

## WOMEN FARMERS AND THE AUTONOMY PERCEIVED FROM AGROECOLOGICAL LOGBOOKS IN THE BAHIAN BACKLAND

*Mulheres Agricultoras e a Autonomia Percebida a partir das Cadernetas  
Agroecológicas no Sertão Baiano*

*Mujeres Agricultoras y la Autonomía Percibida a partir de las Libretas  
Agroecológicas en el Sertão Baiano*

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### ABSTRACT

The article aims to trace the profile of women farmers, understand the specificities of family organization and the marketing of domestic production and its contribution to the autonomy of these women. The research used a qualitative approach, analyzing secondary data generated by the passbooks of 57 women farmers from the PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO project in Bahia, developed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). As a result, it was found that the greater the farmer's access to income from her work, the greater the perception of autonomy and the essentiality of the agroecological passbook. The results also point to the importance of consuming and marketing products as a way of generating income and promoting farmers' autonomy. And finally, the importance of agroecological passbooks as a tool for promoting autonomy and income generation, contributing to improved resource management, promoting conscious and sustainable consumption, and increasing women's participation in agriculture and decision-making in the countryside.

**Keywords:** Agroecological Booklets; Housework; Farmer woman.

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## RESUMO

O artigo tem como objetivo traçar o perfil de mulheres agricultoras, entender as especificidades da organização familiar e a comercialização da produção doméstica e sua contribuição para a autonomia destas mulheres. A pesquisa utilizou-se uma abordagem qualitativa, por meio de análise de dados secundários gerados pelas cadernetas de 57 agricultoras do projeto PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO na Bahia desenvolvidas pelo Fundo Internacional de Desenvolvimento Agrícola (FIDA). Como resultado, constatou-se que quanto maior o acesso da agricultora à renda do seu trabalho, maior a percepção de autonomia e de essencialidade da caderneta agroecológica. Além disso, os resultados apontam para a importância do consumo e da comercialização dos produtos como forma de geração de renda e promoção da autonomia dos agricultores. E por fim, destaca-se a importância das cadernetas agroecológicas como ferramenta para a promoção da autonomia e geração de renda, contribuindo para a melhoria da gestão dos recursos, a promoção do consumo consciente e sustentável, e o aumento da participação das mulheres na agricultura e na tomada de decisões no campo.

**Palavras-chave:** Cadernetas Agroecológicas; Trabalho doméstico; Mulher agricultora.

## RESUMEN

El artículo pretende trazar el perfil de las agricultoras, comprender las especificidades de la organización familiar y de la comercialización de la producción doméstica y su contribución a la autonomía de estas mujeres. La investigación utilizó un enfoque cualitativo, analizando datos secundarios generados por las cartillas de 57 agricultoras del proyecto PRÓ-SEMIÁRIDO en Bahía, desarrollado por el Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA). Los resultados mostraron que cuanto mayor es el acceso de la agricultora a los ingresos procedentes de su trabajo, mayor es la percepción de autonomía y la esencialidad de la libreta agroecológica. Los resultados también señalan la importancia del consumo y la comercialización de productos como forma de generar ingresos y promover la autonomía de los agricultores. Por último, se destaca la importancia de la libreta agroecológica como herramienta para promover la autonomía y la generación de ingresos, contribuyendo a mejorar la gestión de los recursos, promover el consumo consciente y sostenible y aumentar la participación de las mujeres en la agricultura y en la toma de decisiones en el campo.

**Palabras clave:** Cuadernillos Agroecológicos; Trabajo doméstico; Mujer agricultora.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Despite recent advancements achieved by women's rights movements and advocacy, gender inequalities persist in society. Due to the gender relations established culturally, women's work is often less recognized compared to that performed by men. Family farming, as a category, is based on Chayanov's (1985) concepts of the family economy, characterized by the existence of organic links between the family and the productive unit, which materialize through the inclusion of productive capital in the family

assets and the articulation of domestic and production logics (Hora *et al.*, 2021; Sabourin; Samper; Sottomayor, 2014).

The sexual division of labor assigns men's work to the productive sphere and women's work to the reproductive sphere, further hierarchizing men's work over women's. Additionally, the unitary conception of the family economy abstracts domestic work (and domestic production), which often further nullifies the activities performed by women and their double workdays (FIDA, 2021; Herrera, 2019).

Almeida (2022) argues that there is an invisibility surrounding the work done by women, especially in family farming, where productive and reproductive work often overlap. Similarly, the distinction between domestic activities (work) and domestic production is blurred. This is the case, for example, with home gardens, which are considered spaces for reproduction and cultivation for self-consumption but also generate products for commercialization (Cardoso *et al.*, 2019; FIDA, 2021).

In many cases, although women are directly involved in production, the exchange and self-consumption are managed by them; however, the commercialization of family farming products is still carried out by men. This reiterates that female farmers generally face difficulties in participating in commercialization due to their gender roles.

According to Cardoso *et al.* (2019, p. 22), "we must be careful not to overlook the products donated and exchanged by women. These figures need to be valued as they are very present in relationships of solidarity and reciprocity." These relationships are fundamental to understanding the value that women have in the economic rationality of the market, broadening perspectives on productive and consumption processes. Self-consumption, for example, is a source of non-monetary income, enabling families to save resources on food purchases in markets, thereby addressing other important needs for their social reproduction.

Given this context, it is easy to find studies on the role of women in rural areas (Almeida, 2022; Jalil *et al.*, 2019; Herrera, 2019; Cardoso *et al.*, 2019; Negretto & Silva, 2018; Lusa & Freitas, 2017) however, the work developed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA) through the Agroecological Logbooks uses a strategy of monitoring, measuring, and empirically demonstrating the importance of women's work in agriculture for both the property and the family. The methodology aims to highlight the production led by women through data from the Logbooks, seeking to make visible the role of women in economic relations and demonstrate the importance of women.

Therefore, this article aims to draw parallels between domestic work, income, and the autonomy of female farmers, seeking to understand the specificities of family organization and the commercialization of domestic production. Additionally, it aims to verify whether the process of recording in the Logbooks contributed to the autonomy of the female farmers involved in the PRO-SEMIARID project in the state of Bahia.

The PRO-SEMIARID program, developed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA), operates in rural areas of 32 municipalities in the semi-arid region of Bahia, located in the central-northern part of the state. These municipalities are part of five identity territories (Jacuípe Basin, Piemonte de Diamantina, Piedmont Norte do Itapicuru, Sisal, and Sertão do São Francisco) and aim to promote sustainable development and reduce poverty in the semi-arid regions of Brazil.

The program's primary focus is to strengthen the productive capacity of rural families, improve food and nutritional security, and increase community resilience to climate change. Through investments in infrastructure, technical training, and support for family farming, it seeks to foster social and economic inclusion, boosting income generation and improving the living conditions of vulnerable populations in these areas.

The following sections present theoretical, methodological aspects, and main results that highlight the study's relevance.

This study offers three contributions. The first relates to how solidarity initiatives can represent an alternative for promoting the visibility of female farmers in society, integrating them into social, political, and economic circles. The second refers to the discussion on the everyday realities of inequalities faced by female farmers, the struggle for space, rights, and equality, as well as the efforts to strengthen the various forms of work they perform, which are implicated in the construction of sustainable livelihoods. Finally, the research proposes the Agroecological Logbooks as a tool for promoting the autonomy and visibility of female farmers, recognizing them as fundamental elements in the production, commercialization, and management of domestic production.

## **2 WOMEN FARMERS' AUTONOMY**

The autonomy of women farmers is a problem that remains in vogue in society because, despite countless advances, it still resists the immense gender inequality historically perpetrated in the patriarchal social body, which hides women's work in the production unit (Silva; Benites, 2022). In the debates on family and peasant farming, there

are several reflections that show the contribution of women in agri-food production, agroecology and sustainable management of natural resources, solidarity associations, among others (Hora *et al.*, 2021; Paulilo, 2016; Butto *et al.*, 2014; Nobre *et al.*, 1998).

Given their quest for autonomy, it is important to understand how and where the women in the agroecological Logbooks are involved in production processes, marketing channels and access to income. It can be seen that a significant part of the activities carried out by women are in the productive backyards, as Lacerda and Leal (2021) point out.

To be a woman is to be born marked by a social norm, even before you understand it or develop a critical capacity, to have your existence linked to the feminine, to care and to the home. When looking at rural women, hard work is labeled “help” and its recognition “invisible” (Herrera, 2019, p. 39).

In this way, studies seek to give visibility to women's economic contribution, recognizing the unpaid work they do. Everything that is produced through the backyards, mainly for consumption, donation or exchange, although disregarded and not accounted for, is family income (FIDA, 2021).

In addition to productive inclusion through the backyards, access to marketing is an important step in this process of recognizing autonomy, as access to income allows farmers independence in financial decision-making and, therefore, recognition of the importance of their work.

One of the biggest difficulties in the countryside, and an obstacle to women's autonomy and empowerment, is the invisibility of women's work. Negretto and Silva (2018) point out that peasant women are mainly responsible for producing food for their families' consumption, but their working hours are underestimated, as their agricultural work is considered an extension of domestic work, or simply a help.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, there have been significant increases in the areas planted with food, especially among agroecological women (Hillenkamp; Lobo, 2021). Even though women participate in the production process, they do not take part in the decision-making process regarding the property's activities, nor do they have access to ownership (of the land). In this sense, Lusa and Freitas (2017, p.8) point out that “access to land is power, and land ownership is even greater power, especially if it occurs in large extensions, accumulated in the hands of a single owner, and focused on only one type of cultivation”.



The focus of the agroecological report card methodology is on family farmers who carry out agricultural and non-agricultural activities, their relationship with production, marketing and income. According to Brandão *et al.* (2020), it can help analyze the markets and marketing channels adopted by these women farmers. And become a tool for linking rural women, production, marketing and their autonomy, valuing domestic work and organizing the product of rural work and, especially, demonstrating the value of women's work in the family context (Jalil *et al.*, 2019).

The methodology can be used to organize the product of rural work and show the value of women's work in the family context. The agroecological workbook methodology has been widely used by organizations and social movements working with family farmers, especially in the field of agroecology. This methodology makes it possible to collect data and information that can be used to draw up public policies and rural development projects that are better suited to farmers' needs. In addition, agroecological Logbooks can be used to stimulate the exchange of experiences between women farmers, which can help strengthen networks of cooperation and solidarity between them.

In short, the agroecological workbook methodology is an important tool for raising the profile of women farmers and promoting their economic autonomy. By making it possible to analyze production, reception and income activities, this methodology can help identify the challenges and opportunities faced by farmers and contribute to the development of public policies that are better suited to their needs. In addition, agroecological Logbooks can stimulate the exchange of experiences between women farmers and the strengthening of cooperation and solidarity networks between them.

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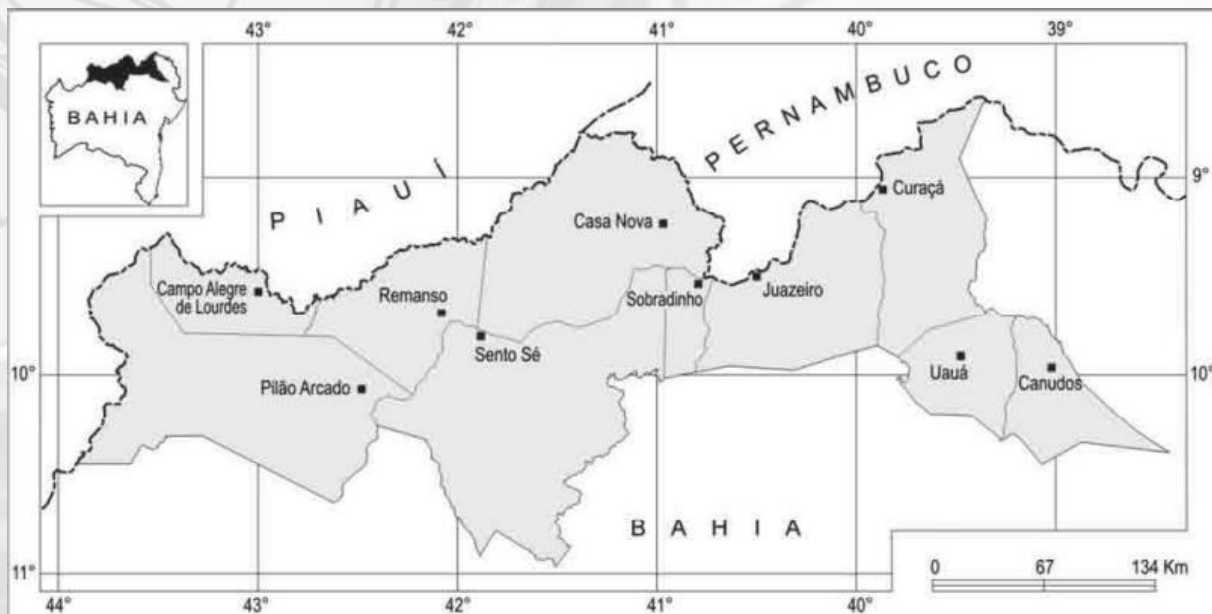
### 3 METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the research objective of profiling women farmers, understanding the specificities of family organization and the marketing of domestic production and its contribution to the autonomy of these women, a quantitative descriptive study was carried out using a survey, a strategy that seeks to discover facts, determine attitudes and opinions, and help understand behaviors, using the evaluation, analysis and description of a population based on a sample (Baker, 2000).

This study focused on analyzing secondary data from socioeconomic characterization questionnaires applied to 57 female farmers participating in the agroecological Logbooks project, with the general aim of drawing parallels between domestic work, income and the autonomy of female farmers. Specifically, this article aims to outline the profile of the women farmers; understand the specificities of the organization and marketing of domestic production; and finally, check whether the process of self-recognition has brought any benefits or well-being to the women farmers.

The agroecological Logbooks have been adopted in six projects in seven Brazilian states, benefiting 879 women farmers. However, this article focuses on the Sertão do São Francisco territory, which includes the municipalities of Campo Alegre de Lourdes, Pilão Arcado, Remanso, Sento Sé, Casa Nova, Sobradinho, Juazeiro, Curaçá, Uauá and Canudos (SEI/SEPLAN, 2023), as shown in Figure 02.

**Figure 02** - Sertão do São Francisco territory in Bahia



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.



The Sertão do São Francisco Territory has 10 municipalities, covering an area of 61,765.59 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population density of 8.06 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. According to data from the Demographic Census (IBGE, 2023), the Territory's population totals 497,969 inhabitants, which corresponds to 3.55% of the state's population. The geographic north of the territory with the central coordinates around Juazeiro (-9.4167, -40.5039) provides a useful reference for exploring this region in more detail (SEESB, 2023).

Located in the north of Bahia, approximately 566 km from Salvador, the Sertão region has, according to IBGE (2023), one of the lowest Human Development Indexes (HDI) in Brazil and one of the lowest per capita incomes in Bahia. The Sertão do São Francisco Territory is one of the regions of the state of Bahia, made up of several municipalities, and the exact coordinates can vary within the territory.

The main geographical features are the São Francisco River, one of Brazil's main rivers, which crosses the region, being crucial for agriculture, water supply and other economic activities. The region is characterized by a semi-arid climate, with low rainfall and high temperatures, predominantly caatinga, which is vegetation adapted to the region's dry conditions (IBGE, 2023).

The predominant economic activity in the region is goat breeding and dryland family farming, both of which are extremely dependent on rainfall and government policies, such as the National Program for Strengthening Family Farming (PRONAF). These characteristics highlight the economic and social vulnerability of the region, underscoring the need for effective public policies for sustainable development and improving the living conditions of local populations.

The research subjects were selected by the technical team at the Flor do Piqui Institute between March and May 2023, with the participation of one of the authors in the sample and data collection. Sampling was by convenience, considering women farmers with a good production profile or potential for productive inclusion. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sample that allows the researcher to make a deliberate choice of a sample that is more accessible, collaborative or available to participate in the process.

Considering the objectives of the article and using the case study strategy, the questionnaire was structured in three sections: the first section (profile) focused on information about the farmer, the rural establishment, the family or characterization of the family nucleus; the second refers to domestic and productive activities, the marketing model

and economic organization, consumption and the perception of autonomy of women farmers; the third refers to access to income, participation and well-being of women farmers.

To analyze and explain all the answers to the questionnaire, we used IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. In order to check the combinations between the answers (variables) we used Pearson's correlation coefficient. The aim was to measure the degree of linear correlation between two quantitative variables or characteristics of a given subject. According to Barbetta (2010), it can be measured in terms of direction or intensity. Intensity refers to the degree of relationship between two variables. The coefficient can take on a range of values from +1 to -1, which classifies its intensity.

**Chart 01** – Classification of correlation intensity

<b>Coefficient of Correlation</b>	<b>Rating</b>
R < 0,3	Weak
R < 0,6	Moderate
R < 0,9	Strong
R < 1,0	Very Strong

**Source:** Adapted from Barbetta (2010)

However, cross-tabulation was also used to compare the variables. The cross-tabulation tables show the relationship between two or more categorical variables. According to Barbetta (2010), the size of the table is determined by the number of different values for each variable and each unique combination of values. Cross-tabulation made it possible to measure the interaction between variable questions. To know a series of hidden data that are very useful to understand the results of an investigation more clearly (Bernard, 2022).

## **4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1 Profiles of the Women Farmers**

This section presents the data that characterizes the profile of the women farmers, with the aim of making it easier to understand the context of the analysis. Table 01 shows the characterization of the women farmers in terms of their age, the situation of their children, whether they live on the property, how long they have worked in the field and how long they have worked on the property.

**Table 01 – Profile of the women farmers**

Profile	Mean	%
Age	46	38,6
Children	2	82,5
Resides on the property	-	93,0
Countryside	32,9	47,4
Property	28,0	42,1

**Source:** Research data (2022)

As Table 01 shows, the average age of the women farmers is 46, just over 38.6% of the total sample; of these, approximately 82.5% have an average of two children. Most of them live on the property (93%). What is most representative of the profile of the women farmers is the comparison between the time the farmer worked on the land (field) and the time she worked on the property. The average time spent working in the fields is approximately 33 years (47.4% of the sample) and the average time spent working on the farm is 28 years (42.1%). This means that, on average, women farmers had worked in the fields for at least 5 years before moving to the property where they live. And that, absolutely, it can be said that the women farmers had already worked in the fields before moving to the properties where they live, either through a union with their partner or through marriage.

Another important piece of information that will be discussed later is the comparison between the average age of the women farmers (46 years) and the average time spent working in the fields (32.9 years); this means, roughly speaking, that women farmers started working in the fields at the age of 13. Cross-referencing the time spent working on the farm and their ages, it can be seen that many of the women farmers (73%) “got married” around the age of 14.

**Table 02 – Civil status of female farmers**

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Perc.
Married	28	49,1	49,1
Partner (male)	22	38,6	87,7
Partner (female)	2	3,5	91,2
Female	3	5,3	96,5
Widow	1	1,8	98,2
Separated	1	1,8	100
Total	57	100	

**Source:** Research data (2022)

Regarding the marital status of the female farmers, 28 identified as married (49.1%), 22 live with a male partner (38.6%), 3 are single, and 2 live with a female partner (our emphasis). The married women, which include those living with male or female partners (93%), reside on the property with their spouses, while the single women live with their parents, where they carry out the activities recorded in the notebook.

Regarding the relationship between the female farmers and the land, it can be observed that 68.4% of the properties are registered in the names of their husbands/partners, and only 7% in the name of the female farmer. Other forms, such as partnerships (15.8%), are still registered in the name of the spouse. To complete the information on the family structure of the female farmers, it is necessary to map the relationship between the children and the property. The majority (82.5%) of the female farmers have children living on the property (5.3% no longer reside in the countryside), and 12.3% do not have children. Children over 14 years old represent 40.4%, and those under 14 years old make up 42.1%. Among this 82.5%, 63% are daughters (girls), which will be considered in relation to domestic tasks in the next section.

#### **4.2 Productive Organization and Marketing Model**

The Farmer's Relationship with Income and Autonomy in Utilizing the Results of Her Work. Regarding the organization of domestic activities, 73.68% of the respondents reported being the main individuals responsible for domestic work, 100% are responsible for domestic production, and none of the surveyed farmers work outside their property—all of them carry out their activities on the property. Additionally, 11% have their children as companions in domestic tasks. Four of them (7%) hire external domestic workers, which is directly related to higher income from the commercialization of domestic products.

Supporting the findings of this research, Hora *et al.* (2021) affirm that an individual-based approach allows for recognizing women as individuals with their own projects, which, due to gender inequalities in the family, society, market relations, and with the State, have fewer opportunities to develop them.

The responsibility for domestic work and the situation of the children shows a strong positive correlation (0.838). This can be better explained when isolating respondents who have daughters (girls older or younger than 14 years). It becomes evident that domestic work is shared more with daughters and less with sons. However, it cannot be stated that the sons of these respondents do not perform domestic tasks.

This is related to research that points to a cultural aspect that transcends generations, embedding in the social fabric the view that domestic activities are a female responsibility (Soares, 2021). Particularly in the realm of domestic activities, these power relations are reproduced, leading to women having a more significant participation in domestic tasks that require more effort and time and are of lower social prestige. Men, on the other hand, tend to focus on domestic activities that allow them to maintain monetary control (Soares, 2021).

Table 03 presents the cross-tabulation of "Who manages the income" with "marital status." A strong positive correlation (0.758) can be identified. Isolated comparisons indicate that married farmers have less autonomy, while those who live with partners (male or female) have more access to and control over financial resources.

**Table 03 – Cross Tabulation: "Marital Status" / "Who Manages the Income"**

	Who Manages the Income		Total
	Other	Farmer	
Married	19	9	28
Partner (male)	7	15	22
Partner (female)	-	2	2
Female	-	3	3
Widow	-	1	1
Separated	-	1	1
Total	26	31	57

**Source:** Research data (2022)

Additionally, by cross-referencing "who manages the income" with "perceived autonomy," a positive correlation (0,689) was found. This correlation allows us to understand that the greater the farmer's access to the income from their work, the higher the perception of autonomy, which increases with the purchasing power that this work provides to the farmer and their family.

Another moderate positive correlation (0.597) is found between "Who manages the income" and "Consumption." The greater the perceived purchasing power of the farmer, the higher the perception of autonomy and the importance of the agroecological notebook. When we cross-reference the factors of income and perceived autonomy, as shown in Table 04, we find that farmers with incomes between R\$500.00 and R\$1,000.00 have little autonomy. The perception of autonomy or significant autonomy appears with incomes above R\$1,001.00.

**Table 04 – Cross Tabulation: "Perceived Autonomy" and "Perceived Income"**

	What is the monthly income recorded in the Logbooks?						Total
	R	50	1.0	1.5	2.	2.5	
<	50	1-1.0	01-1.5	01-2.0	0	01-3.0	
	0	00	00	00	1-2.5	00	
					2.5		
					0		
					0		
No autonomy	2	1	-	1	1	-	5
Little autonomy	10	4	2	3	-	1	20
Autonomy	3	4	5	7	2	2	23
High autonomy	1	-	4	2	2	-	9
Total	16	9	11	13	5	3	57

**Source:** Research data (2022)

A negative correlation (-0.638), though moderate, was found between income and perceived autonomy. This correlation needs to be analyzed together with the results of Table 05, which cross-references the factors "destination of production" and "incentive from the booklet." These data explain why lower incomes leave the women farmers demotivated and doubtful about the importance of the booklet in promoting their autonomy. This factor is related to the destination of domestic products. Commercialization, obviously, yields immediate monetary results, while trade and consumption indirectly benefit the family unit by reducing the need to make purchases.

Table 05 shows that those who receive (perceive) incentives from the agroecological booklet engage in the commercialization of their products (19), while those who trade or consume (17) do not have the same perception.

**Table 05 – Cross-tabulation: Product Destination and Booklet Incentive**

	Booklet Incentive		Total
	Yes	No	
Commercialization	19	9	28
Consumption	7	15	22
Exchange	-	2	2
Total	26	31	57

**Source:** Research data (2022)

Furthermore, the results of the "destinations of domestic products" with the perception of "incentive from the agroecological booklet," as tabulated in Table 05, make it clear that

the majority (31) of farmers do not perceive incentives from the agroecological booklet method. Although fewer in number, it can be observed that exchange and self-consumption are not the most effective destinations for achieving autonomy and income with domestic production, as they do not generate immediate financial resources like commercialization does.

Table 06, when cross-referencing the information on where domestic products are “negotiated” (commercialized or exchanged), finds that more processed products such as cheese, sweets, and juices are sold at fairs or in the home. Less processed products, with simpler preparations, are traded or exchanged within the community or at the church.

**Table 06 – Cross -Tabulation: “Domestic Products” and Commercialization**

	Where the Domestic Product is Sold						Total
	Home	Mark ets	Com munit y	Chu rch	Asso ciatio n	Door- to- Door	
Vegetables	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Cheese	1	3	-	-	-	-	3
Breads/Cakes	-	3	1	-	1	-	5
Sweets	2	6	-	-	-	-	8
Flours	-	-	5	4	-	-	9
Juices/Pulps	2	4	-	-	-	-	6
Crafts	-	1	-	1	1	1	4
Embroideries	1	2	1	1	-	1	4
Sewings	1	-	2	1	-	1	5
Total	7	20	9	4	2	3	45

**Source:** Research data (2022)

In this context, including the domestic space and backyard, which, although contributing to the food security of extended families, are often not considered in agricultural production, as demonstrated by the research on Agroecological Logbooks (Hora *et al.*, 2021; Telles *et al.*, 2018).

#### 4.3 Access to Income and the Well-Being of the Farmer

According to the latest Agricultural Census (IBGE, 2017), a significant portion of the Bahia territory is located in Brazil’s semi-arid region, where climatic conditions limit agricultural production, with a notable impact on the social and economic aspects in the countryside (Pessoti; Pessoti, 2019). The Census also reported that in 2017, establishments

under Family Agriculture (FA) led by women represented 19.7%, while Non-Family Agriculture (NFA) accounted for 15.2% (IBGE, 2017).

However, this uneven development is rarely understood through a sectoral or purely agricultural lens. One must consider the inherent inequality present throughout the economy, where family agriculture continues to play its historical role as a provider of cheap labor, often operating almost independently of the market, including through family self-consumption.

Thus, the economic analysis of the family and domestic labor, previously overlooked by neoclassical economics in favor of market exchange analyses, becomes central (Hora *et al.*, 2021). The profile reveals that most female farmers are responsible for managing the household finances, including the economic activities they undertake. Although they have greater autonomy to manage the resources under their control, in general, female farmers tend to invest these resources in purchasing basic necessities for their families (Telles, 2018).

**Table 07 – Income Uses**

Expenses with:	Monthly Income Perceived in the Booklet						Total
	R <5 00	50 1- 1.0 00	1.0 01- 1.5 00	1.5 01- 2.0 00	2.0 01- 2.5 00	2.5 01- 3.0 00	
Expenses on house	1	2	2	2	-	-	7
Expenses on Children	2	4	3	5	-	-	14
Expenses on goods*	-	-	-	3	3	5	11
Expenses on Leisure	-	1	1	3	2	-	7
Expenses personals**	-	1	3	5	5	4	18
Total	3	8	9	13	10	9we	57

\*White goods: refrigerators, washing machines, stoves, etc.;

\*\*Expenses for the farmer: cosmetics, clothing, personal hygiene, etc.;

**Source:** Research data (2022)

Filipak (2019) describes the use of the Logbooks by farmers as a tool that facilitates the visibility of their economic contribution, both to their families and to themselves in terms of self-awareness and autonomy. The booklet can be an important tool for changing the farmer's own perception, enabling her to also be a key player in the family income. The women themselves acknowledge the significance of the routine of recording in the booklet



for their lives, their personal and collective growth and autonomy, their self-awareness as women and agroecological farmers, and their value and dignity (FIDA, 2020).

Moreover, the records validate women's work and their recognition as farmers, increasing their access to public policies, which strengthens their autonomy (De Lacerda; Leal, 2021). The booklet reaffirms itself as a fundamental tool for making visible and recognizing the importance of women's work (Rody; Telles, 2021). As observed, the agroecological booklet also enables a quantitative assessment and a productive inventory of what is the responsibility of the farmers, contributing to the promotion of their autonomy and empowerment (Jalil *et al.*, 2019).

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout history, women have faced numerous challenges, and many issues remain to be addressed to achieve gender equality. However, significant progress has been made in recent centuries in some areas related to this theme.

An analysis of women farmers' autonomy and the use of agroecological Logbooks has provided valuable insights into the relationship between gender, work, and income in rural settings. It has been observed that domestic work is still predominantly carried out by women within a cultural framework that perpetuates the idea that these tasks are inherently feminine. This situation contributes to women's lower participation in more physically demanding and socially prestigious activities, such as agriculture.

Conversely, it was found that greater access to income from their work leads to a higher perception of autonomy and the importance of the agroecological booklet. Additionally, the results emphasize the significance of product consumption and commercialization as means of generating income and promoting farmers' autonomy.

It is important to note that farmers with incomes between R\$ 500.00 and R\$ 1,000.00 experience limited autonomy, which may be related to insufficient incentives for using agroecological Logbooks and how domestic products are utilized. Therefore, public policies and incentive programs must take into account the specific needs and circumstances of farmers to ensure greater autonomy and access to financial and technological resources. Finally, the importance of agroecological Logbooks as a tool for promoting autonomy and generating income for farmers is highlighted. By organizing and documenting activities and production, these Logbooks can contribute to better resource management, promote

conscious and sustainable consumption, and increase women's participation in agriculture and decision-making processes in rural areas.

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