

LUCAS DO RIO VERDE LEGAL PROJECT

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The Lucas do Rio Verde municipality has emerged as one of the main sites of agricultural development in Mato Grosso state. The municipality plants and harvests twice a year, with a reliable yield thanks to the absence of dry spells during the rainy season. Although it only answers for 0.04% of Brazilian territory, it contributes more than 1% of national grain production – equivalent to 1.5 million tons per year – and it is the country's main producer of second-harvest maize. Brazil is the second largest producer of soybeans in the world (around 61 million tons) and Mato Grosso State is the largest state (18 million tons)¹.

In Mato Grosso state the municipality is notable for its strategic geographical location, amongst other things. It is also well balanced in terms of farm size, with 81% of properties covering an area of up to 1.300 acres. Corporations in this field have for some time noticed that the region is ripe for development. These corporations have shown a growing concern for the environmental impact associated with an increase in Brazilian agricultural exports. And thus arose the challenge of establishing a common agenda for the productive sector, research bodies, government at all levels, civil society and environmental organizations: a challenge which involves testing development models that will guarantee harmony between production and environmental conservation. Although it is difficult and expensive to enforce compliance with environmental legislation, the regularization of productive activities can be welcomed by the rural entrepreneur who does not wish to see his activity interrupted by disputes with the environmental monitoring system, and who also has no desire to restrict his consumer market.

Another important aspect that needs to be evaluated is that rural properties with any type of environmental liability, in terms of a legal reserve and/or areas of permanent protection, tend to invalidate access to public and private funding. It must be remembered that a legal reserve is a stipulation of the Brazilian Forest Code, which has determined that at least 20% of each rural property be set aside for preserved native vegetation, and that APPs are areas that cannot be deforested, among them riverbanks and hilltops.

Purpose of study: Become the first municipality in the country to have all its rural properties environmentally regulated in keeping with the Forestry Code.

Methods: Carry out a survey of the socio-environmental conditions on rural properties; Update the geo-referenced database and register of rural properties and verify their geo-referencing of municipality; Survey the vegetation and the labor conditions on rural properties; Research and define a program for use of agricultural pesticides; Identify potential areas for legal reserve compensation in the municipality and/or in the region using Landscape Planning.

Results and Conclusions: It was draw up a municipal plan for recovery of areas of permanent protection and identified funding sources in order to draft and execute environmental projects and projects to acquire areas for legal reserve compensation. Negotiate and sign terms of commitment for environmental regularization between government and producers.

[1] Sant'anna, A., Ferraz, J.V., Silva, M.L.M. 2008. Agrianual 2009 – Anuário da Agricultura Brasileira. Coordenadores: Agra Fnp Pesquisas Ltda. São Paulo.