

PERCEPTION OF RISK ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF PESTICIDES BY FARMERS IN ONION PLANTING IN SÃO JOSÉ DO NORTE – RS

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INTRODUCTION: Family farming is essential for food security and sustainable development, both in Brazil and globally. The municipality of São José do Norte stands out as the largest state producer of onions, the main source of income for many families. This study evaluated the risk perception among farmers who grow onions, which is a crucial aspect for understanding behavior when faced with exposure to pesticides.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The sample consisted of farmers who grow onions in São José do Norte. Data collection was carried out from August 3 to October 19, with the application of semi-structured questionnaires, applied in person to rural workers, covering different locations in the municipality. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande (CAAE: 63037622.6.0000.5324).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS: The study evaluated the relationship between the number of pesticides used and the perception of risk in different age groups. There was an extremely weak correlation in 18–39 years ($r = 0.02122$) and a very weak negative correlation in 40–59 years ($r = -0.07756$). Among 60–90 years, the correlation was positive and weak ($r = 0.2922$), indicating a greater perception of risk with increased use. Environmental perception varied statistically significantly ($p < 0.05$), being higher among the oldest. No statistical differences were observed for risks to water, soil, air, use of PPE, food quality, animal health, population health and health itself ($p > 0.05$). There was a tendency for variation in the perception of risk to farmers' health ($p = 0.0860$). It was concluded that the perception of risk was homogeneous among age groups, with slightly greater sensitivity among older people.

Keywords: Agrochemical; Environmental risk; Poisoning.

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