

A Study on Accounting Management Practices in Productive units of Settled family Farmers

Rita R. M. Costa¹, Denes D. Vieira², Marcia B. Moreira³

¹UNEB, Brazil

^{2,3}UNIVASF, Brazil

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Abstract—Family farming as a form of social organization when carrying out its productive activities and management of the establishment, are based on the connection of family members in the construction of an identity and economic and social recognition. In this context, the possibility of using Rural Accounting in Brazil as a management tool for these production units presents a profile of fragility and little applicability in the calculation of results due to limitations in relation to the quality of accounting information. Based on these assumptions, the study aimed to analyze the existence of management accounting instruments in the productive units by settled family farmers. The research characterized as a case study, of an exploratory-descriptive nature, with a qualitative and quantitative approach, resorted to the aid of narrative interviews, from semi-structured questionnaires to obtain data. The results obtained allowed us to understand that the low level of education prevents the use of registration and production control. However, it was possible to verify that social trajectories interfere in decision making, production and verification of results.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the agrarian sphere, public policies were implemented with a view to socioeconomic development, especially with regard to family farming. The Agrarian Reform program, for example, was created with the objective of promoting a better distribution of land through changes in the regime of ownership and use, which triggered the settlement of landless families. The expectation was that by making rural development possible, jobs would be generated and environmental sustainability guaranteed.

According to Neves (2006), family farming corresponds to the form of social organization in which there is the aggregation of a broad and differentiated group of farmers who, in the performance of productive activity and management of the establishment, are based on the

bond of family members in the construction of an identity and economic and social recognition.

The complexity of rural issues provided the development of a new perspective, enabling dialogue and interaction of knowledge from different areas of knowledge. Thus, the articulation of a set of new institutional actors in favor of potentially favorable results began, contributing to sustainable forms of production and social organization. Therefore, studies on economic and technical feasibility are no longer suitable as indicators of success for a public policy intervention.

Thus, the need for interdisciplinarity in rural issues is admitted, since they present a management directed towards work factors. Thiesen (2008), exposes interdisciplinarity as a critical and reflective attitude. Farm (1979) shares this conception, adding that

contextualization is fundamental in order to know and integrate knowledge, aiming at new questions, new searches, that is, the transformation of reality itself.

Callado and Callado (2014) admit that rural management in Brazil is still developed within traditional criteria, with a low standard of operational and economic performance, with limitations regarding the quality of accounting information. So, rural accounting is still an instrument little used by small farmers, although it is necessary to calculate the economic and financial results.

Another aspect to consider about traditional financial management approaches is that they basically excel in analysis techniques and restrictive factors in the decision-making process, not considering the importance of the people involved. Koontz and O'Donnell (1969) highlight the importance of the individual within the decision-making process since the ability to develop alternatives is often as important as the right choice between them.

Under this premise, Accounting, as an applied social science, understands that it is human action that acts and modifies the patrimonial phenomenon of an economic-financial nature. It operates in the field of essential knowledge for the formation of decision-making agents of the most varied levels and has the ability to capture the occurrence of economic events that impact a certain state of wealth, to later quantify them and communicate their effects. Thus, sociological considerations open up a vast field of investigation for accounting, enabling interdisciplinarity with elements that allow for a better understanding of changes in the scenario and their impact on projects, as well as the phenomena that interfere with the investigated target object.

The set of various interdisciplinary concerns composed the problematic of this research, represented by the following question: to analyze the existence of management accounting instruments in the productive units of family farmers settled in the achievement of economic and financial results in the Bela Conquista Settlement, in the municipality of Itiúba/BA?

Given the above, the study is justified, as it is essential not only to meet legal requirements, but the behavioral analysis of producers and how they influence decision-making in the management of these projects. In this context, Accounting emerges with the main objective of providing this information to its various users, which is why it needs to adapt to the changes imposed by the Society's new demands. Thus, the research becomes relevant due to the global concern with environmental sustainability, above all due to the perspectives of economic and social development of family farming products.

To answer this concern, families of settlers and families associated with the association were interviewed, which, based on their narratives, made it possible to understand how the decision-making process within these social organizations takes place. The work is divided into Introduction, Theoretical Foundation, Material and Methods, Analysis and discussion of results and final considerations.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Accounting acts in the field of essential knowledge in the formation of decision-making agents of the most varied levels. It was conceived respecting the essence of economic events which, through its capture, processing and analysis techniques, make it possible to measure the relationships arising from economic-financial facts, based on its own methodology, today enhanced by scientific rationality (IUDÍCIBUS; MARTINS; CARVALHO, 2005).

Authors such as Padoveze (2010), Hendriksen; Van Breda (1999), among others, agree with Iudícibus; Martins; Carvalho (2005) when they point out that the validation of any accounting theory is solely and exclusively due to its generated utility for users in the practical world. These authors refer to Accounting as we know it today, with the ability to first capture the occurrence of economic events that impact a certain state of wealth, then price it and, finally, to communicate their effects.

Among the specialties of Accounting Science, Rural Accounting stands out, aimed at serving rural enterprises, that is, those that exploit the productive capacity of the soil, whether through land cultivation, or by raising animals and/or transforming certain agricultural products.

In Brazil, the legislation considers as rural activity: agriculture, cattle raising, extractivism, fish farming, plant and animal extraction and exploitation and the transformation of their production. For Coelho (2009, p.75), this activity must be carried out by an economic agent considered an entrepreneur, who occupies one of the poles of the legal relationship between the State and the private. It is explored in two ways: in agribusiness and in family farming. Thus, rural activity is carried out through material, cultural, economic or legal factors.

Authors such as Lemes (1996), Souza et al. (1992) conceptualize a rural company as a production unit that stands out for having some peculiar characteristics, such as a high level of working capital and a high degree of commercialization with technical objectives aimed at its

survival, stimulated by the desire for growth and the search of positive results.

For Crepaldi (1998), rural accounting, as one of the main control and information systems for rural companies, allows, through its instruments, the verification of the company's situation under the most diverse approaches and aspects, such as structure analysis, evolution, solvency, guarantee of equity and third-party capital, return on investments, among others necessary to contribute to better planning and performance. Also, for the author, the information generated and the financial knowledge help in planning, in solving problems and in decision-making, as finance provides information that helps rural entrepreneurs to perform their duties well.

Also, according to the author, it is not only an attribute of small properties, but also identified in medium and large properties, compromising any financial and economic result. The absence of records and control makes it difficult to correctly calculate the costs of its products; production overheads that are not prorated to all products correctly; the recognition and identification of losses that are not differentiated from random, fortuitous ones from those that are part of the production process; the recognition of labor costs, with biological assets to the depreciation of property, plant and equipment; and exhaustion of pastures used in the activity, among others.

Faced with a perspective of self-sustainability, with financial autonomy to carry out new investments, rural accounting becomes a challenge for the manager of any rural enterprise.

III. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research as to the objectives is characterized by exploratory character and descriptive qualitative nature, according to Gil (2002), exploratory research aims to provide greater familiarity with the problem, where the authors and available literature that can provide support are investigated. the search. And descriptive research seeks to describe the characteristics of a given population or phenomenon, considering that it seeks to discover ideas and data for a better understanding of the phenomenon in question.

To obtain the data, field research was carried out in the months of December/18 and January/19, using interviews and a semi-structured questionnaire as techniques. Regarding the interview, Ludke; André (2007) consider it an efficient instrument in data collection in field research, as it allows capturing the desired information, with practically any type of informant and on the most varied topics. The type of interview adopted for this investigation

was narrative, as it allows for a more detailed understanding of the object of study, that is, what farmers think and how they develop their actions aimed at decision-making.

In the data analysis, an interpretive qualitative approach was used, according to Minayo (2010), it seeks to understand the phenomenon through the meanings that people attribute to it, focusing on the complexity of the human process of making sense of things, insofar as situations happen. Thus, an epistemological focus was given to hermeneutic phenomenological reflection, which, according to Van Manen (1990), is a valuable method of investigation, as it enables the description and interpretation of the phenomenon studied.

The study also resorted to statistical methods for quantification, tabulation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected, which also gives the research a quantitative character. According to Rodrigues (2006, p. 89), quantitative research is focused on the analysis and interpretation of results, using statistical measures and techniques, such as percentage, mean, mode, median, standard deviation, correlation coefficient, regression analysis, etc.

The general setting of the study was the Bela Conquista Settlement, in the municipality of Itiúba (BA), which has 62 settled family farming families, with 21 families participating in the survey. it was by chance, having been made from the respondents of the investigated target population who agreed to participate.

Once the sample was defined, the settled families were typified into two groups: G1- those constituted by squatter families, that is, those that own the land, and G2- non-squatters, representing the families of squatters' children with units active productive activities.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The settlement was founded in 1989 with the production-occupation system, where each settler received about 13 hectares (ha) for their productive unit and an area for the collective of around 112 ha. Horticulture and fruit growing were collectively developed. Another area, about 18 hectares, was destined to the creation of cattle and sheep in a semi-extensive way. Faced with countless subsistence difficulties, under the guidance of the union and the pastoral, the Bela Conquista Farm Settlement Association was set up, with the aim of improving living conditions and its productive units through the associative organization.

Initially, its productive activities were developed with horticulture and fruit growing. Afterwards, they dedicated

themselves to livestock, specifically the raising of cattle and sheep. Currently, it is composed of 62 families, 34 of squatters, represented by the families with the right to own the land, and 28 families of non-squatters, represented by the children who formed families, built houses, exploit the land, but do not have the right of ownership. and who live basically from family farming.

From the sample, of the 34 families of squatters, 14 participated in the survey, representing 66.67% respondents; of the 28 families of non-squatters, 7 participated in the survey, representing 33.33% of respondents. Regarding gender classification, 62% of respondents were female and 38% male. It can be seen in the responses that the woman has a social engagement and a place of active voice in the settlement, arising from the trajectory of individual and collective struggle.

It is observed that, due to occupation, the majority were in adulthood, it can be deduced that those under the age of 30, with 25.81% of respondents, were born in the settlement. The most representative range is between 56 to 65 years old with 28.57%; followed by 46 to 55 years, with 23.82%; from 26 to 45 years old with 19.05 and finally over 65 years old with 9.52%.

Of squatter families 71.43% have children working on the property and of non-squatter families 50% of the children work on the property. In terms of sales, 100% of the products from both squatters and non-squatters are sold at the city's open market.

Regarding education, 52.38% have incomplete primary education having attended only the first or second year; Incomplete High School 19.05% and only 23.81% completed high school. Of the respondents, only one squatter's daughter is studying for a degree in the Technologist in Agroecology course at the Federal University of Recôncavo Baiano (UFRB) 4.76%.

The settlers' source of income predominates as an exclusively agricultural activity at 42.86%; followed by 33.33% referring to agricultural activity and other income due to retirement. Other families supplement their income either with the Bolsa Família 9.52%; with a university scholarship 4.76%; civil servants 4.76% and in salaried work in one of the shifts 4.76%.

The identification of the profile of the settled families was important to verify the practice of accounting instruments in controlling expenses. Assess whether factors such as gender, education, age group influence the adoption of these criteria in managing their production. When analyzing the results of the survey, it was found that there was no record of their activities, even in notebooks, passbooks, or loose forms, only one of the respondents claimed to write down their expenses in a passbook.

Accounting for what is produced is not a habit and they keep this information in memory, so that many of them are not properly processed. This result may be related to low education as 52.38% have incomplete primary education, in relation to age group, this data influences because it is justified by virtue of the representativeness of the squatters' families. As for gender, no influence was identified in relation to recording or not the information, in the speeches a question of lack of experience in the group is evident.

Another aspect that draws attention is the fact that the estimated average income from earnings reported by agents varies considerably, which indicates that they are effectively unable to maintain a value that can guarantee their sustainability. Of the squatters' families, 42.86% earn up to the minimum wage and 57.14% more than the minimum wage. While the families of non-squatters, 87.50% earn up to a minimum wage and 42.86% more than a minimum wage. Note that this disparity is related to the age group of the squatters and the fact that they add the earnings from retirement as a complement to their income.

With the cooperation projects through the association, there was an improvement in the quality of life and an increase in family income, but at the time of the survey, the respondents were not participating in any project.

The conception that these agents have of gains and what they consider as profits or losses is not real, as all expenses related to what is produced and sold are not effectively considered. In both agricultural and livestock activities, in the respondents' understanding, some expenses are not recognized as production costs or marketing expenses, because they are carried out by them. The cost of labor is particularly noteworthy, as it represents services provided by them directly in their production units, values for handling the cattle and labor applied by other squatters.

It was also identified that they do not have the habit of making an Inventory of Fixed Assets, nor do they recognize the loss of useful life of the assets as a cost of production, they also disregard the depreciation of equipment, exhaustion and losses in production.

The criterion used by the majority to find out if there is a gain is when the merchandise is not returned from the open-air market. Part of the production is consumed by the families, however, as there is no record, they do not know how much of the production is consumed, but they estimate that they save 70 to 75% of their own production, instead of purchasing from third parties. The lack of this recognition also compromises the verification of production results.

In the livestock activity, gains vary considerably, as some calf births are sometimes not registered and losses due to death are not recognized in the results. Thus, in livestock activities, although there is registration of males and females, stock control does not separate the Breeders and Breeders. Accounting implies the non-recognition of Biological Assets in the correct group of Current Assets and Non-Current Assets.

When asked about decisions about production, creation and marketing if they are planned in advance, 100% of respondents said no. However, the producers have internal policies for agroecological production, care and respect for the environment and the preservation of social space.

When carrying out purchases, sales, investments, calculation of gains and losses, 100% of respondents also said that they do not register. Due to the risks inherent in the production and raising of animals, 100% stated that there are no Contingency plans to remedy possible losses.

Although the financial obligations are recorded in total forms, as they know how much comes in and how much comes out of the box, however, the research results demonstrate a deficiency in both financial and accounting registration and control, which makes it difficult to organize, plan and make decisions. to produce and how much to invest, as they are carried out on a daily basis, in the immediacy of the facts. In this scenario, the decision-making process is quite empirical and rudimentary, which compromises preventive actions to remedy possible losses in advance.

When analyzing the results of the respondents of the settlers who participate in the association, however, these same agents, when they assume a position of management, proceed with the records of operations by productive units, however this information only indicates entries, exits and balances of operations, but it was found there is no record in greater detail of their productive activities. Resources from projects have better control over execution, but limited entries and exits and calculation of balances, with all expenditures being recorded. Initially, they stated that they wrote it down in a booklet and later went on to a spreadsheet to carry out the monthly accountability, presented at the meeting and registered in the Minutes.

The result corroborates studies by Marion (2014) regarding debates on the use of information on cash flows and that the Cash Flow Statement (DFC) is the main accounting report used in the rural sector in the United States and in Brazil. Thus, as results already presented by Crepaldi (2007), as the limitations in the quality of accounting information generated in rural properties compromising financial results.

The study raises a question to consider that the results point out, is the importance of not retaining only economic, but cultural, social and historical nuances that influence decision-making in the context of the reality of rural producers, as it was noticeable in the speech of some squatters whose trajectory influenced the decisions, between two possible alternatives, the choice always prevails in order to ensure the improvement, development and sustainability of settlers, thus, raising resources is important but cannot transgress internal agroecology policies, for example, applied in their productions.

Understanding the trajectory of these agents, and from the sociological perspective of accounting, it appears that accounting is not totally rational and should not be used only to obtain gains.

V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Bela Conquista Settlement, as a social space, identified itself as an evaluative and devoted posture by agents to causes aimed at family farming, especially to settled families. The speeches of struggle and achievements demonstrate a cooperative relationship that culminated in the opportunity to conquer their right to be in the countryside, conquered respect and legitimacy in their social space and today the settlement has social visibility by the residents of the municipality and surrounding region, who recognize the quality of production.

The research fulfilled its objective and emphasizes the need to familiarize and insert routines in the agents' listings for the records and controls of their production as well as their heritage assets, as with simpler records, their data will be structured and will be able to obtain more reliable information about their reality. . By learning to group expenditures according to the different economic activities and in specific records, the releases will contribute to better economic and social results, they can help for a more elaborate planning of their productions and creations, that is, make an action plan if necessary. in accordance with the relevant particulars of their productive activities.

It is known that the low level of education prevents the use of more sophisticated methods in the decision-making process, in addition to the fact that most of the information recorded is informal. Thus, this research suggests a look at settled family farming producers, new research from other perspectives and public or private actions that may contribute to a management information system compatible with their needs and level of access.

That said, the compression of the trajectory of these agents became relevant, as it allowed them to understand their social practices, the way they deal with their production and decision-making, how they seek to optimize their resources and results for their livelihood and thus mobilize them to serve their individual and collective perspectives.

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