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PERSPECTIVES

**GENDER GAPS IN MUNICIPAL AGRICULTURAL GOVERNANCE: WOMEN'S
UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GOIÁS (BRAZIL)**

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Agricultural governance at the municipal level plays a strategic role in the formulation and implementation of rural development policies, particularly in regions where agribusiness constitutes a central pillar of the economy. In Brazil, the state of Goiás stands out as one of the country's leading agribusiness hubs; however, limited empirical attention has been given to gender representation within local agricultural decision-making structures. This study aims to map gender representation within the Municipal Agriculture Secretariats of the 246 municipalities of Goiás, investigating women's access to formal spaces of power in municipal agricultural governance and examining the persistence of gender inequalities in this institutional field. The research adopts a descriptive and quantitative approach, based on documentary analysis of official information obtained from municipal institutional websites, administrative records, and public databases. The analysis focuses on three dimensions: the gender of municipal

executive leadership, the presence of women heading Municipal Agriculture Secretariats, and the formal existence of these secretariats within municipal administrative structures. The results reveal a clear underrepresentation of women in strategic positions related to agricultural governance. Among the 246 municipalities analyzed, only 35 are governed by women. Of the municipalities that maintain a Municipal Agriculture Secretariat, just 16 have women serving as heads of the department, and in only five cases were these appointments made by female mayors. Additionally, 53 municipalities do not present a Municipal Agriculture Secretariat on their institutional websites, and two secretariats remain pending formal appointment. These findings highlight persistent gender-based power asymmetries in municipal agricultural policymaking, even within a state characterized by a robust agribusiness sector. By providing a systematic quantitative mapping of women's presence in municipal agricultural governance, this study contributes to international debates on gender, public administration, and rural development by offering empirical evidence of enduring institutional barriers to women's access to positions of power.

Palavras-chave: gender inequality; municipal agricultural governance; women's political representation.