



**ACCESS, DYNAMICS, AND
CONSTRUCTION OF NEW MARKETS
BY SETTLED FAMILY FARMERS IN
BONITO, MS, BRAZIL**

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Christiane Marques Pitaluga¹ | Rafaela Flores Kuff²
Sérgio Schneider³ | Rayssa Soares do Nascimento⁴

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¹ PhD in Local Development (UCDB).
Professor at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul.
Campo Grande - MS, Brazil.
Email: christiane.pitaluga@ufms.br

³ PhD in Sociology (UFRGS/Université Paris X).
Professor at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul.
Porto Alegre - RS, Brazil.
Email: schneide@ufrgs.br

² PhD student in Administration and Agribusiness
Management (UFMS).
Campo Grande - MS, Brazil.
Email: rafaela.kuff@ufms.br

⁴ Undergraduate student in Business Administration (UFMS).
Campo Grande - MS, Brazil.
Email: rayssa_soares@ufms.br

ABSTRACT

Food markets, in the context of family farming, are crucial to ensuring access to nutritious and healthy food. It is vital to recognize the importance of family farming, valuing the structure of rural settlements and their characteristics to understand access to different types of markets and the challenges involved in accessing them. The aim of this study is to identify, describe and analyze food markets and commercialization channels and construct a typology of markets accessed by family farmers in the settlements of Bonito, MS, Brazil. Thus, the aim is to answer the following research question: what are the main commercialization channels and types of markets accessed by family farmers in Bonito and the respective challenges and opportunities for accessing and remaining included in them? This study on food supply and markets follows an exploratory and descriptive approach. The analyses were supported by quantitative data. Frequency tables and graphs were created to explore the main characteristics of the variables using R Software. The results showed that 75% of the sample have access to local markets, while 15% accessed conventional markets and 9% institutional markets, revealing the Farmers' Market as the main one accessed. This reinforces the role and power of the construction of new social markets, links, autonomy and capacity for agency.

Keywords: better markets; supply; typology; social construction; rural settlements.

RESUMO

Os mercados de alimentos, no contexto da agricultura familiar, são cruciais para garantir o acesso a alimentos nutritivos e saudáveis. É fundamental reconhecer a importância da agricultura familiar, valorizando a estrutura dos assentamentos rurais e suas características para compreender o acesso a diferentes tipos de mercados e os desafios envolvidos nesse acesso. O objetivo deste estudo é identificar, descrever e analisar os mercados de alimentos e os canais de comercialização, bem como construir uma tipologia dos mercados acessados por agricultores familiares nos assentamentos de Bonito, MS, Brasil. Assim, busca-se responder à seguinte questão de pesquisa: quais são os principais canais de comercialização e tipos de mercados acessados pelos agricultores familiares em Bonito, e quais os respectivos desafios e oportunidades para acessá-los e permanecer incluídos neles? Este estudo sobre oferta e mercados de alimentos segue uma abordagem exploratória e descritiva. As análises foram apoiadas em dados quantitativos. Tabelas de frequência e gráficos foram elaborados para explorar as principais características das variáveis, utilizando o Software R. Os resultados mostraram que 75% da amostra têm acesso a mercados locais, enquanto 15% acessaram mercados convencionais e 9% mercados institucionais, revelando a Feira do Produtor como o principal mercado acessado. Isso reforça o papel e o poder da construção de novos mercados sociais, vínculos, autonomia e capacidade de agência.

Palavras-chave: melhores mercados; abastecimento; tipologia; construção social; assentamentos rurais.

INTRODUCTION

Family farming is an important asset for Brazil, aiding biodiversity conservation, food security, and job and income generation (Lima, Silva & Iwata, 2019). Food markets, in the context of family farming, are crucial to guarantee access to high-nutrition, healthy, and quality food. They also play a fundamental role in leveraging productive inclusion and rural development (Cassol; Schneider; Deggerone, 2024; Schneider and Cenci, 2024).

Despite this recognition, family farmers constantly face many difficulties in accessing more competitive and better markets due to structural limitations, such as small processing capacity, structural limitations, lack of adequate infrastructure, weaknesses in the constitution of social organization, and, no less important, the existence of barriers to obtaining financing.

This article aims to identify, describe, and analyze food markets and commercialization channels to construct a typology of markets accessed by family farmers in the municipality of Bonito, MS, Brazil, an environmentally sensitive region, where the preservation and maintenance of natural resources are fundamental for ecological balance and socioeconomic development.

Bonito has 5,378.723 km² of territorial area, from which 3,483 km² constitute the urban area, and 23.659 inhabitants, considering the last census of 2022 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics - IBGE and the official website of the municipality (BONITO (MS), 2024). The local economy is based on tourism and agriculture (IBGE, 2022). Tourism has become a strong part of Bonito's economy since 1990, and is responsible for the majority of employment (Spanholi & Young, 2024). However, diverse initiatives have also been launched in the municipality, focused on family farming, including the most traditional forms of markets, such as local fairs (The Farmers' Market was inaugurated in 2012, located in downtown Bonito), direct sales in establishments, regional fairs and exhibitions, as well as institutional markets, given the existence of public food supply policies, such as the PNAE (Laws 11947/2009) and PAA (14628/2023) programs, instituted by the Federal Government.

In the context of the municipality of Bonito, sustainable and agroecological agricultural practices by family farmers have a prominent role in both socioeconomic development and preservation of natural resources. The list can also include the general contributions of family farming, such as food security and its role as an alternative for the global food market (Schneider, 2016). A recent article by



Sabourin et al. (2025), in *Histoire économie et société*, demonstrates the contributions, challenges, and perspectives of the family farming segment. For instance, family farmers can promote agroecology, organic production, sustainable agriculture, efficient energy management, agroforestry systems, and the integration of livestock, agriculture, and forestry. This list can contribute significantly to the maintenance and sustainable development of the municipality of Bonito, while conserving its vast biodiversity, which is of great importance to Brazil.

However, as pointed out in the article, family farming remains below its potential, as it can be a pillar in the construction of sustainable food systems, but lacks integration of three dimensions: socioeconomic, environmental, and political-institutional. Authors such as Ventura *et al.* (2010) and Schneider and Cenci (2024) have advocated the importance and need to propose debates, analyses, and discussions of social markets, considering the current situation of both family farming and rural development in Brazil. These authors understand that it is through these markets that agriculture begins to respond to new social needs, and with this, the functioning and establishment of food markets has become a central focus point of sociopolitical clashes.

Therefore, this study seeks to understand the dynamics of family farming markets, as well as farmers' perceptions of how these dynamics occur. We also wish to answer the following research question: What are the main commercialization channels and types of markets accessed by family farmers in Bonito and their respective challenges and opportunities to access them and remain included in them?

The unprecedented nature of the present study deserves to be highlighted, as there are no studies in the literature that address the construction of social markets for family farmers settled in Bonito (Ushizima, 2017), especially regarding the typology of the commercialization channels that they access. Another aspect that corroborates the authors mentioned above and is crucial in the literature is that social and cultural approaches are little discussed (El Bilali *et al.*, 2021), and according to Schneider (2016), the typology of markets is a means not only to classify markets, but to explore and understand the mechanisms that are embedded in the process. According to IPES FOOD (2024), the closest food markets represent not only a biodiverse agriculture that prevents food waste, but also the manifestation of elements such as trust, connection, solidarity, and social capital, in a way that also counts on greater participation of women and younger people.



Therefore, it is key to recognize the importance of family farming for the construction of sustainable, fair, and resilient food systems, also valuing the structure of rural settlements and their characteristics to understand access to different types of markets, the challenges faced, and the barriers that hinder the inclusion of family farmers. Appreciating family farming goes beyond agricultural production itself, implying a need for public policies, support networks, promotion of the autonomy of small farmers, and local development. Specifically, it is essential to analyze how these local market dynamics can be expanded or improved, ensuring family farmers have easier access to different food markets (Deggerone and Schneider, 2022).

FOOD MARKETS AND COMMERCIALIZATION CHANNELS

From the perspective of supporting the development of family farming in the municipality of Bonito, this study draws on the lenses of economic sociology and on the food market typology proposed by Schneider (2016). Accordingly, it addresses the construction of markets for these farmers, enabling them to commercialize their production, contributing both to the preservation of local biodiversity and to food security. However, Schneider (2016) argues that markets, as spaces of social interaction, are marked by asymmetries; there are winners and losers, those who hold power and those who are subordinated. It is therefore necessary to take into account the various mechanisms of interaction and regulation, while also considering that autonomy and agency capacity are two essential concepts for classifying the diversity of commercialization channels, as proposed by the aforementioned author.

According to Deggerone and Schneider (2022), family farmers must have choice opportunities; the more choices they have, the more they can exert the freedom of choice, strengthening their capabilities. In addition, they must develop abilities that overcome a lack of information, uncertainties, and other barriers and constraints, enabling individuals to manage resources, make decisions, develop alternatives, and organize ways to deal with the context in which they are embedded.

From the economic sociology perspective, markets are seen as spaces, or “arenas” comprising different actors (family farmers, producers, consumers, customers, workers, etc.) and institutions (companies, cooperatives, government, social movements, etc.) that converse and seek



new opportunities for the exchange of goods and services. Accepting the approach that markets are social constructions implies understanding that they are formed by a set of operations that permeate social and cultural relations (Cassol; Schneider; Deggerone, 2024).

Markets are constructed through political, cultural, and social arrangements, that is, values, rules, and social norms, factors that have the power to create mechanisms that dictate the behavior and functioning of social actors in certain places of exchange (Schneider, 2016; Cassol, 2018, 2013). Consequently, the demand for quality and provenance products has grown significantly. Family farmers took advantage of this new demand to consolidate themselves in the confinement strategy, that is, in the expansion of proximity markets, which are also called short chains, consisting of the direct relationship between producers and consumers, resulting in the creation of links between producer and buyer (Ferrari and Schneider, 2015).

Within this logic, commercialization channels are configured as a real expression of this exchange relationship, which is why it is essential to appreciate and investigate the reasons that determine and/or influence such decisions (Deggerone, 2021). In this respect, in the literature, several authors, such as Kotler (1998), Rosembloom (2002), Araujo (2013), Neves (2013), Sproesser and Lima Filho (2014) have already discussed this topic. However, their approaches were based on a more orthodox perspective of classification and types of commercialization channels.

For the present study, a different approach was followed. It was considered that the dynamics of the inclusion of family farmers in food markets do not occur in the same way, since this mechanism is the result of socially constructed food systems, influenced by several factors, including personal, cultural, and historical factors. These factors, in themselves, are sufficient to justify the existence of conditions that aim to create different forms of access to markets, revealing differences from a simple exchange of surpluses to more robust and organized processes (Schneider, 2016).

Therefore, the typology of markets proposed by Schneider (2016) considers: proximity markets (on the property; at home; roadside; direct delivery; local fair and consumer groups); local and territorial Markets (regional fair; national fair; sales networks; events; specialized stores and restaurants); conventional markets (middlemen, cooperatives, agro-industries; private companies; internet and supermarkets); and public and institutional markets (school meals; fair trade; international

organizations; hospitals, universities; armed forces, welfare entities and government stocks).

Proximity markets are short commercialization channels where exchange relationships are based on interpersonal ties, mutual trust, and social bonds, which are generally built through local markets, direct deliveries, or on-farm sales points. Although more informal, this is a fundamental market for families and for the recognition of products as part of a local food system (Ramírez et al., 2020).

Local and territorial markets are more structured forms of production, as they enables participation in regional fairs, sales networks, and events. Transactions are regulated by criteria such as reputation, origin, and standardization, which demand higher levels of organization and regularity in supply; therefore, these factors pose specific challenges (Brandão et al., 2020). According to the same author, in conventional markets there may be intermediaries, such as middlemen, and exchange relations are governed by market mechanisms and purchase–sale contracts, with requirements regarding quality, quantity, and frequency. This type of market can serve as a means of income diversification; however, it may also limit farmers' autonomy, creating dependency and reducing their bargaining power.

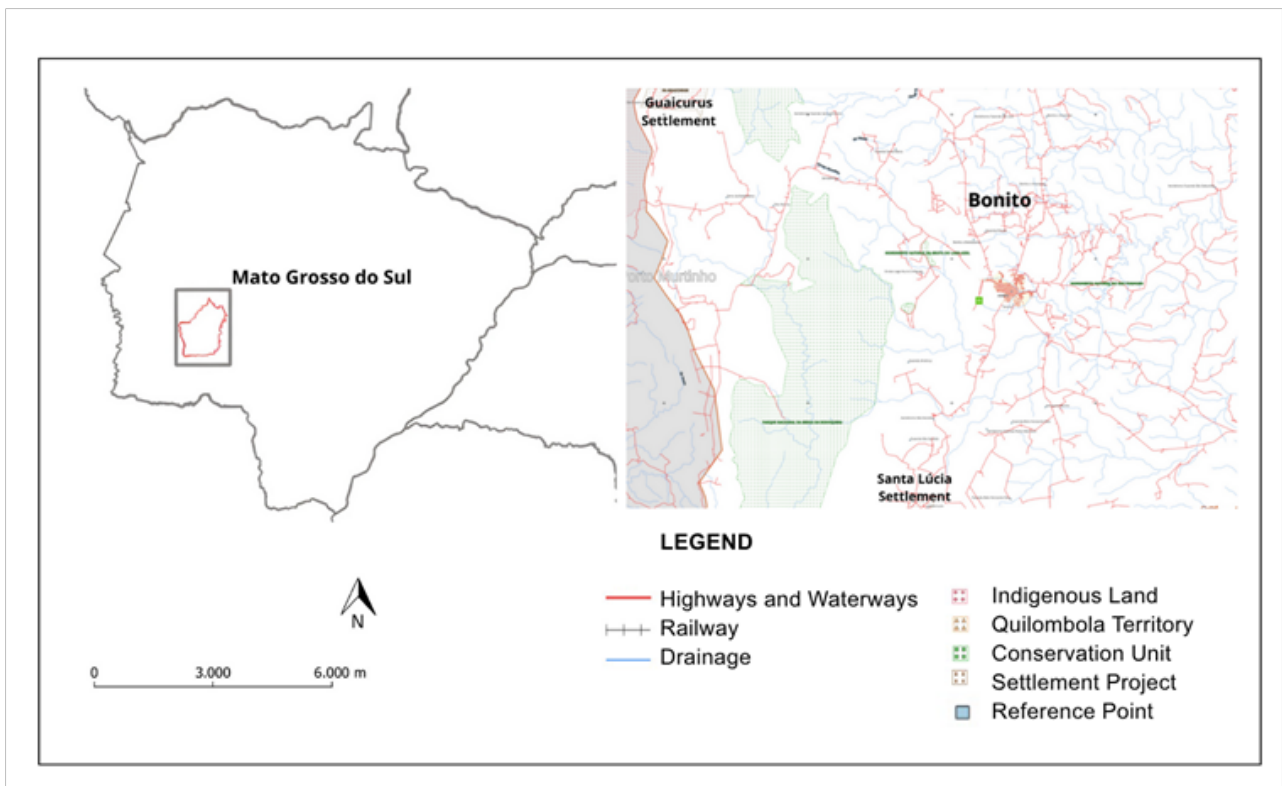
Finally, public and institutional markets can play a strategic role for family farming, since programs such as PNAE and PAA promote the valorization of local production, supporting both food security and greater stability for farmers. Specific rules and social criteria help these markets contribute to the productive inclusion of settled farmers (Deggerone & Schneider, 2022).

Considering the theoretical support and the existence of a variety of conditions that can influence farmers' entry into one market or another, one of the challenges lies in understanding the complexity of these woven relationships, since there are particularities inherent to the process, whether of the food produced, or of the social, political, spatial, cultural scenario or one of any other nature (Dias and Ende, 2023).

METHOD

This study follows an exploratory and descriptive approach, as it aims to understand and describe a phenomenon (Richardson, 2012) and aid the goal of identifying, describing, and analyzing the commercialization channels and markets accessed by family farmers in the settlements. The data were collected through direct contact in field research (Marconi and Lakatos, 2002). Thus, the research sought information directly from the interest group (Gerhardt and Silveira, 2009) in the municipality of Bonito, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, in two Agrarian Reform Settlements, namely: Guaicurus, located 70 km from Bonito, and Santa Lúcia, located 34 km from the municipality, see Figure 1.

Figure 1 | Map of the municipality of Bonito and of the Guaicurus and Santa Lúcia settlements in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul.



Source: IBGE (2022), adapted by the authors

The Guaicurus Settlement area originated from the Baía Negra Farm, which was expropriated by INCRA and currently consists of 128 lots, with an urban nucleus formed by 58 families, 15 of which are productive. They have the support of the Guaicurus Women Farmers Association (still undergoing adjustments and consolidation by the members themselves). The Santa Lúcia Settlement area originated from the Santa Lúcia Farm, expropriated by INCRA 26 years ago, covering over 1,000 hectares of land previously belonging to a farm of the same name. Initially, 36 families were settled in the region, but over the years, some moved away and sold their lots, leaving 18 founding families of the settlements. They have the support of the Association of Small Rural Producers of the Santa Lúcia Settlement.

DATA COLLECTION

To collect the data, a questionnaire was used containing questions on the sales channel, demographic information, information on the area where the respondents live, how they obtained their land, access to technical and rural assistance, access to financing, production, contracts and negotiations, forms of payment, and general infrastructure, for production, storage, and supply to food markets.

The questionnaire looked at categorical variables such as sales channels and form of obtaining land, and continuous variables, with an assessment of the farmers' perception of the information they provided as categorical. The questionnaire also contained semi-structured questions so that the respondents could elaborate on their responses, resulting in more flexibility and a deeper focus on the issues in question. The data were collected by the researchers from September 20 to 22, 2024, in person with family farmers in the respective settlements of the municipality of Bonito, MS, and in a food supply market, the Bonito Farmers' Market.

The questionnaire was made available offline through the Open Data Kit Collect (ODK Collect) application on the researchers' mobile devices, since there are limitations on mobile internet access at the research location. After on-site collection, the data obtained were sent to a server and stored in tabulated form for later analysis. The use of ODK Collect was enabled through a partnership between researchers from two higher education institutions through their respective network research projects. It is worth noting that to ensure the correct application and interpretation of the data, training workshops were held with all the project members.



DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis follows a quantitative approach, with graphs prepared to view the data, but without statistical inference, given the sample size of 33 respondents and the limitation of its representativeness. This choice was made as the research aims to understand the behavior of the various factors addressed in the questionnaire that might influence on type of market accessed by family farmers (Richardson, 2012). The research is also qualitative, as some collected data show a different complexity level when interpreted, and the researchers acted as participating observers, seeking a better understanding of the habits, culture daily life in the settlements they visited (Richardson, 2012).

Frequency tables and graphs were prepared to explore the main characteristics of the categorical and continuous variables, using the R Software (R Core Team, 2024), applying the gplot2 packages for data visualization and dplyr for data manipulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EMERGING PATTERNS: THE ROLE OF WOMEN, ACCESS TO POLICIES AND BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Table 1, below, details the main characteristics of the sample. This description encompasses the respondents' demographics, providing a view of their profile and rural properties, resulting in robustness for the subsequent analysis based on the collected data.

Table 1 | Description of the sample

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Respondents' Gender</i>		
Male	12	36.3
Female	21	63.6
<i>Respondents' Color/Race</i>		
White	11	16.7
Brown	17	25.8
Black	5	7.6



<i>Land Acquisition</i>		
Purchase	3	9.1
Titling or license of occupation for agricultural reform	22	66.7
Inheritance or donation	4	12.1
Untitled tenure	1	3.0
Adverse possession (possession of land obtained after its peaceful use after some time)	1	3.0
Purchase; Titling or license of occupation for agricultural reform	2	6.1
<i>How farmer identifies</i>		
Family Farmer	28	84.9
Agricultural Reform Settler	5	15.1
Basic infrastructure		
<i>Internet access</i>		
Broadband	26	78.8
Mobile Internet	2	6.1
Both	3	9.1
Not possible	2	6.1
<i>Establishment Infrastructure</i>		
Yes. on Own Family Property	26	78.8
No	4	12.1
Yes. but in the Cooperative	3	9.1
<i>Infrastructure Identification</i>		
Freezer	28	84.9
Not applicable	1	3.0
None	4	12.1
<i>Logistics Structure</i>		
Motorcycles	8	19.5
Car	14	34.1
Pickup trucks	6	14.6
Bus	2	4.9
None	11	26.8

Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).



The respondents who completed the questionnaires were not always those responsible for the land, with women constituting the majority of the sample (63.6%), compared to men (36.3%), highlighting the strong role of women in this scenario. Furthermore, even if a respondent was a man, they reported that a woman is the owner of the land on which they live. The men also acknowledged the strength and resilience of women, who are seen as promoters of collective learning and holders of “know-how”, respecting culture and food sovereignty.

The fact that women are often the property owners reflects their major role not only in production but in fostering rural communities, promoting significant social changes (Meus and Ehur, 2021). The study by these authors focuses on female farmers in Rio Grande do Sul and exemplifies this situation, as female farmers are often more closely involved in activities that improve their knowledge and skills, such as courses on good food production practices, conservation, and marketing. Thus, they learn new techniques, improve the quality of their products, and expand their management skills and access to different commercialization channels.

Regarding public policies for women, those who own land can apply for PRONAF Mulher and be given preference in the selection process for the Food Acquisition Program (PAA) and ATER Mulheres, technical assistance, and rural extension focused on agroecological practices (BRASIL, 2025). It is worth noting that to access these policies, it is necessary to register with the National Family Farming Registry (CAF). However, these policies are not accessed by most of the women in the settlements in question, since many do not have CAF.

Despite identifying as family farmers, the survey data revealed that only 14 of the 33 respondents are in the CAF, while the remaining 19 are not. The CAF is the mechanism used to identify and qualify beneficiaries of the National Family Farming Policy (Law No. 11,326/2006). It includes Family Agricultural Production Units (UFPA), Rural Family Enterprises, and Family Farming Associative Organizations, such as farming cooperatives and rural associations. Therefore, registration with the CAF is essential to access various public policy resources for the development and strengthening of family farming (Brasil, 2025).

Regarding the logistical structure available to these farmers, broadband access was high among those interviewed, as was access to infrastructure on their property (78.8%), predominantly represented by freezers used to store products (84.9%), with cassava being the product that most strongly represents



local culture and tradition. The logistical infrastructure mostly consists of automobiles (34.1%), although the second largest percentage was for not having any type of transportation (26.8%).

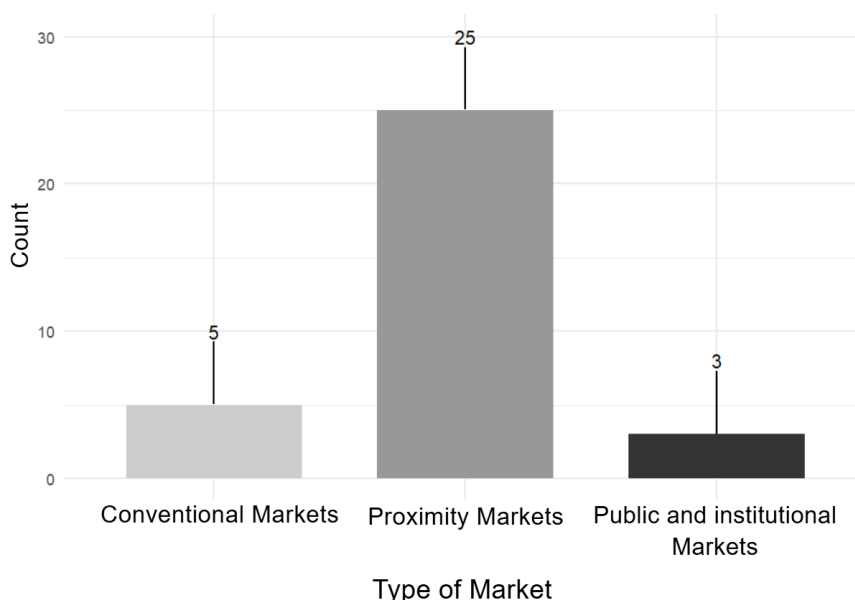
The distance between the properties and the municipality of Bonito varies between 32 and 75 km, with the average being 50 km. However, this is not seen as a barrier for the family farmers, regardless of the distance; their evaluation of the distance from their respective settlement and the municipality of Bonito remains well above average, demonstrating the satisfaction of family farmers regarding the location of their homes.

The following subsection analyzes how access to these marketing channels influences the autonomy of these family farmers, detailing the negotiation strategies employed in each type of market. The particular features of each channel are discussed to understand how these nuances impact the autonomy and agency of the farmers.

ACCESS TO COMMERCIALIZATION CHANNELS AND THE AUTONOMY OF FAMILY FARMERS IN BONITO, MS

The results showed that 75% of the sample predominantly had access to local markets, while 15% accessed conventional markets and 9% accessed public and institutional markets. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the sample by type of market accessed.

Figure 2 | Graph showing distribution by type of market



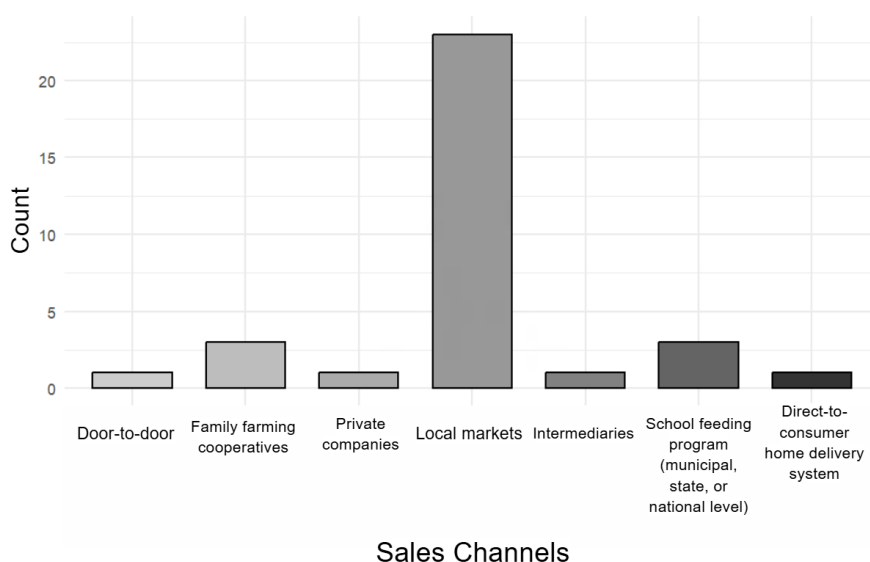
Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

A specific feature of Bonito is the support from the municipal government that ensures a genuine commercialization space for the farmers. The Farmers' Market was inaugurated in 2012, located in downtown Bonito, 70 km from the Guaicurus Settlement. City Hall provides a bus with a driver to transport the farmers and their produce every Saturday. The bus picks up the farmers around 3 a.m. As the road is not paved, the journey takes around one hour and thirty minutes. By five o'clock, they have their stands set up and their products ready to sell until the market closes at 1 p.m., and the bus returns to the settlements at 2 p.m. The market also opens on Wednesday evenings, but only those with their own modes of transport can attend.

It should be noted that, at the market, many consumers only "drop by" to pick up their food and products, which have already been previously separated, since orders have already been made and prices negotiated through digital channels, guaranteeing agility, loyalty, and secure payments. Another type of channel accessed by some is home deliveries. When the market has closed, farmers with cars make so-called "door-to-door" deliveries. It is worth noting here that since they enjoy relationships based on bonds of trust, respect, and reputation, these other forms of trade are more feasible.

Figure 3, below, shows the channels most frequently used by the family farmers to negotiate their produce at local markets, followed by delivery to family farm cooperatives and the so-called institutional market. The latter involves sales to public schools through the National School Meals Program (PNAE).

Figure 3 | Graph showing distribution via sales channels



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

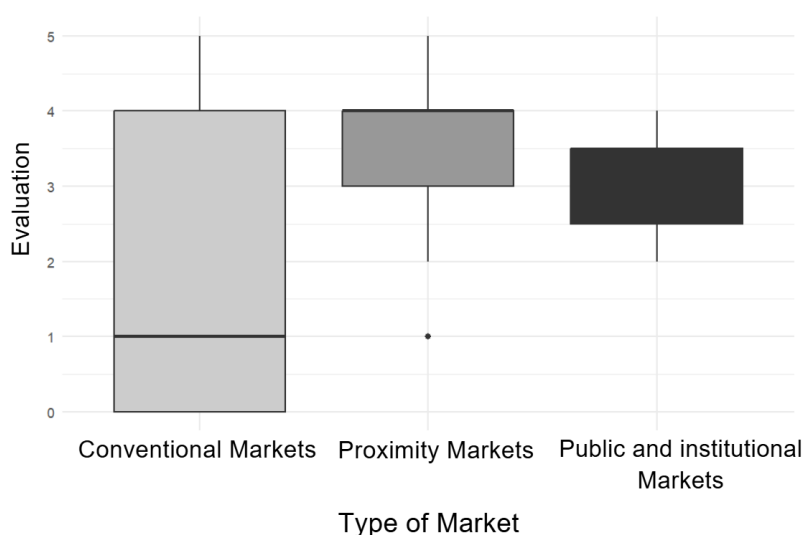


Local markets are characterized by establishing a direct link between farmers and consumers, allowing farmers to market their products without middlemen, reducing costs, regulating the flow of products and improving proximity (Schneider, 2016; Ushizima, 2018).

Factors such as availability of time, labor, and infrastructure aid the choice of commercialization channels, leading farmers to opt for short circuits that meet their sociocultural and economic realities, often favoring local markets (Deggerone and Schneider, 2022). These markets also provide opportunities for farmers to connect directly with consumers, building relationships, understanding preferences, promoting their work, and educating consumers about their food and agricultural practices, which can increase demand for their products (Alvarez *et al.*, 2014).

Figure 4, below, shows that the most satisfied farmers operate in proximity markets, possibly because they themselves set the prices of their products and operate in an environment of social construction with consumers, which reflects their autonomy, allowing them to identify and implement the potential they see in themselves and in their products. In this kind of market, the business model considers that interpersonal and solidarity factors are responsible for commercialization based on trust, friendship, and reputation (Schneider, 2016). The Farmers' Market, promoted by the municipal government in Bonito, illustrates this scenario and is the most frequently accessed market.

Figure 4 | Graph showing satisfaction with decision-making power in determining prices (autonomy vs. dependence) according to the type of market assessed.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

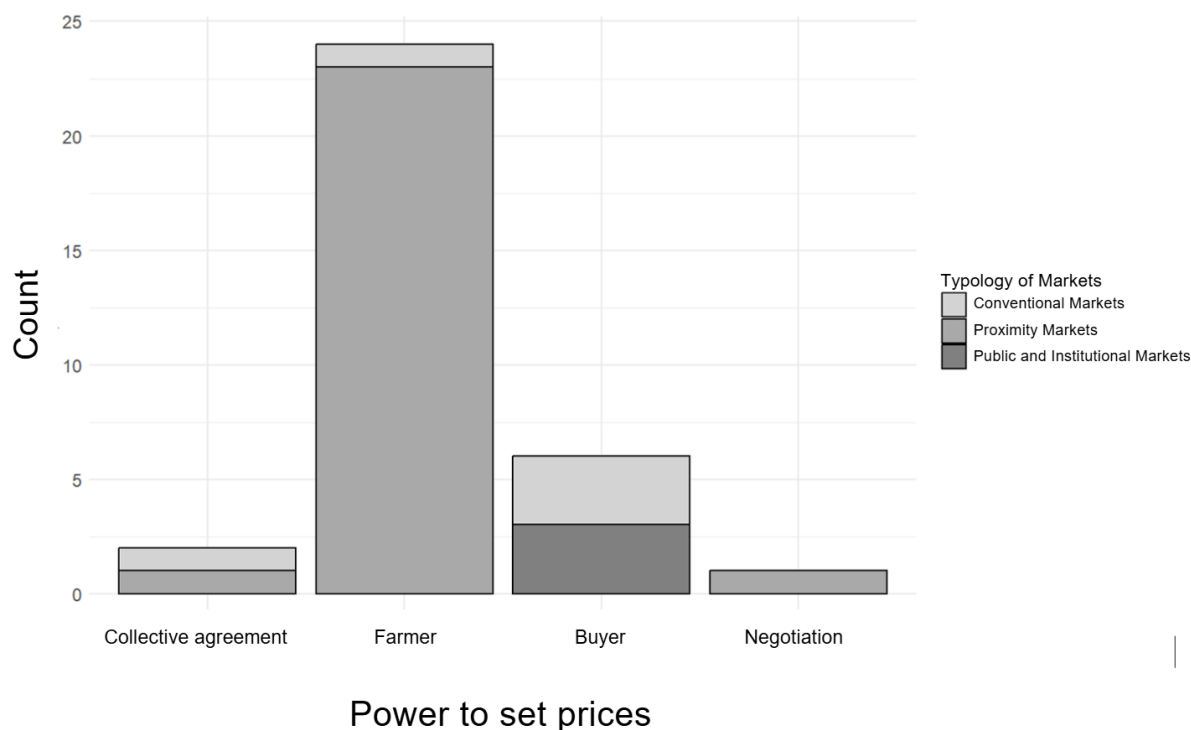
The boxplot chart summarizes the distribution of data regarding satisfaction with decision-making power in price determination. In the chart, the box referring to conventional markets presents highly variable data, ranging from 0 to 1, and can reach a limit of 5, depending on the line that goes from the box to the upper limit of the chart. In any case, in this box, the darker line (median) indicates that most of the responses are concentrated in evaluation 1, that is, a low evaluation regarding the autonomy that they perceive they have in conventional markets, characterized by middlemen, cooperatives, agribusinesses, private companies, the internet and supermarkets (Schneider, 2016), meaning less autonomy in setting prices and less satisfactory exchange relations.

In contrast, the box in the center of the graph, referring to local markets, shows less variability in the data, between 3 and 4, and can reach limits of 2 to 5, but with little incidence. In this box, the darker line indicates that most of the responses are concentrated in an assessment of 4, that is, a good assessment, compared with the autonomy they perceive that they have in conventional markets and in public and institutional markets.

However, public and institutional markets, especially commercialization through the PNAE, still have an average assessment, with most of the responses concentrating on an assessment of 3, a higher assessment compared with conventional markets. In Bonito, the PNAE prioritizes the acquisition of food from family farming (Bonito (MS), 2024), in addition to encouraging more sustainable agricultural practices and valuing local farmers, who do not show a significantly low rate of satisfaction with the market.

Figure 5 complements the above analyses, showing who has the most power concerning setting prices according to the kind of market accessed

Figure 5 | Power to set prices according to the type of market accessed.



Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

The data reveal that, for the most part, farmers have autonomy in local markets. Indeed, farmers have a bigger say in price setting in local markets (72.7%). Conventional markets, in general, may involve intermediaries, in addition to pressure for low prices, which may lead farmers who access these markets in Bonito to feel dissatisfied. However, Table 2 shows that, in general, despite the lower evaluation in relation to autonomy versus dependence in pricing shown in Figure 5, the family farmers interviewed voiced above-average satisfaction with the security of the channel, both when they have autonomy to set prices and when buyers set them.

Table 2 | Main Channel Security Evaluation vs. Price Autonomy

Price Autonomy	Channel Security (Mean)	Standard Deviation	Count
Collective Agreement	2.5	2.121	2
Farmer	3.7	0.690	24
Buyer	4	0	6
Negotiation	3	0	1

Source: Prepared by the authors (2025).

This assessment may reflect requests for discounts and bargains at the time of sale of products through the commercialization channel. For example, when the farmer is the agent who determines the prices, in 87% of cases, there is bargaining or negotiation, compared with 22% when the price is determined by collective agreement or by the buyer. However, the assessment of security in relation to collective agreements, as price determiners, is the lowest. These two cases observed operate in conventional and local markets, and in conventional markets, one of them has a middleman in the negotiation process.

In addition to the social aspects discussed above, it is crucial to analyze the commercialization strategies adopted by family farmers, as both promising actions (the use of online advertising) and the challenges they face (median revenue margin) emerged from the data. The following subsection examines these points, discussing the results obtained in relation to the main products, according to the type of market, and analyzing factors such as income and the digitalization of markets.

CHALLENGES IN REGULAR TECHNICAL AND RURAL ASSISTANCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Ushizima (2018) showed that family farmers in Bonito face the challenge of the seasonality of their products, which limits their supply to specific times of year, hindering the formation of stable partnerships with certain conventional markets, such as supermarkets. This finding is in keeping with the results of the present study, which showed a stronger presence at local markets, followed by sales to cooperatives and the National School Meals Program.

Therefore, it is necessary to adopt better cultivation practices and techniques, disseminated through regular technical and rural assistance (ATER) to expand and guarantee their production. However, farmers from both settlements were very dissatisfied with this issue. They reported that they are rarely visited by state government technicians who offer adequate support for crop management.

In addition to this lack of ATER, it is important to note that climate change and crises are already being felt and are impacting both production and the volume and variety of food produced, as reported by the farmers themselves. Thus, it was possible to observe the resilience and agency of these farmers, who, even in the face of adverse conditions, chose to remain on their farms, adapting



to this new reality and seeking to include other crops that are more resistant to climate conditions.

In this respect, through capacity for agency, in accordance with Farias *et al.* (2017), family farmers can respond to their environments to resist external pressures and seek alternatives, such as the adoption of agroecological and agroforestry techniques, which enhance their autonomy and guarantee their access to different commercialization channels. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the capacity of family farmers to build new social markets. It is understood that through the social construction of markets, priority is given not only to economic exchange but also to social interactions that enable trust and proximity between farmers and consumers.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study, based on the application of the questionnaire *in situ* and direct observation in the two Bonito settlements, ratified the logic of the approach and provided relevant information that can aid the shaping of public policies for them. It also revealed the power and magnitude of social constructions as decisive and central elements for the establishment and formation of new food markets. The coexistence of extreme realities was also revealed: the presence and participation of strong, courageous women who are responsible both for remaining in rural homes and for the entire dynamics of production, negotiation, and supply to food markets. The role played by social relationships between stakeholders should also be highlighted. In addition to supporting the pricing of agri-food products supported by local culture and tradition, they are equally important for building markets and accessing different commercialization channels. This construction process also shows that family farmers benefit from the establishment of bonds of trust, respect, and reputation based on fair, inclusive, and agile trade, the latter emerging from digital markets (internet, WhatsApp, and social media networks).

From another perspective, it can be inferred that the settlements also experience similar difficulties regarding infrastructure, logistics, significant dependence on public authorities to transport produce (provision of buses by the city government), land regulation, and CAF, low technical/rural assistance, and restricted access to drinking water and public credit, and food supply policy resources. Family farmers in Bonito, like many in other states in Brazil, as pointed out in



the literature, face many challenges and adversities, including the direct impacts of the climate crisis, poor articulation of the social fabric and organization, precarious basic education, health, and communication services, and even, in some cases, exploitation of child labor, alcoholism, and discouragement. All of these elements have a decisive impact on farming (volume, quality, and diversity) and on the types and quantities of commercialization channels.

However, this study, despite recognizing limitations in terms of sample size and time to be conducted, explores concepts not observed in the literature for the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The research allowed us to reveal, typify and analyze the main sales channels that settled family farmers have built and access, according to the methodology proposed by Schneider (2016), as well as to present the foods offered in food markets and the level of autonomy and agency capacity of these farmers to guarantee their socioeconomic reproduction, which is in line with the arguments of Ploeg (2016) on establishing their productive activities considering their interests and being free from so-called “dependency relationships”. In this respect, it was shown that local markets are dominant, with the Farmers’ Market as their main market, reinforcing the role and power of the construction of new social markets, the bonds, their autonomy, and the formation of socioeconomic relationships.

Finally, the analyses presented are the result of a pilot study in different rural settlements and were supported by an innovative approach for the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Therefore, given the complexity and relevance of studies that focus on supply, food markets, rural development and the strengthening of public policies, the intention is not to exhaust and/or conclude the topic presented herein, but rather to suggest that new study and research agendas be launched to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of commercialization channels based on the construction of “more and better social markets”, highlighting the agency capacity of family farmers to ensure greater autonomy, freedom, and fair and inclusive trade.



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