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GESTÃO DO DESEMPENHO ORGANIZACIONAL EM LOTES DA REFORMA AGRÁRIA NO BRASIL: PROPOSTA DE FRAMEWORK DE AVALIAÇÃO



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Received: 11/03/2022 Accepted: 09/11/2024

# **ABSTRACT**

Currently, family farming is responsible for national food security, in addition to generating employment and income for a large portion of the Brazilian population. The agrarian reform lots are family farming productive units with specific characteristics, which justifies a different view of their organization and production. The main of this article is to outline a framework for organizational performance management in agrarian reform settlements, contributing to the analysis of development in rural areas. It is based on a database of 25150 lots, collected by the RADIS/UFMT Project, in the period from 2018 to 2022. Through content analysis method, the information related to the production model in the lots, in the light of the field technician's opinion, was worked on. The methodology allowed to identify the most frequent terms in the discourse and, with the support of theoretical sources and concepts, to categorize them into clusters, which constitute the categories for evaluating organizational performance appropriate to the reality of family farmers in the agrarian reform. The study adds contribution to knowledge for the post-creation of settlements and concession of agrarian reform lots in Brazil.

Keywords: Rural settlements. Rural development. Family farming.

# **RESUMO**

Atualmente, a agricultura familiar é responsável pela segurança alimentar nacional, além de gerar emprego e renda para uma grande parcela da população brasileira. Os lotes da reforma agrária se constituem em unidades produtivas da agricultura familiar com características específicas, o que justifica um olhar diferenciado sobre sua organização e produção. Diante desse contexto, o objetivo deste artigo é delinear um *framework* de gestão de desempenho organizacional em assentamentos de reforma agrária, contribuindo para análise do desenvolvimento no meio rural. Parte-se de um banco de dados de 25150 lotes, coletados pelo Projeto RADIS/UFMT, nos anos de 2018 a 2022. Por meio de análise de conteúdo, as informações relativas ao modelo de produção no lote, à luz da opinião do técnico de campo foi trabalhado. A metodologia permitiu identificar os termos mais frequentes no discurso e, com o subsídio de fontes teóricas e conceitos, categorizálos em agrupamentos (clusters), que se constituem nas categorias para avaliação do desempenho organizacional adequada à realidade dos agricultores familiares da reforma agrária. O estudo agrega contribuição ao conhecimento para a etapa pós criação dos assentamentos e concessão dos lotes da reforma agrária no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: Assentamentos rurais. Desenvolvimento rural. Agricultura familiar.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Faced with the existence of numerous conflicts between groups, on the one hand those who own land and, on the other, those who need it and claim their possession, the Brazilian state built and implemented the *Programa Nacional de Reforma Agrária* – PNRA (acronym for National Agrarian Reform Program), in two phases: PNRA I (1985-1989) that established the land policy that contained the mechanisms for mediation and resolution of such conflicts, through the redistribution of land that was proven to be unproductive to family farmers (Brasil, 1985), and PNRA II, in 2004, which provided for new models of agrarian reform settlements appropriate to the characteristics of each region and biome, aiming at production and quality of life integrated with territorial development (Brasil, 2005).

Through this agrarian reform policy, some studies, such as Rossetto et al. (2022), address that Brazilian society has advanced in social processes, contributing to improve development in rural areas. In addition, studies are advancing in discussions related to the post-creation of settlements and concession of lots, focusing on the performance of the management environment of rural properties (Souza; Souza; Durante, 2020; Mattia; Fabrini; Gregolin, 2021; Santana; Pires; Aguiar, 2022).

It is understood that there are conceptual and structural differences in the view of agriculture/ agribusiness and family farming, which is present in agrarian reform settlements and the focus of this research. Thus, studies that seek to broaden discussions about the management and articulation capacity of family farming actors in the search for regional development become relevant (Costa; Santos, 2021). It is noteworthy that, specifically, in the Brazilian agrarian reform settlements, Marques (2017) identified the existence of 557,695 establishments, which were responsible for a total gross income of about R\$11 billion, thus demonstrating the relevance of this environment for regional development.

In this context, the general objective of this study is to outline a framework for organizational performance management in agrarian reform settlements, in the light of the vision of field technicians and the management of the productive units of agrarian reform settlements, based on data collected by the Environmental Regularization and Diagnosis of Agrarian Systems Project (RADIS/UFMT), performed by Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso (UFMT), in a partnership with *Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agrária* – INCRA (National Institute of Agrarian Reform), in Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

# **FAMILY FARMING**

Family farming, as a specific form of production and work in the rural environment, can be understood as a social group that shares the same space (not necessarily a dwelling) and exploits, in common, a unit of production. This group is linked by ties of kinship and consanguinity, and other non-consanguineous members may eventually belong to it (Schneider, 2003). Adicionalmente a estas características, Abramovay (1998) reiterates the capacity of family farming to relate to the markets and its predisposition to follow the main technical advances, based on scientific knowledge.

Although there are different opinions about the concept and importance of family farming, the most well-known conceptions assume that, in this type of agricultural production, land ownership and work are intrinsically linked, aiming to ensure the family's livelihood through the productivity of the unit (Lamarche, 1997). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

Nations (FAO, 2018, p.10), Family farming can be defined as "a mode of agricultural production, forestry, fishing, livestock and aquaculture that manages and operates for a family and that depends predominantly on family labor". Thus, the importance of family farming lies in its ability to promote food security, job and income generation, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation, and the preservation of cultural traditions.

Another factor to consider in relation to family farming concerns the various synonyms that it can receive, such as small production, small farmer, low-income or subsistence agriculture, and even the term peasant (Denardi, 2001). Thus, it is necessary to highlight some distinctions between these concepts associated with family farming.

According to Article 3 of the Law 11.326 (Brasil, 2006), for someone to be considered as a family farmer and rural family entrepreneur, it is necessary to work at activities in rural areas, while meeting the requirements of not holding an area larger than four fiscal modules, predominantly using labor from the family itself, including the management of the establishment and obtaining a minimum percentage of family income from economic activities in its establishment (Brasil, 2006, p.1).

According to FAO data (2018), about 80% of the world's food production comes from family farming, which is responsible for occupying 85% of the cultivated land in Asia, 83% in North and Central America, 68% in the European continent, 62% in Africa and 18% in South America. In Brazil, more than 80% of farms are family-owned, and this scenario allows the country to become one of the largest food producers in the world in this segment (CONAB, 2021). It is also noteworthy that these foods also contribute to expanding the environmental sustainability of agriculture, preservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Thus, regardless of the synonyms used, family farmer, small farmer or subsistence farmer, what remains in the concepts and definitions refers to the differentiations of Brazilian family farming and its occurrence in other countries. It is important to highlight that, in Brazilian regions with high populations and scarce resources, it emerges not only as a form of food guarantee, but as a form of job creation.

Considering the above concepts, it is justified to adopt the theoretical framework of family farming in the approach to agrarian reform settlements as productive units, because it is on this foundation that it is expected to contribute to the theoretical discussions, by associating to this productive environment discussions hitherto carried out in a way restricted to the business and industrial sphere.

The participation of family farmers in the exchange processes, aiming to sell their production of fibers, raw materials and food to supply the cities, is one of the classic economic strategies of their relationship with society (Veiga, 1991). This occurs from the social construction of markets and marketing channels of family farmers with the different social actors active in the food system, from intermediaries, industries, cooperatives, retailers, consumers, among others. Some studies also reiterate that the future of these markets will be their (re)location, as they understand that the trend in the twenty-first century will be artisanal, diversified food, adapted to specific places and based on social relations of reciprocity (Pra et al., 2016; Albala, 2017).

According to Schneider (2016), markets are social relations, which are established between economic agents who can be producers or consumers, with a common interest in transacting goods, goods, resources or other assets. The existence of a market relationship presupposes the existence of exchanges that, in general, are motivated by multiple interests of the agents. Markets are part of the social processes of production and reproduction of economic activities and family units, they influence people's lives, their values and their culture, they shape and modify institutions and are a reason for conflicts, protests and disputes. To the extent that social relations and interactions begin to occur through the mediation of markets, these assume a decisive role in the organization of economic daily life and sociability, influencing attitudes, values and individual action. Thus, the PRONAF – *Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar* (National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming) aims to stimulate income generation and improve the use of family labor, through the financing of agricultural and non-agricultural rural activities and services, developed in rural establishments or in nearby community areas.

Regarding family farming initiatives, it is possible to classify markets into four types, namely: social proximity, territorial, public, and conventional markets (Figure 1). In the public markets,

there would be government policies known in Brazil, such as the PAA – *Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos* (Food Acquisition Program) and the PNAE – *Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar* (National School Feeding Program). Conventional markets would be those that trade agricultural commodities. In these two types of markets, the main characteristic is that social actors, such as family farmers, have little autonomy and a lot of commercial dependence, given that the rules and norms of operation are dictated by other social actors with more power. In the case of conventional markets, for example, agro-industrial companies control the marketing chains. In public markets, the main role belongs to the State, which can allocate countless resources to these initiatives, as well as modify the rules for regulating trade.

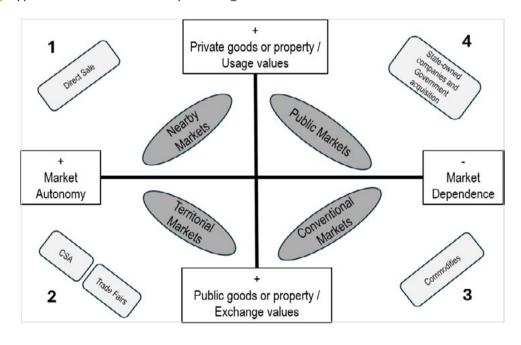


Figure 1 | Types of markets for family farming

Source: Schneider (2016)

# PERFORMANCE INDICATOR MODELING

The Management by Objectives approach presents a significant evolution in the studies of the management environment since the publication by Drucker (1954), which established a methodology or system for managers and other actors in the organization to establish paths together with a focus on achieving the objectives and results of a business.

The management environment of the agrarian reform settlements in which the productive units are inserted requires constant monitoring of their actions, in the search to identify their progress towards the success of their goals and initiatives, that is, to compare their results achieved against their intended intentions and objectives, as a way of evaluating the performance of rural properties. In this context, performance appraisal has a broad definition in the literature, but it can be understood as a process to quantify the efficiency and effectiveness of one or more actions, providing organizations with benefits such as communication of priorities, change of behaviors, and transparency of strategic objectives.

In environments such as rural enterprises, production units are challenged to achieve economic and social results, and the application of proper performance measurement ensures a strategic alignment of their businesses (Van Looy; Shafagatova, 2016). Typically, performance evaluation is measured by a set of transactional data called performance indicators, which in turn are synthetic measures generated through operations such as aggregation and algebraic composition (Diamantini; Potena; Storti, 2016). Also, according to the authors, the properties generally provided by performance indicators include self-explaining attributes in their nominal definition and are typically associated with goals or objectives.

Among the tools for modeling performance indicators, the Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) are a framework of critical thinking and continuous discipline, applied to collective work to concentrate efforts on high-leverage activities at any organizational level, balancing business value and measurability. In Doerr's (2019, p. 44) words, "the system transforms good ideas into practices of excellence and satisfaction in the work environment".

In OKR framework, the management process is conducted like a factory, based on three basic ideas: results-oriented management; collective work, and in the collective performance reflected by the ability to motivate individuals, making them deliver their maximum. Thus, it is understood that this management process can be applied to any productive unit, including agrarian reform settlements, which aim to guarantee resources for the maintenance of the property and the empowerment of the family.

In practice, two questions must be answered: i) "what" should be achieved? and; ii) "how" to establish and monitor the arrival at the goal? (Doerr, 2019). The second question, as simple as it may seem, ended up being the basis for the development of the OKRs tool, associating what is known as a "key result" with an objective (Rahmah et al., 2020). In short, the system is described by Doerr (2019) as a "powerful and proven force for operational excellence" with four dimensions: focus, alignment, follow-up, and effort.

### **METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES**

The present study proposes a framework for identifying the performance profile in agrarian reform settlements in Brazil by analyzing the data collected in 6338 lots in the state of Minas Gerais, 11208 lots in the state of Mato Grosso and 7604 lots in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, through the RADIS/UFMT project, in the years 2018 to 2022. To this end, a qualitative and exploratory approach was chosen (Torraco, 2005; Cassago et al., 2021). The database variable worked on for content analysis was a field to be filled in with a discursive answer, namely: "Explain why you consider the production model in the batch successful".

A qualitative approach was used in order to bring the researcher closer to the researched object, establishing relationships between the actors and the material collected through a cognitive process, rejecting the understanding that the data speak for themselves (Madureira; Branco, 2001), allowing the interpretation of a set of information (Creswell, 2007). As for the objectives, the research is classified as exploratory, as it clarifies ideas, with a view to formulating problems, or possible hypotheses to be dealt with in future studies.

To build the framework from the collected material (Madureira; Branco, 2001), the content analysis technique was adopted with a focus on the results and discussions of the interviews, exploring the "content of the messages and indicators (quantitative or not), which allow the inference of knowledge related to the conditions of production/reception (inferred variables) of these messages" (Bardin, 1977, p. 42).

Then, the data treatment began, with the organization and exploration using the resources available in the Nvivo software, version 12, in combination with the tools of the Excel® software, to

understand the scientific discourse and the approaches of the elements present in the performance framework of the rural properties of the settlements. During the data treatment, the results of the study were prepared to be presented with the inference and interpretation of the authors, based on categorical analysis of open grid, that is, using preliminary concepts, as the categories emerge from the data analysis process. Thus, these concepts include the understanding that a framework can be defined as a set of assumptions or principles that form the basis for understanding a given phenomenon (Wong; Aspinwall, 2004), as in the case of OKRs, in the context of agrarian reform settlements in Brazil.

As a support for the interpretation of the results, cluster analysis was used, which is a statistical technique to classify elements into clusters, so that the elements (terms) within a cluster are similar and elements of different clusters are distinct from each other.

### **FINDINGS**

Focusing on the presentation of the descriptions of the results and the demonstration of the capacity of the proposed data collection strategy, in view of the phenomenon of organizational performance in the context of agrarian reform settlements in MG, MS and MT, Figure 02 presents the frequency of the 50 categories most present in the evaluation of the lots.

Figure 02 shows the most frequent terms: Income, Beneficiary Production, Milk and Beef, which may be related to the performance attributes of the context of the rural properties of the settlements surveyed by RADIS/UFMT. As for the terms dairy and cattle, it can be highlighted in the research by Souza, Souza and Durante (2020) that these activities are related to the performance and success of productive units in settlements in Brazil. On the other hand, the terms income, production and beneficiary highlight that the rural properties of the settlements present the performance of the management of the lots because it is related to the beneficiary's profile, productive profile and the capacity to generate income, as highlighted by the Oliveira et al. (2019).

Production Dairy Occupied Preserved Productive Dwelling Sale Flock Plantation Term Sustentance Family Wooded Couple Worker Plot holder Subsistence Housewife Herd of cattle Technical Abandonment Consumption Plot holders Talon Documentation Frequency

Figure 2 | Frequency of the top 50 search terms

Source: Prepared by the authors.

In the dendrogram of terms (Figure 03), it was decided to delimit 50 main terms associated with nine clusters, according to the different values and colors presented for each dendrogram cluster. Thus, the main elements were grouped for the categorization process.

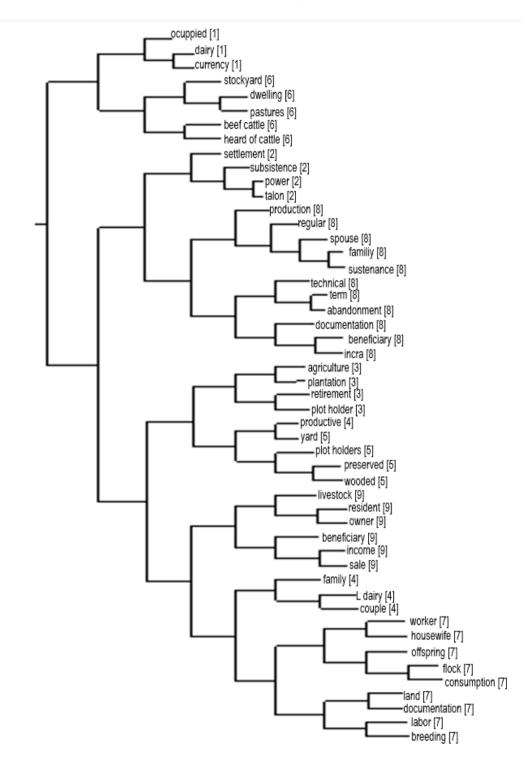
Different segments can be observed, through colors and numbers, helping in the interpretation of the relationship or its association between words, as well as in the constitution of the groups. The clusters are pertinent and logical, they present an overview of the grouping of words presented. The nine clusters obtained were named and analyzed below.

The cluster "1 Area for dairy cattle raising" describes one of the main productive activities present in agrarian reform settlements in Brazil, with which they corroborate Oliveira et al. (2022), when they state that a relevant part of the settlements has as their predominant activity the raising of dairy cattle, due to the characteristics of the activity. Considering activities of low complexity in view of the return on investment of rural producers, the authors Sangalli e Schlindwein (2013) highlight that the existence of areas dedicated to dairy cattle raising can be strategic for agrarian reform settlements, especially as an entry activity.

As for "Cluster 2 Access to local infrastructure" Santana, Pires and Aguiar (2022), point out that the performance of agrarian reform lots in Brazil requires specific public and private actions, preferably in relation to infrastructure, namely: access to transport and roads, health, education, electricity. In the same vein, Santos and Castro (2022) highlight that a set of social indicators can influence the performance of agrarian reform lots, namely: access to basic services such as education, health, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, garbage collection, and leisure and cultural infrastructure.

For cluster 3 "Retirement and agricultural production", the authors Simonato and Bergamasco (2021) highlight that retirement in rural settlements is related to the quality of life and dignity of elderly people in rural areas. Retirement also acts as a source of financing for productive activity through improvements in the lot, leaving the elderly in a position of protagonism in the family scenario, keeping them as providers for families. On the other hand, Santana, Pires, Aguiar (2022) They point out that the existence of pensions can negatively influence the development of agrarian reform lots, as it provides greater stability to their owners, thus hindering the search for the development of rural property.

Figure 3 | Cluster analysis for nine clusters of the survey



Source: Prepared by the authors.

As for "Cluster 4 Family milk production", the research by Pinheiro and Altafin (2007) highlighted that in addition to milk production having a relevant impact on the economic performance of production units, it also impacts the performance of agrarian reform settlements, as it is an efficient activity to keep people in the countryside. In this context, the authors Ferreira et al. (2018) identified that dairy farming in the family context presents the necessary dynamism for the current context in the face of the reality of small agriculture, as it provides a monthly income and, based on its characteristics, its risks in the face of production seasonality, can be mitigated with planning and organization of animal feeding.

As for "Cluster 5 Sustainable production", the research by Santos and Castro (2022) showed that sustainable production impacts the performance of reform lots by integrating production into the socioeconomic and local context of the rural property; by promoting other benefits to local actors such as quality of life and employment; by presenting the ability of farmers to retain themselves through public support services; finally, through planning for the use and maintenance of biotic and abiotic conservation present in the lot's environment. In this line, Souza, Souza and Durante (2020) highlighted that in agrarian reform policies, family farmers developed sustainable processes that contributed to the expansion of public actions in the face of the expansion of activities in the economic, social and environmental environment, beyond urban regions.

As for "Cluster 6 Structure for raising beef cattle", this is one of the performance elements that inversely influences the performance of the lots of agrarian reform settlements, because according to Nunes and Menegat (2021), beef cattle need a larger area for pastures. Thus, Pinheiro and Altafin (2007) and Santana, Pires and Aguiar (2022), state that for its development, the activity needs more than one lot, which impacts the development of partnerships or the leasing of lots.

As for the Cluster "7 Land tenure and family farming", the research by Barbosa and Lerrer (2016) highlighted that land tenure does not directly confer income on the farmer such as retirement or financing, but it does provide a legal, social and power backing to local actors. The authors also point out that when possession is granted to a woman in the family, the transformative effect confers more sustainability in the social relations of the family nucleus involved by the rural

property. Additionally, Bruno et al. (2022) highlight that the documentation of the land gives the farmer the ability to make decisions about the direction of the lot to the point of choosing which crop will be produced, which improvements will be made, as well as the possibility of access to public support policies and public and private financing.

The Cluster "8 Government Institutional Support" highlights the impact of the government support structure on the performance of the lots. On this topic, Santos and Castro (2020) state that assistance, operational, and support in credit policies for settlers are critical success factors for the effective implementation of agrarian reform. The research by Santana, Pires and Aguiar (2022) also highlight that government support policies in the face of the offer of productive microcredit guiding and support policies such as the Light for All Program, are measures that contribute both to maintaining the quality of life of families in the countryside and to the development of productive activities on the rural property.

Finally, the cluster "9 Livestock and income generation" can be confirmed from the research of Talhaferro (2013), who highlights that the livestock activity presents less complexity in line with other productive activities. According to the author, producers perceive a low degree of uncertainty in climate and environmental issues. Additionally, the authors Silva, Fonseca, and Gouvêa (2022) highlight that livestock, in order to generate income and be sustainable on the rural property, can be associated with other crops, with a focus on the diversification of family income, through productive diversification aimed at the commercialization of the products of the lots.

Therefore, Table 1 presents the main categories identified in the categorization of the research data and set with the respective theoretical sources and concepts, as follows: 1) Area for dairy cattle raising; 2) Access to local infrastructure; 3) Retirement and agricultural production; 4) Family milk production; 5) Sustainable production; 6 Structure for raising beef cattle; 7) Land tenure and family farming; 8) Government institutional support and; 9) Livestock and income generation.

**Table 1** | Categories Identified.

Cluster	Definition and performance	Source
1- Area for dairy cattle raising	The existence of areas dedicated to dairy cattle production can influence the success of agrarian reform settlement lots.	Sangalli e Schlindwein (2013)
2- Access to local infrastructure	The performance of land reform lots can be influenced by the local public and private infrastructure available to farmers.	Santana, Pires e Aguiar (2022)
3- Retirement and agricultural production	Retirement can influence the performance of agrarian reform lots by helping to make improvements to the lots and financing productive activity.	Simonato e Bergamasco (2021)
Family dairy production	Family dairy production can influence the performance of agrarian reform lots because it is dynamic and has low risk involved.	Ferreira, Von Ende, Rossés e Neumann (2018)
5- Sustainable production	Sustainable production impacts the performance of reform lots by integrating production into the socioeconomic and local context of the rural property, as well as by promoting the development of quality of life.	Santos e Castro (2022)
6- Structure for beef cattle raising	A Estrutura para criação de gado de corte impacta no desempenho do lote de reforma agrária ampliar as o desenvolvimento de parcerias ou o arrendamento de lotes.	Santana, Pires e Aguiar (2022)
7- Land tenure and family farming	Land tenure impacts the performance of the agrarian reform lot by providing a legal, social and power backup to the actors of the local environment.	Barbosa e Lerrer (2016)
8- Government institutional support	Operational assistance and support in credit policies for settlers are critical success factors for the effective implementation of agrarian reform.	Santos e Castro (2020)
9- Livestock and income generation	Livestock has an impact on the performance of rural property when associated with other productive activities.	Silva, Foneca e Gouvêa (2022)

Source: prepared by the authors.

Thus, the categories identified can be generalized to the different agrarian reform establishments, not exhausting in themselves the need to deepen the specificities of each settlement but contributing as an analytical framework applicable to the improvement of management efficiency in the various contexts of the relationship between the settlement and regional development.

**FINAL THOUGHTS** 

The aim of this research was to propose a framework of organizational performance

management elements present in rural agrarian reform settlements. To this end, 25150 questionnaires

were selected and applied in agrarian reform settlements in MG, MS and MT.

The main productive activities directly related to the performance of rural properties were

livestock and agriculture, the first of which presented a greater capillarity in the lots and a greater

impact on performance, both from the size of the properties and in the production support structure,

with emphasis on the production of dairy cattle.

The clusters identified, when they illustrate the structural issue of supporting the performance

of rural settlement lots, were described both in the public and private services of the surroundings

and in the development of public policies of credit and technical assistance, in view of the productive

demands of each region.

It should also be noted that one of the clusters identified the relationship between sustainable

production and the performance of the lots, this demonstrates the evolution of the agrarian reform

process under development in the states that are the focus of the research and an alignment with

the need for integration between the economic, social and environmental development of these

agricultural communities in the different regions of Brazil.

The elements of organizational performance management present in rural agrarian reform

settlements were categorized, based on cluster analysis, into nine possible dimensions, namely: 1) Area

for dairy cattle raising; 2) Access to local infrastructure; 3) Retirement and agricultural production; 4)

Family dairy production; 5) Sustainable production; 6) Structure for beef cattle raising; 7) Land tenure

and family farming; 8) Government institutional support and; 9) Livestock and income generation.

As a focus for potential future studies, on-site surveys can be carried out against the

configurations of each dimension of the performance of these rural properties, as well as the

measurement of their impact on the quality of life of local communities.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** 

The authors thank the RADIS/UFMT Project for providing the data and research grants and INCRA

for the partnership with UFMT.

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