

Agroecology and local public policies: from the land to the table, experience in building alternative marketing circuits in the City of Buenos Aires.

Objectives:

This paper aims to problematize the political and economic challenges for the construction of agro-ecological food systems from Family Farming (FA), peasant, ecological and locally referenced. The productive responses to the food and health crises generated by the corporate agro-food system have been increasingly visible since the implementation of agro-ecology, in a leading - but not exclusive - way by grassroots peasant organizations.

As a case study we will present the challenges of a concrete process of building short channels of agroecological commercialisation: the Agroecological Fair "From the Land to your Table". This is a municipal programme which, since 2019, has been marketing 5 tonnes of vegetables and fruit per month directly in four parks in the city of Buenos Aires, in the form of agro-ecological bags, produced in the fruit and vegetable belt of La Plata. The program is a joint venture between public agricultural extension agencies (INTA, Fundación ArgenINTA), peasant organizations and the government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires-Argentina.

Methodology and data analysis:

The present proposal - in a qualitative way - intends to analyse agroecology in its three dimensions as a science, as a practice and as a social movement, based on interviews with the peasant social subjects that participated in the fair "From the Land to Your Table".

We will also analyse the marketing dynamics carried out at the fair, the quantities and varieties of products marketed, and the profile of consumers looking for agro-ecological products. We will qualitatively analyse the different problems that have arisen in the constitution of a short circuit of local, alternative and agro-ecological marketing. The relationship between producers and consumers, as well as the role of the State, through its various agencies, in the construction of the direct marketing programme in public parks.

Problem addressed, assumptions and results

The agro-ecological production model is a concrete possibility of adaptation of the family agricultural production matrix, in the face of the socio-economic and environmental challenges imposed by industrial transgenic agriculture (global warming and its direct relationship with diet (Delgado, 2016) and the conventional agricultural production mode, the main emitter of greenhouse gases), in the current corporate food regime (McMichael 2015). With the analysis of the results of this proposal, we will seek to identify the potentialities and limitations of short circuits for an agro-ecological and nutritional transition (in the short and medium term) focused on the modality of direct marketing of seasonal vegetables in urban parks.

Description of the novelty and relevance of the work

The AF's agro-ecological proposals as part of the construction of alternative agro-food systems are concrete responses to the challenge of producing healthy food at fair prices in Argentina today. The sustainable agriculture proposed by these social subjects is a synthesis between the traditional modes of production of peasant communities (prior to the Green Revolution) and the processes of ecological transition developed in the last 40 years, within the framework of the construction of alternative agro-food systems, which have their most

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widespread philosophical and productive matrix in agro-ecology, thus building a unique proposal for agro-ecological rural development.

The main experience analyzed is an interesting articulation between local and national public bodies and peasant organizations that promote alternative commercialization, processes that have been growing steadily in recent years. These direct marketing proposals include both the modalities of their own premises (warehouses) and fairs, as well as short channels articulated between producers and urban consumer movements organized via a web platform. In general, these experiences lack scale and stability in sales (which would be mitigated by specific public policies for the sector, public purchases for hospitals, schools, access to land, crop insurance, permits for fairs, etc.).

The experience analysed is new - in several aspects - in the area of the city of Buenos Aires, both for the weekly frequency of the fair, as it is exclusive to agro-ecological producers, and for the scale of consumers it manages to reach. This experience is also an unprecedented joint venture between family farmers' organisations, INTA and the centre-right party that has governed the country's richest city for more than a decade.

Keywords : agro-ecology, agro-food systems, short circuits, family farming

References:

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