

Consumer Preferences and Importance of Food Crops Like Rice and Beans in Brazil

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In many countries, rice and beans are traditional food crops being widely produced and consumed. Thus only a small portion of the production is exported. In Brazil, the rice and beans production is not enough to satisfy the domestic demand. But how large is this domestic demand for rice and beans? Who is demanding what and how much? How much are Brazilian citizens spending to acquire food e.g. on rice and beans?

The objective of this study is to report the behaviour of the domestic market for food crops like rice and beans, and the consumption habits of Brazilians, exploring data from the national household budgets survey from 1995–1996 and 2002–2003. In that period there were some changes in household expenditures. The amount of household income spent on food increased from 16.4 % in 1995–1996 to 17.1 % in 2002–2003 mainly due to income reduction. The minimum wage dropped from US\$ 115.3 in December 1995 to US\$ 56.5 in December 2002. This real income reduction also increased the pressure of utilities on household budgets from 20.8 % in 1995–1996 to 29.3 % in 2002–2003, and of commuting from 9.7 % to 15.2 % in the same period.

The annual per capita consumption of polished rice — main consumption form — is about 25 kg, varying from 18 kg in the South to 36 kg in the Central West region. The annual per capita consumption of beans is about 13 kg, varying from 10 kg in the South to 18 kg in the Northeast region. The per capita consumption of rice and beans is higher in lower income classes. Rice participates in total caloric intakes with about 18.8 % (varies from 8.9 % in Pernambuco to 39.6 % in Maranhão) while beans represent just 6.7 % (varies from 4.2 % in Santa Catarina to 12.0 % in Paraíba) of total caloric intake of Brazilians.

Keywords: Beans, consumer preferences, household expenditures, national household budgets survey, per capita consumption, rice

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