

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A 20/01/2026) - IRSA 07 - THE GOVERNANCE OF LOCAL PRODUCTIVE SYSTEMS AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES

THE SOCIOECONOMICS OF COCOA PRODUCTION: A CASE STUDY IN MUNICIPALITIES OF WESTERN AMAZONIA.

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Brazil ranks 7th as the world's largest producer of cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*), recognized as an important agricultural commodity and for promoting employment in rural areas, generating income, and providing ecosystem services. Understanding its importance, this research aimed to understand the socioeconomic background of cocoa farmers in the municipalities of Ourilândia do Norte and Tucumã, in the state of Pará, Eastern Amazon. Structured questionnaires with 152 questions related to socioeconomic and productive profiles were used. 230 people were interviewed in Ourilândia do Norte and 284

in Tucumã, totaling 514 families. After data collection, exploratory multivariate data analyses were performed. The research results showed that rural property management is carried out by adult men, married, and with low levels of education. The social infrastructure, considered in this study to be basic sanitation and quality of access, confirmed the reality experienced in other municipalities, especially in rural areas. This condition weakens the cocoa farming value chain and excludes producers from competing in the market on an equal footing with other commodities. The average income of US\$140.90 and the legal insecurity regarding land regularization were observed with concern, as the number of respondents who did not possess any land title was 206 in Ourilândia do Norte and 167 in Tucumã. An important conclusion was the representativeness of family farming, confirmed by the average size of rural properties: 28.5 hectares in Ourilândia do Norte and 58.5 hectares in Tucumã. The results found throughout the research are fundamental to understanding and identifying possible weaknesses in the cocoa farming value chain in Brazil, and based on these results, to creating solutions to strengthen family farmers who cultivate cocoa in the studied territory, thereby creating more opportunities in the countryside

Palavras-chave: amazon; agriculture; cocoa; sustainability; territory.