

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 09 - ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS IN FOOD SYSTEMS
TRANSFORMATIONS

**FOOD TRANSITION THROUGH THE LENS OF INSECT-BASED FOODS:
FROM TABOO TO A NEW FOOD REGIME?**

Kamila Guimarães Schneider (kamilaschneider91@gmail.com)

Nathalie Vieira Lucion (nathiluci@gmail.com)

The use of insects in human nutrition still faces significant resistance, particularly in Western cultures. Despite their low acceptability, insects offer high protein availability and are considered a potential alternative for future diets. In countries such as Singapore, United States, insects intended for human consumption are largely used in powdered form, incorporated into the production of breads, supplements, and protein bars. From a production standpoint, insect farming requires less physical space and lower input intensity. However, the consolidation of insects as a food source depends not only on their technical and nutritional properties but also on a sociotechnical arrangement that involves the interplay of science, technology, culture, market, and the State. Social acceptance, risk definition, safety criteria, and the possibilities for the circulation of these products are co-produced by regulatory frameworks, productive practices, technical devices, and narratives on innovation and the future of food,

constituting central debates within food governance. In Brazil, although rich in nutrients, insects are classified as food contaminants. Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency defines them as foreign matter, permitting only trace amounts deemed safe in industrialized foods. In contrast, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply authorizes and encourages their use in animal feed, enabling the production of edible insect species within the national territory. This institutional misalignment reveals conflicts of jurisdiction, regimes of truth regarding food safety, and competing innovation agendas. Even when restricted to animal feed, insect production demonstrates advantages in terms of scalability and diversification, fostering the emergence of foodtech startups seeking to reconfigure food taboos and markets. The debate also encompasses bioethical concerns related to the rearing and harvesting of insects. Thus, this study analyzes the socio-technical potential and challenges associated with the commercialization and consumption of insect-based proteins in Brazil, using bibliographic and documentary research, as well as interviews with key stakeholders.

Palavras-chave: alternative protein; insects based; innovation; governance; food transition.