

Agroecological foods bringing people together and changing attitudes





CETAP
AGRICULTURA ECOLOGIA

**SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND ACTIONS
TO NURTURE LIFE!**

Centro de Tecnologias Alternativas Populares

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Sharing achievements and what was learnt

In this magazine we will talk about food supply based on the production and commercialization of agroecological foods, which is regulated in Brazil by Law 10.831, of 2003. We want to share the journey taken by farming families in the regions where the Center for Popular Alternative Technologies - CETAP operates, as well as our main achievements and some lessons learned.

The pioneers of agroecological food production were farming families that, in addition to cultivating the land, challenged themselves to seek new marketing spaces, which most of the time happens directly, resulting in a very rich process of integration between producers and consumers. This stimulates new dialogues, balances interests and establishes partnerships between those who produce, those who offer and those who seek healthier food, coming from more sustainable dynamics.

This process, however, is also very challenging. How do you win over new followers for this proposal without having great resources for advertising? What strategies to use to increase sales and identify new demands, without

having a large communication structure? How to consolidate this relationship of trust and maintain a constant dialogue between producers and consumers? The journey taken, and summarized below, presents some suggestions for these and so many other questions that are part of the important mission of producing sustainable food, contributing to the environmental rebalancing of agro-ecosystems and their ecological functionalities, so that they are accessible through cooperation between the different actors, boosting local development based on the principles of solidarity economy.

We started with a brief presentation of CETAP, highlighting the work developed and the regions it covers. Another point addressed is the sale of ecological foods and the expansion of processing and distribution opportuni-

ties. In this sense, the importance of articulation and partnership between the different sectors and organizations is highlighted.

Many of the actions carried out by CETAP had the decisive support of international cooperation entities, during the different stages and historical moments of this construction. In particular, we would like to highlight the support received from the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) from the beginning of our trajectory and in the construction of several of the actions presented here, which included the "Project to support the structuring and consolidation of new dynamics of local supply, strengthening the sovereignty and local economies in the northern region of the state of RS".

Edson Klein
(Executive Coordinator of CETAP)

Edson Klein shares actions carried out by CETAP in a meeting with consumers, cooperatives and advisory organizations in the area of agroecology. (mar/2019)





CETAP team at an evaluation and planning meeting (Dec / 2019)

CETAP

The Center for Popular Alternative Technologies - CETAP is a Civil Society Organization (CSO), created in 1986, whose main objective is to encourage farmers to adopt technological formats for the production of agroecological foods, using technologies and practices that reduce environmental costs and impacts and enable the viability and continuity of families in the mission of producing food.

Considered to be a public utility, the entity provides advisory services for the defense and guarantee of rights, training, qualification and promotion of citizenship, striving for the opening of spaces and opportunities for the exercise of active citizenship and

strengthening of social organizations.

With more than 30 years of operation, CETAP has stimulated the development of sustainable agriculture, based on the principles of agroecology and the role of those who carry it out. It operates through technical and socio-environmental assistance and training activities, of an educational and cultural nature, which contribute to the development and implementation of agriculture that is suitable to socio-cultural, economic and ecological conditions, aiming to eliminate the social and environmental problems caused by the different types of agrochemical production processes. Always devoting special attention to the monitor-

ing of farming families, it encourages the diversified production of healthy food, contributing to food and nutritional safety and to the quality of life of people, based on collective marketing dynamics and articulated with the urban public.

To carry out the programmed activities, the entity has a multidisciplinary team that designs and executes projects that are supported by cooperative's and similar entities (national and international) and/or by municipal, state and federal public bodies. Partnerships are made with various organizations and entities formed in forums and networks, such as: Ecovida Agroecology Network; Terra do Futuro - Latin America Articulation; Ana - National Agroecology Articulation; MAELA - Latin American and Caribbean Agroecological Movement; Consortium of NGOs from RS; ABONG - Brazilian Association of NGOs; CPORG - Organic Production Commission of Rio Grande do Sul; Alliance for Adequate and Healthy Eating, among others.

CETAP's activities are based on institutional programs that guide fundraising as well as the unity of actions developed by the technicians.

These programs are constantly improving, seeking to ensure that the work developed by CETAP is in line with social demands and with the changes that occur from time to time. The food commercialization process, for example, has been expanding its spaces and opportunities and thereby posing other challenges for the team, such as mediation between farmers, consumers, enterprises, public authorities and other social organizations.

PROGRAMS	OBJECTIVES
Support for ecological production with the participation of women and young people	Promoting ecological agriculture and the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) certification as a process of improving food and nutritional quality, generating income, as an option for life and sustainable development.
Promotion and conservation of socio-biodiversity	Promoting actions that can trigger processes of valorization and the use of socio-biodiversity in a perspective of complementarity and harmony.
Commercialization and approximation between rural and urban	To strengthen regional strategies and spaces for the supply and commercialization of ecological food, stimulating the approximation between rural and urban as well as promoting conscious and responsible consumption.
Inter-institutional articulation and cooperation	Strengthen the institutionalism of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), especially CETAP, working in a network to increase political influence, ensuring sustainability and governance.
Institutional management and strengthening	Strengthening the institutionalism of CETAP, creating mechanisms for articulation, construction and qualification of internal processes and human resources; qualifying communication and management of the available resources aiming at financial sustainability.

A little bit more about the journey - main aspects



In its origin, CETAP's priority actions were technical and socio-organizational, encouraging farming families to experiment and adopt other technological formats in their agricultural production, ones that use practices with low environmental impact, valuing biodiversity, encouraging organization, cooperation and the exchange of information, experiences and knowledge among farming families, based on agroecological principles and seeking support from partner entities.

As a result of the increase in the production of some groups, CETAP was challenged to assist in opening channels for the sale of the ecological foods produced by farmers and, thus, spaces and different forms and organizations were created to make ecological foods available to the population.

The principles of direct farmer-consumer relations, action research, experimentation, cooperation and partnerships guided the steps to start the first actions to offer ecological food to the population, with the creation of a direct selling fair in the city of Passo Fundo.

For this journey, CETAP became involved in the theme, acting as an agent of motivation, guidance, mediation and organization of the farming families and of the aspects needed for the act of commercialization to take place, such as: a continuous production plan, infrastructure (transportation, tables, tents, scales ...), food presentation, pricing table and policy, packaging, advertising among others. While at the other end, to also show customers that the food was produced without the use of pesticides and other inputs that are harmful to people's health and the environment.

Evaluation meetings were constantly held to reflect on the existing barriers, from the perception of the farmers as well as the proposals/suggestion of the fair's customers, and, together, to define actions to overcome them.

The commercialization process, in addition to providing learning opportunities, helped to integrate farmers and consumers through agroecological agriculture, healthy food and conscious consumption. These are food production and consumption practices that strengthen the discussion on food and nutritional safety, the journey through sustainable rural development is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN).

Ecological agriculture generates development with inclusion and responsibility

In discussions regarding ecological agriculture, we have always been concerned with involving and strengthening the organizations of farmers and consumers so that the proposal takes root, strengthens and consolidates itself. We encourage the organization of fairs, local, state and regional networks, of NGO Consortiums, Rede Ecovida and international cooperation, as a way to enhance and strengthen this proposal. We have spo-

ken with different social actors and presented a development project with the purpose of producing quality food that is accessible to all families, in addition to discussions on the preservation of natural resources that are essential for the survival of many species, including humans.

In the spaces we participate in, we contribute to these ideas being disseminated and socialized, but unfortunately this does not mean that we easily win over many fans. In recent decades, the theoretical accumulation of the ecological agriculture proposal has expanded and amplified its narrative in several social segments, with an emphasis on the educational environment at all levels. This allows us to confirm that society has been discussing ecological production more, as well as the need to take more care of the quality of food and the preservation of the environment.

The acceptance of the discourse in social spheres does not mean, however, that there is a corresponding implementation of concrete practices in ecological agriculture, but it indicates less resistance, just as in the early days of the alternative agriculture proposal.

Thus, there is still a huge gap between the theoretical understanding and concrete actions needed to transform reality. There are many references created showing the viability of ecological agriculture and this needs to be expanded and massified for all of society. Knowledge is a fundamental factor for each person to be able to act in order to change their reality. Consumers play an important role in defining needs and demanding the quality of the food being produced and consumed, as this directly affects their health and quality of life. Thus, a close relationship between farmers and consumers is imperative for the proposal of ecological production to evolve and expand as a sustainable development strategy for this and for the next generations.

Direct commercialization of agroecological foods

The start of commercialization through the Passo Fundo Ecological Fair

The start of CETAP's journey, more specifically in the early 1990s, was dedicated to encouraging farming families to adopt ecological farming technologies and practices, it motivated some families which started to produce differently and, from this production, demanded support to help carry out the commercialization of the products. The main question was: where do we sell what we produce? Such questioning was extremely challenging, because CETAP, at the

time, had no experience in commercialization processes and had limited knowledge about supply spaces and their specificities.

Based on the reflections regarding this challenge and visits made to the Redenção Ecological Fair (Porto Alegre), it was decided to start a direct selling fair in the city of Passo Fundo/RS, which started in 1998. Firstly, the fair was held once a month, located on a piece of land provided by Cáritas Diocesana de Passo Fundo, it offered consumers some agroecological foods grown and offered by three groups of families. On the eve of the fairs, advertising was carried out through radio and newspapers, however, attendance was low and there were few

sales, farmers were not motivated. After three months, the fair became a biweekly event, but this did not increase the demand as expected. Therefore, it was decided to relocate the fair to another space with greater public visibility, being moved to the center island of the main avenue in the city - Avenida Brasil.

The transfer to the location with greater public visibility led to an increase in consumers at the fair and enabled the expansion of sales, which in turn, motivated the expansion of production and the supply of food by the farmers. The fair has become a space for direct sales, dialogues, learning and fostering new opportunities.

Passo Fundo/RS Ecological Fair held at Praça da Mãe, on the city's main avenue. (2006/2007)





Sananduva Organic Diversity Meeting (2016)



Celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the Passo Fundo/RS Ecological Fair (2018)



Inauguration of the Pé na Terra Fair - Sananduva/RS (2018)

Farmers acquired new skills and consumers began to understand the importance of food diversity and it being produced in an ecological way and offered directly by those who produced it. In this context, the role of CETAP was to monitor the organization of farmers and the produce being offered, in addition to promoting the dissemination and integration actions between the farmers and consumers, providing them with opportunities to exchange information, expanding the learning of the parties and the demands for agroecological foods, which in turn, motivated the expansion of production. The work was always carried out in conjunction with partner entities, councils and public managers, seeking support for these ways of producing and offering food.

Promoting fairs in the region

As a consequence of the process carried out by the Passo Fundo Ecological Fair, new fairs were emerging in municipalities in the region where CETAP operates, and where there are farmers who produce ecological food. The fairs, in addition to spaces for supply, also function as a meeting point for food and people, providing learning opportunities for those who produce and consume food. Currently, there are 11 ecological fairs distributed in the municipalities where CETAP operates.

Expanding commercialization opportunities for agroecological products

During the first two decades of the existence of ecological fairs, other supply spaces were being created. Among them, we can mention sales to schools, restaurants, specialized stores, small markets, food deliveries at home, sales to various events and sales channels. In the first years of the Zero Hunger programs (implemented by the Federal Government), agroecological foods were donated to low-income families and entities that provide social services, such as associations, day-care centers and nursing homes.

Thus, the farmers were acquiring expertise in the area and expanding the spaces to sell food. This program also made it possible for organizations to carry out exchanges between those who produced the food and those who received food donations, as a way of valuing those who produce, but also so that farming families could get to know more about the reality of those receiving the food.



Agroecological foods in schools

The supply of agroecological foods in the National School Meals Program (PNAE), and in other institutional markets, helped to boost the production and commercialization of these foods, becoming a strategic market especially for farmers starting their journey in agroecology. However, the amount of students who have access to agroecological foods

is still low, considering the total volume of acquisition of these foods in Brazil. We envision the possibility of significantly increasing the supply of these foods in school meals, provided that some limits related to the lack of understanding and awareness of many managers about the productive aspects (seasonality, weather conditions) and the importance of these foods in the promotion of food and nutrition safety are overcome. Added to this is the need to improve the infrastructure

*Ecological Dinners are events that help with the dissemination of food and in the integration between farmers, organizations, public authorities and consumers.
Photo: Ecological Dinner in Aratiba/RS (2019)*

conditions of schools, to overcome difficulties in storage and preparation of foods that arrive fresh or have been minimally processed, and also the need for encouragement and support for processing units (managed by farming families, cooperatives and associations or partners) so they can offer food with greater practicality in preparation and consumption.

We emphasize that school meals are also an opportunity to spread adequate and healthy food among schoolchildren, emphasizing the importance of food diversity and seasonal, regional and agroecological foods in promoting healthier, more responsible and sustainable food consumption. Betting on the supply of agroecological food in schools is an investment that includes educational, social, environmental and economic aspects.

Delivery to restaurants

Some restaurants want and purchase agroecological foods to offer healthy meals to customers. There are restaurants that use agroecological foods as an attraction. Still little explored due to the need for logistics for frequent (daily) deliveries, we believe that this market presents possibilities for expansion. These spaces have a tendency to move towards ready-made foods, which can be served requiring little time on the part of the cooks, which also requires an improvement in the structures of the farming families. This pre-processing is an alternative to be created and discussed in partnership with urban enterprises that can have a close relationship with farmers and create income alternatives.



Utopia Restaurant (Sananduva/RS) receives agroecological products directly from farmers



PEIXINHO DA HORTA à milanesa.

Stores specializing in the sale of agroecological foods

They are shops that offer agroecological foods. They are managed by people or families who know the importance of these foods and how these foods are produced, and they maintain permanent contact with producer and supplier farming families.

Although the relationship between farmers and urban people is not direct, the owners end up carrying out some mediation in favor of agroecological and local foods. It can be said that, although still insignificant in relation to the volumes traded, they are partnerships that make it possible to reduce the involvement of the farmer in marketing, since the farmers need to dedicate themselves to the production process. It is a partnership that can be gradually expanded, aiming at food supply.

These stores end up being an important mediating alternative, as they provide a service that meets the wishes of farming families

who do not have time for commercialization as well as the demands of consumers, who want to have more safety in the origin and quality of their food. Thus, they generate employment and income opportunities, giving greater visibility to agroecological foods.

Markets

Some markets seek, together with ecological families, to purchase agroecological foods to offer in their establishments to attract their customers. This possibility has been tested by farming families, who are advancing in the production process, looking more closely at the regularity, seasonality and diversity of foods to make up their supply mix. These spaces do show a possibility of growth, but there is also a need for logistics for frequent delivery. It also allows for the flow of a significant quantity and a diversity of products. These are spaces that challenge families to have greater and better production planning to be able to offer and maintain their participation in supplying these spaces.





Preparation of baskets for deliveries (Erechim/RS - 2020)



Home delivery of agroecological foods (Sananduva/RS - 2019)



Cocktail party with agroecological products, showing off new uses and dishes (Aratiba/RS - 2019)

Home delivered food

Marketing through food being delivered at home is an interesting alternative for people who want agroecological food, but are unable to attend fairs or other spaces that offer these foods.

For farmers, commercialization with periodic deliveries presents itself as being economically safe and as a strategy to reduce waste. Only those products corresponding to sales will be harvested and production can be organized according to the average of orders and deliveries.

Although deliveries require considerable time on the part of the farmers, they enable the parties to make adjustments and make quick arrangements for food quality or new customer demands. Direct contact allows for evaluations and possible adaptations, which can be attended to quickly in the next delivery. It produces dialogues with those who consume the products, creating a bond of credibility and possibilities for expanding demands. It is common for farmers to make their production units available to consumer groups who want to know how food is produced and the aspects involved, from seed and soil care to food preparation and delivery.

Event sales

Sales at various events is another opportunity for marketing agroecological foods. There are lunches, dinners, cocktail parties that use agroecological foods, some have defined annual calendars, while others are done according to demand. Many with the intention of being festive moments to celebrate and publicize the flavors and results obtained. There are events that aim to raise awareness among people (children, youth and adults), representatives of entities and public managers, where food from producer families is offered for tasting. At social events such as parties, cocktail parties, weddings and others, agroecological foods are gradually gaining space, also as a way of valuing local production by families belonging to the communities themselves.



The promotion of native socio-biodiversity and the challenge of new commercialization dynamics

Biodiversity is one of the pillars of the construction, promotion and consolidation of agroecology in its different dimensions: production, social organization, processing and commercialization. Thus, the conservation and use of socio-biodiversity, as well as the construction of logistics for the commercialization of this biodiversity, are the focus of our actions.

CETAP, since its origin, has devoted special attention to the rescue and use of species from socio-biodiversity and traditional agriculture. Intense work was done with creole seeds, such as corn, beans, peas, popcorn, wheat, strawberries, lettuce, tomatoes, among others. The promotion and conservation of creole seeds and their products has gradually resulted in the maturity and a better understanding of the theme, presenting new challenges for the qualification of agroecological production systems and expanding the food and nutritional diversity of families.

The search for more sustainable ecological-based agricultural food systems moti-

vated the intensification of the work done with biodiverse agroforestry systems in the early 2000s. At the time, two major structural axes were chosen that still remain today:

Implementation and management of agroforestry systems

Qualifying agroecological systems, making them more complex in their arrangements, expanding their ecological functionality and restoring their resilience. To present production and income generation alternatives, associated with environmental conservation strategies.

Valorization and use of native fruits

Promote the valorization and use of native food species, with special attention to native fruits, as a way to expand the food and nutritional base of the population. In this sense, the implementation of Agroforestry Systems (SAFs) cannot be based on the use of exotic species.

Agroforestry System Area (SAF) certified by SEMA/RS Vacaria/RS (2020)

The good acceptance of the implementation of SAFs and the growing use of native fruits in the early 2000s drove the need to create commercialization alternatives for these products. The concrete exercise of commercialization was a way of demonstrating to farming families that the long-awaited generation of income from native species was possible. On the other hand, it also made it possible for consumer families to have access to this type of product, normally neglected in the traditional market.

In this scenario, we initiated several reflection sessions, internally, with the CETAP team, as well as with our audience, to evaluate the best strategy to be followed. We concluded that it would be extremely important to

have a regional actor that was dedicated exclusively to working with the perspective of articulating the logistics of storage, processing and marketing of native fruit products, within a logic of complementarity and synergy with the other actions of the production chain. In the idealization of an enterprise with this function, we understand that this actor should be in the urban space, with the purpose of demonstrating that the actions of agroecology, in the case of native fruits, was an element that could also boost the generation of jobs and income in the urban space.

It is important to note that we do not see cities as just being a market. We understand that implementing new formats of food production and distribution in-

volves having urban partners that operate processing and distribution logistics. In short, the operationalization of a productive chain needs to be built and promoted by both rural and urban actors. It was from these motivations that the “Encontro de Sabores” was born, in 2007.

The headquarters of the “Encontro de Sabores” project is located in the city of Passo Fundo/RS, and has an agribusiness of native fruit products, in addition to having the infrastructure needed for storage and distribution of products. It also has a warehouse for collecting and distributing products in the city of Vacaria/RS.

Over time, the “Encontro de Sabores” experienced different challenges.

*Collection of
native fruits in
Coxilha/RS and
processing at
Encontro de
Sabores, in Passo
Fundo / RS
(2019)*



In the initial phase, we faced a lack of knowledge about pulping techniques, the appropriate equipment and adequate space needed to carry out the work. These difficulties were overcome with continuous tests, exchanges of information and the raising of funds necessary to make adjustments to the workspace. New challenges were presented in the instability of the offer and in the quality of the fruits and the pulp delivered by the farming families. In this sense, technical advisory and motivation work done with families and groups, carried out by CETAP, contributed decisively to greater stability in the supply and in the quality of the pulps and fruits.

In recent years, “Encontro de Sabores” has found variations between the volume of pulp and fruit supply and the volume of product

demand. Solutions have been sought through joint planning with producer families and groups regarding the volumes delivered, as well as agreements on payment commitments, through dialogue and greater harmony between the Solidarity Chain of Native Fruits, diversification of products offered and marketing channels, in addition to intensifying marketing.

In 2020, “Encontro de Sabores” stimulates the marketing of products from an approximate set of 150 families of farmers who are involved in the collection of pine nuts, butia, guava, uvaia, strawberry guava, açaí and jabuticaba Juçara, in addition to the production of pulps in different rural communities in the Mountain, Coastal, Alto Uruguai and Planalto do Rio Grande do Sul regions. Seven more families are also involved in the preparation of 25 different types of food, for cocktail

party services and in the preparation of dinners. As a member of the Solidary Chain of Native Fruits, “Encontro de Sabores” sells in different markets, such as: fixed points of sale, agroecological food fairs, stalls at events, cocktail parties and dinners.

The initiative to create an urban enterprise, such as the “Encontro de Sabores”, associated with the actions developed by CETAP, later resulted in a state articulation that allowed native fruits and agroforestry to start, in fact, to be seen in a different light by different segments of society. This process has served as a basis for supporting debates and defining strategies and actions in other agroecology networks, especially within the scope of the Ecovida Network of Agroecology, where this topic has been gaining visibility and expression during recent years.

*Processing and storage of native fruits and pulps at Encontro de Sabores
Passo Fundo/RS.*

*Cocktail party with agroecological food served at the event.
(2019)*



Solidarity productive chain of native fruits

The Solidary Productive Chain of Native Fruits of the State of RS (CSFN) involves a wide range of audiences and initiatives, being one of the newest and most promising articulations of the agroecological field in several territories of Rio Grande do Sul, not only because of the theme it proposes to work with, but by the structural form of its operation.

The proposal for the structuring of this chain began in 2011, when the State Secretary for Economic Solidarity and Support for Micro and Small Enterprises (SESAMPE), after knowing more about the work developed by CETAP and Encontro de Sabores, it identified that the construction strategy of a productive chain articulated between the rural and the urban should make up one of the six Productive Chains of Economic Solidarity that the Secretariat was willing to promote at a state level. In summary, we can say that CSFN is an organizational dynamic where diverse organizations, networks, companies, actors and articulations from the agroeco-

logical field and the economic solidarity are integrated and participate, who share a set of principles and collectively build operational agreements

CSFN members seek to implement a food production, processing and distribution format that encourages the conservation of local socio-biodiversity. They also implement a dynamic where workers are the protagonists of the different phases of this “system”, relating in an integrated manner, with a complementarity perspective.

The production and distribution structure

- © There are more than 40 products made from native fruits. Among them, we highlight: frozen pulp, popsicles, juices, ice cream, baked goods, cookies, pasties, puddings, mousses and pies.
- © In addition to boosting native fruits, the productive units have taken advanta-



ge of and added value to the production of pulp from other fruits available in different regions, such as: blackberry, citrus, mango, passion fruit and strawberry.

- © The volume produced, processed and sold reached 40 tons in 2019, ready for consumption, including pulps and derived products.
- © In general, commercialization takes place through the Solidary Chain of Native Fruits' chain of partner actors, in more than 40 different commercial spaces, in addition to the seasonal distribution of native fruit popsicles, juices for events and cocktail parties, frozen products for bakeries, restaurants and fairs in which groups and enterprises participated.

Price policy

- ⊙ Since 2011, one of the central concerns of the Solidary Productive Chain of Native Fruits is to keep the process of income generation and management open, transparent and based on values that are fair to all its members.
- ⊙ In the process of economic management, the principles of economic solidarity must prevail.
- ⊙ This work is a permanent challenge, which requires adjustments and adaptations that vary according to the specific context in which the different projects that make up the chain are located.
- ⊙ The price policy follows the same percentage of result/profit in the different stages, for the different “actors” involved, from production to the point of sale.
- ⊙ The proposal is to operate with an “open spreadsheet” system, for the formation of costs and sales prices, considering the collective construction of the “fair price” for each stage of the process.

This 20-year journey on this theme and, in particular, that of the last decade, based on the dynamics of the Solidary Chain of Native Fruits of RS, has generated many lessons, which has allowed us to point out important issues in the structuring and dynamization of agroecological productive chains which are articulated and managed by different actors, both from a logistical and economic point of view.

Among the lessons learned, we can say that it is extremely important to build food systems that are articulated between rural and urban initiatives, that is, the countryside and the city need, together, to think about and implement new formats of food production and distribution. This is important, since it is still quite common, when discussing agroecology, to have the idea that farmers are the only actors in this process.

Undoubtedly, the rural is an important part of this movement for obvious reasons; however, the urban universe needs to get involved and boost actions with a complementary logic. In addition to issues related to flows, we can consistently boost the proposal of agroecology to generate jobs and income in cities, involving several workers and thereby making supply networks more agile and efficient. Perhaps this is our greatest challenge now: to expand partnerships with urban sectors in order to increase the number of enterprises involved in this work.

Expanded Regional Meeting of the Solidary Chain of Native Fruits in Vacaria/RS, for planning and setting the price policy (2020)



The southern food circulation circuit of the Ecovida Network

Viable collective dynamics for the commercialization of agroecological foods on a larger scale, benefiting a greater number of farming families, especially in relation to the logistics of transporting the products to consumption centers, are recurring challenges to be overcome. To this end, farming families, production and advisory organizations linked to the Ecovida Agroecology Network, including CETAP, have joined together in the search for alternatives to overcome these challenges.

*Ecovida
Agroecology
Network group
conducts an
inspection visit
to renew the
organic
production
certification.
Três Arroios/RS
(2018)*

The different regions where CETAP operates are made up, in most cases, of small municipalities, where the organization of some families or local groups, even without a very significant number, are able to supply the fairs and other alternative marketing formats. Therefore, the construction of broader proposals, which allow for the entry of a greater number of families, which can collectively reach different consumption spaces, is something indispensable for the advance of the “agroeco-

logization” of the properties. It is based on this reality that CETAP and other partner marketing organizations discuss the construction of new formats, considering, in a special way, three aspects: local experiences already consolidated; the growing demand for agroecological foods and the increase in the number of farming families seeking to enter into new models of production and commercialization, which make it possible for them to remain on the properties in a dignified manner.



The ECOTERRA Association's initiative to seek new links

In the early 2000s, farming families associated with ECOTERRA (Regional Association for Cooperation and Agroecology), which is based in the municipality of Três Arroios/RS, were losing part of their production, as the local market was not absorbing the quantity produced. Initially, dialogue was sought with the markets and the public authorities of the municipalities in the region, so that they could absorb this production. However, the new demands created were not enough. This situation provoked the debate to build a commercialization process for other urban centers, with a larger population. The next step was to join a dynamic that articulated actors from the Agroecology Ecovida Network in different states. However, the demand was still low, not being expressive of the association's possibilities of supply.

In 2006, from a demand to supply fairs, fixed points and restaurants in Curitiba/PR, an articulation for the exchange and sale of agroecological foods began. Thus, the Southern Circuit process began, based on a partnership between advisory and marketing organizations:

- ⊙ Regional Association for Cooperation and Agroecology (ECOTERRA), in Três Arroios/RS;
- ⊙ Association for the Development of Agroecology (AOPA), Curitiba/PR;
- ⊙ Cooperativa Ecoserra, from Lages/SC;
- ⊙ Cooperafloresta Associação, Barra do Turvo/SP.

The initiative mobilizes technical advisory, production, collection, logistics, distribution and marketing organizations of agroecological foods in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná and São Paulo. Articulation with networks in other states is already in the process of consolidation. The Southern Circuit involves more than 1,600 families of ecologist family farmers, in addition to several advisory organizations which operate in the different stages, from the production process to the final consumption. CETAP operates

directly at the ECOTERRA station in Três Arroios/RS, where it directly accompanies 100 farming families.

The performance of CETAP in the technical-productive, organizational and flow guidance together with ECOTERRA allows for an increase in the number of families involved, with the consequent increase in the diversity and the volume of food produced.

Opening of the Ecoterra Pavilion in Três Arroios/RS (2018)



This dynamic seeks to make the commercialization of agroecological foods collectively viable, expanding direct sales, in an organized manner and with fairer prices, considering the real production costs of families, plus the costs of organization and logistics, presenting a final price that does not exploit those who consume the products.



The exchange and circulation of food between the regions allowed the ECOTERRA station to increase the diversity of food offered. At the beginning of the process, there was food in greater quantity - the Valencia orange. Today, more than 70 foods are offered, on a regular basis, in larger quantities and with guaranteed sales. In our region of operation, the guarantee of agroecological production takes place through the participatory certification issued by the ECOVIDA Agroecology Association.

Dynamics organization

The dynamics of the circuit are organized into “stations”, which correspond to the local organizations involved in the collective management. These organizations nominate a person for direct contact with the other stations,

who becomes responsible for systematizing the demands and requests between the partners involved in distribution and marketing, following a production plan made with the involved farming families.

The circulation of food is carried out the farmer's trucks and vehicles as well as organizations that, from the stations, carry out the exchange of food on the planned routes. Approximately every 45 days, there is a face-to-face meeting between the stations, when representatives of the farming families and advisory organizations make decisions about price formation, planning, logistics, organization of offers, demands and financial arrangements.

The representatives of the ECOTERRA station point out that the objective of the work in the Alto Uruguai region of Rio Grande do Sul is to

“make ecological farming families viable, which today are excluded from the productive, technical and conventional system, as they do not have enough land or investment capital. With production planning and fair prices, we show that ecological agriculture can indeed produce large quantities of food, to help improve society's food quality”.

Spaces accessed by the circuit:

- ◉ Agroecological fairs
- ◉ Public sector institutional programs (PNAE)
- ◉ Small markets
- ◉ Restaurants and specialty shops
- ◉ Cooperatives and consumer groups
- ◉ Direct sale on the property (rural tourism)
- ◉ Sale at events in rural communities and the Ecovida Agroecology Network

One of the criteria built collectively is that each station has autonomy in organizing its local partnerships for production and commercialization. However, the stations that are involved and active in the circuit have priority in the delivery and purchase of food from the other stations. It is worth mentioning that all foods that circulate in these dynamics are agroecological, and certified.



Generating credibility through collective participation

SPGs (Participatory Guarantee Systems)

Agroecology, through healthy food, income generation and a methodology to connect people in different dynamics, has gained strength in today's society. An increasing portion of the population seeks food and products identified with socio-environmental responsibility and health promotion. At the same time, we still have many challenges, which go beyond awareness, production, processing and distribution of agroecological foods.

The process of building a new food system, based on agroecology and on sustainability, requires a participatory credibility model.

This construction and its consolidation involves different actors, from rural and urban areas, who need to expand their dialogue and define strategies in different fields: political, technological, economic and social.

Despite the fact that food is present in our daily lives, we rarely ask ourselves what we are putting on our table, that is, where does the food we eat daily come from? How and by whom were they produced? How far did they travel and how were they transported to my table? What is the purpose of those who produced, transported and sold them? Who were the biggest beneficiaries in this process? These questions help us understand the

need to build partnerships and articulations that promote more transparent and participatory processes, with the objective of offering a guarantee and credibility to ecological production.

CETAP is part of the Ecovida Agroecology Network which, together with other organizations in southern Brazil, over the years has developed a method called Participatory Certification. However, with the approval of the National Law that regulates organic production in Brazil (Law N°. 10,831, of 2003), this process became known as **Participatory Guarantee Systems – SPGs**.

Ecovida Agroecology Network group holds meetings with families of farmers during the inspection for the certification of organic production. Três Arroios/RS (2018)

It is extremely important to streamline a process that demonstrates, in an open and transparent way, how the various stages of production, processing and distribution of agroecological foods are carried out, generating credibility between those who produce and those who consume. Thus, ecological production generates recognition and value for those who produce, in addition to healthy, adequate and quality food for those who consume. The SPG is one of the ways to generate credibility in a more collective way and with the involvement of a larger number of sectors of society.

SPG on the basis of CETAP's performance

CETAP, from the beginning up to present day, through the most diverse actions it promotes, has always stimulated cooperation between people and organizations, because it believes that cooperation is one of the fundamental principles in the promotion of agroecology. Only through the practice of cooperating does it become possible to build local, regional and broader dynamics, capable of promoting credibility processes and the principles of agroecology.

This willingness, commitment and, above all, the spirit of collectivity, allowed us to dream, plan and start - together with the other organizations that are part of the Ecovida Agroecology Network and

based on the practices of families and agroecological groups - the implementation of a collective system of generation and credibility, which came to strengthen the relationship between those who produce and those who consume food.

The SPG is a way of contributing to the strengthening of cooperation between different actors - rural, urban, production, processing and advisory - sharing a common objective. Therefore, it is the understanding of CETAP, that the SPG is much more than a tool to guarantee food certification and to access other market channels, but it is a social dynamic, which strengthens the different agroecological dimensions in a given region and state. Currently, CETAP is directly involved in the organization and promotion of two nuclei of the Ecovida Agroecology Network, the Planalto and Alto Uruguai Nuclei, also acting as support to the Serra Nucleus in Rio Grande do Sul.

Things learnt

The dynamics built for the SPGs have helped to create mechanisms for the participation and organization of families, which significantly strengthens some points, such as:

- ⊗ promotion and maintenance of group actions;
- ⊗ spaces for collective discussion of various topics related to agroecology (seeds, production techniques, processing, marketing...);
- ⊗ access to different ecological food markets, stimulating production growth and strengthening the identity of the Ecovida Network;
- ⊗ exchange of experiences and knowledge of what happens within the group, which strengthens the farming families socially, through discussions on the challenges faced and the search for solutions to problems.



Participatory Guarantee System (SPG) inspection visit - São João da Urtiga/RS (2020)

The whole journey brings learning opportunities, but also doubts:

- a) what individual practices can be adopted daily to contribute to the agroecology proposal?
- b) what aspects can be incorporated into reflections, school activities, studies and research objects to deepen, qualify and give visibility to what has been accomplished, pointing out measures that can be adopted to expand the production and use of healthy foods?
- c) what public policies can be redirected or created to support these forms of food production and marketing?

Instead of insisting on showing the possibilities, we leave questions for each person to be able to contribute, adding actions that are being or can be carried out. Each idea added will be of great value to the collective.

I hope that these notes contribute to the awakening and to the importance of changes, starting with ourselves and how our attitudes can sensitize other people we coexist with.

Finally, we want these reflections to encourage us to create something that goes beyond “common sense”, because the limits of this reality that have been placed on us generate a sense of mediocrity for the human species vis-à-vis life as a whole; more strongly evidenced through the reality of the Covid-19 Pandemic this year 2020.





Investment in research and public policy support

The lack of support for public policies to stimulate ecological production is a constant. The situation could be much more favorable if we had investments and incentives for research at universities and in rural areas. Local food production makes it possible to structure more sustainable dynamics, reducing energy expenditure to commercialize and offer fresher and better nutritional quality food, with immediate gains for the municipalities' economy. To overcome these obstacles, it is important to have partnerships that identify with the proposal for sustainable development.





Ecological agriculture perspectives in the region and operation of CETAP

The production of organic foods, free of pesticides and chemicals in Brazil, continues to grow and change the reality of farming families that work to produce these foods, as well as those who seek a healthier diet. According to the Brazilian Council for Organic and Sustainable Production (Organis), the cultivation of these foods grows an average of 20% per year, which demonstrates that this change in behavior is not just a fad, but is becoming a sustainable productive dynamic.

The growing technification of agriculture that has been implemented in recent decades is not inclusive, on the contrary, many farming families continue to be left out, in the countryside. Families who have little “arable” land for the production of commodities are unable to support their families, often being forced to leave their properties or live in unsuitable and even inhumane conditions. We are often shocked by the impoverishment of urban peripheries, but we also forget about the families and rural communities that have been abandoned by the current capitalist model.

The production of food, following the agroecological principles and the different dynamics of commercialization that exist, show us, in a concrete way, the viability of the farming families to remain in the field, even with only a little land area, being able to support their families with dignity. This model builds cooperative relationships between farming families and city dwellers, strengthening the different links in this chain that is advancing and establishing itself as a sustainable way of life, respecting the environment in which we live.

*Agroecological
production
area in
Aratiba/RS
(2018)*

Perspectives and challenges for CETAP in this context

Throughout its history, CETAP has consolidated itself as being one of the organizations that keeps its focus on contributing to the affirmation of family farming and its different organizations, particularly acting in the construction of sustainable agriculture, based on agroecological principles, working towards opening spaces and opportunities for exercising active citizenship and strengthening social organizations. Thus, we can affirm that:

a) there are farming families that want to advance in agroecology.

The view of the organization for those who are being excluded from productive processes, living in precarious conditions in agriculture, is something essential. There is a significant number of farming families still in a vulnerable situation and without any support, who are seeking support to build alternatives for their survival in the countryside. One of the forms of support is agroecology and its dynamics, especially if we consider the growing demand on the part of consumers and their organizations for healthy food, produced with more environmental and social consciousness as well as being economically just. Our challenge is to maintain the “Cetapian essence”, constantly adapting to changes in time and social context, welcoming different audiences, demands and dynamics;

*Agroecologist
family farmers.
Ibiraiaras/RS
(2018)*

b) there are families that have already proved that it is possible.

There are many questions about the feasibility of producing food following the principles of agroecology. We have several experiences that prove that it is possible to produce, sell and live without harming the environment, offering clean and healthy food for consumption. These experiences are references for organizations and other families that want to know more about and experience, in practice, the viability of agroecology in several aspects;

c) it is necessary to increase the participation of city dwellers in food processing and marketing enterprises.

Urbanization, with the increase in the distance between homes and places of work or study, the population's distance from culinary practices and the little time dedicated to food, have now started demanding food with minimal processing, which makes the preparation and consumption thereof more practical. Even in the school environment, due to the poor infrastructure of schools and the reduction in the number of human resources involved in preparing food, the need for food that is also synonymous with practicality is evident.



Meanwhile, in rural areas, the production of agroecological foods has been challenged by the decrease in the size and number of families, by the need for farmers to participate in different spaces to guarantee the certification issued by the PGS and, often, by the need to be present in commercial spaces, such as fairs, for example. This scenario has motivated and evidenced the need for processing units assumed and managed by partners that respect the principles of agroecology and that can offer the consumer quality food at a fair price, without overloading the farming family;



Work with Early Childhood Education students in a Municipal Public School. Passo Fundo/RS (2019)

d) education is necessary for responsible consumption and healthy eating.

The current agricultural food system faces major sustainability challenges and aspects related to consumption and it is crucial to reverse this scenario and start promoting a sustainable system that is synonymous with health and that can guarantee food and nutritional safety for future generations. A large portion of the population remains oblivious, or chooses not to engage in sustainable consumption practices, which can be explained by the excessive amount of advertising approaches that promote and encourage the consumption of nutritionally unbalanced, hyper-palatable foods that do not respect culture and the environment, and that have been derived from a system that is economically and socially unfair.

A greater supply of agroecological foods, in itself, is already a counterpoint. However, actions of an educational nature that seek to bring reliable information about healthy and sustainable food to the population are also necessary, enabling consumers to become more aware of the impacts caused by their food choices and, thus, assume greater responsibility with their health and the environment;



Pé na Terra Fair takes place next to the Utopia Restaurant. Sananduva/RS (2020)

Social and environmental setbacks threaten achievements

We are experiencing a cloudy period, because the achievements we have reached are being threatened by the interest of the capital associated with agribusiness agriculture, with the release of a diversity of pesticides, progress in deforestation and land grabbing, neglecting climate change and its potential impact. Anyway, they are small setbacks at the moment, but very worrying in social and environmental aspects, especially for future generations.

e) we need strategies for institutional support.

In view of the changes that are taking place, thinking about strategies of resistance and survival of Civil Society Organizations that defend agroecological, diversified and sustainable food production, carried out by farming families, articulated with urban families, becomes increasingly necessary and urgent. CETAP has always maintained, as a guide for its actions, the principle of being a motivator in the construction of processes that directly aim to support farming families and consumers who challenge themselves to build different sustainable and viable ways of organization, to maintain and sustain their families in a dignified manner;

f) our performance must be articulated in networks.

With regard to working in networks, historically, we have always had this perspective, starting with the participation and articulation of the PTA Network, which brought together entities supporting another model for family farming, on a national scale, and participating in the Brazilian Association of

Non-Profit Organizations (ABONG). In the southern region of Brazil, we have already participated in the TA-Sul Network and encouraged the creation of the Ecovida Agroecology Network. In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, we established a relationship with other partner entities, in an articulation called the Consortium of NGOs, with which we pleaded policies for the support the promotion of Ecological Agriculture and we also carried out joint projects under the coordination of CETAP. At an international level, we have established partnerships with partner entities to support projects that promote and strengthen agroecology. In our relationships with the beneficiary public, we encouraged collective activities and organizational actions that resulted in the constitution of several organizations. Thus, we can say that along the way, networks have been built that currently shape institutional relations and that encompass the different levels of activity of the entity, involving farmers, consumers, their organizations and partner entities. At the moment and at this current juncture, the challenges are intensifying and the strategy of cooperation and networking is essential to remain and advance in ecological agriculture.

*Study meeting
about the
Networks
promoted by
CETAP, with the
participation of
representatives
from the
Solidary Chain
of Native Fruits
and the
Consortium of
NGOs-RS.
Passo Fundo/RS
(2018)*



Production systems tuned to the natural environment

The construction of the ecological agriculture proposal takes into consideration the valuation of diversified production, socio-biodiversity and socio-cultural characteristics. The analysis of local ecosystems and traditional production systems contribute to the implementation of production systems that are more in tune with the natural environment. We can consider that there is innovation in the adaptation of traditional knowledge and in its adaptation to organic production systems, which provided for an increase in food supply.



Lessons learnt from the path of ecological agriculture

Time is the master of history and teaches us that in our life, which is brief, we must value the accumulated knowledge, in addition to having respect for and taking care of the environment and its ecosystems. Only then, will we find balance in the forms of coexistence and cooperation between all organisms on the planet.

The practice of ecological agriculture requires and encourages knowledge and learning, both for those who are already dedicated to the production process, and for those who want to start this way of producing food. Engaging in commercialization, seeking food supply with diversity and quality, through relationships of trust and credibility, it also requires and provides constant learning for farmers, consumers and support entities. We want to share some of the greatest lessons learnt that this journey has provided us.

1. It is possible to produce food with different technological formats.

Ecological agriculture breaks with “established truths”, that it is only possible to produce food using “conventional” technologies, which are presented as hegemonic, showing in a concrete way, that it is possible to have other options for food production. Ecological agriculture, practiced for decades by farming families, shows us that it is possible to produce food using more appropriate principles and technologies, with great socio-environmental responsibility. The different dynamics of commercialization of ecological foods are extremely important to consolidate viable systems, from production to consumption with the urban dwellers, guaranteeing a fairer price for those who produce and those who consume.

2. Small properties are of great importance for the economy and local development.

With their logic of production and reproduction, small rural properties continue to be very effective. They produce food diversity, adopting sustainable practices, in environments that stimulate knowledge and the exchange of experiences between generations. When producing for self-supply and income generation, they adopt management measures that reduce the risk of unfeasibility, contributing to food safety and strengthening the economy in general. It is necessary for the whole of society to realize the importance of this model, as this way of managing production units is very efficient when development with inclusion and sustainability is desired.



3. Producing and marketing environmentally friendly foods increases opportunities for women and young people.

The dynamics of production and marketing of agroecological foods are enabling changes in gender relations as well as between generations. Family members participate in the various stages and phases, from production to marketing. Thus, the decision-making process starts to have greater participation, including decisions on how to share the results achieved through sales and the priorities for the use of resources in the production unit. Social relationships contribute to the development of personal skills and the self-care of the people involved. It should be noted that women and young people have great sensitivity to and interest in ecological agriculture.

4. Knowing the origin and knowing how the food that was consumed was produced are rights that are being increasingly exercised by people.

Ecological agriculture is making a significant contribution to this process in which consumers seek to know how and where food was produced, enabling the transfer of information on the different production formats and the exchange of knowledge between the rural and urban. By exercising this right, they contribute to improving production systems, expanding access to food as well as increasing food and nutrition safety for current and future generations.

5. It is necessary to invest in spaces that make it possible to expand access to ecological foods.

The "laws of the market" suggest that the producer seize the opportunity to sell ecological food at higher prices, due to the differences between supply and demand. However, the different productive formats make it possible to practice prices that are accessible to a significant portion of the population. The direct relationship between farmers and consumers stimulates price adjustment. Selling food in different spaces allows greater security to plan production and minimizes risks of losses when unforeseen events occur. In societies like ours, with great social inequalities, there is a need to create and strengthen spaces that facilitate the population's access to food. Food and nutritional safety is unlikely to be achieved if food is considered only to be a commodity, with the purpose of making a profit. Farmers and consumers can build viable options that promote greater sustainability and food and nutritional safety.

6. Biodiversity increases food and income opportunities.

Betting on diversified production brings opportunities for a more balanced and adequate family diet, greater safety in the productive aspects as well as in the supply of food and income generation. The diversity offered in the commercial spaces stimulates new demands and different food uses, expanding income generation. When we neglect or destroy biodiversity, we are reducing opportunities for food, health, income and quality of life for both current and future generations.

7. The valorization of regional, seasonal and agroecological foods is of unquestionable importance.

The production and commercialization of agroecological foods in different cities, with different population sizes, is enabling people to start to value these healthy, fresh or minimally processed foods which have been produced locally, respecting the seasonality of production. In addition, they promote the recovery and appreciation of traditional and native foods, which increases the food supply in both quantity and variety of flavors. Choosing these foods is a conscious and responsible attitude.

Moment for exchanging seeds, materials and experiences during CETAP's 30th anniversary celebrations.

Três Arroios/RS (2016)



8. Strengthening agroecology is related to stimulating partnerships and strengthening institutions.

Involvement in the production and commercialization process stimulates different capacities in people, which extends to other spaces, such as associations, cooperatives and support organizations, for example. During the journey, new needs are identified and partnerships are established. The different parties are challenged to exercise dialogue so that they can contribute to the achievement of common goals. The commitments made by civil society organizations contribute to the strengthening of their institutions.

9. Agroecology strengthens the relationships of partnerships and the trust between rural and urban.

The production of ecological food is carried out using practices and technologies that generate credibility for farming families organized in groups. This relationship of trust is first formed among the farmers themselves and then later with customers. This credibility is fundamental for the expansion of the clientele and for the purchase and sale relationships to last longer. By exercising the right to know who and how food was produced, people take care of their health and thereby collaborate with the improvement of food and nutrition safety in general. Ecological agriculture is stimulating exchanges, motivating visits to production units and sharing knowledge between the rural and urban.



10. The sale of ecological foods should encourage sustainable production and conscious consumption.

The approximation between those who produce and those who purchase food is very important. Historically, these social segments have been identified as being conflicting, emphasizing that: "Those who produce and sell want to earn more and those who buy want to pay less". Direct sales and other marketing dynamics of ecological agriculture helped to transform this propagated "conflict" into collaboration and cooperation, after all, those who consume want to know how the food was produced and those who produce are proud to explain and invite them to get to know their area of production. The paths that arise from these actions indicate that the forms of production tend to be qualified and expanded, in an integrated way with the conscious and responsible consumption of those who live in urban centers. Thus, ecological agriculture tends to encourage conscious consumption; and conscious consumption tends to stimulate ecological agriculture. We need to highlight the depth of this process, which enables development with inclusion and responsibility.

11. Actions to promote agroecology collaborate with the theme of Food and Nutritional Safety.

Healthy foods from adequate and responsible production processes are contributing to the reflections and actions that seek to improve the population's food and nutritional safety. Food and nutrition safety brings together a set of principles and practices that must be adopted through the policies and attitudes of public managers, entities, companies and individuals, assuring the right of all people to have access to quality, nutritious and healthy food. The importance of valuing local and regional foods, the consumption of fresh or minimally processed foods are also aspects that are present in the reflections and practical activities carried out, such as tasting events and promoting gastronomic alternatives. This debate also takes place in spaces for dialogues about school meals, such as municipal councils, with the aim of offering adequate and good food to students. Although with financial limits, local actions are appearing in this direction, which in turn, tend to motivate other actions by educators on related topics, in addition to stimulating dialogues in family spaces about adopted eating practices.

Tasting event and divulgation of dishes based on native fruit at gastronomic enterprises, restaurants and hotels. Lagoa Vermelha/RS (2019)

12. Dialog spaces are important to stimulate actions and policies to encourage ecological agriculture and responsible consumption.

Ecological agriculture follows the guiding principles of the dialogues and actions that are carried out in groups, nuclei, farmers' networks as well as those of collaborating partners and consumers. The food offered is stimulating dialogues and the exchange of information, as is the case with municipal and state councils, which are composed of diverse and equal representations. It

seeks to identify actions that can be taken collectively and policies that can be adopted or improved, aiming to support the production of healthy food and responsible consumption. Being present, showing what is done, by whom and for what purpose, are conditions to gradually gain support and expand people's perspectives. The exercise of dialogue in spaces with different thoughts and objectives is necessary and healthy for personal, collective and proposal growth. We will not have great achievements if local actions do not have social and political recognition, supporting the decisions which have a greater reach that may be adopted.

Constituting and maintaining spaces for food supply and integration between those who produce and those who consume provide important indicators and learning opportunities, which collaborate with the need to improve production systems and access to agro-ecological foods. These are references that show the possibilities of other formats of social relations and development. Established partnerships and networks are good indicators of social recognition of the importance of what is being accomplished.

In our institutional trajectory, we realized that collective construction is more challenging, but it allowed us to gradually

build up lessons that made the Alternative Agriculture proposal conform to Agroecology; and ecological production gained visibility and social acceptance. However, we need to be aware of the appropriation of the narrative by green capitalism, which turns environmental preservation into an intention to increase profits. Thus, the effort we have made to produce healthier food, with environmental preservation, defending the fact that food is a right for everyone, becomes compromised, and as a result not being accessible to the most vulnerable sectors of society.

We have identified, in the accumulated learning, that it is necessary to bring consumers closer to far-

mers, in order to foster social support for ecological family farming. Therefore, it is necessary to disseminate reliable information regarding food, agriculture and consumption, seeking to create, together with consumers, an awareness that changes daily attitudes and consumption habits.

In education, we see a fundamental path to provide new knowledge and training to citizens. It is necessary to provide access to new views of care and respect to be taken for the environment and life, as well as information and knowledge about where food comes from and how it is produced. Thus, we will promote the awakening to new behaviors and attitudes of consumption.



Commercialization evolves with the increasing demand

Commercialization has evolved in a very significant way, based on consumer demand. It is necessary to constantly improve this process in order to offer consumers healthy and identified foods, with traceability and certification. With these procedures, it is possible to circumvent the lack of understanding of the health surveillance services and provide credibility to consumers. In this regard, the organization and articulation of social actors is essential to assert and ensure the production and supply of ecological foods.



Ecological agriculture motivates conscious consumption and the transformation of attitudes

When people take ownership of the ecological agriculture proposal, they become more aware and change their attitudes towards consumption, as they challenge themselves to know more about where the foods originate from and how the food they consume is produced.

They perceive the importance of the farmers' activities, rural succession, food quality, preservation of the environment, their health, public policies and other aspects related to production and consumption. In this sense, we can affirm that ecological agriculture allows for the discussion about conscious consumption and encourages changes in attitudes.

Organization:



CETAP
AGRICULTURA ECOLOGIA

Support:

