

Our fields are getting cleaner

The Empty Pesticide Container Collection Program is turning 20, with 17 million pieces returned

For two decades now, the trucks of the Empty Pesticide Container Collection Program pass through the tobacco growing regions to collect the containers and dispose of them in an environmentally correct manner. It is a pioneering initiative that precedes the 2002 legislation on the return of pesticide packaging, seeing that the tobacco sector had started collecting these containers two years before this legislation was enacted.

Continuously in operation, about 1.8 thousand collection points are visited a year in the rural districts of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina. In 20 years, the Program was responsible for the correct disposal of upwards of 17 million containers. This volume makes sense because the tobacco farmers' holdings are diversified, so they also return the empty pesticide containers of crops other than tobacco. Tobacco, by the way, is one of the commercial crops that uses the least amount of pesticides, only 1.01 kg of active ingredient per hectare.

After their removal from the farms, and after going through collection centers accredited by the National Institute for Processing Empty Containers (InpEV), most of them, about 94%, give origin to new products, especially to inputs used by civil construction companies, or are transformed into new pesticide containers. Approximately 6% of the containers are sent to incinerating plants, accredited for this purpose.

The initiative, which is a reference in Reverse Logistics, relies on the work of the field staffs of the companies associated with the SindiTabaco. These extension workers are responsible for mobilizing the farmers and distributing the invitations indicating the date and time the containers are collected from the nearest collection points. On the other hand, the Tobacco Growers' Association of Brazil (Afubra), is responsible for giving publicity to the chronogram in the main communication vehicles of the tobacco growing regions. Upon delivering the empty containers the farmers are given receipts that they present to the environment inspecting organs.



THE PROGRAM

- **411** tobacco growing **municipalities** in **RS** and **SC** are benefited. In Paraná, similar initiatives carried out by the local centrals are supported by the tobacco companies associated with the SindiTabaco.
- More than **117 thousand tobacco growers** in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina are beneficiaries.
- More than **17 million empty containers** have already been collected in two decades.
- Approximately **1.8 thousand collection sites** are visited a year.



PRESIDENT'S WORD

Iro Schünke

Economy and health. This has been the great clash in the world in times of pandemic. It is something that the tobacco sector dominates in a more skilled manner than many other agribusiness sectors – seeing that the sector has managed to keep stable in spite of the Coronavirus. With its businesses moving ahead steadily, with the necessary adaptations and complying with all guidelines on sanitation and health, the numbers of the tobacco sector are supposed to decline, especially as far as the quality of the crop goes, once it was affected by bad weather conditions, and there are also logistic questions related to exports.

A survey conducted by Deloitte, at the request of the SindiTabaco, concludes that the 2020 shipments should drop from 2.1 to 6 percent in volume and 15.1 – 20 percent in dollars, compared to 2019, when 549 thousand tons of tobacco were shipped abroad, bringing in revenue of US\$ 2.14 billion. With these numbers, Brazil should keep its leading position in global tobacco exports, for 30 years now, in spite of a pandemic and all its social and economic unfoldings.

In 2020, despite the woes of the pandemic, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of a successful and unique initiative focused on young rural farmers: the Growing Up Right Institute. And we also celebrated the 20th anniversary of a pioneer Reverse Logistics program. Other noteworthy highlights include the thousands of farmers who have adhered to the certification process (IP tobacco), complying with the most discerning international standards relative to safe and sustainable production. This attests to the fact that we continue on the frontline of the global market when it comes to the quality and integrity of the Brazilian product, without overlooking the fact that the balance between health and economy is always welcome.

SPEAK UP, PRODUCER!

This space is destined for the farmers who belong to the ITPS (Integrated Tobacco Production System) in all regions in South Brazil.

DANIEL VOELZ
Vera Cruz – RS



In the farm of Daniel Voelz (39), in Linha Ferraz, interior of Vera Cruz, all empty pesticide containers are triple-rinsed, perforated and delivered to the Container Collection Program. For 20 years now, the farmer has been repeating the short journey taking the packaging to the collection point in the locality, where a team pick up the containers and write out a receipt for the farmer.

In two decades, Voelz has already returned 2.5 thousand containers. But only a part of this volume consists of tobacco pesticide containers, as the Program also collects pesticide containers used on crops other than tobacco. According to the farmer, this initiative makes the rural holdings cleaner, seeing that it disposes of the empty packaging in the correct manner.

Initially, Daniel cultivated the fields jointly with his father, but in the past 8 years he and his wife Marlene have been administrating the farm. In the current season, the couple planted 70 thousand plants and the expectation is for a crop of 850 arrobas ((12.75 tons). They say they have opted for tobacco because it is the best cash crop for a small holding.

THE FARM

- **7 hectares**
- **5 hectares** devoted to crops
- **70 thousand** plants of tobacco
- **3** curing-barns (conventional)
- **2 thousand** eucalyptus trees (reforestation for fuel wood used for curing their tobacco)
- **Diversification:** food crops for their own consumption like cassava and sweet potatoes, besides corn after tobacco harvest for their livestock.

INTERVIEW

XICO GRAZIANO, agronomic engineer, Master in agricultural Economics, PhD in Business Administration, member of the Agro Sustainable Scientific Council (CCAS), lecturer, professor and author of ten books.

How do you see Brazilian agriculture and its position in the international market?

The most recent data from the balance of trade corroborate the trend of the past decade: Brazil is moving fast towards becoming the main food and agricultural raw materials supplier in the world. One more decade, and we will be the granary of the world.

In your vision, what will the future of the Brazilian agribusiness sector be like after the pandemic?

Many sectors suffered and will continue suffering from the crisis caused by the pandemic, seeing that it has upset the markets and weakened aggregate domestic demand. Reorganization will occur, an adaptation, and this process is advantageous for those who ship their goods abroad. I understand that it will take two years for us to resume our dynamism. We have learned a lesson: e-commerce will move agribusiness forward.

Member of the Agro Sustainable Scientific Council and an advocate for agriculture-oriented technology, what is your opinion on scientific knowledge for farming without environmental damage?

Only technological breakthroughs are capable of promoting

the necessary marriage between ecology and agronomy, that is to say, production in conjunction with preservation. Legislation plays a relevant role, so does awareness, but without new knowledge that ensures profitability along with sustainability, the calculations do not match. Ultimately, it is the economy that runs the show.

You fight the false narratives that blame Brazilian agriculture for using excessive amounts of pesticides. Are there facts that pesticides used in Brazil remain within safe limits?

Analyses performed by the PARA (Analysis Program of Pesticide Residues in Food Items), conducted by the Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Anvisa (National Health Surveillance Agency), attest to the real situation, the facts. The latest report contained data regarding 4,616 samples of tens of fruit, vegetables, cereals, and concluded that only 2.3% of the samples contained residues of chemical ingredients above the MRL limit, the Maximum Residue Limit set forth by legislation. Of these samples, only 41, or 0.89% of the total analyzed crops presented a serious risk potential for human health; none of them, ZERO, presented chronic risk. These data are scientific. This is the FACT, and the rest is myth.

CLASSROOM

Thinking about agro's future

Thinking about agro's future suggests a reflection on young people who live in the countryside, knowing that many of them will inherit farms and agricultural activities. In the tobacco sector, for 20 years now these reflections have been turning into actions intended to protect the children and adolescents in rural areas. Initially, the sector got mobilized to make sure children attend school and have a happy childhood, whilst staying away from child labor. And, after a decade and a half of a maturing period and constant updates of the implemented projects, in 2015 the Growing Up Right Institute was created, with its focus on the adolescents enrolled in the countryside apprentices program,

One of the audiovisual productions that portrays the essential parts of the work performed by the Growing Up Right Institute regarding the protection of children and adolescents in the countryside is the video "Thinking about Agro's Future", which can be accessed at SindiTabaco's Youtube channel. "In uncertain times, agro drives the economy, agro generates wealth", the text highlights, recalling the recognition recently earned by the rural activity due to the uncertainties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. With reference to the young in the countryside, the video cites: "Thinking about the future, it is learning time, under the right guidance, with a breath of hope, with new opportunities, from the countryside to the countryside", it concludes.



Access the QR
Code and watch
the video

Preserving for better living conditions

PIETRO GABRIEL PEREIRA, 17, was a young apprentice at the Rural Professional Learning Program run by the Growing Up Right Institute, in Cerro Branco (RS), in 2019

"For us, from the rural area, preserving the environment is very important because, if we do not care about it now, there will be consequences in the future. And if we do our part, we will have a better place to live and work. When I was an apprentice at the Growing Up Right Institute, we took part in the Zero Waste project with an eye on promoting awareness of the local population about the right manner to dispose of waste, seeing that conscious attitudes avoid damages that may reach the environment and all of us. It looks as if our initiative reaped good results. Furthermore, after the rural management course, I devised a plan for the cultivation of hydroponic vegetables on my family's farm. Once the project was implemented, it became clear that it is possible to produce vegetables without the use of pesticides, and it was a very good crop. It was so good that it resulted into a big surplus, as the initial idea was to produce vegetables for their own consumption. This made it possible to sell some of the vegetables to a restaurant in Cerro Branco, and it generated an additional income to the main crops cultivated on the farm, which are tobacco and rice. The project of the course gave rise to another source of income from the farm. And it was within the idea of sustainability, as we were already careful in the use of pesticides, about waste disposal, the preservation of native plants and special cares regarding the use of soil, keeping the productivity of each crop as a relevant concern. As far as I am concerned, this environmental awareness grew stronger during the course given by the Growing Up Right Institute, and I consider it as an opportunity for acquiring knowledge for the rest of our lives, especially the fact that you come to grips with the chances that exist in the farm."



NEWSFLASHES

FIERGS

SindiTabaco president Iro Schünke continues as Board Member of the Rio Grande do Sul Federation of Industries (FIERS). He is one of the directors of the 2020/2023 tenure and has been in this position since 2008, as the representative of the tobacco sector at the federation that encompasses the industrial segments in Rio Grande do Sul. Gilberto Porcello Petry was reelected as president of the new tenure. At his inauguration he expressed optimism in spite of the difficult moment Brazil is going through and reiterated that the industry is an advocate for the balance between social distancing and a stable dynamics of the economic activities.

HARVESTING CAUTIONS

With the arrival of harvest time, SindiTabaco resumes its awareness campaign relative to workers' health. The recommendations are related to harvesting clothing, whose efficiency has been attested by research that pointed to a 98-percent reduction in dermal exposure. The blouse and the trousers of this clothing received their Approval Certification from the Ministry of Labor and Employment (CAs numbers 34.899 and 34.900). It is also recommended to wear the complete PPE, including impermeable gloves, boots and hat, and avoid entering the tobacco field in the hottest time of the day, when the leaves are still wet with dew or on rainy days.

FEMALE VOICE

The "Us for Them" program – A the female voice in the countryside" has a special edition in 2020. Due to the social distancing recommendations to prevent the Covid-19 from spreading, the format was adapted, including the participation of young people who have already taken part in previous editions. In Virtual meetings, under the supervision of professional members from the Growing Up Right Institute and communication courses from the University of Santa Cruz do Sul, they devise itineraries and record new bulletins based on joint reflections. Another novelty of the program could be the availability of contents in new digital platforms in the future.

TOBACCO GROWERS' DAY

This year, due to the pandemic, the World Tobacco Growers' Day, October 28, the day goes by without any celebration. The date commemorates the activity of 146 thousand tobacco farmers who harvest 600 thousand tons of tobacco cultivated on 261 thousand hectares in the three southern Brazilian states. Officially, the Tobacco Growers' Day was created by the Legislative Assemblies of Rio Grande do Sul (Law 14.208, of 2013), Santa Catarina (Law 16.114, 2013), and Paraná (Law 17.729, of 2013). The date is a reference to the day when, in 1492, crewmen from Colombo's ship witnessed a group of native people in a ritual engulfed in smoke coming from tobacco leaves.

Direct planting is the new reality of tobacco farming



More than three quarters of the tobacco fields (76%) are cultivated in areas where soil preparation is in conformity with such techniques as direct planting and minimum tillage. But this has not always been common practice. The situation only changed after joint efforts by the field teams of the tobacco companies and the tobacco farmers for the implementation of soil and water conservation techniques. In 2007, for example, 83% of the farmers were still using the conventional land preparation system, which consists in revolving and disking soil devoted to tobacco, and conservation practices were only used in 17% of the farms.

In this continued evolving process, significant breakthroughs took place from 2011 to 2014, when the direct planting and minimum tillage rates exceeded conventional cultivation systems. During this period, the use of techniques that prevent soil from degrading went up 26% (from 39% to 65% of the fields) and, in the meantime, conventional soil preparation practices dropped from 61% to 35%.

Ever more common cultivation techniques that excel in soil conservation practices are ascertained by SindiTabaco's technical staff, which collects the data surveyed by the industries through the Integrated Tobacco Production System (ITPS). The numbers attest to the fact that the incentive and guidelines attracting the farmers to adhere to sustainable practices in the tobacco growing farms have yielded concrete results.

For the farmers, the conservation-oriented techniques are also lucrative because, after the first years of soil cover practices, they perceive an increase in quality and natural fertility. And, as the years go by, the use of fertilizers decreases, resulting into lower production costs.

TOBACCO ROADS



With a predominant undulating topography, Piên is located in the First Plateau in Paraná, near the border with Santa Catarina.

Mayor: João Osmar Mendes (João Padeiro)

The main tobacco growing regions are the highlight in every edition of SindiTabaco News. Now, know a little more about the municipality of Piên, in the southeast of Paraná, 90 kilometers from Curitiba.

Piên is one of the municipalities where tobacco is one of the main agricultural crops. According to data released by the municipal administration, the crop represents 59.3% of the total in the composition of the Gross Agricultural Production Value in Piên.

The secretary of Agriculture and the environment, Moacir Gravi Gonçalves, explains that agriculture is very representative in economic terms. "It is estimated that 70% of the population consist of family farmers", he evaluates. With an agriculture characterized by small holdings, Piên's high point is diversification, as, besides tobacco, the farmers also grow soybean, corn and produce chicken, in addition to forest products, livestock, vegetables, fruit and grains for their own consumption.

The statistical figures released by the Tobacco Growers' Association of Brazil (Afubra) show that, in the 2019/2020 growing season, 1,058 farmers in Piên cultivated tobacco. In all, they harvested 7,304 tons. In the current crop year, the expectation is for the numbers to repeat.

PIÊN IN NUMBERS

Sources: Municipal Administration and IBGE

Population (estimated 2019): **12,746** people

Territorial area: **284.49** km²

Per capita GDP (2017): **R\$ 59,820.33**

Total revenue in the municipality (2017):
R\$ 45,208,540.00

Rural holdings: **1,400**

Area of the farms: **3 to 4** hectares

Tobacco producers (2019/2020 crop year): **1,058**

Main agricultural products: tobacco, soybean, chicken, corn and forest products.



GLOSSARY

DECREE 4074/2002

Sets forth, in article 53, that "users of pesticides and correlated products are under obligation to return the empty containers and respective lids to the stores where they were acquired, in compliance with label Instructions, within one year from date of purchase".

PI TOBACCO

It is an official program of the Brazilian government created by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (Mapa) with the aim to ensure the safety and traceability of the products for consumption. With the certification, it is feasible to attest to the origin and methods used in the generation of the products, through formal and audible records, on the principles of sustainability and their function in light of environmental, economic and social requirements.

RURAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

Created in 2015 by the Growing Up Right Institute, it provides professional courses to young rural boys and girls, without having to leave their farm or school, enrolling adolescents in the Rural Management and Entrepreneurship course. The adolescents aged 14 – 17 carry out their theoretical activities in the school premises, at home or in their communities and, in compliance with the Learning Law, they receive a salary proportional to 20 hours a week – the hourly load of the course, which takes place in the shift opposite to their regular school hours.

CALENDAR

OCTOBER 23

20th anniversary of the Empty Pesticide Container Collection Program

OCTOBER 28

World Tobacco Growers' Day





OCTOBER 29

Meeting of the Sectoral Chamber of the Tobacco Supply Chain (virtual)

DID YOU KNOW?

LESS PESTICIDES, MORE MONEY IN THE POCKET

Demand and application to crops

	KG IA/HA	US\$
*Kilogram of active ingredient per hectare		
	46.87	1,868.73
	39.18	1,076.57
	31.60	1,166.67
	1.01	71.50

The crops that require less kilograms of active ingredients per hectare (kg AI/ha) are as follows: banana, tobacco and bean, respectively 0.48, 1.01 and 1.22 kg AI/ha, well below the average of the 19 crops analyzed (4.90 kg AI/ha).



Access QR Code and know more

Source: Lourival Carmo Monaco Neto and José Otávio Machado Menten (Research Demand and Relative Application of Pesticides to Major Agricultural Crops in Brazil – 2016)

ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

SindiTabaco comprises 14 associated companies and sees to the demands from all over Brazil, with the exception of the States of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Transparency and visibility are SindiTabaco's strategies, whilst emphasizing the social and economic importance of the sector, whether in the generation of jobs and taxes, or through the relevance of tobacco for the economy of the municipalities and States in the South Region. Furthermore, the Entity encourages sustainability, through social and environmental responsibility, a fact that attests to the reason for the existence of the SindiTabaco and its vast operational field

- Alliance One Brasil Exportadora de Tabacos Ltda.
- ATC - Associated Tobacco Company Brasil Exportação e Importação de Tabaco Ltda.
- Brasfumo Indústria Brasileira de Fumos S.A.
- China Brasil Tabacos Exportadora S.A.
- CTA – Continental Tobaccos Alliance S.A.
- JTI Processadora de Tabaco do Brasil Ltda.
- OTC Comércio e Fabricação de Fumos Ltda.
- Philip Morris Brasil Indústria e Comércio Ltda.
- Premium Tabacos do Brasil S.A.
- ProfiGen do Brasil Ltda.
- Souza Cruz Ltda.
- Tabacos Marasca Ltda.
- Universal Leaf Tabacos Ltda.
- UTC Brasil Indústria e Comércio de Tabaco Ltda.

PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS



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Production: SindiTabaco (www.sinditabaco.com.br)
Rua Galvão Costa, 415 - Centro
96810-012 - Santa Cruz do Sul - RS
Fone: (51) 3713 1777

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MSL
ANDREOLI

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