

Sustainability certifications to support farmers' decision-making process and business management

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ABSTRACT

The demand for certified products has grown greatly in recent years because their lower environmental impacts and the supposed extra profitability that certified agriculture should generate for farmers. Therefore, different types of certification have emerged. In this context, their impacts on sustainability have been widely discussed in the academic arena since it has produced contrasting results. This study contributes the discussion developing a compared evaluation of sustainability between organic and conventional banana in Ecuador. SAFA (Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture) is a new sustainability assessment tool that still lacks wide application in developing countries and it is chosen for the present analysis due to its ease of application and understanding. The results display how certified production overcomes conventional' s in governance, environment and economic dimensions but performs lower in the social one. A possible explanation of this may rely on the size of the farms and production processes rather than certification standards. Furthermore, certifications are ineffective in correcting some crucial points that affect the sustainability management of the whole system such as the monoculture and the use of no renewable materials. The system is structured in a monoculture since all product is directed to exportation. Crop rotation and intercropping are an exception that is possible only in agri-forest farms, which are a small fraction of total producers, and this fact affects biodiversity. Researchers and practitioners can use this study as a valid reference point for the implementation of SAFA in other agricultural systems and managers as a guide for the control of processes in agri-foodbusinesses directed to augment the biodiversity and sustainability of the agricultural processes..

Biography:

Laura Piedra-Muñoz is a Lecturer in the Department of Economics and Business and Vice-Dean in the Economics and Business Studies College at the University of Almería in Spain. She received her PhD in Economics and Business Administration in 2005 from the University of Almería. Research stay in Georgia State University (USA) in 2006. She has 21 years of experience in studies on environmental economics, sustainability and agri-food systems. She has published 35 scientific articles in international journals. Additionally, she has published 5 books and 19 chapters; she has more than 50 contributions to international conferences; and she has been a member of the Scientific Committees of 12 international conferences. She has directed three doctoral thesis. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Migration Studies since 2013; Guest Editor of a Special Issue in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health; and a

reviewer in JCR journals.

Publication of speakers:

1. Bonisoli L, Galdeano-Gómez E, Piedra-Muñoz L (2018) Deconstructing criteria and assessment tools to build agri-sustainability indicators and support farmers' decision-making process. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 182: 1080–1094.
2. Bonisoli L, Galdeano-Gómez E, Piedra-Muñoz L (2018) Deconstruction: the qualitative methodology for the analysis of sustainability assessment tools of agri-system. *MethodsX* 5: 635-638.
3. Bonisoli L, Galdeano-Gómez E, Piedra-Muñoz, L, Pérez-Mesa JC (2019) Benchmarking agri-food sustainability certifications: Evidences from applying SAFA in the Ecuadorian banana agri-system. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 236, 117579.

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