

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A 20/01/2026) - IRSA 05 - FAMILY FARMING IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

**FAMILY FARMING IN URUGUAY'S FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SECTOR:
PATHWAYS, PRESSURES, AND PROSPECTS (1990–2024)**

Julieta Krapovickas (julieta.krapovickas@cienciassociales.edu.uy)

Joaquín Cardeillac (joaquin.cardeillac@gmail.com)

Family farming has gained renewed recognition as a socially equitable and ecologically sustainable mode of food production, capable of supplying nutritionally sound food through short commercial chains while generating synergies in rural territories and contributing to local economies. In Uruguay, however, systematic data on the number of family farmers and agricultural holdings engaged in fruit and vegetable production remain scarce, with only broad estimates available regarding the social composition of these sectors. This absence of detailed information poses challenges for both research and policymaking.

This paper addresses two main objectives. First, it examines debates surrounding the concept of family farming, with particular attention to the operational definition established by the Ministerio de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca, which has been legally in force since 2016. We analyze the scope and

limitations of this definition, highlighting how its legal operationalization grants family farmer status to certain actors while excluding others who, despite engaging in similar practices, are unable to access differentiated public policies. This discussion underscores the importance of critically assessing how complex concepts are institutionalized and the implications of such definitions for equity and inclusion in rural development.

Second, the paper explores trends and challenges in family fruit and vegetable farming in Uruguay between 1990 and 2024 through a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative analysis draws on agricultural census data (1990–2011) and specialized sectoral records to trace changes in the number of holdings and cultivated area. Qualitative analysis is based on 19 interviews with family farmers conducted between 2024 and 2025, as well as two interpretive focus groups held in Canelones in late 2025. Findings reveal multiple challenges leading to processes of decomposition of family farming, particularly as concentration processes and heightened competition in a reduced market increasingly transform family-based productive units into entrepreneurial enterprises.

Palavras-chave: family farming; territories; rural population; rural/agrarian work.