

# FAMILY AGRICULTURE AND DIVERSIFIED CROPS - A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE DROUGHT IN THE SOUTH REGION OF BRAZIL

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**Abstract:** The present paper aims to understand the response of the *Pradense* society to the drought that emerged in 2005 and consequently broke out into a state of emergency in this municipality of the *Rio Grande do Sul* - Brazil. With a qualitative approach, using field work, it attempts to describe the perception of the social actors in a holistic perspective, regarding the impacts and consequences of this occurrence.

**Keywords:** Family Agriculture, Diversified Crops, Climate changes

## ACRONYMS

ACIS-AP – Associação Comercial Industrial e Serviços de Antônio Prado

AECIA – Associação dos Agricultores Ecologistas de Ipê e de Antônio Prado

Coopaecia – Cooperativa AECIA de agricultores ecologistas

CORSAN – Companhia Riograndense de Saneamento

EMATER – Associação Riograndense de Empreendimentos de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural

FEE – Fundação de Economia e Estatística

IPHAN – Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional

PRONAF – Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar

## Why *Antônio Prado*?

During the field work, this was one of the most pertinent issues which needed to be settled with the local people. Normally, after I explained the reason for my stay there, I was asked:” why *Antônio Prado*?”

I think it’s important to explain the way that *Antônio Prado* was selected as the place that the research was undertaken. Not only because of the continuous queries, but it’s important to see that research is limited by various factors, in this case, by time and money.

Before *Antônio Prado*, it was established that my research was going to be done in the municipality of *Caxias do Sul*. From research on the internet, I felt some hesitation with respect to the selected location.

The township of *Caxias do Sul* has about 400.000 habitants. It's not impossible to do field work on this type of population density, but we have to know the data we want to collect, and then select the right methodology and techniques to obtain it.

During the time of the formation before the field work I became reluctant about the municipality.

With just three weeks and a limited budget to do the field work, I started to think that the research was going to be compromised, because of the costs of being in a big place, the necessity of transportation, time to become familiar with the place, in summary, factors that increase the costs and time available for research like this, which just takes 15 days of field work.

The coordination didn't place any hindrance to the idea of changing the location, thus, the next step was looking on the internet at a small place near *Caxias do Sul*, but we changed this strategy and decided to call the Department of Environment and Agriculture in *Caxias do Sul*, and ask for a town with a small density population in the region that suffered from the drought of 2005 and that had declared a state of emergency. They gave us three locations: *Ipê*, *Vacaria* and *Antônio Prado*. We started to consider *Ipê*, it fulfilled the three requirements, but then we searched for a place to stay and we didn't find anything. The next place was *Vacaria* but it didn't fulfil the requirements; despite being less dense than *Caxias do Sul*, it has a considerable population. The last was *Antônio Prado* which was chosen, and as the next pages will show, this micro-region presents particularities that give a different response to the drought that occurred in 2005 in the region and in the country.

## Historical consequences of floods and droughts in Antônio Prado

*Mérica, Merica*

*Dalla Italia noi siamo partiti  
Siamo partiti col nostro onore  
Trentasei giorni di macchina e vapore,  
e nella Merica noi siamo arriva*<sup>1</sup>.

*Merica, Merica, Merica,  
cossa saràlo 'sta Merica?  
Merica, Merica, Merica,  
un bel mazzolino di fior.*

*E alla Merica noi siamo arrivati  
no' abbiám trovato nè paglia e nè fieno  
Abbiám dormito sul nudo terreno  
come le bestie andiam riposar.*

*Merica, Merica, Merica,  
cossa saràlo 'sta Merica?  
Merica, Merica, Merica,  
un bel mazzolino di fior.*

*E la Merica l'è lunga e l'è larga,  
l'è circondata dai monti e dai piani,  
e con la industria dei nostri italiani  
abbiám formato paesi e città.*

*Merica, Merica, Merica,  
cossa saràlo 'sta Merica?  
Merica, Merica, Merica,  
un bel mazzolino di fior.*

*Merica, Merica, Merica,  
cossa saràlo 'sta Merica?  
Merica, Merica, Merica,  
un bel mazzolino di fior.*

The mountainous area now known as *Antônio Prado* in the *Gaucha* Mountain - *Rio Grande do Sul* - remained impenetrable until the decade of 1880, just the Kaingang, a hunter-gathered ethnic group live there. Then the region was occupied by Swedish and Polish settlers until 1888, a time when they start a new immigration to *Alto Uruguai* (cf. Barbosa, 1980:14).

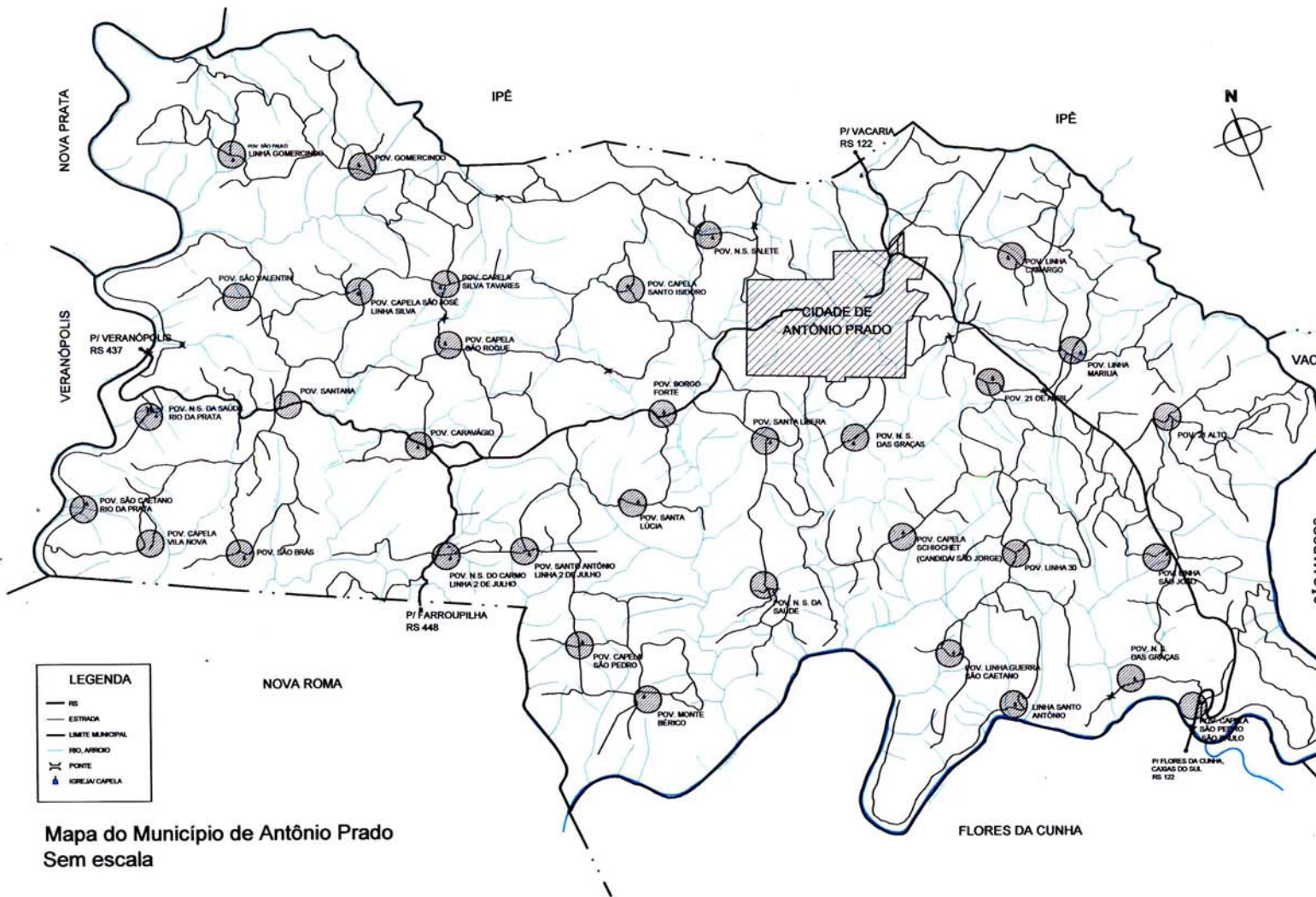
Nevertheless it was the Italian immigrants that occupied the recent pages of the history of that land, and they are the reason why it's known as the most Italian city of Brazil. Mainly they come from the region of Veneto in the north of Italy and by the immigrants that first tried living in the coffee plantations in *São Paulo* or from the neighbouring municipality of *Caxias do Sul*, that's why the name of the municipality was from a man that fought for immigration in the country (cf. Barbosa, 1980: 14).

Like the lyrics *Mérica, Mérica* demonstrate the epic journey to reach the Promised Land, Barbosa (1980) shows the same brave odyssey of the first Italian settlers in the dense forest where *Antônio Prado* now lays. This part of the history was constantly referred to in the field work by the descendents of these first settlers, for example, like one of the informants one told me, Italians are hard workers: in a

adverse place like this region, they made agriculture prosper, if they were in the northeast of Brazil, one of the poorest regions in the country, they probably would have made the same agriculture prosper.

Geographically *Antônio Prado* is situated in the region of *Rio Grande do Sul* with 347,62 km<sup>2</sup>. Watered by the *Andas* and *Prata* rivers. The municipality has borders with *Ipê* in the north, *Nova Roma do Sul*, *Nova Pádua* e *Flores da Cunha* in the south, *São Marcos* and *Campestre da Serra* in the east and *Veranópolis*, *Vila Flores* and

Protásio Alves on the West. The climate is considered subtropical and the latitude reaches 770 meters above the sea level.



Typically this region doesn't have many problems with droughts, and therefore the occurrence in 2005 caused some apprehension. Nevertheless the testimony of one elder informant states that the impact of the drought of 2005 doesn't even compare with one in the past: *"Fifty years ago there was a drought, by the Inferno River on the top... I wanted to say, down there where I live, had almost dried out. One river that it's a river, one medium river. I tell you because I went to the river, and there was a puddle*

*here and there. I was peeking the fishes that stay in the puddles...*<sup>1</sup> Rosana, the agricultural engineer of the *Cooperativa Agropecuária Pradense*, confirmed this fact, that is, the elders say that a intense drought like this one happened 60 years ago, and the young ones never had seen one like this before, and so they were not prepared for it.

Barbosa (1980) described one episode of a big drought in December of 1889 that made the settlers lose their crops and therefore go to work on the construction of the *Simão* Road, but the main climate problem of the region were the floods of the rivers that surround the municipality and made communication impossible with other regions (cf. Barbosa, 1980: 18, 36, 37).

The repercussions of the isolation of *Antônio Prado* persist in the memory of the inhabitants. To resolve the problem of the floods that made the municipality inaccessible, they decided to order an iron bridge from Germany to be constructed in the *Passo do Zeferino*, but this never happened. The bridge arrived in the *Rio Grande do Sul*, but instead of going to *Antônio Prado* it went to the neighbouring municipality of *Vacaria*, because they were afraid of the development occurring in *Antônio Prado* (cf. Barbosa, 1980: 36, 37)

Not just isolation caused the decrease of the inhabitants or the exodus of the inhabitants to *Alto Uruguai*, but there were also other effects:

“The relative road via isolation of Antônio Prado was one of the factors that permitted the preservation of the cultural-historic patrimony. The tourists and the experts that passed by the city, or visited the inland were delighted with the beauty of the old chalets, most of them in wood, in a typical style of Italian constructions of the beginning of the century. In 1988, after countless attempts the ISPHAN/Pró Memória declared Antônio Prado “National Patrimony”<sup>2</sup>.

(Boni, 1989: 9)

In 1987 there was one provisory *tombamento*<sup>3</sup> of 47 buildings in the city center. This event provoked controversy in the Pradense society:

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<sup>1</sup> Interview made on 18/07/06. Translated by the author

<sup>2</sup> Translated by the author

<sup>3</sup> “The *Tombamento* is an administrative act of the public power, with the objective of protecting determined cultural goods, impediment that they come to be destructed or to take away their character. It must be applied to movable or immovable goods of natural and cultural interest, in what they are

“Even in these first reactions to the *tombamento* it can be predicted the main poles of the controversy that divided the informants: the question of the propriety right, the theme of modernization and progress in a local society, the dispute related to the definition of memory (representatively concerning, in the value of *tombadas* houses, if this represented or not the experience of the immigrant and the Italian colonization in the region), in the end but not the least important, the authoritative action of the SPHAN.”<sup>4</sup>

(Lewgoy: 8)

The first informant that noted this fact was Marcus, the secretary of the Agriculture and Environment Secretary. Before I arrived in Antônio Prado the previously collected information gave me the idea that it was a tourist city, and not only was it a national patrimony but was also designed as a slow city<sup>5</sup> and was included in the route of the wine of the Gaucha Mountain, but the field work demonstrated other points of view.

According to Marcus and corroborated by Lewgoy<sup>6</sup> the *tombamento* was not viewed as a factor of development to all *Pradenses*, instead they see “*The construction in stone-work passed to signify social position while the wood in a general way stayed with the humble and unpretentious constructions, until these days*”<sup>7</sup> (Posenato, 1989: 15)

In agreement with Ciami Fochesato, the probationer that was working in the office of the Tourism Secretary stated that statistically tourism represents a small part of the activities of the municipality, notwithstanding the cultural and natural potential that it has.

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associated with historically, culturally, architectonics, effectives, artistic, archeologically, ethnographically, bibliographically, land-scape values. Can be photographs, books, furniture, utensils, works of art, buildings, streets, squares, quarters, cities, regions, forests, water-falls, etc.

The *tombamento* must always be accomplishment with the public power – by the Union, through the Institute of the Historical and Artistic National Patrimony – IPHAN, by the State Government through the Institute of The Historical and Artistic Patrimony of the State – IPHAE or by the municipality administration employing specific laws.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by the author

<sup>5</sup> It's a movement that congregates a international network of cities, compromise officially to improve the quality of the life of there citizens through the valorisation of the culture, environment and especially by the gastronomy.

<sup>6</sup> Anthropologist that conducted field work in 1990 and 1991 in *Antônio Prado* with the aim of interpreting the details of the different ethnographic dimensions moved by the *tombamento*.

<sup>7</sup> Translated by the author

Another “post card” of the city it’s the Brazilian movie “*O Quatrilho*”<sup>8</sup> that was made in the idyllic landscape of *Antônio Prado* and in some of the *tombadas* houses. The film represented the colonization of the Italian immigrants in the *Gaucha* Mountain. Some informants said that this movie brought a new perspective to the *pradenses* that thought that the *tombamento* was a negative thing in the municipality and a new way of promoting the tourism.

Of the many factors that the *Gaucha* Mountain presents for attractive tourism, the subtropical climate is one of the most important. Mainly Brazilians relocate to this part of the country to enjoy the cold weather, even snow appears in *Antônio Prado*, but that did not happen during the field work during the cold season.

Despite the fact that the city’s inhabitants don’t mention any drought; they emphasize constantly the climate changes that were occurring locally and globally and consequently they were concerned about the next generations, as the next chapters will describe.

### **Was there really a drought in 2005 in *Antônio Prado*?**

Finally on July 10<sup>th</sup> I arrived in *Antônio Prado*, after spending five days in the capital of the region, *Porto Alegre*. These few days were very productive for the research, because I found a bibliography related to *Antônio Prado*, and got in touch with some institutions, like the *Fundação de Economia e Estatística* (FEE) and the *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Desenvolvimento Rural* (PGDR) of the *Faculdade de Agronomia e Florestal*, where they gave me the contact of the *Centro Ecologico de Ipê*, neighbouring municipality of *Antônio Prado*.

During the time on the bus to *Antônio Prado* a lady started to talk with me, so I explained the reason why I was there, she look at me surprised, and said that she didn’t know anything about a drought in 2005 in *Antônio Prado*; even though she was not local, she was working there in a shoe factory since 2004. But then I became worried, this was the first contact made but the next two persons that I spoke to: the owner of the hostel where I stayed and the lady of the restaurant told me the same. In neither case did they hear about any drought in 2005 in *Antônio Prado* but the last one, told me to go to

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<sup>8</sup> Based on the novel of José Clemente Pozenato and Directed by Fabio Barreto the movie was nominated for the Oscar of Best Foreign Language Film.

the Department of the Environment and Agriculture and ask for her cousin that works there. If there was a drought I would get the answer from him.

The next day I went to the building of the Prefecture where some departments of the State and other institutions like the EMATER that could give me information about the drought, are located.

First I went to EMATER, a mixed capital (private and governmental) institution whose objective is to guide and inform the farmers in techniques, crops, and everything related to the improvement of their activity.

According to the agricultural technician, Roberto Scalco, not only did the drought occur but he also gave me a technical report<sup>9</sup> where it's demonstrated that some farmers lost more than 54% of the crops: grapes, corn, apples, milk, onions, horticulture and peaches, and as a result the emergency state was declared.

The situation was worrying according to this informant, mainly the artesian wells, the dams and even the water springs dried in the inland and the solution passed through the construction of more artesian wells and the adjournment of the payment of agriculture loans that the farmers made and because of problems provoked by the drought, they couldn't pay. For the families more affected a quantity of 300 to 350 Reais<sup>10</sup> was given by the government, called "*bolsa estiagem*".

Next to the EMATER was the office of the Department of Environment and Agriculture, there I met three functionaries: two environmental technicians, and Marcus, the secretary of the department, who described to me not only what occurred in the drought but also cultural aspects related to the *pradenses*. First they baptised the balcony to attend to the public as "balcony of lamentations", Like Marcus said: "*No one comes here to say that had a good crop season, instead they just come and ask for help*"<sup>11</sup>. Therefore in the time of the drought they realised that the demand to construct artesian wells increased and still is. This strategy is causing some reluctance from the technicians and the farmers, because with the substantial demand caused by the drought, there are more probabilities of contaminating the water table of the region.

Another technician was Rosana, the agricultural engineer from the *Cooperativa Agropecuária Pradense*. She pointed out the same aspects of the others and added another one, that is, with the drought the cooperative started to sell more irrigation

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<sup>9</sup> In annex I

<sup>10</sup> 1 U.S. dollar = 2.13 Brazil real

<sup>11</sup> Translated by the author

systems. According to her, there is a change of mentality on the part of farmers, nowadays they have more information and help from technicians, so they are concerned with the climate changes, the drought just came to prove this, and so they decided to prevention methods by buying irrigation systems - the most wanted is the drip irrigation but also they are using overhead (sprinkler) irrigation.

The adjournment of the payment of agriculture loans was considered one of the major strategies implemented by the Trade Union of Antônio Prado in collaboration with the neighbours' trade unions of the region, to ease the farmers that were more affected by the drought. There turned out to be manifestations, that took place in different parts of the region, according to the leader of the Trade Union of Antonio Prado, the associates from the municipality participated in these manifestations and in the end the Banks granted the adjournment.

The loans that the farmers received are integrated in the PRONAF, which consists of a Federal Governmental finance to help the development of family agriculture. César Damiani, the manager of the *Banco do Brasil* (Bank of Brazil) disposed a documentation related to adjournment entitle: "PRONAF- Emergency measures – Droughts – South Region"<sup>12</sup>. Basically he said that the help conditions consisted in an adjournment of loans payments related to the crop of 2004/2005 to the next year, that is, in the time of the field work, and for the *pradenses* farmers that took part of this emergency measure, wouldn't show any problem in the payment. Another relevant fact referred to was an increase of the farmers that made a request for loans, before the drought existed 100 clients and now there are 700 to 800 requests.

During the field work the cross information collected confirmed the occurrence of a drought in *Antônio Prado*, but the perception of the social actors diverges. Local News paper "*Cidadania*" described the occurrence, even interviewed some farmers that lost their products, as well as the diverse technicians from different institutions that I interviewed corroborated, but the other side of the coin reveals that in the same social group, like the farmers - the most directly or visibly affected by the drought – demonstrated that the impact of the drought can bring positive things, such as the quality of the grapes, or the effects of the drought was not so drastic to the activity:

“While the viniculture industries commemorate the excellent grape harvest-time, chiefly because of the favourable weather

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<sup>12</sup> In annex II

conditions for the complete growing of the grapes, raising the quantity of the sugar in the fruit, associated with the grate sanity of the fruits, that surely will produce wines with a high quality, the farmers lament the loses of the productivity caused by the strong drought that reached the Rio Grande do Sul, and the difficulties of commercialising the grapes produced”<sup>13</sup>

(Casarotto, 2005: 16)

One plausible justification for some informants not knowing about the drought can be related to the information that the director of the CORSAN in *Antônio Prado* gave, which is, although the state of emergency was promulgated, the city inhabitants didn't have problems with the supply of water, and so they weren't affected directly. For those that don't have canalized water the situations is the opposite: *“As they don't own a vehicle, just send a horse to bring water from a neighbour, a distance of 3 km. Thus, they didn't take enough, because the water became old and with mud, inappropriate for use. For personal hygiene, they had to bathe with a mug, because the artesian well was almost dried.”*<sup>14</sup>

Despite the strongest impact of the drought having been in the inland of *Antônio Prado*, it also had repercussions in the city.

As the days were passing and contact was more intense with some informants, it was possible to discern the impact that the drought made in the city.

One of the repercussions of the drought was related to the education system. In an interview with a teacher of the private school, it was identified that in the time of the drought some students had to give up studying. She identified the students as sons of settlers that had crops damaged and the solution that they took was to put the children in the public school.

Comparatively the general perception about the education in the country placed the private schools as best qualified in relation to the public school in the first grades, but in the university the balance was the inverse. In the case of *Antônio Prado* the differences are attenuate. Other relevant issues about the education in this municipality are the concentration of education establishments in the city in relation to the inland: In

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<sup>13</sup> Translated by the author

<sup>14</sup> In: newspaper “Cidadania”- A informação de Antônio Prado, ano V – nº 63: Translated by the author

the entire municipality there are fifteen schools, but just four are located in the inland (two in the community of *Santana* and the other two in the community of *21 de Abril*).

The impacts of the drought in the rural areas cause damage in the economic chain, affecting commercial activity in the city. As the president of ACIS –AP said:

“I would say that the people start to better understand the problems now. After the period of the drought the people started to stop spending the little money that they kept for future prevention. So I would say it like this: in relation to commerce, the producers practically stopped buying, because they don't have any more capital, the little that they have, they are keeping for use in another harvest [...] it directly affects commerce like this: this year the commerce it's at a standstill in our municipality, because, what's perceivable is that the farmer would have a low budget and the little money he prefers to keep than to invest. Keep because they don't know what is going to happen this year. The drought extended until now, mid winter, that is, a long time... I myself never saw a drought as big as this one.”<sup>15</sup>

With this situation, the ACIS-AP decided to give an incentive to the consumers to buy more things in the local stores, and for that they had a raffle for owning various prizes, being the first a car.

Another area impacted by the drought was the health system. With the consequent decrease of water in the artesian wells and in the water springs source, it became improper for consumption and so increased the cases of diarrhoea in the municipality.

Though the diverse references above described about the impacts of the drought in the city, there's no doubt that this is a consequence of the crises of the agricultural activity in the inland, and the effects were not just locally, but extend to all the south region.

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<sup>15</sup> Interview on Sunday, 23-07-2006: Translated by the author

## Family Agriculture and Diversified Crops

*The colonization, in its unassuming appearance, represents one revolution in the Brazilian economic system. The archaic structures imposed by the metropolis based in the latifundium, monoculture and the slavery: almost continental extension of land, destined to the production of food-stuffs that are highly quoted in the world market, worked by unfortunates that get nothing from their labour. The settlers that were arriving from Europe introduce a different production: the small property less than 80 hectares, destined to the multiculture to supply food-stuff in the inland market and exclusively worked by the family. In a few years it came to understand the superiority of this model, principally in Rio Grande do Sul, where in 1829, the settlers of São Leopoldo came down of the Sinos river and sell their product in the capital of the province.”<sup>16</sup>*

(Posenato, 1989: 6)

Three days had passed on my field work, and by this time, with the information that I had collected, there was one major step, to go to the colony<sup>17</sup>. There's no doubt that the farmers were the group that was most affected by the drought and as a result the observation of the impact, the consequences and the strategies are more evident.

Luckily I met Fernando, a person that decided to live in the colony and start to cultivate a vine-arthour. He was from *Nova Hamburgo*, a nearby city; famous for producing shoes, but recently it has been suffering from a crisis caused by international competition. He turned out to be an important informant in the field work. Two years ago he started to work for a family that was doing organic agriculture, before he decided to go on his own. He was my free pass to the community of *Linha 2 de Julho*. Although he was an outsider, he turned out to be an important informant, because he was there for two years and got in touch with the settlers. This gave me the opportunity to understand and to go deeper into aspects of the colony that would not be possible with another methodology, for example: participating in the festivity of the colony, and by this being

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<sup>16</sup> Translated by the author

<sup>17</sup> In these paper colony it's refer to the inland of the municipality and it's inhabitants are so called settlers, despite of the negative connotation as one informant said: "settlers are called as dumb, ignorant that just know about land". But like the settlers said, they are proud of their provenience.

able to describe the way that the society of the colony is organized; talking with some youths and getting to know their perspective of the colony, and of course the perception of the settlers about the 2005 drought.

The arrival of the first settlers in *Antônio Prado* is associated with the agricultural activity:

“Simão David de Oliveira was the first citizen that, by 1880, established in the right margins of Antas River [...] in that fertile land, covered by the frost, Simão and his companion built two houses and locked with a thorn fence in a land of 330 meters long. There they cultivated corn, beans, tapioca, sugarcane, coffee, banana-trees, fig-trees, pineapple plants...”<sup>18</sup>

(Barbosa, 1980:12, 13).

The agriculture in *Antônio Prado* can be divided in three stages: Implementation of the colonial agriculture (1875-1930), the colonial agriculture (1931-1970) and the modern agriculture (1971-2006).

Simão David de Oliveira belonged to the first stage that was characterized by the slash-and-burn agriculture; small farms with subsistence production utilizing the fallow system. The trade of the pig fat was considered the principal economic activity.

The second stage consisted in the intensive use of the land with the intensification of slash and the reduction of the fallow system. Corn and wheat represented the main crops that permitted an increase of mills. In the first stage the grape was used mainly for self-consumption, but in this period the production increased and so cooperatives appeared as well as technical assistance (EMATER) and rural credit.

At the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties –still in the second stage- the prices of pig fat and wheat went down, so these productions were abandoned until present days.

With this situation the third stage the settlers took to introducing new types of production: milk, horticulture, fruits (peaches, apples) and aviary chickens. As a consequence agro industries and horticulture merchants were introduced in the

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<sup>18</sup> Translated by the author

municipality which expanded production in the region (*Caxias do Sul* and *Porto Alegre*). Other relevant issues at this stage were the adherence of the settlers to the ecologic agriculture and the abandonment of the slash-and-burn agriculture areas and the beginning of reforestation.

Despite of all these variations in activity, three main aspects persist until today, that is, family agriculture, crop diversity and small property.

The kinship relationships have an important role in the organization of the communities in the colonies. As was observed in the two communities of *S. João* and *2 de Julho*, the settlers had some parental relationships with each other. The community of *S. João* was made up of two generations, that is, the land of the community was divided in three owners: the father, the son and the daughter, each one with their own type of production.

The father could be identified with the second stage - colonial agriculture – he presented diverse crops, most for self consumption, like beans, nuts, sweet potato, figs, pumpkins and corn for the cattle. Instead, the production of milk and grapes was done for economic purposes.

In relation to the son and the daughter, they represented the modern agricultural period, that is, they had small agro industries as well promoting the ecologic agriculture, both belong to the AECIA<sup>19</sup> and Coopaecia. The son was into the production of juices from organic fruits (grapes, peaches and apples) as well as the production of milk. The daughter produced a variety of teas that were selling in the ecologic markets of *Antônio Prado*, *Caxias do Sul* and *Porto Alegre*. Like the others, she also produced milk. Despite the division of land, some activities and goods belong to all, like the cattle activity (fifty) and the utilization of the artesian well that was constructed eight years ago.

It was possible to observe other variations of family agriculture as well as the sense of community in the locality of *2 de Julho*. The Fernando property was rented, and the owner, Nilson Camatti, was the cousin of the neighbour, Walter Camatti, who was a farmer that bet on the culture of onions, beets and grapes for selling, and the

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<sup>19</sup> “Created in 1989, by a group of youths that assumed the challenge of the ecologic agriculture and the associative. The AECIA appears by the discussions stimulated by the Catholic Rural Pastoral Youth of Antônio Prado/RS and by the Centre of Ecologic Agriculture of Ipê/RS, about the problems caused by the industrial agriculture, like the intoxication of the farmers and the environmental pollution caused by the machines, seeds and chemical manures, the impoverishments of the agricultures and the rural exodus” – in: <http://www.aecia.com.br/>

production of corn to feed the cattle, chickens and pigs, for self consumption. The labour is done by the family; made up of him and his father, sister and brother-in-law.

José Marcon was another farmer that I met in *2 de Julho* and from all informants that I met, he probably was one of those most affected by the drought. His main production was milk and corn. From the statements of the other informants, corn was the crop most affected, but to them it was not the main produce, as it was for José Marcon. The work was done by him, his two daughters and wife.

Despite the problems told by José Marcon, when I asked him about if he had taken a loan, he responded negatively. The same question posed to the other informants, and corroborating César Damiani, the manager of the bank, the ones that took out a loan were not having problems in the payment. From his personal experience, Walter Camatti gave an explanation for why the settlers are not having problems in payments of the loans. Years ago he made a loan and he was having problems in paying, the solution was to intensify the production. This fact permitted the understanding that the land is not being maximized, but it's a good strategy as it was for this settler.

One major aspect in the field work was that all the settlers that I spoke to referred to some crop lost, but as they don't have just one crop, they said that the situation stabilized for a time. The problem is that all commented on the present situation. The drought cannot be viewed as a static event that just occurred in 2005, for the settlers say that the weather is changing, for three years it didn't rain like before. In the time of the field work it should have been raining, and was not, they were anxious, Walter Camatti, was cultivating the onion, but was worried; if it didn't rain he had to install the irrigation system.

My first contact with Walter Camatti and José Marcon was in the colony's festival. It's an event where all the community participates and it has a religious aspect that occurs once or twice a year, entitled: "*Our lady of Carmo - Maria Mother of the Saviour Our companion and Patroness*"<sup>20</sup>. The event lasted three days – from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of July – the first two days were dedicated to Mass and had the objective of preparing the community in a spiritual way for the festivity. The last day a mass was given related to the agricultural activity with the theme: "*Festive Mass with the blessing of the scapulars, onion moult, pruning-shears and seeds*"<sup>21</sup>. After the ceremony took

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<sup>20</sup> Translated by the author

<sup>21</sup> Idem.

place there was a traditional lunch, that the cost 12 Reais, consisting of *Capeletti* soup<sup>22</sup>; mashed potato with boiled chicken; tomato and lettuce salad; barbecue pork and chicken; to drink, red and white wine as well as a lemon drink. At the end of the meal, it was time to know who won the raffles that were sold during the lunch –first prize was a cow, and like the others prizes, it was donated by families in the community. The last activities were the football and *bocha* tournaments<sup>23</sup>.

Normally preparation for the festival starts one month before, with the collecting of donations from the families; chickens, eggs, vegetables. The rest of things the commission buys in the market.

The organization committee is nominated for one year, and all the families of the community have to participate at least once in seven years. The activities of this committee are not just restricted to the planning of the festival, but also the management of the infra-structure of the community, which include the church, the Pavilion, the soccer camp and the bar. Each one of these buildings was constructed with money from the community, and with voluntary work of members of the community. It's in these places that the social life of the community happens, normally the men get together in the community bar at night, to play cards, talk and drink. José Marcon recommended this activity, and invited Fernando to be there; as he was going to stay in the community he should be sociable and get to know and hook up with the people in these places.

Religion had and still has an important role in the social life of the *pradenses*, many of the developments in the municipality were made by the priests, as in the example of Father Galioto:

“...Was who lifted the colony. It will be mentioned for a long time everything that he did. He modernized agriculture and educated the farmers to have more luxury and comfort in their houses. He taught them that they should have every sanitary service inside their houses. A lot thought this impossible, because who can handle that smell? So he took the farmers to the canonical house, take them to the sanitary, opened the door and says: “put your nooses here. Do you smell any unpleasant smell? Isn't this almost like perfume?”<sup>24</sup>

(Barbosa, 1980: 51)

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<sup>22</sup> Consists of a boiled water with pasta with meat stuffed, accompanied with grated cheese.

<sup>23</sup> From wikipedia: It's a sport between two persons or two teams that consist in throwing the *bochas* (balls) and put them the most possible near of the *bolim* (small ball), previous launched. The opponent for is turn, will try to throw the balls more closed to the *bolim* or remove the balls of the opponent

<sup>24</sup> Translated by the author

Despite all the efforts from the church, the relation with the communities is not always harmonious. In conversation with José Marcon, this tension was noticeable. Fernando had told me that all the money from the festivities stayed with the church who also handled its management. Fernando was not far from the truth, as José Marcon explained, there are some communities that do that. In relation to the community of *2 de Julho* that didn't happen, instead, the money stayed with the community and the management was done by the organizing committee. However, this year the community was having some divergence with the church, they were obliged to give to the religious institution 10 % of the income of the festivity, if they didn't there would be no priest to celebrate the Mass in the community.

As regarding the role of religion in the drought, it was possible to obtain information that the various communities of the municipality made a religious procession to the community of *Burgo Forte*, with the aim of causing rainfall in the region.

Though the data collected in the field work demonstrate that the family agriculture and the diversified crops attenuated the problems of the drought in Antônio Prado, there are some aspects that can make this type of activity impracticable.

Agriculture represents one of the most essential activities of Antônio Prado, but it is suffering from changes: "*the rural population that in 1960 represented about 65% of the total, changed to almost 26% in the year of 2000, in contrast, the urban population changed from 36% to 76% in the same period.*"<sup>25</sup> (Basso, 2005: 22).

This decrease of the rural population is one of the present concerns that the communities have to face. In agreement with this statistical data, the field work allowed understanding of further aspects. It was possible to know that the colonies were staying with a lot of young single men, it even appeared on the National Television – *Globo* – because the opposite situation happens in the north of the country.

I had the opportunity to speak with some youths during the research, and this was one of the subjects that was the focus. In an informal meeting with a group of young settlers (eight boys and three girls) were we exchanging ideas from our countries. Their perspective of the community was then understood. Most of them are studying in the city, just four in the community of Santana and one was not a student. It curious that

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<sup>25</sup> Translated by the author

the three girls didn't want to stay there, one even says that her father didn't let her to study, justifying: *"I didn't study to be a farmer, why you want to study"*<sup>26</sup>.

Another point of view of the impractical nature of family agriculture and diversified crops was given by Roberto Scalco, not only he was the agricultural technician of EMATER, but also he was a farmer. Personally, he thinks that with this type of production there isn't maximization of productivity, that is, different crops need different treatments as well the materials differ, and so the investments of the farmer are higher.

Though these obstacles can influence the continuity of the family agriculture and the diversified crops in *Antônio Prado*, there's no doubt that the effects of the drought were not as severe as the one of the neighbouring municipalities where latifundium and monocultures predominate and like one young settler said when confronted with the choice of staying in the colony: *"A person that lives in the city doesn't have a way to sustain himself if doesn't have a job. In the colony, if you have a cow, you have milk, with chickens, you have meat and eggs. In short, you have to sustain your self, even without working for others."*<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Idem.

<sup>27</sup> In: newspaper "Cidadania" : Translated by the author

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## Annex I



## ESTIAGEM 2004/2005

## LAUDO TÉCNICO

## 1 - IDENTIFICAÇÃO

Município Antônio Prado

Data de elaboração 07/04/05

Evento ocorrido Estiagem prolongada

Período de ocorrência 15/11/04 a 30/03/05

Atividades afetadas. Uva 35%, Milho 90%, Maçã 70%, Leite 40%, Cebola 35%, Hortigranjeiros 60%, Pêssego 50%.

## 2 – PESSOAS ENTREVISTADAS

NOME	ENTIDADE - INSTITUIÇÃO
José Marcon	Agricultor
Deoclides Zanotto	Agricultor
Reinaldo Scalco	Presidente Conselho Mun. Agricultura
Andréia V Carra	Secretária Mun. Agricultura

## 3 – EVIDÊNCIAS CONSTATADAS NO VOLUME TOTAL DE PRODUÇÃO DA(S) ATIVIDADE(S) MAIS AFETADA(S)

Redução em relação à expectativa inicial: 54,28%

## 4 - PARECER

Considerando a intensidade do evento ocorrido, constatado pelos testemunhos das pessoas entrevistadas.  
 Considerando o acompanhamento realizado pelo Escritório Municipal da EMATER junto aos produtores assistidos, durante o desenvolvimento das atividades afetadas e;  
 Considerando as observações feitas junto às estruturas de comercialização, é possível afirmar que houve perda acima de 54 % na(s) atividade(s) acima citadas, dos agricultores abaixo identificados.

Assinatura: \_\_\_\_\_

Nome do Técnico:

Registro no Conselho Profissional: 45532

## Annex II

### PRONAF – MEDIDAS EMERGENCIAIS – ESTIAGEM – REGIÃO SUL

**01.FINALIDADE:** Divulgar medidas de apoio para os agricultores familiares atingidos pela estiagem ocorrida nos Estados do Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina e Paraná.

**02.AMPARO REGULAMENTAR:** Resolução CMN/BACEN nº 3.274, de 24.03.2005.

**03.BENEFICIARIOS:** Agricultores familiares com empreendimento localizado em municípios da Região Sul atingidos pela estiagem, com estado de calamidade ou de emergência reconhecido pelo Governo Federal, conforme relação a ser divulgada posteriormente pelo Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário (MDA).

#### **04 CONDIÇÕES DE APOIO:**

**a) OPERAÇÕES DE CUSTEIO da safra 2004/2005, contratadas SEM ADESÃO ao PROAGRO MAIS OU ao PROAGRO TRADICIONAL:** adotar um dos procedimentos, alternativamente:

**I.** concessão de prazo adicional de 02 (dois) anos, a partir do vencimento pactuado, para pagamento das parcelas dos financiamentos de custeio vencidas ou vincendas em 2005, observadas as seguintes condições:

- i. o prazo adicional deverá ser solicitado pelo mutuário;
- ii. somente fará jus ao prazo adicional o mutuário que declarar ou comprovar prejuízos superiores a 30% (trinta por cento) da produção esperada;
- iii. reembolso - em 02 (duas) prestações anuais, de acordo com a época de obtenção das receitas das explorações da unidade familiar;
- iv. garantias - as vinculadas à operação;

#### **OU**

**II** - concessão de desconto de R\$ 650,00 (seiscentos e cinquenta reais), mediante solicitação do mutuário, desde que declare ou comprove prejuízos superiores a 50% (cinquenta por cento) da produção esperada e efetue o pagamento até a data de vencimento pactuado, observado que:

- i. caso a dívida seja de valor inferior ao do desconto de R\$ 650,00, o benefício ficará limitado ao saldo devedor;
- ii. fica mantido o rebate especial de R\$ 200,00, no caso dos Grupos "A/C" e "C";

**b) OPERAÇÕES DE CUSTEIO da safra 2004/2005, contratadas COM ADESÃO ao PROAGRO MAIS ou PROAGRO TRADICIONAL, cujo mutuário DESISTA DO PEDIDO DE COBERTURA ANTES DA REALIZAÇÃO DA PERICIA:**

**I** - concessão de prazo adicional de 02 (dois) anos, a partir do vencimento pactuado, para pagamento das parcelas dos financiamentos de custeio vencidas ou vincendas em 2005, observadas as seguintes condições:

- i. o prazo adicional deverá ser solicitado pelo mutuário;
- ii. somente fará jus ao prazo adicional o mutuário que declarar ou comprovar prejuízos superiores a 30% (trinta por cento) da produção esperada;
- iii. reembolso - em 02 (duas) prestações anuais, de acordo com a época de obtenção das receitas das explorações da unidade familiar;
- iv. garantias - as vinculadas à operação;

**c) OPERAÇÕES DE INVESTIMENTO:** Prorrogação do prazo das operações com parcelas vencidas e vincendas em 2005, de mutuários atendidos pelos Grupos "A", "C", "D" e "E" do Pronaf, para até 01(um) ano após o vencimento da última prestação pactuada, ficando dispensada a análise caso a caso, e obedecidas as seguintes condições:

**I** - mutuários que tiverem financiamentos de custeio com pedido de cobertura do Proagro Mais ou do Proagro Tradicional deferido, a prorrogação poderá ser efetuada sem a necessidade de solicitação formal do mutuário;

**II** - mutuários que tiverem financiamentos de custeio com pedido de cobertura do Proagro Mais ou do Proagro Tradicional indeferido ou não aderiram ao Proagro Mais e Tradicional, devem solicitar a prorrogação ao Banco, nos prazos abaixo:

- i. até 15.04.2005, para as prestações vencidas ou vincendas até 30.04.2005;
  - ii. até quinze dias antes do vencimento, para as prestações vincendas a partir de 30.04.2005;
- III** - garantias - as vinculadas à operação;

## ESTIAGEM - AGRICULTURA EMPRESARIAL

### PROCEDIMENTOS SIMPLIFICADOS

01. Em função da ocorrência de eventos generalizados decorrentes de adversidades climáticas, está facultada a adoção de PROCEDIMENTO SIMPLIFICADO para análise e processamento de solicitações de prorrogação.
02. O PROCEDIMENTO SIMPLIFICADO somente poderá ser implementado nos Estados do PR, RS e SC, e sua utilização ficará a critério da agência, desde que observado o disposto no item 04 seguinte, que poderá optar pelo PROCEDIMENTO PADRÃO DE PRORROGAÇÃO contido nas instruções gerais ou na norma específica de prorrogação da linha de crédito, sempre que assim julgar mais conveniente.
03. **ABRANGÊNCIA:**
  - a) produtores rurais com operações de custeio ou investimento que seriam pagas com a receita da safra 2004/2005, que declararem frustração por estiagem em percentual superior a 40%;
  - b) linhas de crédito:
    - I - custeio, com recursos do MCR 6.2., MCR 6.4. e PROGER Rural;
    - II - investimento com recursos do BNDES (Proirriga, Moderinfra, Proazem, Prosolo, Moderagro, Moderfrota, Sisvárzea, Provarzeasul e Finame Agrícola Especial) em que o titular contava com a receita da safra 2004/2005 de algodão, arroz, milho, soja e/ou trigo para a liquidação dos seus compromissos;
    - III - investimento com recursos do MCR 6.2., MCR 6.4. e PROGER Rural.
04. **PRE-REQUISITO:** Laudo do ATR demonstrando a ocorrência de estiagem generalizada nas lavouras do município, com definição do percentual médio de perdas por cultura igual ou superior a 40% da produção prevista.
05. **PEDIDO DE PRORROGAÇÃO:** O produtor deverá apresentar pedido de reescalonamento e declaração do percentual de perda, nos prazos abaixo:
  - a) mutuários com operações BNDES, relacionadas no item 3-b-II acima:
    - I - até 15.04.05, para as prestações vencidas ou vincendas até 30.04.05;
    - II - até 15 dias antes do vencimento, para as prestações vencíveis no mês de maio;
    - III - até 31.05.05, para as demais prestações vincendas em 2005;
  - b) demais mutuários: antes do vencimento das operações, não podendo exceder 31.05.05.
06. **PRE-ANÁLISE:** A agência deverá receber as solicitações de reescalonamento e:
  - a) **PERCENTUAL DE PERDA:** Utilizar no estudo, o menor percentual de perdas entre aquele informado pelo produtor e o índice definido pelo ATR. Se ficar abaixo de 40% ou se o mutuário não aceitar o uso do percentual do ATR, deverá ser utilizado o PROCEDIMENTO PADRÃO DE PRORROGAÇÃO;
  - b) **DEMAIS OBRIGAÇÕES JUNTO AO BANCO:** Verificar se as demais responsabilidades no Banco estão em situação de normalidade. Deverá, ainda, assegurar-se que o cliente regularizará as suas obrigações relativas a CPR e outras linhas não passíveis de prorrogação ou reescalonamento, até os respectivos vencimentos;
  - c) **DESTINAÇÃO DAS RECEITAS OBTIDAS:** As receitas advindas da comercialização deverão ter a seguinte ordem de direcionamento:
    - I - para liquidação/amortização de CPR e outras operações não passíveis de reescalonamento ou prorrogação;
    - II - ao mutuário, até 20% da produção esperada, por conta de despesas com manutenção e com colheita/preparo do produto, podendo ser elevado para até 30% quando houver despesas com arrendamento;
    - III - para amortização das operações passíveis de reescalonamento ou prorrogação, se houver receitas remanescentes.

OBS: caso o mutuário pretenda aguardar o melhor momento para comercializar a produção obtida, admite-se, desde que as demais obrigações junto ao Banco estejam em normalidade e o produto fique depositado à ordem do Banco, que o recolhimento dos valores não seja efetivado imediatamente, podendo ser definida parcela com vencimento até outubro de 2005, condicionado, ainda, que à época da

comercialização, seja observado o direcionamento acima.

**07. ESTUDO DE REESCALONAMENTO DE OPERAÇÕES DE INVESTIMENTO COM RECURSOS DO BNDES:**

- a) ENCARGOS: os originais;
- b) GARANTIAS: as vinculadas à operação original;
- c) NOVO PRAZO:

I - quando o empreendimento financiado estiver localizado em MUNICÍPIO COM SITUAÇÃO DE CALAMIDADE/EMERGÊNCIA RECONHECIDA PELO GOVERNO FEDERAL: reescalonar, o vencimento da parcela de 2005, para um ano após o da última prestação estipulada para a operação;

II - quando o empreendimento financiado estiver localizado nos demais municípios: reescalonar, o vencimento da parcela de 2005, para até três anos, desde que o novo prazo não ultrapasse o PRAZO TOTAL da linha de crédito. É admitido reescalonar os valores para coincidir com as eventuais parcelas futuras restantes.

**08. ESTUDO DE REESCALONAMENTO DE OPERAÇÕES DE INVESTIMENTO COM RECURSOS DO MCR 6.2, MCR 6.4 E PROGER RURAL:**

- a) ENCARGOS: os originais;
- b) GARANTIAS: as vinculadas à operação original;
- c) NOVO PRAZO: reescalonar, o vencimento da parcela de 2005, para um ano após o da última prestação estipulada para a operação.

**09. ESTUDO DE REESCALONAMENTO DE OPERAÇÕES DE CUSTEIO:**

- a) ENCARGOS: os originais;
- b) GARANTIAS: as regulamentares, exceto penhor de safra. Caso seja vinculada hipoteca em nova garantia, a formalização deverá dar-se, mediante comprovação de quitação do ITR;
- d) NOVO PRAZO: I - perda igual ou superior a 60%: 5 anos, em parcelas anuais;  
II - perda entre 50% e 60%: 4 anos, em parcelas anuais;  
III - perda entre 40% e 50%: 3 anos, em parcelas anuais;
- e) VENCIMENTO DAS PARCELAS ANUAIS: até 90 dias após o período previsto para colheita no município