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PEASANTRIES

**QUESTIONING THE TRANSITION TO MULTIFUNCTIONALITY: TENSIONS
AND CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE
PRACTICE OF SOCIAL FARMING IN A CAPITAL-INTENSIVE
AGRICULTURAL AREA IN NORTHERN ITALY**

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The Alpine province of South Tyrol is one of the most intensive agricultural areas in Italy, characterized by high pesticide use, strong varietal concentration, and integration into long, standardized agri-food chains. Despite being predominantly family-based, agriculture in the region is deeply embedded in a global agro-industrial system, resulting in hybrid forms between peasant and industrial farming.

The transition toward multifunctionality is often framed as a strategy to support the localized re-emergence of peasant agriculture. Within this perspective, social farming represents a “broadening” strategy that diversifies farm income while

producing services with public good value, contributing to the reconfiguration of rural welfare and local economic networks.

However, promoting social farming requires rethinking relationships between farms, institutions, and civil society beyond productivist logics. Drawing on selected farm case studies from South Tyrol, this contribution shows that institutional efforts to foster transformation often reinforce productivist models, particularly by supporting agro-tourism-oriented services, while essential social functions such as employment inclusion remain marginal.

Palavras-chave: multifunctionality; innovation; social farming; new productivism.