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SUSTAINABLE RURAL FUTURE

PORTRAIT OF COOPERATIVISM IN AGRARIAN REFORM IN BRAZIL

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Based on the premise that collectivity in rural areas is one of the ways to promote the development and strengthening of family farming in agrarian reform settlements, this article aims to analyse the profile of cooperation in agrarian reform, highlighting its potential and challenges, so that, based on the reality of these collectives, we can consider public policies to support their consolidation. A total of 157 interviews were conducted with leaders of cooperatives linked to UNICRAB – National Union of Popular Agrarian Reform Cooperatives of Brazil, an entity linked to the MST (Landless Workers' Movement) social movement. Data collection was carried out in two stages: i) National Meeting of Cooperatives within the scope of Coopera Mais Brasil, held in Luziânia, from 22 to 25 April 2024; ii) Meeting of Cooperatives affiliated to UNICRAB, held

between 27 and 28 February 2025. The results show that the size of cooperatives varies greatly, but that 90% have up to 500 members, of which 49% are small, with up to 50 members. Primary production is the most striking feature of cooperatives, and the three main products from settlements at the national level are: vegetables, cassava, and fruit. In general, the biggest challenge faced is access to credit, in 87% of situations, focused on agro-industrialisation and infrastructure, in 76% of cases. Marketing and lack of technical assistance follow as challenges, with 50% and 48% of cases, respectively. On the other hand, the institutional market, such as PNAE and PAA, accessed by 74% of cooperatives appear as extremely important public policies for the consolidation and organisation of cooperatives, as they are secure purchases, allowing production without the uncertainty of sales. Furthermore the study demonstrates the importance of diversifying the ways of marketing products, as already happens through fairs and other markets.

Palavras-chave: family farming; agricultural cooperation; settlers; agroecology; agribusiness in rural areas.