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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Food on the table

Alexandra Ozorio de Almeida | EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Brazil is known for its agricultural activity. The country's harvests break record after record, with growing productivity, and Brazil is a world leader in exports of various commodities. However, there is another agricultural reality that is less attractive. The area planted with rice and beans, the basis of the national diet, decreased by more than 30% from 2006 to 2022, according to IBGE, the national statistics agency.

The shift to growing more profitable export-oriented items contributes to food insecurity in the country. Food insecurity means the lack of consistent access to nourishment, both in quantity and quality. It is estimated that more than half of the Brazilian population – approximately 125 million people – today experience some degree of food insecurity.

Researchers in nutrition, economics, sociology, agronomy, and geography are focusing on hunger (cover feature, *Page 6*). In addition to understanding this complex phenomenon, they look for ways through which the country can face this apparent paradox, ensuring adequate nutrition for its population.

In 2023, EMBRAPA (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation) turned 50 (*Page 20*). Its mission is to provide Brazil with food security by means of a tropical model of agriculture and animal farming. The research produced at the institution, which has campuses in all federative units, is largely responsible for the country's agricultural diversity and international position as a food exporter.

However, the worrying effects of climate change and new demands from consumer markets call for greater focus on sustainable agriculture, an area of research to which Embrapa has dedicated increasing efforts.

It was in agronomic engineering that the research career of plant geneticist Marcio de Castro Silva Filho began. Castro took over as FAPESP's Scientific Director in April 2023. For several years, he has combined research on plant-insect-pathogen interactions with institutional action.

Formerly a director of CAPES, the national foundation for the improvement of higher education personnel, Castro was also a postgraduate dean at the University of Sao Paulo, an institution where he settled upon returning from a doctorate abroad. In the interview in this issue (*Page 14*), Castro talks about his career and anticipates the problems he will focus on in his new role.

A Brazilianist can be defined as a non-Brazilian national who conducts research on Brazil aimed at a foreign audience (*Page 56*). However, the term covers a historical process of both rivalry and collaboration. In the last century, these researchers focused on understanding Brazil as a whole and its historical processes. More recently, less attention has been given to a single nation, and interest has been directed toward broader themes.

Dreams are viewed by the Yanomami people as a way of seeing the invisible. From the perspective of psychoanalytical theory, dreaming is a representation of individual desire and a means of accessing the subconscious. Ethnographic research among the Yanomami points to dreams as a way of entering realities that are inaccessible while awake (*Page 62*). Experiences of their waking lives are just as important as those that occur when dreaming: they are complementary ways of existing in the world and relating to it.