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SUSTAINABLE RURAL FUTURE

**RURAL FAMILY FARM SUCCESSION AND COOPERATIVISM: AN
INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Family farm succession has become a central concern for the future of rural territories, as aging farmers and the low attractiveness of agriculture to younger generations threaten the continuity of family farming. Agricultural cooperatives and farmer organizations are often cited as potential drivers of youth retention and intergenerational renewal, but evidence remains scattered. This study synthesizes recent research on the relationship between rural family farm succession and cooperativism. We conducted an integrative review following PRISMA principles. Searches were run in Scopus and SciELO (last update December 8, 2025) using multilingual terms on family/rural farm succession/transfer and cooperatives/cooperativism, without geographical or temporal restrictions. Records identified: 17 (Scopus=12; SciELO=5). After de-duplication and eligibility screening, seven peer-reviewed empirical studies were included. Main exclusion reasons include duplicates, off-topic (e.g., value

chains, post-socialist transitions) and succession studies without cooperative focus. The selected literature, largely focused on Latin American contexts, converges on three main findings. First, belonging to agricultural cooperatives or farmer associations is frequently associated with a greater intention to take over/succeed the family farm, by improving income prospects, access to markets, technical assistance and credit. Second, cooperatives that invest in youth-oriented programs, leadership training and participatory spaces for young people appear better positioned to foster intergenerational commitment to farming. Third, despite this potential, structural barriers persist: gender inequalities in access to land and decision-making and limited autonomy among rural youth can undermine the capacity of cooperatives to sustain succession processes. Overall, the review suggests that cooperativism is not a sufficient condition but can be a significant enabling factor for family farm succession. The findings highlight the need for public policies and cooperative strategies that explicitly integrate youth, gender and territorial development agendas, and for comparative and quantitative research capable of addressing selection bias and moving beyond intentions to observed succession outcomes.

Palavras-chave: family farm succession; agricultural cooperatives; rural youth; intergenerational renewal; family farming.