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Title

**Evaluation of the agro-ecological transition in several dairy farming systems with differentiation approaches (TAPE), Brazil.**

Brazil has an extremely varied cultural wealth, particularly when it comes to food. This diversity is the result of the presence of indigenous communities, the slave trade from the 16th century onwards and successive waves of migration of European origin from the 19th century onwards, particularly from Italy, Portugal, Germany and other regions. This mix of cultures has created immense diversity, particularly in the food sector. Each community has tried to preserve its roots, while adapting to local conditions, often by modifying its practices. Raw milk cheeses are a good example of this historical and cultural adaptation.

As part of the agro-ecological transition, the TAPE tool was used in five raw milk cheese production areas. The main aim of this study was to test the hypothesis that communities perpetuating traditional methods would be in a good position to make this transition, while taking into account the role of differentiation signs such as geographical indications and collective brands. More than 150 producers took part in this project in these five regions.

Several key points emerge from this study. Firstly, the average CAET score (agro-ecological transition assessment tool) across all properties was relatively satisfactory, at around 57. However, a more detailed analysis reveals significant differences between regions. For example, two very traditional areas with rugged terrain had high CAET scores. On the other hand, another region, where producers are located in island areas in the heart of intensive agricultural regions, has very low scores.

The most worrying point concerns farming practices. Irrespective of the region, they score the lowest, showing the profound impact of the conventional farming system, even on small, traditional farms. Another striking aspect of this study is that signs of differentiation, such as geographical indications, do not appear to be a direct catalyst for the agro-ecological transition. It is rather the established territorial specificities that play a driving role. The concepts of culture, tradition, social conditions and governance are linked more to the prior existence of these specific features than to the introduction of differentiation strategies.

The study also reveals the extent to which small farms are informal, which makes it difficult to assess their potential for transition. It is difficult to measure changes in farming and livestock practices in a sector that is largely informal. In conclusion, it appears that when farms organise themselves, regularise their operations, access training and finance, and diversify their distribution channels, they can create favourable conditions for an agro-ecological transition. This dynamic is based on making the most of existing cultural and food heritage.

Although this study shows that differentiation systems have not had a strong impact, it should be noted that these systems, such as geographical indications or 'selo arte' (a label for artisanal food products), are gaining in importance in Brazil. What's more, the productivist and capitalist discourse that accompanies these approaches is gradually giving way to a discourse centred on sustainability and the preservation of traditions. This could strengthen the role of signs of differentiation in the agro-ecological transition. The challenge is there, and success is not guaranteed, but the signs of change are visible.

### **Bibliographical references (max. 10)**

- Vanier M., 2009, *Territoires, territorialité, territorialisation*. Controverses et perspectives, Espaces et territoires, PUR, Rennes, 228 pages.