

HOW ORGANIC FARMING CULTIVATES RURAL-URBAN INTERFACES IN A BRAZILIAN TERRITORY: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IBIUNA (SÃO PAULO STATE).

Lucimar Santiago de Abreu, Brazilian Agropecuary Research Institute, Embrapa, São Paulo, Brazil

Stephanie Bellon, Inra Sad - Unité d'Ecodéveloppement, Avignon, France

lucimar@cpnma.embrapa.br

Can organic farming (OF) contribute to improve our understanding of the present society? Should it be considered as a "niche" market or an alternative agricultural model making sense in global economy? Our starting standpoint consists in considering OF as an on-going social strategy committed to rebuild spaces for agricultural production and for living in the current rural world. Through their experience of organic activity, in areas neighboring three Brazilian metropolis (including close to 20 million inhabitants), farmers from Ibiúna (São Paulo) are creating associative entities and experiencing new social practices, based on their encounters with various institutions and urban consumers. In this territory it also renews environmental issues and the relation between countryside and cities. In a first stage we introduce our theoretical framework, supporting our understanding of the present rural situation. Secondly, we describe the social universe of this research and characterize the development process of OF as a social project, with economic and environmental interactions in Ibiúna territory. Thirdly, we analyse the development of various organisations forms and initiatives, dedicated to organic production, certification and distribution, and show how various operators select and exclude some farmers or entities. Finally, we introduce elements likely to secure the social renewal of farmers groups and discuss the way they can face risks, overcome difficulties and sustain new avenues for development.

Key words: agricultural organic; small scale farming; risk; environment