

SENSIBILITY TO TECHNICAL AND ECOLOGICAL RISK AMONG FARMERS: PRODUCTIVE PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IN THE BRAZILIAN ATLANTIC FOREST

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The view of farmers of the Ribeira Valley regarding environmental risks associated with agricultural practices was researched by means of an analysis of productive practices and of environmental-agricultural attitudes. We considered the role of experience with modern technology and also the impact of modern ecological viewpoints as factors which could change risk perception associated with human activities in rural environments. As a result, we described a social logic underlying the use of agricultural technology, along two dimensions: technological behavior (control over technology as opposed to lack of control over it), and environmental-agricultural attitudes (anticipation of risk as opposed to lack of it). Typologies of technological usage and environmental attitudes were constructed, including the following types: 1) productive modernity, 2) ecological modernity, 3) ecological indifference and 4) ecological tradition. The study was realized in the municipality of Tapirai (SP), on the Ribeira Valley, São Paulo. This territory is part of the Brazilian tropical forest known as Mata Atlântica, where many kinds of small scale farmers live, with different productive activities and cultural profiles, including a set of diverse environmental systems, some of them as preservation areas. The method employed was a statistical treatment of ecological and socio-cultural data and a qualitative analysis of some of the social types involved.