

Characterization of the family economy of the La Hermosa farm in the village of La Libertad in Florencia - Caquetá

Caracterización de la economía familiar del predio la hermosa en la vereda la libertad en Florencia – Caquetá

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Cite as

Polania Rojas AS, Campo Marín JA, Chávez Polania AF, Sánchez Castillo V. Characterization of the family economy of the La Hermosa farm in the village of La Libertad in Florencia - Caquetá. SAP Multidisciplinary Open. 2023; 1:72. <https://doi.org/10.62486/mo202372>

Publication History

Submitted: 21-07-2023

Revised: 26-10-2023

Accepted: 24-12-2023

Published: 25-12-2023

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ABSTRACT

The peasant family economy in the La Hermosa farm, located in the La Libertad hamlet of Florencia, Caquetá, faces significant challenges due to the disarticulation of the community and the lack of inclusion of plot holders in communal projects. This study analyzes the family economy of the farm, characterized by the multifunctionality of its activities, including swine, poultry and agricultural production. The main economic activity is swine farming, which generates income in the short and medium term, allowing for continuous production cycles. Poultry production, divided between egg and chicken production, contributes additional income, while bread crops are essential for family nutrition and food sovereignty. The peasant economy on the farm is characterized by the active participation of family labor and its articulation with local markets. However, marketing faces obstacles such as the poor condition of tertiary roads and increased transportation costs. Short marketing circuits allow a direct relationship between producers and consumers, favoring the sale of fresh and organic products. This work highlights the importance of implementing agroecological practices and sustainable production systems that preserve biodiversity and contribute to food security and sovereignty. It also emphasizes the need for policies that strengthen the peasant family economy, guaranteeing its economic viability and its capacity to adapt to environmental changes. The research also underlines the relevance of community participation and the integration of producers in local development projects to improve the living conditions of peasant families.

Keywords: Peasant Economy; Food Security; Agroecology; Rural Sustainability.

RESUMEN

La economía familiar campesina en el predio La Hermosa, ubicado en la vereda La Libertad de Florencia, Caquetá, enfrenta desafíos significativos debido a la desarticulación de la comunidad y la falta de inclusión de los parceleros en proyectos comunales. Este estudio analiza la economía familiar del predio, caracterizada por la multifuncionalidad de sus actividades, incluyendo la producción porcina, avícola y agrícola. La principal actividad económica es la porcicultura, que genera ingresos a corto y mediano plazo, permitiendo ciclos productivos continuos. La producción avícola, dividida entre la producción de huevos y pollos, contribuye a ingresos adicionales, mientras que los cultivos de pan coger son esenciales para la alimentación familiar y la soberanía alimentaria. La economía campesina en el predio se caracteriza por la participación activa de la mano de obra familiar y su articulación con los mercados locales. Sin embargo, la comercialización enfrenta obstáculos como el mal estado de las vías terciarias y el aumento de los costos de transporte. Los circuitos cortos de comercialización permiten una relación directa entre productores y consumidores, favoreciendo la venta de productos frescos y orgánicos. Este trabajo resalta la importancia de implementar prácticas agroecológicas y sistemas productivos sostenibles que preserven la biodiversidad y contribuyan a la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria. Además, se enfatiza la necesidad de políticas que fortalezcan la economía familiar campesina, garantizando su viabilidad económica y su capacidad de adaptación a los cambios del entorno. La investigación también subraya la relevancia de la participación comunitaria y la integración de los productores en proyectos de desarrollo local para mejorar las condiciones de vida de las familias campesinas.

Palabras clave: Economía Campesina; Seguridad Alimentaria; Agroecología; Sostenibilidad Rural.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, poverty rates in rural areas have been very high when contrasted with those in urban areas. These are the results over time of the conflicts and battles that peasants have had to suffer. Many of them have been denied the right to property and have not been granted access to basic goods and services provided by the government (Guillermo Suarez, 2016) .

According to (Dane, 2016), “Land ownership in Colombia is highly concentrated, in that 0,4 % of rural landholdings cover 76,6 % of the rural area while 75 % of landholdings are less than 5 hectares and occupy only 2,1 % of the rural area.

The peasant economy is one of the oldest activities on the planet. It allows this rural minority to subsist in the face of capitalist industrialization, preserving cultural and productive traditions depending on the area or region where it is implemented.

Peasants, unlike capitalist forms based on wage labor that seek to maximize profits, do not base their economy on the maximization of profit, but on satisfying the consumption needs of the family; currently, peasant economies have remained in a globalized world and coexist against large capitalist enterprises, despite the rise of modern agriculture, these forms of production are maintained due to the characteristics of the production model and the ability to adapt to changes (Santacoloma, 2015).

Smallholder farmers play an important role in maintaining food security in rural and urban contexts (Guzmán & Salcedo, 2014; Santacoloma, 2015).

Thus, the purpose of this work is to analyze and understand the socioeconomic and productive processes that affect the rural family of Vereda la Libertad in the village of Venecia, therefore, this analysis will allow us to understand the dynamics that affect the day to day life of the rural family, what are their respective roles, their main livelihood, knowledge and skills that they put into practice in their productive environment and their family purpose.

Problem Statement

On the La Hermosa property in the La Libertad district in Florencia - Caquetá, there has been a problem for quite some time due to a disarticulation of the community, both internally and externally, because the community action board has not taken into account all the farmers to make them part of their outreach projects for the sale of products, such as farmers’ markets. In most of the plots, the economy is not based on the products of this, because it does not satisfy their needs, since the product’s sales are very low and local.

The peasant family economy is a family-oriented economic system that uses all domestic labor and natural, social, and financial resources to ensure the family’s survival and improve its quality of life.

The peasant economy, with its multifunctional characteristics, not only plays a crucial role in the livelihoods of families but also plays a role in the integration between nature and agriculture, contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and food sovereignty (Garay & Barbieri, 2010).

The limited market maneuvering options that farmers have for their products reduce the possibility of earning what is necessary to satisfy the family’s living conditions, which generates the action of seeking income options. For this reason, agroecology is presented as an alternative for farming families to obtain a profitable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly income (Plata & Cáceres, 2015).

The peasant family economy, by placing healthy food on the market, seeks to generate value in their products (nutritional quality) in which they can have direct commercial relations with consumers and thus strengthen their survival actions, and take care of the quality of their farm territory in an ecological environment (Girad, 2015). This claim is given to reduce the poverty situations of the peasant family, which is complemented by the commitment to materialize a more sustainable agri-food model.

Justification

Working with this study’s subject is important because it requires new proposals that combine social, economic, and environmental sustainability in a problematic context for the family economy.

It is worth noting that the family farm concept is a “social category and a recent political construction”, which refers to existing economic models or institutions in the rural environment, classified under different denominations “to give them a new social meaning, symbol and institution”. Economic connotation: “identity”. Among these existing systems, the various conceptualizations and analyses of the peasant economy in Colombia stand out, as well as the recent proposals of agrarian organizations for the national economy. Both terms are included in these guidelines and are pillars of the conceptualization of peasant, family, and community agriculture.

According to agricultural statistics, the issue of generating surpluses for the agrifood supply seems to have been resolved. This clearly shows how small producers have made a substantial contribution to agriculture. These statistics also highlight their enormous technological and productive heterogeneity and the massive processes of small farmers’ adoption of green revolution technologies.

The cases were identified by the producer, representing different forms of organization of the production systems, types of land tenure, farm size, and scale of farming activity; likewise, for each of the cases, the main farming activity was determined. It was possible to proceed in this way because all the studies had the common objective of evaluating the economic viability of the family production systems and implemented a similar economic valuation model that allows the aggregation and comparison of the results.

General Objective: evaluate the characteristics of the peasant family economy in the village of La Libertad.

Specific Objective

- Analyze the operation of the production systems on the La Hermosa farm.
- Estimate the labor participation in the family farm economy of the farm.
- Define the articulation with farmers’ markets.

Hypothesis

What are the characteristics of the peasant economy on the La Hermosa farm?

The characteristics of the farm economy are related to:

- Diversification of production systems.
- Family labor participation.
- Articulation with markets.

Food safety

According to Salazar, L. & Muñoz, G. (2019), food security is determined as the condition in which all people, at any time, can obtain sufficient food that is safe and nutritious to meet their nutritional requirements and maintain a healthy life, both from a physical and economic perspective.

Another relevant definition is presented by FAO (2011), which states that food security is achieved when all people have the ability, in all circumstances, to obtain food in adequate quantity, that is safe and nutritious, and that meets their daily energy requirements and food preferences, allowing them to lead an active and healthy life. Thus, the mere availability of food at the national or global level does not automatically ensure food security at the household level.

Concerns about insufficient access to food have driven the development of policies focusing more on income and expenditures to achieve food security objectives.

Food sovereignty

According to ACF (2008), food sovereignty is revealed as the right of people to access healthy and culturally appropriate food, produced sustainably and ecologically, and to determine their own food systems and agricultural practices. Thus, individuals, communities, and countries can self-determine and design their policies and practices related to agriculture, livestock, fisheries, employment, food, and land use. These policies should be tailored to each entity's particular ecological, social, economic, and cultural needs. Food sovereignty strongly emphasizes strengthening local systems and economies, which potentially guarantees food security for the local population. In addition, this approach contributes significantly to the broader concept of food sovereignty, which seeks to empower communities in decision-making related to food production and distribution, promoting self-sufficiency and the preservation of cultural and ecological diversity.

Peasant, family and community economy

It refers to the set of activities that involve the production, transformation, distribution, sale, and consumption of goods and services and are planned and managed by individuals, families, and communities (including peasants, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, Raizal, and Palenquero communities) living in rural areas of the country (MINAGRICULTURE, 2014).

This wide range of occupations and livelihoods is mainly carried out through administration and work within the family, and collaboration in groups or communities. However, it may also include hiring additional workers.

Short marketing circuits

This type of trade involves the direct sale of fresh (local) or seasonal products, eliminating intermediaries or minimizing their participation as much as possible, establishing a direct connection between producers and consumers.

Short marketing circuits bring farmers closer to consumers, promoting more personal interactions. In addition, by avoiding long-distance transportation, these circuits reduce environmental impact (ECLAC, 2014). They also foster awareness in both producers and consumers, which in turn favors the adoption of more sustainable production practices and more responsible consumption.

Sustainable production systems

According to CONABIO (2017), it is an organized system of activities related to agriculture, managed by a group of people, carried out in a specific time and place, through practices and technologies that preserve the production capacity of shared natural resources without causing their degradation.

Sustainable production systems generate food that is safe, healthy, and of high quality. They also play a role in reducing the effects of climate change and adapting to it in their operating areas. These economically viable systems provide ecological services, preserve biodiversity and the beauty of rural landscapes, ensure animal welfare, and promote well-being and good living.

Agroecological practices

These techniques and technologies refer to approaches in planning and managing sustainable food production systems. These approaches incorporate and link ecological principles to increase production, biodiversity, and energy use efficiency while reducing waste generation and dependence on chemically synthesized inputs (Altieri, M. 1999).

These strategies are based on the communication of knowledge, mainly based on experience, observation, and expertise accumulated by producers. These practices are applicable both to individual plots and to larger farms or landscapes. Some of the agroecological practices that stand out are crop rotation, polycultures, cover crops, green manures, crop-livestock mixtures, living barriers, agroforestry arrangements, corridors, minimum tillage, allelopathy, and the use of organic fertilizers, fungicides, and insecticides, among others.

METHOD

Location - Population

The present work will be developed in the municipality of Florencia, capital of the department of Caquetá; geographically located with coordinates latitude 01° 36' 55" N and longitude 75° 36' 13" W, having an extension of 2292 Km² with an average altitude of 242 meters above sea level and an approximate temperature of 27 °C. The La Hermosa property is located in the La Libertad district, jurisdiction of the township of Venecia, bordering to the north with the farm of Mr. Raúl Martines, to the east with the farm of Mr. Alejandro Buriticá, to the west with the access road to La Libertad and to the south with Leónidas Ortiz.

The economic characterization was carried out on the La Hermosa property, which is owned by the Martínez Gaitán family, who are currently responsible for maintaining and supporting the productive unit. The family consists of Mr. José Ilario Martínez, 72 years old, his wife Rosaura Gaita, 60 years old, and his son Cristian Camilo Martínez Gaitán, 29 years old.

Paradigm

Empirical - Analytical: because we are going to produce a formal knowledge and circumscribed to the variables considered, which will start from a representative sample to be extrapolated to a certain population and finally these hypotheses will be accepted or rejected as part or all of the results.

Approach

Qualitative: we will collect and analyze non-numerical data to understand concepts, ideas or experiences, as well as data on life experiences, feelings or behaviors and the meaning people attribute to them.

Type Of Research

Diagnosis: we will analyze a specific situation based on the observation of the scenario and its entire context. In order to study a situation in depth, it is necessary to identify all its characteristics, detail them and discover their implications. And to know better the reality, the existence of weaknesses and strengths, to understand the relationships between the different social actors that develop in a given environment and to foresee possible reactions within the system in the face of intervention actions or changes in some aspect of the structure of the population under study.

Schedule of activities

CRONOGRAMA DE ACTIVIDADES							
ACTIVIDAD	MESES (Semanas)						
	Septiembre				Octubre		
Realización de las entrevistas para aplicar en campo.							
Aplicación de las entrevista para evaluar las características de la economía familiar campesina.							
Análisis e interpretación de la información colectada.							

Figure 1. Schedule of activities

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The production unit has three livelihoods: pig production, poultry production, and agricultural production. The primary means of livelihood is swine production, which supplies most of their needs. For Cardona, S. (2020), productive units, as structures in agricultural production, can consist of the whole or a portion of a property, either contiguous or fragmented in one or several municipalities, regardless of size or land tenure. It also indicates that they engage in various activities and strategies to ensure greater efficiency in the relationship between labor and land, including expanding their plots through practices such as leasing and colonato.

The main economic activity of the La Hermosa farm is pig farming, which generates short and medium-term income, allowing the producer to maintain continuous production cycles. Over the years they have carried out this work because it was encouraged by their parents, who told us that they do not feel able to perform another type of activity with primary economic interest, since their empirical knowledge is based on the production of pigs; over the years the sale of weaned pigs is characterized by leaving lucrative profits for the producer. According to INTAGRI (2019), pork leads consumption worldwide, with an increase in both pig farming and meat production globally. This type of meat plays a significant role as the primary source of protein in both developing and developed nations.

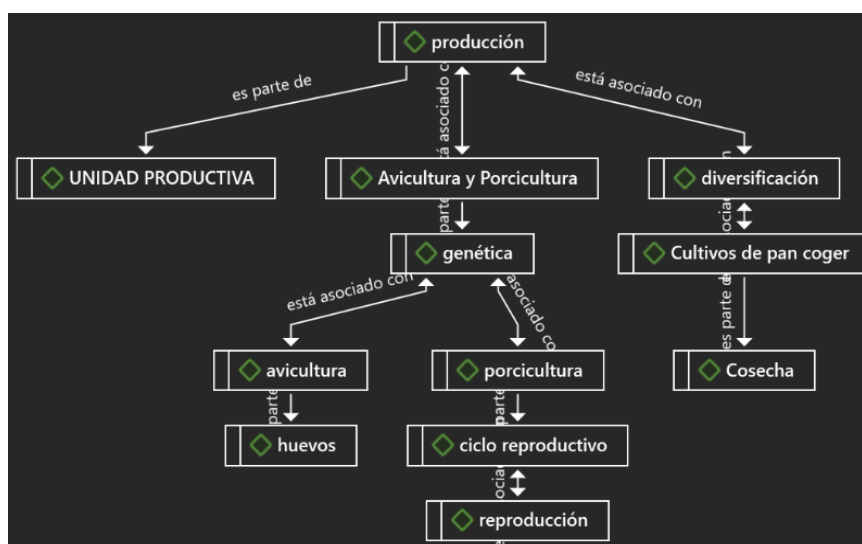


Figure 2. Network Production unit

On the La Hermosa farm, there are two poultry units with different productive focuses, one of which is the production of eggs and the other is the production of chickens or free-range hens. These production units generate additional income that allows producers to have short-term income, generating a more dynamic economy. According to Hortua et al (2021), in Colombia, small-scale poultry farming is found in low-income rural communities, where production is focused on self-consumption. Prevalent is the care of Creole or adapted hens raised on pasture, with limited use of balanced feed. Local or criollo birds are different in this respect, as they stand out for their natural ability to breed and incubate, as well as their survival capacity, longevity, and resistance to certain bacterial or viral infections.

Other production activities used in the peasant family economy of the La Hermosa farm are bread crops, which serve the family to cover expenses in the family basket and also as products that can be taken to the peasant market; according to Sanabria (2019), “bread crops are those that meet part of the food needs of a community, such as cassava, banana, and corn” (p.5).

The harvest of pan coger products on the Hermosa farm feeds pigs, chickens, and family food sovereignty. In terms of production time, this unit makes it possible to cover the food costs of pig production; it should be noted that this unit covers a large part of the farm’s area, which does not allow diversifying other crops. According to Mena (2012), “bread crops, rice, bananas, and animal husbandry are an alternative to generate other resources, which has been achieved because each family has its well-enriched plot” (p.29).

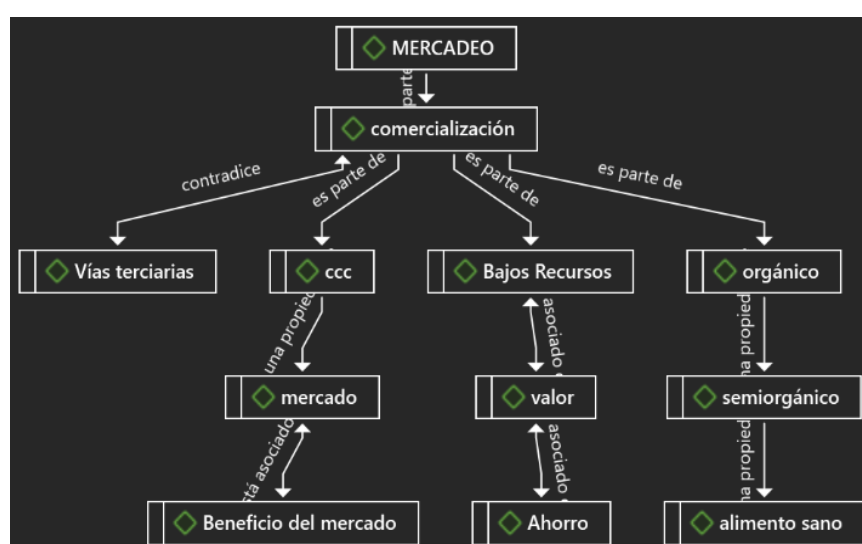


Figure 3. Network Marketing

The peasant family economy of the La Hermosa farm is characterized by the fact that food is always made of excellent quality, without poisons or toxins, something more organic, so that the products are a healthy food and in the same way guarantee a good marketing and consumer satisfaction. Something vital, which highlights Gutiérrez et al (2021).

They “always seek to market their fresh and healthy products at a fair price, without intermediaries, emphasizing the direct relationship between the producer and the consumer” (p.20).

The producer of the farm la hermosa tells us about the problems he has to be able to market his product, one of these is due to the

rise in gasoline and most of all because of the tertiary roads that makes it very difficult for him to take his producer to the markets to sell them, According to Caicedo (2017), While most tertiary roads in the country are known for their low traffic volumes, there may be exceptional cases in which the pavement is subject to significant loads. Consequently, the approach should be aligned with the actual expected use of the road and incorporate traffic studies that validate the actual loads used on those roads.

Some of the production processes in the La Hermosa farm include that its products are marketed in the same village, neighboring villages, or used to ensure family nutrition. We can identify piglets, pork, Creole chicken, and eggs among some products. This marketing circuit is short because of the difficulty of accessibility in the area. According to Aranda & Molina (2021), short marketing circuits is a method in which the marketing of the product and the consumer is reduced, since the shorter the distance, the better the benefits, because we would have more money left by having fewer intermediaries, we can make savings in costs of sending these products to other places and, in addition, people will consume fresher products improving their health and obtaining a benefit from the market.

FINANCING

The authors received no funding for the development of this research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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