

PERCEPTION OF SMALL FARMERS CONCERNING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN SANTARÉM, PARÁ

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Abstract

In recent years, there have been changes in how society uses raw materials, food, and non-renewable natural resources. This stems in particular from population growth, which makes it necessary to practice environmental conservation and increase productivity. Sustainable food production has been the subject of several debates, but these often do not reach small farmers. In this sense, this work evaluated, through an electronic questionnaire, producers' knowledge about the term sustainability and whether they carry out sustainable activities on their properties. First, contact was made with some regional farmers, the purpose of the survey was explained, and a questionnaire was sent to those who agreed. Information was initially collected from 13 farmers in some locations in the Lower Amazon, Pará State. The questionnaire was sent between April and June 2022. It was structured with 22 questions using the Google forms tool. Data about socioeconomic aspects (name, telephone, age, sex, education), property size, production income, participation in agro-ecological and cooperative fairs, receipt of consultancy and/or assistance, knowledge about sustainable agriculture and its limitations were analyzed. There were also questions about soil quality and management and water supply. Initially, these first respondents were small farmers, and they had small production, mainly used for their own consumption; 92.3% of the producers said they do not sell at fairs, and 100% of the respondents were not members of a cooperative and did not receive any promotion or qualified assistance. The main results point out that, about general notions of sustainable agriculture, the farmers showed a high level of knowledge on the subject. This was probably due to the level of education of the interviewees: 61.5% had higher education. About the use of chemical fertilizers, 84.6% reported not using them, and for insect control, 92.3% did not use pesticides. When asked about crop-livestock integration, 46.2% did not adopt it on their property. Most of them expressed interest in making their property fully sustainable but did not know how to do it. In other words, sustainable farming plays an important role for society in the social, economic and environmental aspects, and can be practiced by farmers in a positive and beneficial way, provided that means are provided on how to proceed in practice.

Keywords

Agro-ecological, Conserve, sustainability.