

Brazilian multifaceted ecologically-based agriculture: Between conventionalization and agroecological principles application

Lucimar S. de Abreu *Embrapa Environment, Brazil,*
Stéphane Bellon *SAD Ecodevelopment Unit, INRA, France*
Maria de C. F. Alencar *Embrapa Environment, Brazil*

In Brazil, recent legal changes have included several agricultural systems in the organic agriculture legislation, i.e., organic agriculture *per se*, biodynamic agriculture, permaculture, agroecology. However, some consider agroecology as being the umbrella for these ecological forms of agriculture, including organic agriculture. As a result, many initiatives were launched by various stakeholders: government institutions; research, training and extension organizations; NGOs or farmers groups. This debate illustrates the different interpretations of organic agriculture among farmers groups and researchers. Based on an analysis of documents (Brazilian congress proceedings and journal articles) as well as data from interviews, meetings and fairs, we analyse the current development of organic farming in Brazil. The conventionalization debate in Brazil is posed in specific terms, as organic agriculture is often interpreted as a method substituting conventional inputs and practices with alternative eligible practices. Other forms of agriculture are considered as genuine alternatives to conventional farming, i.e. based on redesigning farms and agroecosystems on the basis of new ecological processes. Organic agriculture is thus seen as favouring large scale producers, supermarkets (packaging enhancing visual quality of products) and export markets. As a whole, the discourse is not explicit in scientific publications, although the literature discussing the industrialization model of Brazilian agriculture is extensive. We conclude that in most cases research and field work does not address the development of organic agriculture in terms of conventionalisation, but as interpretations of organic agriculture and oppositions between alternative agricultural models.