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AGROECOLOGICAL FAIRS AS SPACES OF VALUE IN THE TERRITORY OF MENDOZA, ARGENTINA

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In this presentation, we seek to highlight the importance of fairs that are part of alternative agroecological marketing circuits promoted by peasant family farming, in contrast to the limitations of the conventional agri-food system. These limitations bring together a multitude of factors, including environmental degradation and the deterioration of the health of populations affected by the massive use of agrochemicals, which add to the structural disadvantages faced by smallholder families as a result of the concentration of production and trade imposed by the dominant production model.

Given this situation, we propose analyzing the markets associated with direct retail sales, which are frequented by a portion of the urban population in search of healthier food, as alternatives to the conventional agri-food model. We base this analysis on fieldwork with farmers in the Green Belt of Mendoza (Argentina), who sell their produce in urban areas of the province and gather at three agroecological fairs: Bioferia, Vida Feria, and Feria Eco Oasis. Based on these three case studies, we provide an account of how they have developed over the years, seeking to characterize these spaces based on their particular “imprint,” which is the result of their location, the producers and products offered, the profile of those who attend, and the cultural and recreational activities that take place in each of them. The results suggest that these alternative spaces promote the autonomy of agroecological production and ensure its viability, promoting food sovereignty and improving the quality of life of the population as a whole.

Palavras-chave: peasant family farming; alternative marketing channels; food sovereignty; social construction.