



VALUE ADDITION IN HORTICULTURE IN THE LIQUID MODERNITY  
AGREGAÇÃO DE VALOR EM HORTIFRUTÍCOLAS NA MODERNIDADE LÍQUIDA

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**Abstract**

This paper analyzed the perception of family farmers about the ways of adding value to horticultural products in the liquid modernity. For this, it was used the exploratory-descriptive research of phenomenological approach, with qualitative nature. It was concluded that farmers are not clear about what value addition is, despite the fact that they use some variables. It was found that they receive little or no technical assistance, that they have not received orientation about management, and observed that they do not seek information about the market. This shows that farmers are not prepared to face the challenges contained in liquid modernity, which is fluid, and has as its main characteristic the speed of change, including in commercial relations.

**Key words:** Theory of liquidity. Management. Knowledge. Agriculture.

**Resumo**

Este artigo analisou a percepção dos produtores rurais familiares quanto as formas de agregação de valor às hortifrutícolas, na modernidade líquida. Para tanto, utilizou-se a pesquisa de tipo exploratório-descritivo de abordagem fenomenológica, com natureza qualitativa. Concluiu-se que os agricultores familiares não têm clareza do que é agregação de valor, apesar de utilizarem algumas variáveis. Identificou-se que os agricultores recebem pouca ou nenhuma assistência técnica, não receberam orientação sobre gestão e não buscam informações de mercado. Isso mostra que os agricultores familiares não estão preparados para enfrentar os desafios contidos na modernidade líquida, que é fluída e maleável, e possui como principal característica a rapidez das mudanças, inclusive nas relações comerciais.

**Palavras-chave:** Teoria da liquidez. Gestão. Conhecimento. Agricultura.

## Introduction

In order to survive in the market, it is known that organizations need to satisfactorily serve their increasingly demanding consumers. To do so, Porter (2004) indicates that it is necessary to develop a competitive advantage that can occur in three ways: through costs, differentiation, or focus. From a market point of view, this differentiation happens by adding value to the product, that is, delivering to the consumer a greater package of benefits than its competitor (KOTLER; KELLER, 2018).

For this satisfactory service to occur, it is necessary that sellers pay attention to the buying behavior of consumers, which is influenced by the environment all the time. This environment, as Bauman (2001) points out, is the liquid modernity, increasingly fluid and malleable, and its main characteristic is the speed of changes in everything, including personal relationships and, consequently, commercial ones. And this is no different when it comes to products from family farming, which, like any supplier, needs to be flexible and adaptable.

There is a scarcity of research that combines value addition in family farming and Bauman's Liquidity Theory. There are works that discuss value addition in family farming, such as the findings of Rocha, Costa, and Castoldi (2012), Freitas and Ribeiro (2013), Ferreira (2017), Aguiar, Delgross, and Thomé (2018), among others, but none encompass the context of liquid modernity. Similarly, studies show that Liquidity Theory is more theoretically discussed, and the few empirical research that exist in the management area do not focus on family farming, as demonstrated by the investigations of Shahghasemi et al. (2015) and Perkiss and Handley (2017).

Given this context, the research question was: how do family farmers perceive the forms of adding value to their horticultural products in a liquid-modern society? Therefore, the general objective was to analyze the perception of family farmers about the ways of adding value to their horticultural products in a liquid modernity.

The scientific and social contribution of this study is knowledge, since it is an interdisciplinary study involving the areas of administration and sociology. Furthermore, the theoretical contribution derives from the filling of the gap between value addition in family farming and liquid modernity, which allows the application of the sociological theory. And, thus, investigate whether the Liquidity Theory is empirically proven, strengthening the theory.

## Theory

### Theory of liquidity

Bauman's theory of liquidity has been widely discussed in the academic environment in the most diverse fields of professional training. This theory, which began to be discussed in the late 1990s, deals with the fluidity and lightness of actions, attitudes, behavior, and decisions of individuals who live in a society that is considered liquid. Unlike solids, which have clear spatial dimensions, liquids constantly change shape when subjected to any stress.

This is because the changes that occur are highly rapid, as Leal (2002) points out, by stating that this time is marked by confusion of concepts, and that relativism is a striking feature, as well as the loss or abandonment of theoretical references there is little possibility of deepening reflection on the problems and by implication, generate consequences and responsibilities equally fast. In the same way, these actions, attitudes, and behavior are replaced by others with the same or faster frequency. And an important point is that this is not mere ephemerality, but a set of values that leads "humanity" down paths that are often unknown, and with obscure destinations.

However, Bauman's theory of liquidity, despite having been 'launched' around the year 2000, has only been used to support discussions in the last 10 years. Thus, we have analyzed publications on Bauman's theory of liquidity available on the Web of Science and SCOPUS databases, in addition to the CAPES Thesis Catalog. What can be seen in chart 1.

**Table 1 - Data from selected papers about Bauman's theory of liquidity**

WEB OF SCIENCE			
(LEE, 2011)	Modernity, solidity and agency: liquidity reconsidered	Sociology -The Journal of the British Sociological Association	
(KOCIATKIEWICZ; KOSTERA, 2018)	After retrotopia? The future of organizing and the thought of Zygmunt Bauman	Scandinavian Journal of Management	
(ALI, 2013)	Secularism: from solidity to liquidity	Cultura - International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology	
(COSTA, 2016)	Liturgia em “tempos líquidos”	Revista de Cultura Teológica	
(JAY, 2010)	Liquidity crisis: Zygmunt Bauman and the incredible lightness of modernity	Theory Culture & Society	
(PERKISS; HANDLEY, 2017)	Making sense of contemporary disasters: a liquid development perspective	International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy	
SCOPUS			
(JOUBERT, 2018)	“Flowing” under the radar in a multifaceted liquid reality: the ekerk narrative	HTS Teologiese Studies	
(SIGAHI; SALTORATO, 2018)	A emergência da universidade operacional: redes, liquidez e capitalismo acadêmico	Educação e Sociedade	
(CHÁVEZ, 2018)	Información líquida en la era de la posverdad	Revista General de Información y Documentación	
(DELUCA; GRISCI; LAZZAROTTO, 2018)	Trabalhar e tatuar-se: estratégia de inventar a vida	Psicologia e Sociedade	
(LÓPEZ, 2017)	De refugiados a parias, en la modernidad líquida	Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales	
(GEVEHR, 2016)	A crise dos lugares de memória e dos espaços identitários no contexto da modernidade: questões para o ensino de história	Revista Brasileira de Educação	
(SILVA; MENDES; ALVES, 2015)	O conceito de líquido em Zygmunt Bauman: contemporaneidade e produção de subjetividade	Athenea Digital	
(COSTA, 2015)	“Tempos líquidos”: desafio para a nova evangelização	Theologica Xaveriana	
(SHAHGHASEMI et al., 2015)	Liquid love in Iran: a mixed method approach	Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences	
(ROSSONI, 2015)	Residência na atenção básica à saúde em tempos líquidos	Physis: Revista de Saúde Coletiva	
(GRISCI; BITENCOURT; FLECK, 2012)	Trabalho imaterial, medo, solidão: "amigos de aluguel" na sociedade líquido-moderna	Psicologia em Estudo	
(MOREIRA; PESSOA, 2012)	De lo solido a lo liquido: las nuevas alfabetizaciones ante los cambios culturales de la WEB 2.0	Comunicar	
(REDMOND, 2010)	Avatar Obama in the age of liquid celebrity	Celebrity Studies	
CAPES' THESIS CATALOG			
AUTOR/TIPO	TÍTULO	PROGRAMA	IES
(PINHO, 2018) Dissertação	Ódio líquido: Confrontos entre o bem e o mal na mídia paraense	Comunicação, Cultura e Amazônia – UFPA	
(OLBERMANN, 2017) Dissertação	Captura à vida de alto executivo: dispositivos em cenas cotidianas	Administração – UFRGS	
(DEUS, 2017) Thesis	Embelezamento físico: requisito da gestão gerencialista para o exercício do trabalho imaterial	Administração – UFRGS	
(SILVA, 2017) Essay	Reencantamento via consumo: Intersecções entre religião e consumo nas redes sociais digitais	Comunicação UFPE	
(CAMARGO, 2017) Essay	Corpo e contemporaneidade: uma abordagem crítica sobre os padrões de beleza e consumo estético da mulher veiculados pelas mídias	Comunicação social – UMESSP	
(ARRUDA, 2018) Essay	Contemplação assíncrona: a estratégia de viver a vida pós-pedido de demissão de trabalhadores do setor bancário	Administração - UFRGS	

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2019.

Through this review, it was identified that most of the works that have discussed the theory of liquidity are review studies and theoretical essays. The empirical research, although few, converged to consolidate the theory, even when it is used only as a backdrop to analyze and/or justify the phenomena studied. As for the dissertations and thesis, these also use Bauman's theory more as a backdrop to contextualize the phenomenon studied.

Only one empirical work in economics and business was found: Making sense of contemporary disasters: a liquid development perspective, however, it was noticed that despite being classified as management and business in the researched index base, it focuses more on natural disasters. The following table presents the elements of liquid modernity discussed by the authors of the empirical studies.

**Table 2 – Elements of liquid modernity**

Speed of change	(GRISCI; BITENCOURT; FLECK, 2012) (SHAHGHASEMI <i>et al.</i> , 2015) (ROSSONI, 2015) (PERKISS; HANDLEY, 2017) (JOUBERT, 2018) (DELUCA; GRISCI; LAZZAROTTO, 2018)
Precariousness	
Instability	
Transitoriness	
Uncertainty	
Unpredictability	
Fragility	
Fear	
Insecurity	

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

It was also noticed that there are no studies focused on agriculture, administration, or family farming, thus awakening the possibility of new research studying the areas of administration focused on agribusiness in its various sizes in this liquid society.

**Value addition in family agriculture**

It is known that, increasingly, products are similar, and it is often not possible to identify the producer/manufacturer. With agricultural products this is even more accentuated since they are commodities. Thus, differentiating your product is an essential marketing strategy to stay in the market, which is increasingly competitive.

The differentiation of products can happen in many ways, as long as you pay attention to what is important to your consumers. Knowing this, value is added to the product in order to draw the consumer's attention so that he prefers a certain product and is willing to pay a higher amount to get it.

When it comes to manufactured products, getting the consumer's attention is a little less complex, despite the number of competitors. It is common for companies to use differentiation by product, by distribution channel, by image, by employees, and by services, as pointed out by Kotler and Armstrong (2015).

In view of this, we sought to identify the main variables used to add value in family farming. To this end, the theme was researched in the Web of Science, SCOPUS, SCIELO, SPELL, and the CAPES Periodical Portal. Ten articles were selected, presented in the following table.

**Table 3 - Data from the selected papers on value addition**

<b>WEB OF SCIENCE</b>		
(PARODI, 2018)	Agroecological transition and reconfiguration of horticultural work among family farmers in Buenos Aires, Argentina	Cahiers Agricultures
<b>SPELL</b>		
(ROCHA; COSTA; CASTOLDI, 2012)	Comercialização de produtos da agricultura familiar: um estudo de caso em Passo Fundo – RS	REIMED - Revista de Administração IMED
(FREITAS; RIBEIRO, 2013)	Experiências de comercialização agroextrativista dos agricultores familiares do Rio dos Cochos, Januária/Cônego Marinho – MG	Organizações rurais & Agroindustriais
(GODOY; WIZNIEWSKY, 2013)	O papel da pluriatividade no fortalecimento da agricultura familiar do município de Santa Rosa/RS	Desafio online
(FOGUESATTO; MACHADO, 2017)	O Processo decisório na criação de unidades que agregam valor à produção agropecuária: as agroindústrias familiares	Desenvolvimento em questão
(CAUMO; STADUTO, 2014)	Produção orgânica: uma alternativa na agricultura familiar	Revista Capital Científico
<b>SCOPUS</b>		
(CAMPOS; VALENTE, 2010)	A construção do mercado para o café em Alto Paraíso de Goiás	Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural
(AGUIAR; DELGROSS; THOMÉ, 2018)	Short food supply chain: Características na agricultura familiar	Ciência Rural
<b>PERIODICAL PORTAL</b>		
(FERREIRA, 2017)	Agregação de valor nos produtos da agricultura familiar de Foz do Iguaçu -PR: O caso da agroindústria Delícias do Campo	Revista Latino-americana de Estudos em Cultura e Sociedade
<b>BRAZILIAN HORTICULTURE</b>		
(HENZ, 2010)	Desafios enfrentados por agricultores familiares na produção de morango no Distrito Federal	Horticultura Brasileira

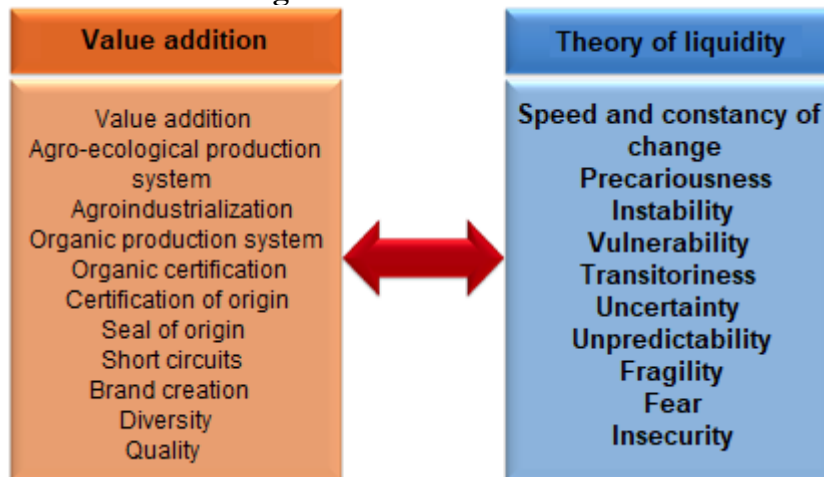
Source: Prepared by the authors, 2019.

Although the papers address 10 different ways of adding value, agroecological production, agroindustrialization, organic certification, certification of origin, short circuits, branding, diversification, organic, quality and seal of origin, which are often combined with each other, there is the possibility of going further, through variables such as, a) Manipulated product, b) Standard packaging, c) Defined market positioning, d) Service, and e) Image, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2015). Thus totaling 15 possible ways to add value in rural family production.

Furthermore, family farmers must consider the context in which they are inserted, that is, as Bauman states, in a liquid society. Thus, farmers need to be aware of what happens with their consumers, since what they produce, and how they produce can influence the acceptance or not of their products in the market, which is formed by increasingly demanding people who live in this liquid context.

Thus, there is a gap between what has been researched so far and other forms of adding value in family agriculture, considering the liquid society. Given this context, the following research model is presented.

Figure 1 – Research model



Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

With figure 1 it is possible to observe the variables on value addition discussed in the selected papers that correlate with the elements of the theory of liquidity.

## Method

To reach the proposed objective, the interpretivist research paradigm with a phenomenological approach was adopted, in addition to the use of exploratory-descriptive research of a qualitative nature.

The data collection instrument used was the semi-structured interview, directed to family farmers who grow vegetables, with the intention of identifying how they add value to their products, being inserted in a liquid modernity. The interview script was composed of the variables identified in the literature: Value addition, Agroecological production system, Agroindustrialization, Certification and Seal of geographical origin, Diversity, Quality, Organic production and organic certification, Marketing of products, Branding and market positioning, Product and Advertising.

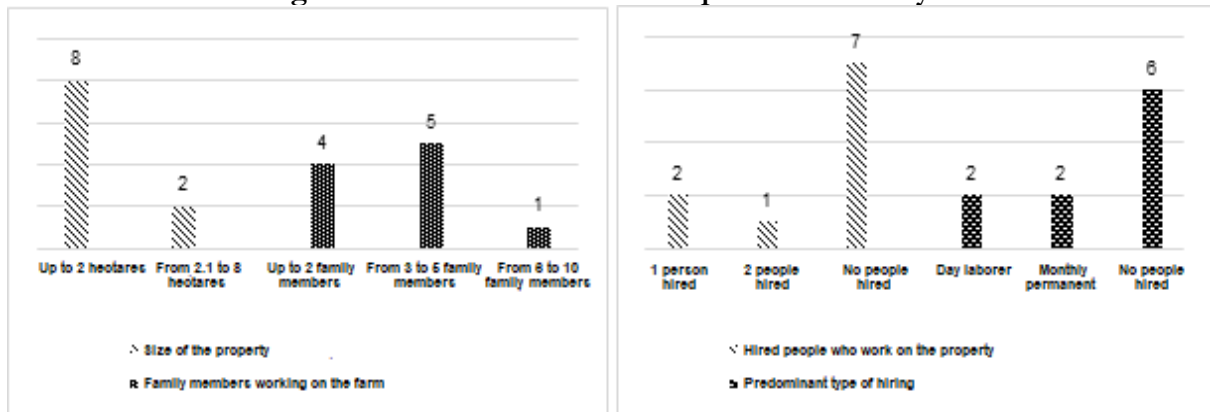
For data collection, on-site visits were made, which were recorded on a cell phone recording application, one by videoconference, and then transcribed manually. The sample size was 10 rural family farmers who work with horticultural products in the Umuarama region.

The choice of participants was made by the Snowball method, where the first respondent indicates the next research participant, and so on. The first one invited to participate in the research has great social and economic relevance since he is a family farmer with over 30 years of experience in growing vegetables and is one of the founders of COOPERU, a cooperative of farmers in the city of Umuarama. As for the research cut, this was cross-sectional and took place between the months of November 2020 and March 2021.

## Analysis and discussion of the results

In order to ensure the anonymity of the research participants, they are presented as E1, E2, and so on. Some characterization data of the participating farmers are shown below.

Figure 2 – Characteristics of the producers surveyed



Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

Seven of the rural producers surveyed said they knew what value addition was, although it was impossible to identify this in some speeches, and all of them said they belonged to family farming. As for location, the respondents are distributed as follows: 3 from Umuarama, 1 from Cruzeiro do Oeste, 1 from Maria Helena, and 5 from Pérola.

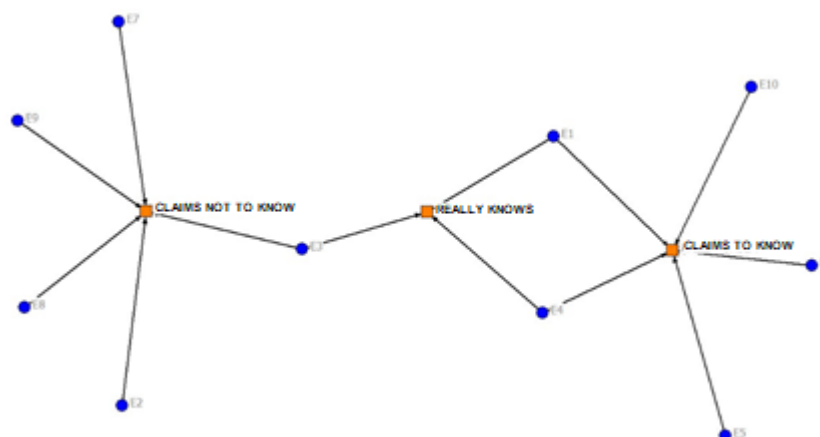
The following are the results of the research with the rural producers highlighted by variable, starting with an overview of the knowledge and importance of adding value, in the view of the producers surveyed.

### Value addition

Farmers were asked if they have knowledge about what value addition is, and also if they believe that value addition would bring advantages to them, in addition, they were asked if they would add more value to their vegetables. The findings are in line with the studies of Campos and Valente (2010), Henz (2010), Rocha, Costa and Castoldi (2012), Godoy and Wizniewsky (2013), Caumo and Staduto (2014).

Five of them claimed to know what value addition is, and the others claimed not to know what it is, or "I've heard of it." However, what is identified in their speeches is different, only 3 of them really know what value addition is. The figure below shows the producers who claim to know what is or not value addition, with the identification of who really knows, through the speeches.

Figure 3 – Producers who claim to know what value addition is, and those who really know.



Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

The producers who showed in their speeches that they know what value addition is are E1, E3 and E4. E1 informed that "Yes, we know, but we don't add value, no ... we sell it fresh, the way we

harvest it, we sell it." When asked if she believes that adding value can bring benefits to the family farmer, she said "I believe so, for sure." E4, stated that "Yes, the output of the small farmer is that... ."

Although E3 claims to know "more or less" what value addition is, in his speech it is clear that he knows what it is. However, he informed that he would not add more value to his horticultural products, because "... the investment is very high, you know, and you're going to invest a lot, right, in a market that may not give value to your products... ."

E3's speech shows fear, insecurity, and uncertainty, elements that exist in liquid modernity, as pointed out by Shahghasemi et al. (2015), Deluca; Grisci and Lazzarotto (2018), among others.

Three of the farmers surveyed confused value addition with cost reduction, or selling their vegetables for a higher price, they are E5, E6 and E10. This is shown in an excerpt from the speech of E5, who, when asked about what value addition is, stated that it is to add value to their vegetables, not to sell them for low prices: "I know how much fertilizer cost, and how much my wife's and my boys' daily expenses cost when they are doing things, I know how many sprays of fertilizer, poison, soil correction, our daily expenses, so I can see that." It is perceptible in E5's speech that he is not clear about what value addition is. Of course, taking care of costs and expenses is important, but this is not adding value.

It can be considered from the speeches presented that there is some confusion in the definition of value addition even for those who claimed to know what it is. Although products with added value have "higher" prices, adding value is only appropriate if it is validated by consumers, i.e., if they have value for consumers. However, it was found in the speeches that the producers surveyed do not seek information about the consumer market, as can be seen in the excerpts presented below. According to E6, they have never received any kind of help with the management of the property. He also pointed out that sometimes he goes to EMATER to analyze the land, "but most things we do, and we find out, and we try to find the best formula... ."

This lack of help and search for knowledge about management was also clear in E8's speech. When asked if he has received or receives any type of assistance in property management, he questioned "Financial?" Did you receive anything, like limestone, or fertilizer, or anything like that? This shows that the interviewee does not have a clear notion of what management is.

Similarly, producers do not seek market information to plan their cultivation. This is evidenced by the excerpt from the speech of E3, who stated "... in fact, we've been delivering (to the market) for 20 years, ... so, the market never changes, you know ... our schedule has been almost automatic for a long time now." This speech of E3 shows characteristics of solid modernity, since remaining doing the same thing for a long time implies durability, rigidity, elements contrary to those pointed out in the studies of Grisci, Bitencourt, and Fleck (2012), Rossoni (2015), Perkiss and Handley (2017), Deluca, Grisci and Lazzarotto (2018).

Thus, it was possible to detect that these family farmers have no knowledge about management, either because of lack of help or lack of interest. This lack of understanding about how to manage the property leads the farmer to cultivate what they consider more interesting from their point of view, and not from the consumer's perspective, which may be responsible for the lack or little importance given to adding value to their vegetables. This same fact shows that family farmers are not able to face the adversities of the liquid contemporaneity, which makes the consumer's buying behavior inconstant, since it is perceived in the interviewee's speech 3 characteristics of solid modernity such as rigidity and durability/tradition.

### **Agro-ecological production system**

It was identified that only E5 uses Agroecological production, which agrees with what was raised in the work of Parodi (2018). It is noteworthy that despite the adoption of the agroforestry system, at no time during the interview did E5 mention that this production system is a form of value addition. It is noteworthy that despite the adoption of the system, the rural family producer does



not have a certificate or declaration of agroecological transition or agroecological certification that is issued by institutions accredited by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA). Three producers said they did not know what the agro-ecological production system is, E2, E7 and E9. Respondent 3 said he had heard of it, but in his speech, he implied that he does not know what it is.

All the others, E1, E4, E6, E8 and E10 said they knew what the agro-ecological production system is. However, analyzing their speeches, it is possible to observe that there is no clarity about what this system is, since they all associated it with the organic production system, since soil conservation and less use of chemical pesticides were common in their speeches, as can be confirmed in the excerpts of the interview of E1, whose main crop is lettuce, and informed that knows, the agroecological system, "more or less", complemented by saying that: "... we would like to enter the agroecological one, even because we don't use pesticides, ... understand?". However, he expressed that his neighbors use them and indicated that he knows that it would be necessary to build a barrier to avoid contamination, but expressed his concern "... then we stay, how am I going to build a barrier? It's 5 bushels... "

The speech of E10, who mainly grows acerola corroborates this "confusion" about the agro-ecological production system, since, when asked if he knows what it is, he answered yes, and when questioned if he uses this system, he pointed out: "Because we are organic, right, we use it. When asked whether they seek specific information regarding agriculture and land management, the interviewees showed "little concern", as can be seen below.

Four of the rural producers surveyed stated that they had never received technical assistance, and the others receive or have received assistance at some point, and the institution commonly mentioned is EMBRAPA. Interviewees 8 and 10 are cooperative members of FrutiPérola, and the assistance they receive is from the cooperative's agronomist. Interviewees 2 and 4 stated that they seek information on specific agricultural issues, but their sources are alternative, as can be seen in the sequence.

E2 said that she has sought information "Yes, when we have doubts about something, we ... today the YouTube tool is so practical, right, that everything you want, you look there, you put there the production of such or pest, and for control, for management, all these things." She added that, in the past, she had help from the agronomy course of the UEM (Maringá State University, Umarama unit), through the internship that the students needed to do. E3, on the other hand, stated that he does not receive any type of technical assistance, nor does he seek information about land cultivation and management: "... we've been here for 30 years, so, ..." suggesting that EMATER technicians do not have much to contribute. He added that "... then they, somehow, each one has their own type, the old producers, so they have their own type of, of working ... So, what is working well, ..." implying that they maintain what is working. Observing the speech of respondent 3, there is some disbelief in the assistance from institutions, since there is no demand for help, neither for land management nor for property management. The speech of E3 shows a certain frustration with technical assistance for soil and crop management.

The producers who said they have never received assistance but seek information about agriculture and land management are E5, E6, E7, and E9. E5 stated that he keeps informed by taking courses. "... there is the CPT, (Technical Production Center) EMBRAPA teaches a lot, but the CPT, ... so, we have, even I have several, at that time it was, tape to watch on video." And added that he also took courses. "... by EMATER too, so today, if you only have one function, the trend, ... as you say ... it can decline and you'll have a hard time because you only have it, we have the duty to have more knowledge."

Respondents E6, E7 and E9, despite not receiving any type of assistance, they seek information about land management and agriculture, as commented, however, their sources of information may be influenced by other interests, as can be observed below.

E7 stated, "I seek, I seek information and this guy here gives me information because he is an agriculture technician. Given what was said, he was asked if this guy, who visits him, is from any

company, to which he replied that "He is from this company [showed the packaging of a pesticide], eh, I just don't need to pay him, because he earns over the sale of this here... ." The same happens with E9, who stated that he seeks information with the agronomist that visits him. In view of this, we asked if this agronomist was contacted by the producer, to which he replied that "No, he came to us. To complement this, it was asked if the agronomist's visit is a paid service, and E9 clarified that "No, he works like this ... for example, he passes by, in fact, here the people from, the vegetables here of Pérola, 90% of all are working with him ... he is a salesperson. E9 also said that when he comes, if the producer needs, he takes a look at the plant/fruit and suggests what can be used.

Analyzing the speeches, it can be seen that, except for E5, the other respondents seek information about agriculture and land management informally, that is, with salespeople. It is noted that the assistance received, in general, is low, standing out the salespeople who are agricultural technicians or agronomists. However, because they are vendors and represent some specific brands, this may be a limiting factor in the reports and diagnoses, and consequently in what is prescribed.

It can also be noticed with the highlighted speeches that, as there is a lack of technical assistance for "day to day" issues, it leads to the conclusion that qualifications and training regarding other production systems are not discussed with professionals in the area such as agronomists or agricultural technicians. Besides, it was not observed any interest in seeking information about this on the part of producers, except for E1 and E5, as already mentioned. Moreover, it is clear from the speech of some respondents, such as E3, that there is a certain resistance to change "we have been here for 30 years, so, ..." which is contrary to the survey carried out in the studies by Perkiss and Handley (2017), Deluca, Grisci and Lazzarotto (2018), among others, who point out the transience and inconstancy of today. This reveals that some of the family farmers still live according to aspects of solid modernity.

### **Agroindustrialization**

Only two respondents make use of agroindustrialization, E4 and E10, which is in line with what was discussed in the works of Godoy and Wizniewsky (2013), Ferreira (2017), and Foguesatto and Machado (2017). The authors identified that the main reason for the creation of agribusiness is economic. This is confirmed by the speech of E4, which has strawberries as its main crop, and reported that industrializes them, however, the activity is for the use of strawberries that do not look good for sale, but are good for consumption:

No, it's like this, this strawberry, if you go there to see it, is the strawberry that would be thrown away, so it's V. [son] and she [wife] every day after the harvest they sit down and do the job to turn it into money, so it is, how do you say, I added, I reused the product that would be used to feed our chickens and pigs, it became a first quality product today, after being cleaned, washed, frozen, and packed.

The interviewee also said that he has already tried strawberry jam but gave up because the production and destruction costs are high, which makes the investment unfeasible.

The speech of respondent 10 also corroborates the findings of Ferreira (2017), Godoy and Wizniewsky (2013), and Foguesatto and Machado (2017) that the stimulus for the creation of the agro-industry is economic "... as a period we were still conventional, so we lost a lot of production, ... then, ... I opened a pulp company, ... we said it's just to not lose, let's say right, add value ... and then we started making, ... and sell to people like that, casually."

Thus, agroindustry is an important activity for adding value to the products of family farming, since the increase in the producer's earnings results in better income, providing better quality of life, which is in line with the studies of Ferreira (2017), Godoy and Wizniewsky (2013), Foguesatto and Machado (2017), as commented. The other producers surveyed do not industrialize any product, and one of them confused agroindustrialization with manipulation such as peeling and chopping cassava.

Family farmers did not mention considering the consumer's point of view about their agroindustrial products. This reveals that producers do not seek market information for their planning and decision making, about what and how much to produce.

### **Certification and Seal of Geographical Origin**

None of the rural family producers use the seal or certification of geographical origin, despite the advantages discussed by Henz (2010) in his study showing the experiences of strawberry producers in the Federal District state, and by Campos and Valente (2010), who portrays the social construction of the coffee market.

The only interviewee who said he believed that the certification of geographical origin could bring advantages to the rural family farmer was E10, who stated that, "I think it would be very nice, I think that every place should have it ... when you have a strong production of some product, you have this seal, it's very nice, ..." The others are not clear about what the certificate or the seal of geographical origin is, confusing it with traceability, as it can be observed in the speech of E1, who stated that "There is a lot of information about this... ." He complemented this by indicating that "In other markets they don't have this, in the first Walmart had tracking, let's suppose that if there was a problem, they already knew where it came from, as it was from the international market, they demanded that."

### **Diversity**

Although all family farmers cultivate more than one type of fruit and vegetable, none of them indicated diversity as a value-adding factor. The findings of Caumo and Staduto (2014), identified that diversification in family farming is paramount to obtain a high degree of rural development, through activities that generate monetary income and consequently, quality of life.

Thinking about the importance of the diversity of fruit and vegetables, the surveyed producers were asked whether, when there are reports on the benefits of a certain food on television programs, this influences consumer demand for these products. And, also, if the response of consumers interferes in the planning of their production. Five of the producers surveyed affirmed that these reports influence the buying behavior of consumers, four said they do not, and one did not know how to answer, as it will be demonstrated in the next section.

Respondents E1 and E3 had similar perspectives. E1 said that when there are reports about the benefits of some vegetables or recipes, "Ah, then it becomes a huge demand ... once came out of spinach, 'Jesus', everyone was looking for spinach in 1 month ... then consumption increases, the same way it increases falls, left the media, it's over." Then in this case, "... I know that spinach sold 11, 12 packs, if something comes out today talking about it, tomorrow I can take 30 packs that sells." This is also the perception of E3, who mentioned that "It has, it has ... the worst is that it has, it increases a lot, in a short time, right ... because after 15 days people take care of their health, then they forget again and go back to pizza with soda."

Both producers realize that there is a change in demand for specific foods when they are shown in news reports about particular benefits, or on cooking shows. However, the period of increase in demand is short, which makes any kind of investment in cultivation impossible.

As for the search for information, it was possible to identify from the speeches that they do not investigate the market to plan their production and do this planning according to their intuition. It is possible to identify clearly, in the speeches of E1 and E3, the transience and inconstancy in the buying behavior of consumers. These elements are constituent in liquid modernity, as evidenced by the works of Perkiss and Handley (2017), Rossoni (2015), among others.

### **Quality**

Although "quality" was mentioned as a value proposal for market positioning, none of the respondents pointed to quality as a way to add value to their products, which is advantageous

according to the study by Campos and Valente (2010), because it points producers in directions that they can follow for rural development.

It is noted again that the lack of knowledge in management is a limiting factor for the conduction of better use of resources and greater profitability of the property. It is worth mentioning that, if the rural producer's income increases, the possibility of an improvement in the quality of life of the whole family grows, which stimulates the permanence in the property.

### **Organic Production and Organic Certification**

Many producers think organic; however, it was noted that many adopt only some practices of the organic production system, but do not make the adoption of the complete system. The only ones who employ the system in its entirety are interviewees 8 and 10, who as commented are part of FrutiPérola, which meets the findings of Campos and Valente (2010), Henz (2010), Rocha, Costa and Castoldi (2012), Caumo and Staduto (2014), Foguesatto and Machado, (2017), showing that the organic system of production is a factor in adding value, since the term "organic" is strongly associated with products grown without pesticides and other chemicals, which suggests a healthier product.

As pointed out, respondents E8 and E10, acerola producers said they use the organic production system and have the organic certification seal, although, at the moment, E8 is suspended for a serious problem with leaf-cutting ants. E8 was asked if the vegetable-garden he planted before dealing with acerola was also organic, and his answer was "... no, but I didn't use strong poison, no, when we get into this organic environment, something changes in our minds, doesn't it? It completely changes the way we think... ."

Given the above, it is clear that he believes and likes the "philosophy" and the organic production system, thus, he was asked whether or not it was easy to decide to suspend the organic certificate because of ants. His answer was that "It's being painful because I'm seeing people delivering the green acerola for R\$ 2.00, right, and I'm delivering mine for R\$ 1 and a little bit", E8's wife complemented informing that "they receive it within 7 days, and we have not received a cent in three months." She added that this difference was since they are selling ripe acerola without organic certification, while the other producers are delivering organic and green acerola, which is sold to a pharmaceutical industry in the Northeast, which uses them as the main input for the manufacture of the vitamin C.

E8 was also asked if, in his opinion, having the organic certification is a differential for the rural family producer, to which he stated:

Ah, organic? Very important, very important... . Just because you see people from the northeast coming to buy organic acerola here in Pérola, while there is a lot of conventional acerola here, they come to buy acerola here. What does that mean? It means that organic production is very important, right!

About the organic certification, E8 announced that, "Yes, very important." One can notice that, although he believes and likes working with the organic system of production, the main motivation for his dissatisfaction in having to request suspension of certification is driven by the monetary value that the cooperative pays for his acerola, and not by other issues such as better quality of life. All other respondents, as commented, claim to know the organic production system and "practically" use it, as it is possible to observe in some excerpts of their speeches, such as E3, who said he knows the organic production system, and when asked if he uses this system, he said that: "Practice, practice no, right, ... now, ... so, as I have knowledge, I always work ... because I learned then... . I work with less pesticides, very little pesticides.

Three of the producers surveyed, E2, E6 and E7, disclosed that they thought that the organic production system would not bring advantages to them. The following are the excerpts that portray this.

E2 stated that she has believed that the organic production system is not advantageous, because consumers are not concerned about whether what they consume is organic or not: "... there are few people today who go to the market, for example, and worry about whether this here is organic and if this here is not organic, did you understand? ..." She added, "So what do people look at today? They look at the size, the beauty, ... so, we end up with that product that they say is organic on the side. I think it's unfeasible. E6 also stated that it is not interesting because he believes that the product "... that we already sold, it is in a price so ideal, right, if it were 100% organic ... it is much more expensive, right, it is a little more expensive... ."

It is possible to identify that the reasons that these two participants do not find interesting for rural products to adopt the organic production system, is the lack of market, since consumers, in the vision of those surveyed, are not interested in organics because they are less beautiful than those produced conventionally, or they are not willing to pay more to get them.

Other reasons given for not adopting the organic production system are the impossibility of making protective barriers, pests, diseases, this is evidenced in the speeches of E7: "look girl, once in a while you have to use a stronger poison, it's hard for me to use it, I'm buying more eh, eh, it's, *dum, dum*, who sells natural product, you know? You can even drink it, but it is very expensive... ." E5, who affirmed that to be organic it is necessary that, "... instead of fencing it for planting, and let's say, letting the chicken loose, you have to invert, you have to fence the garden, you know? Isolate it from any other type of planting and contact so that you don't have contamination in there... ."

It was also observed in the statements of the interviewees E1, E5 and E8 that the neighbors are a crucial element in the decision of whether or not to adopt the organic production system, since the protective barriers are effective against chemical pesticides, but not against other problems such as leaf-cutting ants, as shown by E5, who relates an experience with the African snail, which in his words is "a devastating plague and has no natural predator here in Brazil," so there is a need to use pesticides, but "and the neighbor that only leaves weeds on the property ... she is breeding scorpions, ... so, we try to do it well here, in a more organized way, we try to do the organic farming, but it is complicated, because if the neighborhood does not do it, right, it is difficult for us."

It is worth noting that what ensures the quality and exemption of pesticides to organic products is certification. And, despite the advantages of certification, its process is bureaucratic and slow, besides the difficulty in maintaining the 'safety' measures so that there is no contamination with pesticides and other chemicals by neighboring properties. In addition, the costs of maintaining the certification seal can motivate the discontinuation of its use by family farmers.

It is possible to observe in the speeches that there is consonance with the researched articles, since there are those who have identified their advantages and adoption of the production system, and those who are not willing to invest in the organic production system, given the difficulty of joining and maintaining the system that has strict rules to be followed. Still, it is noticeable that some of them do not see advantages in adopting the organic system, whether this social advantage, of producing cleaner and better food for their own health and that of consumers, or this economic advantage, in getting better sales prices for their products.

It is possible to identify that some of the rural producers claim that consumers are not willing to pay more for organic products, however, it is understood in their speeches that they do not seek information about the market and the consumer, because none of the respondents said they have sought market information for their decision making about what to produce and how to offer their product, as it can be observed in the speech of E1: "No, we observe the consumer, right, we've been working for a long time so we have the vision of next year, every year it's the same thing, so it does not change, right... . We already have the notion." This is also noticed in the speech of E3 when he states that the 'market never changes' and completed saying that they work almost automatically.

In the excerpts of the speeches, a perspective of solidity is observed, when stating that there are no changes, that the work is perennial, traditional, which are opposed to transience, inconstancy and

instability, elements of the theory of liquidity discussed by Grisci, Bitencourt, and Fleck (2012) and Rossoni (2015).

It is noted by the speeches that these two farmers use their knowledge and experience to place their vegetables in the market, but do not seek information about the market in which they operate. This is reinforced by the speech of E9, who stated that he does not seek market information: "No, it's something that comes from my head, from the moment. Indicating that there is no planning for his cultivation.

It is clear from the excerpts highlighted that producers do not seek information from consumers to organize their production, thus demonstrating that they do not pay attention to the influences of the liquid society, since production does not change or is routine. This also reveals that the statement that consumers would choose to buy cheaper food rather than organic food is not based on consumer perception.

### **Commercialization of products**

The commercialization of fruit and vegetables in general happens through short circuits, and with the survey conducted, it was identified that all producers surveyed use this format to sell their products. This practice of adding value is in line with the studies of Rocha, Costa and Castoldi (2012), Freitas and Ribeiro (2013), Ferreira (2017), Parodi (2018), Aguiar, Delgross and Thomé (2018), who discuss the experiences of producers who use short marketing circuits and point out that short chains tend to be a stimulus for local economies and increase the autonomy of producers. However, although all of them use short circuits, none of the rural producers investigated think of this distribution as a way to add value to their vegetables.

Five out of the ten producers surveyed deliver their products to the direct purchase program: E5, E6, E7, E9 and E10. Different from the other participants, E4 only sells 'privately,' that is, to final consumers, confectioners, and ice-cream and açai sellers. E6 is the producer who sells his products to more types of shops: market, grocery store, restaurant, in addition to the direct purchase program.

Respondents E3 and E8, despite stating that there is no difficulty in marketing their vegetables, contradicted themselves, as it can be seen in the excerpts of their speeches. E3 said that he has no "No difficulty ... the problem is the price that does not rise, right, everything rises, and our product does not rise... . We are always losing, ... right." Same line from E8, "We never had a problem, we never had a problem of not receiving... . Price, the price is not good for us, right, but it is better to sell cheap than to lose it here in the field, right, of course if you had a better price, it would be better, right." It is possible to realize that, differently from what was said, the problem in the marketing process of those surveyed is the negotiation of the sales price.

It is possible to identify that the commercialization happens, with the rural producers surveyed, always through short circuits. One can notice from the speeches that they do not realize, or at least have not expressed, this as a competitive advantage or as value addition, since their fruit and vegetables arrive fresh to consumers. Another relevant point is the participation of most of the surveyed producers in the direct purchase program. Involvement in this program helps the family farmer to maintain his/her property and stay there.

One can also discern that, although the rural producers, in general, affirm that there is no difficulty in marketing their products, one can notice a dissatisfaction in relation to the sales price practiced by them, which leads us to understand that, either they don't know how to negotiate their production, or they don't know how to impose themselves to the buyers as being the product suppliers.

This dissatisfaction may be related to the lack of knowledge in management, thus, in order to identify how the rural family farmers surveyed behave in the face of a liquid society, which according to Bauman (2001), has more malleable relationships, it was questioned how and where farmers seek information to support their decision-making in the management of their properties.

And none of the 10 rural producers surveyed seek information to plan what to produce and where to sell, as it can be observed in the excerpts of some speeches below.

When asked if she seeks information to plan what to produce and where to sell, E1, indicated "Yes, what we do here is continuous, we stopped planting a lot of things to focus on what we got from the market to supply it every day.

Farmer E6 stated that he uses knowledge to organize his production:

... let's say, it is time to plant cauliflower now, right, because our climate is now, right... . January for example, why would we plant? There's heavy rain, too many bugs, so it's unfeasible, right, and you learn the changes with time and the climate depends, that plant is no use, right.

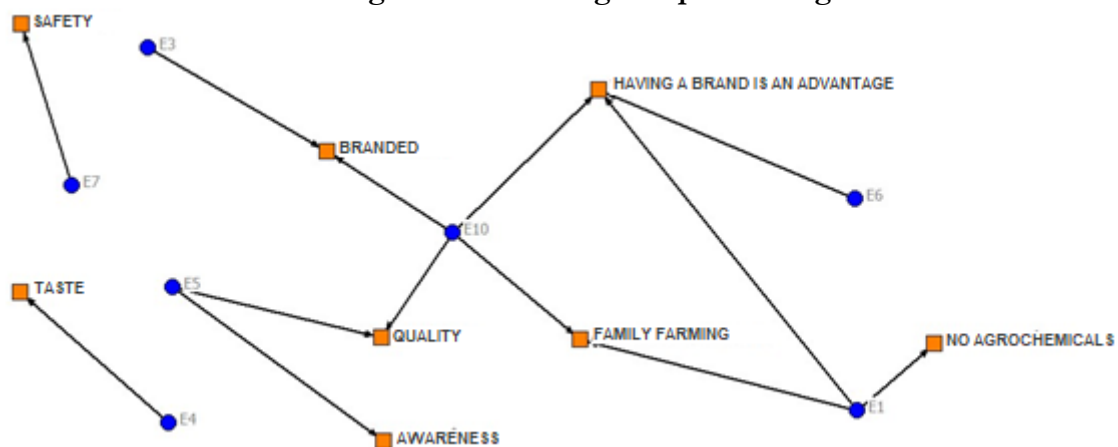
Analyzing the speeches, one notices that there is no planning about what to plant and where to sell the production. They produce what they are used to and sell to the same retailers or consumers, with no plans for expansion or diversification. In order to investigate the family farmers' knowledge about management, they were asked whether they receive or have received any kind of help and/or training for the management of their properties. The result was unanimous, none of those surveyed receives or has ever received any kind of management support, and also, none of them showed interest in seeking this kind of support.

This lack of market knowledge shows that family farmers are unaware of the current obstacles that make relations more fluid and delicate among the members of the value chain. This is noticeable in the speech of E1 when pointing to the continuity of its production, as commented at the beginning of the discussion of this topic, which diverges from the notes, studies of the theory of liquidity, such as transience, speed of change, uncertainty, among others (ROSSONI, 2015; PERKISS; HANDLEY, 2017; JOUBERT, 2018).

### Brand creation and market positioning

Regarding brand and market positioning, only two of the interviewed producers have their own brand, among the others, some think that creating a brand would bring competitive advantage by adding value, which is in line with the study by Henz (2010), who presents the experience of family strawberry producers in the Federal District and points out as one of the suggestions the creation of a brand as experienced by family producers in the state of Espírito Santo. The following figure, with the help of UCINET®, shows the perceptions of farmers regarding branding and positioning for their brands.

Figure 4 – Branding and positioning



Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

The two producers who have a brand are E3 and E10. E3, when asked if his products have their own brand, stated that "... it must have a label, right, then, but it's not like a brand ... it's that every,

every product for you to put a label on it needs to have the name, then the name is Alimentos São José... . Yes, it's not registered or anything, but they allow it there, eh, eh, eh, eh, as they say, health, right. It is understood, by analyzing his speech, that E3, despite having a name, does not use it as a brand, from the marketing point of view, failing to add value beyond making the brand known in the market.

Participant E10, in addition to acerola, he works with fruit pulp. When asked if he believes that having a brand brings benefits to the rural family producer, E10 was succinct and said, "It does." Regarding market positioning, although the producers had no knowledge of the concept, they were asked to point out the way they would like their brands to be remembered, if they had one. The answers given were natural/not agrototoxic, taste, quality, awareness, and being a family farm product. This is shown in excerpts taken from some interviews.

Starting with E10's speech, he was asked to point out up to three words that he would like to represent his brand to consumers: "It's family farming, right, eh ... [he thought for a while] nice quality. Nice quality, I think that's it... . Right now, it's hard [to think of the strong points]."

A certain harmony can be noticed in the statements of respondents E1, E5, and E7, who pointed out that they would like to be remembered for not using pesticides, being safe, and being part of family farming. These positioning differentials are important, from a social and environmental point of view.

As mentioned at the beginning of this topic, some producers do not think it is advantageous for them to create a brand, they are the ones surveyed E4 and E5, E7, E8 and E9. The excerpts from the speeches of E3 and E9 demonstrate this.

E3's statement was quite "unexpected" when he was asked if, in his opinion, working better with his name/brand, making it more prominent, would bring him advantages. His answer was no, and he complemented:

In fact, we work ... like this, it's something that maybe, depending on what you do, you can even increase it... . But then you'll need labor, and then it's not worth it if you put it there ... then it's more like family farming, you know, which ends up being better ... nowadays for the employer it's hard, and maybe he [the employee] quits ... and maybe what he gave you, for example, a little profit he takes back in double, you know... .

The speech reveals that the farmer does not invest in his São José brand, and in its dissemination because it would increase sales and he would have to hire someone to handle the extra work that the investment would cause, and this would not bring advantages in terms of profits. It is worth noting that in E3's speech, in the item Value addition, it is possible to observe fear, insecurity, and uncertainty, elements present in liquid modernity, as discussed by Shahghasemi et al. (2015), Rossoni (2015), Deluca, Grisci, and Lazzarotto (2018), among others.

E9, on the other hand, when asked if he believes that owning a brand would bring advantages to him, replied:

Ah, what I have to say to you ... I think that what we have, for example, is the case as we were saying... . Brazilian people eat with their eyes, so if the merchandise is beautiful, I think it is not necessary to have a brand... . So, it is important that the merchandise be beautiful, it is not about the brand, I think it does not interfere in anything.

When asked about if he had a brand, how he would like it to be remembered, E9 stated "That's a good question, because today I was thinking about this kind of thing.... I could even suggest a brand of something, the products we have, it would be very good... ." Given his speech, the question was asked: how did you think of having/creating a brand, did you imagine how you would like people to remember your brand? To which he said "No, never, until now we still have it in our heads because you know... . [laughs] It's a head alone to think a lot of things during the day [laughs]." About if he would like to receive more information about the creation of a brand, E9



said "Ah, I don't think so, ... I don't think so, because ... it was already an extra concern, right [laughs]."

E9's speech identifies a contradiction, because at the same time that he says he does not believe that the brand would bring advantages, he was thinking about putting a brand on his products. Nevertheless, it is clear that the person interviewed cannot say how he would like his brand, if he had one, to be remembered.

Analyzing the speeches of those surveyed, it was found that only 3 of them realize that the brand can be an important differential for adding value to their products. Another 2 could not answer if they think that the brand can bring advantage to their business, and the others do not consider this variable as an element of value addition.

It was also clear that there was some confusion between brand, label, seal of origin, and product traceability. Thus, the need for clarification for family farmers is identified. This ratifies what was pointed out earlier, producers lack knowledge and support/assistance on management, which could generate knowledge and improve the way they run their properties and consequently improve the earnings of family farmers. Due to this ignorance, producers also do not seek information about market behavior, which has as a consequence the absence of the aptitude to face the constant embarrassments in the liquid society. Since, as pointed out by Rossoni (2015), Grisci, Bitencourt and Fleck (2012), and Joubert (2018), we live in a moment of fast and constant mutation and paying attention to this allows better organization aiming at consumer service.

Despite this, 6 of the producers surveyed pointed out that they would like to have it as a value proposal:

**Table 10 - Desired Brand Positioning**

<b>E1</b>	No Agrochemicals	Family farming	No	Yes
<b>E2</b>	Quality		No	No
<b>E4</b>	Taste		No	No
<b>E5</b>	Awareness	Quality	No	No answer
<b>E6</b>	Safety		No	No
<b>E10</b>	Family farming	Quality	Yes	Yes

Source: Data Collection, 2021.

It is worth noting that E3, despite having a brand, did not answer how he would like his brand to be remembered.

### Product

When gathering information about how family farmers manage their products, they were asked about processing, packaging, and labeling. The findings are shown below starting with the participants who benefit their crops or agro-industrialize them.

E3 stated that he has benefited his cabbage, "We wash it, cut it, pack it and sell it." As for the packaging used, he informed that the package is simple (transparent) and the label is glued. Although the cabbage is the main crop in the property, the respondent was asked if in the other products grown, some kind of packaging is used, and his answer was, "No, it is loose ... we just use plain bags without any kind of customization.

E10 sells in nature, such as the acerolas delivered to the cooperative, or agro-industrialized, such as fruit pulp. The acerolas, as well as the E8, are delivered in plastic boxes. The pulp, on the other hand, is packed in transparent plastic. As for the label used, he answered "... it's glued. It's one of the weak points, because the company is small, you can't get an order for the plastic one, ..." indicating that he cannot make printed labels on the packages.

Interviewees E6 and E9 also process their products, but neither of them uses a label identifying the producer or other information that is relevant. E6 indicated that they have processed the cassava grown on the property by peeling and cutting it. In relation to packaging, E6 expressed that they use plastic bags for the cassava. E9 sells chopped cabbage, and sometimes, chopped parsley and green onion too, the packaging varies between the transparent bag and the Styrofoam tray with PVC film. The other products, of the two surveyed, are sold in nature, and the only packaging used is the plain bag.

All the other respondents use the plain bag or the transparent bag, without any kind of identification and pointed out that it is the same as all the other producers, as if this information endorsed the use of these packages.

The main reason noted for the use of 'simpler' packages and without labels is the cost, as seen in the speech of E10, commented earlier. It is clear from the speeches that they do not see packaging as a way of adding value, as already mentioned.

During the interview with E1, she was asked if she had ever thought of producing hydroponic vegetables, to which she replied "Here in Umuarama it does not sell, people here prefer the product grown in soil, maybe because the stalks are of a very different size, right, usually the hydroponics are smaller ... maybe that's why, but there are people who eat and say that the taste is different. It is noted by the interviewee's speech that there is no search for information about consumer preferences, nor about their buying behavior, as previously commented. Thus, the rural producer's perception that consumers do not like or would not buy hydroponics may be mistaken, which leads her to make an incorrect decision.

The speech of E1 denotes the perception of the other farmers surveyed. The result of this is that they are unaware of the constant changes that happen nowadays, and the inconstant relationships in the market, since it is possible to verify in their speeches aspects of solid modernity that are the constancy, the immutability of what they produce, how they package/label and how they deliver to the consumer, working 'always' with the information they already have, without seeking new ones, which is contradictory to the studies of the authors already mentioned as, Rossoni (2015), Perkiss and Handley (2018) and Deluca, Grisci and Lazzarotto (2018).

### **Advertising**

It was identified in the interviews that none of the rural producers surveyed makes any kind of communication, not even the two producers that have their own brands, E3 and E10. However, they were asked what message they would like to convey if they had a brand.

Interviewee 10 said that, because he has a degree in environmental management, it is important to do the right thing, when he decided to join the cooperative he saw that its values are in accordance with his, so the "... main thing is health, right, it's the issue of the, the health of both food and mental health and everything that happens when you consume only natural fruit, consume only fruit in this case, organic, right.

Given the statement, the respondent was asked if he believes that with his brand and his label he can convey the desired message. He said that "Yes, because we put that it is totally natural, with no added sugar or preservatives or anything, right... ." Complementing, he exposed that the slogan adopted, and that appears on the label, is 'totally natural.' As for E3 and E10, despite having a brand, they do not realize it as a form of adding value, and perhaps because of this, they do not manage it properly, from the marketing point of view.

As previously mentioned, it is understood that the lack of knowledge about management is a point that affects the way the property is managed, and also, the perception of producers about what is value addition and the ways it is possible to apply it in their horticulture. It was also clear that family farmers did not search for market information and, consequently, are alienated from the changes that take place in the liquid-modern society, which results in farmers who are not prepared for the challenges of the malleable, more fragile relationships that take place between suppliers, customers and competitors nowadays.

However, despite this, A1's speech reveals fear, insecurity, and inconstancy, which is in line with the discussions of Grisci, Bitencourt and Fleck (2012), Shahghasemi et al. (2015), Joubert (2018), among others, as it can be observed below.

E1 was asked if it is difficult to market a vegetable that she is not used to selling. She said there have been barriers because "... the market trusts him/her [the producer], ... sometimes it happens that we don't have [the product] this week and he [her husband] buys it outside. When asked why this practice occurs, she explained that "... then we lose, the market will put another producer there with that product... . Then we have to compete with the other producer, right, because there are two of them delivering the same thing. If we don't have the product, we get it outside to deliver it to the market, the market doesn't get without it.

### **Theory of liquidity**

Although they were not directly questioned about the theory of liquidity, we tried to identify in their statements, elements of liquid modernity and solid modernity. As previously mentioned, the elements that characterize liquid modernity are rapid and constant transitoriness, precariousness, instability, vulnerability, uncertainty, unpredictability, fragility, fear, and insecurity, according to Grisci, Bitencourt and Fleck (2012), Rossoni (2015), Shahghasemi et al. (2015), Perkiss and Handley (2017), Joubert (2018), Deluca, Grisci and Lazzarotto (2018). Consequently, the following are terms that characterize solidity: predictability, tradition, constancy, perennality.

Analyzing the speeches of the producers, it is possible to identify that practically all of them have a vision of solidity, because durability, permanence and constancy are perceived. The excerpts from interviewees 1, 3 and 6 demonstrate this, as it can be observed below.

About the vegetables that are grown, E1 said that "our production here is continuous, right, ... we have the vision of the next year, every year it's the same thing, so it does not change, right." Regarding the influence of reports, in television programs, about the benefits of certain products, the interviewee reported that the demand increases, "but with 15 days the phase is already over." E3's speech was very similar: "we have been selling for 20 years, so the market never changes... ." About the reports, he stated, the demand "increases a lot", however, for "a short time ... because after 15 days people take care of their health, then they forget again, and go back to pizza with soda." E6 has the same perception regarding this issue: "Suddenly it disappears, just like an eggplant, there was a time when it was like this, this, that, and now it's gone... . Usually, it's just a fever, then it disappears, and then it's back to the basics again. It's always like that.

However, we also identified the presence of liquidity elements in their statements, such as fear, uncertainty, and insecurity, as it can be observed in the following excerpts from E1 and E3.

E1 reported that it was necessary to deliver the fruit and vegetables to the supermarket without flaws, otherwise, it opens space for new competitors "... then we lose the market, and another producer will put that product there... . Then we have to compete with the other producer, right, because there are two of them delivering the same thing." He also said that when they don't have the vegetables to deliver to the supermarket, they buy them outside so that there is no interruption in supplies.

E3, when asked if he would work the brand and handle other products if the profitability was higher. His answer was "we have thought about it ... but we retracted because ... the investment is very high, you know, and you will invest a lot in a market that may not value your product... ." He added that "... it is worthwhile if you build three sheds and rent them, you know what I mean, because then you will get money without having to work there," indicating that after the construction you receive the rent without having to work.

It was found that the interviewed family farmers are more influenced by solid modernity when it comes to decision-making for the management of the property; however, as they are inserted in liquid modernity, they are also influenced by liquid elements. Nevertheless, as Bauman (2001) points out, the crucial point in liquid modernity is the clash between time and space, where space is solid, and time is dynamic. Thus, we have in contemporaneity the speed of movement and the

connection to more agile means of mobility, which becomes a power tool, since power moves at the speed of a 'click.' In this way, being aware of what happens around becomes crucial for the permanence of the rural enterprise, which implies, among other things, knowing your consumer and adding value to your products according to his/her perspective. Therefore, the importance of understanding the perception of family farmers about adding value in the liquid modernity.

### **Conclusion**

As the proposed objective was achieved, the research question was also answered, since, with the survey done, it was identified that family farmers, despite employing some variables of value addition, many do not realize that what they do is value addition or even have a distorted view of what value addition is, and therefore, do not consider what is value for the consumer, because value addition is only valid if it is important for the consumer. This limited view shows that family farmers are not prepared to meet the consumer relations with their consumers, since they do not know them, in addition, there is the aggravating factor that, in liquid modernity, consumption has a much more exacerbated symbolic load. And this is no different when it comes to food consumption.

The research question was also answered when it was identified that family farmers have received little technical assistance and no management support. In addition, it is also evident that most of the farmers surveyed have not shown any interest in seeking knowledge, especially about the management of the property. This is probably the main reason why family farmers are not able to add value to their vegetables, because they lack knowledge about management.

It was also found that rural producers do not seek market information, thus, they are hindered in relation to the changes that take place in their environment. It was also evident that producers have not realized the liquidity in relationships, especially commercial ones, since, today, time is 'more important' than space, and who has the power is who holds the information. It is worth pointing out that liquid modernity is characterized by consumption that shapes the individual, and identity is shaped and changed with the same speed as information travels. This highlights the need to understand the market and its consumers so that it is possible to remain in your property with quality of life. This reinforces what was said in the previous paragraph, and so perhaps this is the second main reason why producers do not add value to their products, because they are unaware of the market in which they operate and the buying behavior of their consumers. It should be noted that understanding the market implies having better relations not only with its consumers, but also with its suppliers, and commercial relations for the acquisition of inputs are also affected by net modernity, since it affects all aspects of society, such as relationships, work, consumption... that is, it affects the perception of everything around individuals. In addition, if family farmers do not seek market information on technologies and inputs for handling land and crops, which also happens faster in liquid modernity, they become outdated faster, which leads them to lose productivity, which makes its production more expensive, which makes its commercialization difficult.

Therefore, the findings of this study are faced with producers who are not aware of the constant and rapid mutations that take place in their environment, that is, liquid modernity. The result of this 'blindness' is the lack of understanding of the inconstancy of relationships, which are increasingly malleable, especially commercial ones, as already commented, since they are part of a value chain that involves suppliers, competitors, and consumers, which will require from them, the producers, more and more adaptability. Adapting to this liquid reality, allows the rural family producer to have conditions not only to remain in the market, but also to make his property prosper.

Given the above, it can be stated that the theoretical contribution of this study is in identifying that the lack of knowledge on the part of family farmers hinders the addition of value to their vegetables and market insertion that is set in a liquid society, which fills the gap between sociological theory and marketing strategy. Thus, it cooperates with the ratification and complementation of sociological science, once new knowledge has been developed, as family farmers, in general, do not

seek information about the management of the property or the management of the land/crop, which results in fear, insecurity and uncertainty, characteristic elements of liquid modernity. Still, this ignorance/disinformation alienates the producer in the search for value addition, which results in planting and what to plant in a traditional way, always with the same pattern, selling to the same customers, the same quantities, which reveals other characteristics of solid modernity such as immutability, predictability and constancy. And it is this scientifically supported knowledge that makes social transformation possible.

We also contribute socially and scientifically because by proving the application of the theory of liquidity with the use of the marketing strategy of value addition, it is evident that liquid modernity, consciously or not, influences the decision making regarding the management of the property. This allows family farmers to adjust the way they market their products and the sustainability of their enterprise. And, the better the management of the rural enterprise, the better the producer's earnings, which allows him/her to have a better quality of life, this enhances the encouragement and stimulus to remain on his/her property, living from it. In this way, paying attention to the rapid and constant changes of liquid modernity is not just a strategy for the differentiation and growth of the property, it is, above all, a way of survival for the family farmer.

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