this situation also resulted in building initiatives of organizational alternatives and ways to produce to think up new horizons for small producers struggling to keep up in farming and think a new model for the field. In this sense, it was important the actions of the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) in the South and a number of NGOs that formed the Network of Alternatives/South Technology (Network TA/South).

The Network TA/South emerged from an articulation of environmental NGOs who initiated the organization of a “movement contesting the agricultural modernization process” (Network TA/South, 1997, p. 177). The origin of this joint occurred with the creation of the Alternative Technologies Project (PTA) by the Federation of Organizations for Social Assistance and Education (FASE) in 1983. In 1989, this project provided the basis for the creation of an independent organization, the Advisory and Services for Projects in Alternative Agriculture (AS-PTA), performing work in the South, Southeast and Northeast. Specifically in the South, it created the TA/South Network as “a network of non-governmental entities, non-profit and non-partisan or religious character, which develops research papers, advice, training and dissemination in the area of alternative technologies for agriculture.” (TA Network/South, 1997, p. 170). The network was formed by heterogeneous set of organizations in the three southern states, such as the Foundation for Rural Economic Development in the Midwest Region of Paraná (Rureco) in Paraná (PR); the Association of Small Farmers of western Santa Catarina (APACO) in Santa Catarina (SC); the Center for Alternative and Popular Technology (CETAP) in Rio Grande do Sul (RS), among others.

The organizations that comprise the Network identify themselves as builders of a “new rural development model” that prioritizes the small and medium family farmers freely associated in the production process, processing and marketing; takes into account the potential of each agro-ecosystem; Regionalize the beneficitation and processing products structures (TA Network /South, 1997).

In the northern region of RS stood out the performance of CETAP. This center was created to meet the needs of “seeking concrete alternatives to farmers” (Alternative

Agriculture, 1991 p.3). Since its inception, the CETAP was to “function develop rescue activities, experimentation and dissemination of Alternative Technologies to strengthen small production and preserve the environment” (id., 1991, p. 3). Similarly, in the Central West region of Parana, Rureco is constituted as supporting organizations to small farmers. Brandenburg (1997, p.125) to consider the case of Rureco (an organization formed in 1986 with the Church of the progressive sectors support to assist farmers’ associations) draws attention to the farmers’ associations come up with the initial objective of “assisting small farmers hitherto marginalized by the technical service, both the state and the cooperatives”, but with the development of the network of associations linked to Rureco, while these “execute projects that are formulated by the Commission, develop activities and own projects, developed from discussions with the associated farmers.” (id. p.125-126). Thus, the Rureco just promoting new ways of thinking about social uses of technology and provided farmers become subjects of their own process of forming awareness of their social status and the construction of new sustainable technologies and the adaptation to their needs.

These advisory organizations were at the center of discussions and building practical experiences related to the topic of alternative or ecological agriculture developed by the rural unionism of CUT, the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST), the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB), among others, in the southern region of the country.

### **The formation of the CUT rural unionism and the debate on a new development model**

The CUT’s rural unionism has its origin articulated with other rural social movements from the late 1970s (such as MST and MAB, who were born in the same cultural broth). In three southern states, began with the formation of trade union opposition to municipal unions linked to the State Federations of Agricultural Workers (FETAG-RS, FETAEP and FETAESC). In some municipalities where small farmers were facing serious difficulties related to low prices of agricultural products, lack of land for new generations, situations of farmers who would be affected by construction of dams, among others, there was a movement contesting the political choices made by unionism and boards of trade unions. Conformed competition around the labor movement, a “political field” (Bourdieu, 2007), where the challengers agents, which were articulated in so-called trade union opposition, accused the directions set being accommodated with the problems of farmers of being undemocratic because they settled their focus is in the figures of presidents, of being welfare agencies related to governments to provide health care, security. Also, some trade unions and federations themselves were accused of being co-responsible for the problems caused by agricultural modernization policies and affecting small farmers at that time, in that the federations and their unions had supported the modernization policies, maintaining close relationships with governments (Picolotto, 2011). Trade union opposition fought this kind of stance and argued that they wanted to form a new unionism emerged from the collective interests of farmers, “one ‘authentic’ ‘combative’ unionism able to effectively represent the ‘bases’” (Schmitt, 1996, p. 193).

The conquest of the first unions by the oppositions occurred in the early 1980s mainly in the regions of Alto Uruguay RS, West of Santa Catarina and Paraná Southwest regions close between the three states and a strong presence of settlers. With new achievements of unions and approach others considered most active, it was forming a renewal movement unionism in other regions of the states, generating tension and disputes within the framework of the official trade union federations. After unsuccessful attempts to conquer the directions of the federations at the end of the 1980s the CUT decide to form a parallel organizational structure in the states with the formation of the State Departments of Rural Workers (DETRs), following a national orientation of the CUT in 1988, He had already formed its National Department of Rural Workers (DNTR).

Since its inception in the mid-1980s, some CUT unions have sought to address not only the demands of the farmers, but also to discuss issues related to production and technologies used in agriculture. As Almeida points:

In Rio Grande do Sul, some unions of rural workers located in the Alto Uruguay region (Northern State) initiated the discussion on the technological issue, considering the problem of inadequate agricultural research, technical assistance and rural extension, as inadequate. They are geared to small farmers and especially for the “exports”. Along with this criticism, do the condemnation of “intense input agriculture”, ie one that uses intensely soil correctives, fertilizers and pesticides, endearing production costs and polluting the environment (1989, p. 204-205).

This more general and diffuse position of intense input agriculture condemnation trade unionism was deepened from the early 1990s and led the idea of building an agriculture project itself into the country. For this, some factors contributed.

The holding of the II World Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil (Eco-92) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, provided an opportunity for the rural social movements also discuss the situation of agriculture and the environmental issue. With the opportunity of holding this event in the country, it was organized a parallel conference in the city of Vitória, Espírito Santo, with the participation of various organizations of small farmers in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Among the actors in the Brazilian field were present: DNTR/CUT, MST, CPT, CETAP, Indigenous Organizations of Brazil, among others. At the end of the Conference a document has been released to mark his disagreement with the current development model and suggest changes in regard to “natural resource management” in order to ensure “biodiversity and the wide range of research on the use of these resources”. Also affirmed their opposition to “patenting that converts the discoveries of life in private business” and defended the principle that the biodiversity resources should be preserved “to ensure the life of future generations” (Declaration of Vitoria, 1992 p.13).

The discussions at the conference were detailed in the following years and gave base passes unionism build an initial development of alternative development project. In this sense, the year 1993 was remarkable. This year were held extensive discussions on DNTR and in the southern states on the issue. The First National Plenary of DNTR held in August

1993, he was appointed one of the main challenges of the CUT trade union movement would be “to build an Economic Development Alternative Project for the field.” (DNTR, 1993, p.1).

Following this discussion, the Forum of South DETRs determined that the CUT unionism in the region would give priority to construction of an alternative project to the field. In the resolutions of the State Congress II DETR-RS, held in November 1993, is a synthesis of this debate. With the formulation of this project aim was to leave for a union action tactics not only with a “demanding and contesting character” (id.), But it was to draw up an “alternative proposal for rural development” that would serve to “setting concrete directions of claim and negotiation “(id.). The unions should be more “purposeful”, have proposed a project to present. This project, in addition to goals by strengthening family farms and support the agrarian reform entailed in making technology choices that take into account ecological and cultural concerns, as we read:

A Development Alternative Project to ensure the viability of family farming implies: a) a new technological model that takes into account social and ecological issues of agricultural production; b) new forms of organization of production, marketing, processing of production and supply; c) land reform as a tool for transformation of the current model of development of Brazilian agriculture; d) differentiated agricultural policy for the small farmer; e) research and extension focused on the interests of workers; f) build the cultural foundations of an alternative development, rescuing values such as solidarity, cooperation and establishing a new man-nature relationship (DETR-RS, 1993, p. 14-17, our highlights).

With the decision to unify the Brazilian rural syndicalism through DNTR entry in the CONTAG structure (and DETRs states in FETAGs) and the affiliation of the Confederation with the CUT in 1995, the proposal of building alternative project of rural development, had been built inside the CUT unionism, has been adopted by unions of all rural workers nationwide (Picolotto, 2011; 2014).

The construction of an alternative project to the field was the focus of labor’s concerns in the second half of the 1990s the union attention focused on the realization of an ambitious project of research and training between 1996 and 1999, called Project CUT/CONTAG of Union Research and Training. Much of this accumulation of research and reflection was referred to the VII 1998 CONTAG Congress and led the debate on the construction of the alternative project development and possible changes in union structure. On the one hand, the suggestions on alternative development project were well received by the trade union movement, suggestions of reformulations of the union structure had lower acceptance and were a cause of great discord in the late 1990s.

Regarding the alternative project, the VII Congress decided that the labor movement would adopt the formulations of the Project CUT/CONTAG and would officially take over the construction of the Sustainable Rural Development Project Alternative (PADRS). Noting that the starting point for construction of this project was to be the

“design development”, “which should include economic growth, justice, social participation and environmental preservation. This development would favor the human being as a whole, enabling the construction of citizenship” (CONTAG 1998, p.29).

In this sense, we present the key elements that should be part of this project with the following items: defense of family farming as national agricultural exploration model, which the union perspective, as well as providing a more decentralized and democratic development, would be more able to produce food, with lower costs and in a more balanced way with the environment; the struggle for land reform in order to promote a break with the exclusionary model of development, land concentrator, income and power and as a means of expansion and consolidation of family farming; among others (Contag 1998).

With regard to the discussion of changes in union structure, there dynamic differentiated by country. In the South, with the adoption of family farming identifying category and winning the PRONAF, there was a process of (re) organization and strengthening of the actors of family farming and a new break with the union structure of CONTAG. In the state of Santa Catarina, difficulties of CUT work together with the union federation linked to CONTAG, provided an opportunity to create another organization. In 1997 it was founded the Federation of Workers in Family Agriculture of the State of Santa Catarina (FETRAFESC) proposing to be specific representative of farmers in the state. The FETRAFESC requested membership in the CONTAG, but was not accepted. Following this standalone experience, considered successful and the relative strengthening the family farm of political identity was reached, the CUT’s rural unionism in the South decided to create in 1999 a new organization regional coordinator of family farmers. It was the Southern Front of Family Farming which brought together trade unions, cooperatives and NGOs in the region.

The process of strengthening the organizational dynamics and identity of family farming in the South, coupled with the perceived lack of perspective of change in the correlation of forces in FETAGs and CONTAG, fueled the debate on the prospect of creating a trade union structure of family farmers in the region. The official founding of the Federation of Workers in Family Agriculture in the South region (FETRAF-Sul) took place during the First Trade Union Congress of Family Farming, held between 28 and 30 March 2001 in Chapecó-SC. The FETRAF appeared as a specific union structure of family farmers and as a competitor organization CONTAG and its state federations. Since 2005 this trade union organization would be nationalized with the founding of FETRAF-Brazil (Picolotto, 2011).

## **The agriculture program of FETRAF and the environmental issue**

The FETRAF-Sul, for being heir to a portion of this syndicalism, since its founding the environmental issue appears with certain relevance in its political program. When analyzing the resolutions of the congress of the Federation and the statements of its leaders can raise some clues as to how the environmental theme was built and what meaning it has for the Federation. First, it appears associated generically to the theme of building the alternative project of rural development, inherited from the CUT and CONTAG. In the resolutions of

the Federation founding Congress is pointed out that its strategic aim would be “to prioritize the development and implementation of Sustainable Development of Alternative Design and Solidarity (PADSS) across the South” (FETRAF-Sul, 2001 p.13) . With this political line aimed “to respond adequately to the economic problems of the category, by an affirmative intervention in the organization of production, based on agro-ecological principles, from financing to marketing.” (2001, p.22). As can be seen, environmental concerns were at the center of its program for agriculture.

The testimony of Altemir Tortelli (former member of DNTR in the 1990s and the general coordinator of FETRAF-Sul between 2004 and 2010) complements the description of how it was built and what would be the Alternative Project Development:

After extensive research, diagnostics, exchanges with partners in other countries, with discussions with universities, we decided to build a framework of a development vision that was called Alternative Project of Sustainable Development ... it had two major pillars that held another view that development was based on the strengthening of family agriculture and agrarian reform, as actions that interact and complement each other ... not only getting the theme of the issue of agricultural policies ... the farmer need not only produce food for themselves and pro market, it has other needs. So these other needs became part of a vision of development, shares a vision of companies, parts of a front of several public policies. (Tortelli, interview in 2010).

The FETRAF claimed heir to the debate about building a new model of agriculture, focusing on the implementation of agrarian reform and the strengthening of family farming and the construction of a more harmonious relationship between man and nature; the changing of conception on how the countryside was considered. This could not be perceived only as a production space, predatory exploitation of natural resources, but as a social space, of living, the conscious use of natural resources and of different subjects who have needs that go far beyond the production.

In the following FETRAF congress would be more detailed as it would incorporate the environmental issue in their agriculture project. The first Congress held in 2004, it was decided that one of its central themes of action would be “moving in the socioeconomic organization of family farming as a fundamental element for the implementation of sustainable development and solidarity” (FETRAF-Sul, 2004, p. 29). In this sense, guidelines were drawn to the unions together with partner organizations in the area of credit (such as the Rural Credit Cooperative with Solidarity Interaction - CRESOL), cooperatives and production associations (which are different from the local level in municipalities and regional), the joint certification of networks (such as Ecovida Network that links organizations of ecological farmers) and support NGOs have managed to concrete actions for the realization of the Federation development project, such as agro-ecological production, family agro-industrialization, direct marketing and solidarity economy initiatives. For this, we would need to build a strategy of “intervention in the organization of production” with well-defined roles between the “union” with political role of general coordinator and the



“economic organization” of family farming that would stimulate paper and offer concrete alternatives production to farmers.

The Congress of FETRAF II (held in 2007) returned to establish guidelines to support sustainable production. Among its main items are: construction of agroecology as agricultural production model; the processing of products through family farms; organization of marketing through institutional channels (such as the Food Acquisition Program - PAA), direct marketing and channels of solidarity economy and fair trade; the encouragement of production for self-household and production of own seeds (FETRAF-Sul, 2007).

The construction of agro-ecology perspective appears as central to the strategy of organizing production since the founding of FETRAF (and even before, as shown in the previous sections), however, it significantly changes its direction through the years. If the first years of founding of the Federation agroecology tended to be understood as a production technique where the guidelines in this area were: “strengthen the processes that aim at advancing a new technological model that is based agroecology and sovereignty in quality seeds, in coordination with the Ecovida Network” (FETRAF-Sul, 2004 p.34). With advancing the debate within the Federation it became understood in a broader sense and together with your family farming project. This setting appears in the resolutions of the Second Congress:

The FETRAF-SUL / CUT adopted agroecology as the basis for a new process of family farming in order to build a new way of doing and living agriculture. Not just as technology without the use of pesticides, but as a new conception of agriculture, founded on a new relationship between farmers and family with the land, with production, with the environment and with life. (FETRAF-Sul, 2007, p.57, our highlights).

The issue of construction of ecological agriculture normally appears opposed to the model of large export agriculture, the so-called agribusiness. The Third Congress of FETRAF-Sul, held in 2010, reinforces this opposition between models of family farming and the agribusiness. The resolutions of the Congress pointed out that the Federation “see the environmental issue in a multidimensional perspective, within the approach of human and sustainable development” (FETRAF-Sul, 2010, p.14). In this perspective, it aims at the charging of public policies governments to “recovery and preservation of the environment, strengthening family farming from the perspective of sustainability, guiding its production strategy based on the following principles: agroecology, diversification, preservation of biodiversity, and protection of polyculture water.”(id.).

In this sense, agroecology is associated with the model of family farming production, rescuing and valuing and traditional know-how that differs from large agribusiness companies. Following these precepts, the Federation proposes in its resolutions of III Congress agroecology as “a new model of doing and living in agriculture” that takes into account traditional knowledge of farmers and their local culture that encourages diversification of activities, production for own families and to the market and that provides greater autonomy to farmers in the production processes in the face of transnational corporations in the agricultural sector (FETRAF-Sul, 2010).

## The environmental issue as an opportunity: payment for environmental services and differentiation of colonial/agro-ecological products

The environmental issue is not seen by the organizations of farmers only by the bias of restrictions on conventional forms of production or as the need to adapt agricultural production models to new patterns of use of natural resources sustainably. On the contrary, the FETRAF-Sul leaders claim that the environmental issue is a “great opportunity” for family farms. An opportunity because of family farming can adapt more easily to less impacting production formats in nature than large agricultural holdings. Family farms would keep a large potential to produce quality food and at the same time preserving natural resources. As stated Celso Ludwig:

The environmental issue is a great opportunity ... because we need not only produce rice and beans, we can produce water, we can produce environmental services also ... agroecology issues. (general coordinator of FETRAF-Sul, interview in 2012).

These opportunities focused on the strengths that family agriculture production model can offer. Among these opportunities, two issues have received great attention from FETRAF in recent years: payment for environmental services and differentiation of colonial and/or agro-ecological products.

The possibility of payment for environmental services is innovative and is attracting much attention from civil society and the united sectors worldwide. One of the most discussed issues in the literature on forest conservation, biodiversity and water resources is the “possibility of using the Payment for Environmental Services (PES) as an economic instrument to assist in the environmental management of these ecosystem services” (Jardim, 2010, p. 26). As this is a new issue, in recent years there has been a wide experimentation on mechanisms for environmental services beneficiaries pay to providers in order to compensate them for the opportunity costs associated with the use of restriction of natural resources (Jardim, 2010). In this sense, farmers are among the agents that more can contribute to the preservation of natural resources (such as the preservation of water, forests and biodiversity) and thus be recipients of payments for such services.

The debate on payments for environmental services is relatively recent in unionism. Based on testimony from leaders and document analysis of FETRAF it is clear that the theme appears most clearly from the year 2009. According to the testimony of Diego Kohwald (general secretary of FETRAF-Sul), the debate on payment for environmental services appeared in the Federation with the execution of a project in the southwestern Paraná on the preservation of “natural mine waters”. During realization of this project has been known to experience developed by the city of Umuarama, in the northern Paraná, which pays a financial incentive to farmers who preserve forests near the springs that form the river that supplies the city. Based on these experiences would have built the debate about the need for family agriculture have a remuneration policy for environmental services. As Diego Kohwald reported:

We dialogue with society for this to be a development policy of family farming, promotion of family farming, promotion of the environment and not as welfare policy. And soon it goes like this, “the farmer’s leaving plantations turn into bush, they are no longer working just to get the government’s help.” That’s not it! For that reason furthermore there is a need to make the preservation of the environment they also need to cultivate for subsistence, it is necessary to have production (Diego Kohwald, interview in 2012).

The construction of the agenda on payments for environmental services in FETRAF-Sul differs from the current conception of the importance of environmental services at present. It differs from environmental design whose primary objective is to promote the conservation of resources, for it seeks ways to encourage landowners and farmers to preserve the forests and waters of its properties. As the Federation represents farmers, who can offer these environmental services, this demand insert environmental services as another option to enable family farming, alongside food production. In his view, this policy could not make farmers abandon agricultural production, but should be included in the list of activities that the farmer carries. It would be just one more way to encourage farmers to preserve part of the resources of their property and thus receive financial compensation from the company. An activity that can be easily integrated with the ecological agricultural production.

However, even with these differences in the way of conceiving the theme there is similarities in some respects between the agendas of organizations of farmers and environmental guidelines of nature conservation. The leaders of farmers give us some indication of why this approach. The model of large-scale agricultural holding (the so-called agribusiness) would have less commitment to the preservation of natural resources than the model of family farming. It is what supports the general coordinator of FETRAF-Sul:

The farmer has land in their way of life, that is, it is much easier to leave it an integrated view of the environmental issue because it needs water to drink. The entrepreneur is in town taking mineral water and he’s not there. The farmer is there seeing his animals drinking water. So he can more easily integrate production and integrate it, because it is part of that landscape. The family farmer is part of nature, he is no stranger there. His perfume is the scent of the earth. And since the entrepreneur has the scent of the city, is another scent ... He wants to know if there is profit, if there is not, it sells it and buys shares in Petrobras (Celso Ludwig, interview in 2012).

The family farmer has a greater need to preserve natural resources, properly handle the inputs you use for the production, because if not taken proper care is compromising the health of their animals, their children and their own. Similarly, the continuity of their family farm will be committed (at risk of ending) if there is a constant concern with the sustainable use of resources. This may directly affect the possibilities for their continuity

and their children in agriculture. This direct involvement of farmers in the management processes and productive economic establishment is seen as an advantage in the proper management of resources compared to the employer model (impersonal) of large farms agribusiness. The latter tends to have less concern for how the output is performed. The key to this latest model is to give financial return, regardless least the way is carried out production and environmental impacts it causes.

Another topic that has received special attention from FETRAF in recent years is the creation of certain cultural differences and quality for the products of family farming. This difference can occur because the production is made of environmentally friendly manner, in which the products receive the qualification of agro-ecological or organic (Niederle, 2014). But it can also occur associated to the call for ways to produce traditional social group of settlers, in which case the qualified products as colonial products (Dorigon and Renk, 2011).

The recent appreciation of manufactured handcrafted products (traditionally made for self-household) shows one way to give “positive values” (Honneth, 2009) for family farms to its roots and its typical products are now finding local markets and regional consumers who often have or had some connection with the countryside and also value or pass to value these products. Longhi and Santos (2003) point out that local trade of green products and/or colonies held in many cities in the South by the farmers themselves play the role of redeemed and stimulate the consumption of colonial products. These initiatives opposes the contemporary trend “of artificiality and consumerist alienation promoted by commercial marketing systems” (Longhi and Santos, 2003, p.9).

The farmers also call attention to this difference of colonial and/or organic products and their potential to establish itself as a “differentiated product” compared to the processed products:

If you take my pot with housemade schimier [marmalade] and open it and then you open a manufactured one that is a major agricultural industry. Only in the open, you will notice the smell. We work with more fruit ... cook it in small quantities, it gives more flavor. It has several factors. And do not use preservative, does not use any chemicals, just fruit, sugar, cooking and going to the pot and it is done. And in the manufactured one in large agribusinesses they put preservatives; they have to put conservatives to not losing the product in that long. It has no taste, it loses taste. (Family farmer's Feirão Colonial in Santa Maria-RS, interview in 2013).

The statement highlights the different qualities of each product and the potential that the family farming products can be provided to differentiate the products of large companies. The form of produce from family farms differs both be produced in an environmentally appropriate way, and by positively rescue cultural elements of the social group of settlers. The valuation of finished handcrafted products (according to traditional ways of producing inherited from ancestors, the settlers) shows one way to give positive values for family farms to its roots and its typical products that meet local and regional

markets for consumers often they have or had anything to do with the rural environment and also value or pass to value these products. It is a way to assign differential “qualities” according to social values shared by producers and consumers (Niederle, 2014).

Dorigon and Renk (2011) call attention to the acquisition of a cheese, a fig jam or a “pé-de-moleque” [a hard candy of peanut and sugar cane juice] is more than just buying something different, “it is a cultural act, full of representations and meanings, a return to the past, to childhood, valuing a way of life and rescue the sense of belonging to that tradition” (id. p.109). In this sense, (re) build links of belonging to a certain culture and also valuing way to produce of farmers who come to give new value to traditional forms of processing of certain typical products. Similarly, this revaluation of regional products can be interpreted as a way to promote “positive attitudes” (Honneth, 2009) farmers themselves against habits, ways of producing and products they always performed for your own consumption, but never (or almost never) had a specific value on the market. From the moment the house made salami or cheese replaced by a different value in the market because it was drafted by a family formed traditionally by farmers, the farmer as the subject also happens to be valued by consumers and take positive attitudes to itself, its history and products development.

Finally, it is worth noting that the agriculture program built by FETRAF has expanded to other dimensions that go far beyond the productive sphere. Attention to environmental issues as well as having fostered open a reflection on the sustainable use of natural resources and the construction of an eco-agriculture model has also fostered thinking about new ways of complementary income, such as payments for environmental services. Products made of traditional and/or agro-ecological way shape has acquired a distinctive value in local and regional markets providing new opportunities for economic integration of family farmers. The different qualities of regional products and its appeal to the origins and traditions of the social group of settlers as well as having been constituted as a cultural resistance trench can also give basis for a rethinking of the forms of production of family farming, adding environmental concerns and with the quality of food. In this sense, the model of produce from family farms gets a new value when compared with the production model of large agricultural operation in that it is in the family model that realizes greater potential to add the environmental dimension and the concern with the quality of food produced.

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# A GREAT OPPORTUNITY: THE UNIONS AND THEIR GREENING PROJECTS OF FAMILY FARMING

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**Resumo:** As preocupações ambientais têm influenciados os projetos políticos e a construção das pautas das organizações de agricultores familiares. O objetivo deste artigo é analisar como estas preocupações foram assimiladas pela Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura Familiar da região Sul (FETRAF-Sul) na região Sul do Brasil. Com base em pesquisa documental e entrevistas com lideranças de agricultores fez-se uma leitura sobre o processo de construção da pauta ambiental no sindicalismo. Desde meados da década de 1980 o tema ambiental vem se fazendo presente nas preocupações sindicais, entretanto, a forma como ele vem sendo entendido muda ao logo dos anos. Se em um primeiro momento tendia a ser associado com as consequências negativas da modernização da agricultura, no período mais recente o tema ambiental vem sendo colocado no centro do projeto de agricultura do sindicalismo e passa a fomentar uma possível positivação do modelo de produzir da agricultura familiar.

**Palavras-chaves:** agricultura familiar, sindicalismo, pauta ambiental, agroecologia, FETRAF-Sul.

**Abstract:** Environmental concerns have influenced the construction of political projects and agendas of organizations of family farmers. The aim of this paper is to analyze how these concerns were assimilated by the Federation of Workers in Family Farming in the South (South-FETRAF) in Southern Brazil. Based on archival research and interviews with leaders of farmers became a reading on the process of building the environmental agenda in syndicalism. Since the mid-1980s the environmental issue has been causing concern in this syndicate, however, how it was understood changed over the years. If at first tended to be associated with the negative consequences of modernization of agriculture, the most recent period has been placed the environmental issue in the center of the farming project is to promote syndicalism and a possible model to produce positive turning point in family farming.

**Keywords:** family farms, syndicates, environmental agenda, agroecology, FETRAF.

**Resumen:** Las preocupaciones ambientales han influenciados los proyectos políticos y la construcción de las pautas de las organizaciones de agricultores familiares. El objetivo del artículo es analizar como estas preocupaciones fueron asimiladas por la Federación de los Trabajadores en la Agricultura Familiar de la región Sur (FETRAF-Sur) en Sur de Brasil. Con base en investigación documental y entrevistas con liderazgos de agricultores se hizo una lectura sobre el proceso de construcción de la pauta ambiental en el sindicalismo. Desde meados de la década de 1980 el tema ambiental viene haciéndose presente en las preocupaciones sindicales, sin embargo, la forma como él viene siendo entendido cambia al inmediateamente de los años. Si en un primer momento tendía a ser asociado con las consecuencias negativas de la modernización de la agricultura, en el periodo más reciente el tema ambiental viene siendo colocado en el centro del proyecto de agricultura del sindicalismo y pasa a fomentar una posible “positivación” de la plantilla de producir de la agricultura familiar.

**Palabras-clave:** agricultura familiar, sindicalismo, pauta ambiental, agroecología, FETRAF-Sur.

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