

Work issues on Tomatec - a tomato sustainable production system

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Tomatec is a tomato sustainable production system. It encompasses a set of good practices on the crop. The main practices are: irrigation through water-dropping, fertilization within irrigation (ferti-irrigation), integrated pest control (which heavily reduces the use of pesticides), good soil handling with no-tillage cropping and use of contours for planting, use of tiny wires for supporting tomato trees (instead of bamboo logs) and the enveloping of the fruits with paper bags. Enveloping remains as one of the most important practices due to two factors: first, it is visible. Tomatec crops are easily recognized by people because of the white paper bags that involves all bunches, turning all plantation into white. The other reason is because enveloping is a very laborious process, and the key for having fruits free of pesticide residues. In order to assess the impacts of Tomatec, using the Ambitec method, we have conducted four interviews with Tomatec producers in the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. These interviews happened on 2019 September and took place in four municipalities: Tanguá, Nova Friburgo, Teresópolis and São Sebastião do Alto. Producers mention that farmworkers use individual protection equipment during their works. On field, we have seen hats and jackets. They mentioned that farmworkers also use masks for pesticides aspersion. Concerning to labour time, we have observed two main ways of contracting. Smaller producers usually work themselves in the fields. On harvest time, they contract many farmworkers, which are payed by numbers of day working. Bigger ones contract farmworkers by month and sign their workcard, paying the wages as well as the labour benefits, as disposed by Brazilian law. Another interesting finding about work on Tomatec is the genre division. All producers mentioned that pesticide sprinkle is exclusive to men, and enveloping is exclusive to women. It is not defined by rural producers: the farmworkers actually ask for that. Producers reported that farmworkers realize that sprinkling is a more painful and dangerous activity, with potential harms to fertility. Although Tomatec is recognised by strongly reducing the total amount of chemical products on the crop, men still want to save women from that kind of activity. On the other

hand, enveloping is considered by farmworkers and producers a more delicate activity. It demands agility and precision to put on the paper bags on tomato flowers and to clip them, making the tomato fruits growing up inside the bags without receiving any drop of pesticide. Men are considered slower and less efficient than women to carry on this activity. So, analysing work issues on Tomatec we can see that the adoption of this production system have established many different strategies to deal with safety, law and genre issues.