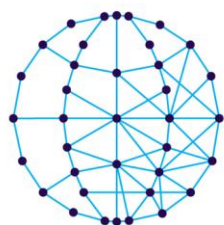




Cooperatives : The Power to Act
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COOPERATIVES IN BRAZIL: EXPORT AND IMPORT BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

The objective is to analyze Brazilian trade balance as a result of cooperative export and import behaviour in 2015. Secondary data from the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (MDIC) were used for this analysis. There exist more than 6,800 cooperatives in Brazil distributed over 13 business segments. In 2015 there was a positive balance of 25.7% of the total balance of the country's organizations. The purchasing countries are China, the USA, Germany, the Arab Emirates and Japan. The exporting countries are Argentina, Paraguay, Belgium, the USA and China. The most representative states are Paraná, São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Mato Grosso do Sul. Among the commercialized products, soybeans (in various forms) stand out. As for imports, meat processing and cotton harvesting machinery and equipment stand out.

Résumé

L'objectif est d'analyser la balance commerciale du Brésil à la lumière des résultats du comportement import-export des coopératives en 2015. Des données secondaires du ministère du Développement, de l'Industrie et du Commerce extérieur (MDIC) ont servi à cette analyse. Le Brésil compte plus de 6800 coopératives réparties en 13 secteurs d'activité. En 2015, la balance a été positive pour 25,7 % de la balance totale des organisations du pays. Les pays importateurs sont la Chine, les États-Unis, l'Allemagne, les Émirats arabes et le Japon. Les pays exportateurs sont l'Argentine, le Paraguay, la Belgique, les États-Unis et la Chine. Les États les plus représentatifs sont le Paraná, São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Mato Grosso do Sul. Des produits commercialisés, le soja (sous des formes variées) est le premier en importance. Quant aux importations, la machinerie et l'équipement destinés à la transformation de la viande aux cotonnières arrivent en tête.

Resumen

El objetivo es analizar el resultado de la balanza comercial brasileña en términos del comportamiento de las exportaciones e importaciones de las cooperativas en 2015. Para este análisis, se utilizaron datos secundarios del Ministerio de Desarrollo, Industria y Comercio Exterior (MDIC). En Brasil existen más de 6800 cooperativas divididas en 13 segmentos de negocios. En 2015, había un saldo positivo de 25,7 % del balance total de las organizaciones del país. Los países compradores son China, EE. UU., Alemania, los Emiratos Árabes y Japón. Los países exportadores son Argentina, Paraguay, Bélgica, EE. UU. y China. Los estados más representativos son Paraná, Saõ Paulo, Santa Catarina y Mato Grosso du Sul. Entre los productos comercializados se destaca el grano de soja en sus diversas formas. En cuanto a las importaciones, sobresalen las máquinas y equipos para la preparación de carne, así como las cosechadoras de algodón.

Introduction

Faced with a vast and diversified market that limits the participation of many organizations, it is necessary to look for competitive alternatives in order to conquer it. Cooperatives seek to exercise that role as a development tool in the sector where they act and still offer their members conditions to grow (Simioni et al., 2009). According to Begnis et al. (2014), the benefits of cooperation were seen by man as a way to better life. In that context, cooperatives were conceived in response to the interests of their members by founding the social component with cooperative principles and values (Novkovic, 2008). As such, cooperatives act as an economic and social force in the world, be it due to their number of members, generation of jobs or other proportionate measures (Goel, 2012).

World Cooperative Monitor data from 2014 (International Cooperative Alliance - ICA, 2015) on the analysis of 1,926 cooperatives from 65 countries showed that they had an aggregate turnover of 2.62 billion dollars in 2012. The Cooperative and Employment study in 2014 (Roelants et al., 2014) showed estimates for 74 countries home to approximately 79% of the world population revealing that cooperatives employ at least 250 million people worldwide. Novkovic (2008) complements these data by stating that cooperatives are present to a large extent in world market economies.

In terms of total exportation in Brazil in 2015, the main products were as shown in table 1:

Table 1: Brazilian exports: key products (2015 Jan - Dec)

Ord	Description (NCM)	US\$ FOB	Part. %
1	Soybeans, soy minced, except for seeding	20,981,829,291	10.98
2	Crude oils	11,781,308,300	6.16
3	Iron ore not crowded and its concentrate	10,378,928,216	5.43
4	Other sugar cane	5,899,281,601	3.09
5	Cafe not roasted, not decaffeinated in grain	5,555,373,845	2.91
6	Paste chem. non-conif. soda sulfate, semi bleached	5,342,874,857	2.80
7	Oil cake, other solid residues, extracted soybean oil	5,003,245,433	2.62
8	Corn in grain except for seeding	4,932,413,460	2.58
9	Cuts and offal of chickens and roosters, edible, frozen	3,958,788,803	2.07
10	Boneless beef and veal, frozen	3,953,397,095	2.07
11	Iron ore cluster to the pelleting process	3,697,172,229	1.93
12	Other aircraft/air vehicles, weight> 15000 kg empty	2,984,717,644	1.56
13	Calcined alumina	2,505,281,536	1.31
14	Rooster and chicken meat, not cut in pieces, frozen	2,270,666,438	1.19
15	Automobiles with comb. engine, 1500 <cm3 <= 3000	2,153,050,370	1.13
16	Other iron and steel products semi, c <12:25%	1,995,955,677	1.04
17	Turbojet parts or turboprops	1,875,335,724	0.98
18	Manuf. tobacco whole or in part, dry leaves.	1,745,469,774	0.91
19	Other cane sugar, beet, chem. sucrose, pure, soluble	1,740,248,696	0.91
20	Other ore copper and its concentrate	1,645,560,551	0.86
	Remaining products	90,733,425,044	47.47
	Total of major products	100,400,899,540	52.53
	Grand total	191,134,324,584	100.000

Source: MDIC (2016)

Faced with this economic force represented by unions and their importance in countries where they are present, the goal of the study was to make an analysis of the Brazilian trade balance based on the performance of exports and imports of cooperatives in 2015. Ninaut and Matos (2008) emphasize that cooperatives will be established as a power in the Brazilian economy through sustainable development and will generate jobs and income for members. In this sense, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2016) highlights that cooperatives are currently important tools used by the government for economic development, aside from creating economic benefits shared by partners as if they were individual members of the business or company.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives are business organizations in that their objective is the formation and operation of activities in order to provide benefits to its members (Deacon and Ovando, 2013). These organizations are a tool that offer members the opportunity to develop and increase their returns by reducing the effects of market forces, thus showing more value, competitive strength and efficiency than other forms of business organization (Knutson, 1966). The structure of the traditional cooperative is defined as being the property and under the control of its users. Aside from benefiting these users, the right to property is restricted to members, the right of return is not transferable, and the distribution of benefits is proportional to participation, among others (Chaddad and Cook, 2004).

With respect to the management of these organizations, Peterson and Anderson (1996) highlight the importance of providing higher yields and lower costs to members and potential members when compared to those offered by traditional companies. In order to achieve this, the authors discuss the need to address risks efficiently, while maintaining strategies aligned with their goals.

Cooperativism in Brazil

The Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB, 2015) divides cooperativism in Brazil into 13 branches of activities; each branch is responsible for specific activities that contribute to meeting the needs of their members and are in accordance with the characteristics of the country. Each of the branches, its definition, and the number of cooperatives and members is presented below in Table 2.

Table 2: Cooperativism branches, definition, cooperatives and members in Brazil 2013

Branch	Definition	Nº *	Nº **
Agricultural	Composed of agricultural farmers or agro-pastoral and fishing, where the means of production belongs to the members. Provides services such as receiving or sale of joint production, storage and processing as well as educational and social technical assistance.	1,597	1,015,956
Consumption	Directed at the purchase of consumer goods for its members.	122	2,841,666
Credit	Acts in rural and urban credit, aims to promote savings and finance the needs or projects of its members.	1,034	5,725,580
Educational	Composed of education professionals, students, students' parents, educational entrepreneurs and related activities, aimed at the educational training of children and adolescents.	300	61,659

Special	“Cooperatives formed by people who need care or are in disadvantaged situations in accordance with law no. 9.867 November 10, 1999”. Helps individuals generate income; organizes work, training, development and other measures that contribute to economic and social independence.	6	247
Housing	Intended for the construction, maintenance and administration of housing for its members.	220	120,980
Infrastructure	Provides its members directly and primarily with essential services such as energy and telecommunications.	130	934,892
Mineral	Researches, extracts, cultivates, industrializes, trades, imports and exports mineral products.	86	87,190
Production	Produces one or more types of goods and products.	253	11,600
Health	“...dedicated to the preservation and promotion of human health.”	849	264,597
Employment	Organizes and manages the interests connected to the professional activity of cooperative workers in order to provide services not identified in the other branches.	977	226,848
Transportation	“... act in the provision of freight and passenger transport services,” such as taxis, motorcycle taxis, vans, buses, trucks. Transport can be individual, collective, freight or school.	1,228	140,151
Tourism and Leisure	Providing tourist services, leisure, entertainment, sports, art, events and lodging directly and primarily to its members.	25	1696
Total		6,827	11,433,062

Source: adapted by the authors according to OCB (2015) and cooperativism institutional agenda (2015)

*Number of cooperatives

**Number of members

The data show that the cooperative movement in Brazil had a total of 6,827 cooperatives with 11,433,062 members, in 13 branches of different activities in 2013. Cooperatives that stood out were the agricultural and credit sector while the tourism and leisure industry and the special cooperatives had the lowest participation rates. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2013, the Brazilian population was 201 million people and in accordance with Table 2, almost 11.5 million of them were part of some branch unions, representing 5.7% of the total population.

Brazil is located in South America and occupies the central-eastern part of the continent, with an area of 8,514,876,599 square kilometers and a population of over 205 million people. Divided into 27 states and one Federal District, its capital is the city of Brasilia, which located in the west central region (IBGE, 2015). The economy of Brazil showed a GDP of \$2.353 trillion in 2014, which was divided between agriculture (5.8%), industry (23.8%) and services (70.4%). The workforce in these three sectors was distributed as follows: 15.7% in agriculture, 13.3% in industry and 71% in services (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2015).

Methodology

This study deals with documentary descriptive research and uses a quantitative approach. For analysis, we used secondary data from the website of the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (MDIC) and in the foreign trade statistics of the Brazilian Trade Balance: Cooperatives—January to December 2015. The data relating to imports and exports include monthly and accumulated values segmented by products, main destinations and states of the federation. The data on exports and imports of Brazilian cooperatives allowed the selection of categories for analysis, namely: a) the history of imports and exports; b) import and export values during the study period; c) main export products; d) main destination countries and exported products; e) main exporting federation states; f) main imported products; g) main countries of origin and imported products; h) main importing federation states.

Results and Discussions

The Brazilian trade balance of cooperatives shows the results of the import and export of these organizations for Brazil in 2015, in addition to historical values of these two activities.

Brazilian Cooperatives' Imports and Exports

The Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (MDIC, 2016) defines export as “the exit of goods from the customs territory, arising from a contract of international purchase and sale, which may or may not result in foreign exchange inflows” while import “comprises the temporary or permanent entry of goods into the national territory originating from other countries.”

Data concerning the export and import of Brazilian cooperatives for 10 years of operation (2005-2015) are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Brazilian cooperatives' imports and exports: history (US\$ FOB)

Year	Export	Import	Balance
2005	2,253,971,093	232,165,145	2,021,805,948
2006	2,832,923,928	193,574,105	2,639,349,823
2007	3,301,234,776	276,219,427	3,025,015,349
2008	4,010,600,074	539,055,452	3,471,544,622
2009	3,627,791,364	306,020,664	3,321,770,700
2010	4,417,824,355	269,090,089	4,148,734,266
2011	6,213,282,879	388,183,606	5,825,099,273
2012	6,233,061,995	395,030,834	5,838,031,161
2013	6,072,481,254	396,654,853	5,675,826,401
2014	5,280,587,187	414,474,743	4,866,112,444
2015	5,348,979,945	289,568,235	5,059,411,710

Source: MDIC (2016)

The 10 years analyzed for exports showed that three years stood out, 2011, 2012 and 2013, with the highest export index, representing more than \$6 billion for the country each year. For imports, the figures for these 10 years showed that there was diversity in the results, with the lowest figures at \$193 million in 2006 and the highest \$539 million in 2008. The balance of the two activities highlighted the highest figures in the three years 2011, 2012 and 2013, which were important for export, and showed

constant values for imports, but not the lowest. In relation to the values of these two activities, the results are shown for each month of the year 2015 in table 4.

Table 4: Brazilian Cooperatives Exports and Imports: monthly and accumulated values (US\$ FOB)

Time	Exportation (2015)	Importation (2015)
January	452,807,727	23,893,923
February	338,059,355	16,974,243
March	426,610,432	28,784,306
April	478,739,086	27,110,306
May	568,615,231	29,967,201
June	532,650,069	19,899,817
July	550,878,642	37,175,812
August	441,853,943	17,360,297
September	344,547,940	18,387,841
October	372,259,385	23,000,849
November	331,920,657	28,223,201
December	510,037,478	18,790,439
TOTAL	5,348,979,945	289,568,235

Source: MDIC (2016)

The months of 2015 that Brazilian cooperatives exported the most were in December, June, July and the highest value was in May. The months of 2015 that showed the lowest import values were December, September, August and the lowest value was in February. The month of December showed relevance to the two activities analyzed during the year.

Exports of Brazilian Cooperatives

Exports from Brazilian cooperatives accumulated more than \$5 billion in 2015. Table 3 showed the main products that were included in the list of exports for the year. Table 5 shows accumulated exports from cooperatives (US\$ FOB).

Table 5: Exports from cooperatives: by goods - accumulated (US\$ FOB)

Products	2015	Part. %
Coffee non roasted, non-decaffeinated, in beans	910,032,760	17.01
Pieces of chicken, frozen	899,173,414	16.81
Soy bean, ground, except for seeding	709,682,882	13.27
Other sugars- cane, beets, pure chemical sucrose, soluble	658,555,524	12.31
Paste and other solid residues from soy bean oil extraction	521,673,258	9.75
Other pork, frozen	241,199,360	4.51
Soy bean oil, gross	233,409,539	4.36
Other sugars	186,241,171	3.48
Corn grain, except for seeding	183,198,322	3.42
Ethyl alcohol non denatured w/water content<= 1%,	154,334,268	2.89
Remaining products	651,479,447	12.18
Total	5,348,979,945	100.00

Source: MDIC (2016)

The total number of products that are exported by Brazilian cooperatives reaches 172, and of these, 10 stood out to characterize the export activity. The four most exported products are coffee, pieces of roosters/chickens, soybeans and other sugars; together they represent a total of 59.4% of the country's cooperatives' exports, i.e., more than half of the export total is represented by only four products. Regarding the destination of exported products, Table 06 presents the main buyers from Brazilian cooperatives in 2015. Table 6 shows Brazilian cooperative export by main destinations and products.

Table 6: Main buyers from Brazilian cooperatives (2015)

Countries/Products	2015	Part. %
China	927,910,941	17.35
Ground soy beans	615,746,842	66.36
Frozen chicken, fresh or refrigerated, including giblets	252,291,909	27.19
Cane sugar	18,956,061	2.04
United States	447,044,008	8.36
Raw coffee beans	263,647,174	58.98
Ethanol	165,688,831	37.06
Remaining basic products	5,103,652	1.14
Germany	410,634,171	7.68
Bran and residues from soy bean oil extraction	208,177,339	50.70
Raw coffee beans	154,589,388	37.65
Salted meats including chicken	34,992,469	8.52
United Arab Emirates	318,185,588	5.95
Refined sugar	232,294,303	73.01
Frozen chicken, fresh or refrigerated including giblets	67,850,345	21.32
Cane sugar	13,926,920	4.38
Japan	289,341,913	5.41
Frozen chicken, fresh or refrigerated including giblets	166,541,146	57.56
Coffee beans	96,346,232	33.30
Corn grain	9,667,874	3.34

Source: MDIC (2016)

Out of the 148 countries that make up the list of buyers from Brazilian cooperatives, the five that stood out were China, the USA, Germany, the UAE and Japan. The most sold products by countries are: soybeans to China, raw coffee beans to the US, bran and residues from soybean oil extraction to Germany, refined sugar to the United Arab Emirates and chicken to Japan. Two facts can be highlighted: firstly China, the main buyer, has a significant participation, because its numbers represent more than double the value of the second place; and secondly, the main product imported by each country represents more than 50% of the total purchased from Brazilian cooperatives. In Brazil, more than 6,000 cooperatives are distributed among the 28 federation units (states and federal district). Table 7 shows participation, in descending order of amounts, of the states most representative in that export activity.

**Table 7: Brazilian cooperatives export by federation units:
accumulated (US\$ FOB)**

FU (State)	2015	Part. %
Paraná	1,924,431,175	35.98
São Paulo	1,010,825,716	18.90
Minas Gerais	837,567,350	15.66
Santa Catarina	633,765,418	11.85
Mato Grosso do Sul	363,225,092	6.79
Rio Grande do Sul	176,549,930	3.30
Mato Grosso	161,505,216	3.02
Goiás	52,691,996	0.99
Tocantins	36,627,782	0.68
Other States	81,926,680	1.53
Undeclared	69,863,590	1.31
Total	5,348,979,945	100.00

Source: MDIC (2016)

The five states that stand out the most in terms of exports by Brazilian cooperatives are Parana, Sao Paulo, Minas Gerais, Santa Catarina and Mato Grosso do Sul, accounting for 89.18% of total exports. This shows a concentration of total exports. We can highlight the state of Paraná as a major exporter, as it represents 35.98% of exports by cooperatives in Brazil.

Imports of Brazilian Cooperatives

In relation purchases by Brazilian cooperatives, imports accounted for more than \$289 million in 2015. Table 8 shows the main products imported by the country's cooperatives.

Table 8: Brazilian cooperative imports by goods: accumulated (US\$ FOB)

Products	2015	Part. %
Brewing barley	34,301,618	11.85
Non-roasted malt, whole or split	25,940,905	8.96
Soy, even ground, except for seeding	23,223,369	8.02
Urea with nitrogen content >45% in weight	20,782,806	7.18
Machinery and equipment for preparing meats	17,992,734	6.21
Potatoes, prepared or conserved, frozen	16,655,930	5.75
Corn grain, except for seeding	15,458,935	5.34
Other fertilizers, chemical minerals with nitrogen and phosphor	13,215,441	4.56
Other potassium chlorates	13,113,348	4.53
Other cotton harvesters	8,457,304	2.92
Other products	100,425,845	34.68
Total	289,568,235	100.00

Source: MDIC (2016)

A total of 172 products are imported and the products that stand out are barley, malt, soybean, urea and machinery for preparing meats. These products together represent 42.22% of imports by Brazilian cooperatives. A noticeable fact among the most imported products (Table 08) is the need for equipment to be able to carry out the cooperatives' activities, as in the case of machinery for preparing meat,

fertilizers (among others) and cotton harvesters. The main countries of origin of imports by Brazilian cooperatives, as well as the main imported products, can be seen in table 9.

**Table 9: Brazilian cooperatives imports by main sources and products:
accumulated (US\$ FOB):**

Countries/Products	2015	Part. %
Argentina	58,085,581	20.06
Barley grain	32,609,983	56.14
Malt, whole or broken, unroasted	16,260,478	27.99
Wheat grain	2,132,780	3.67
Paraguay	42,515,326	14.68
Soy beans	23,223,369	54.62
Whole kernel corn	15,447,758	36.33
Wheat grain	3,299,052	7.76
Belgium	20,749,215	7.17
Vegetables, prepared/preserved in acetic acid	9,594,235	46.24
Malt, whole or broken, unroasted	5,042,623	24.30
Organic and inorganic compounds	4,977,675	23.99
United States	20,567,759	7.10
Agricultural machinery and equipment (except tractors)	8,677,326	42.19
Food preparations	5,251,698	25.53
Fertilizers containing nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium	2,045,496	9.95
China	18,518,360	6.40
Fertilizers containing nitrogen, phosphor and potassium	13,215,441	71.36
Heterocyclic compounds, salts and sulfonamides	738,974	3.99
Ammonium sulfate	603,700	3.26

Source: MDIC (2016)

According to the information in Table 9, the top five countries of origin of Brazilian imports are Argentina with barley; Paraguay with soybeans; Belgium with vegetables; the US with machinery and equipment for agricultural use; and China with fertilizers. What stands out is the fact that just five countries represent 55.41% of imports despite the fact that two major exporting countries are in South America, the same continent as Brazil. The cooperatives that import the most by Brazilian state are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Brazilian cooperatives imports by federation units:

accumulated (US\$ FOB)

UF	2015	Part. %
Paraná	169,434,187	58,51
Santa Catarina	49,016,775	16,93
São Paulo	22,066,015	7,62
Rio Grande do Sul	19,895,775	6,87
Mato Grosso do Sul	16,127,910	5,57
Mato Grosso	9,042,296	3,12
Goiás	1,358,601	0,47
Pernambuco	1,034,937	0,36
Minas Gerais	848,294	0,29
Ceará	347,837	0,12
Other states	395,608	0,14
Total	289,568,235	100,00

Source: MDIC (2016)

The data for the cooperatives in Brazilian states that import the most (Table 10) show five states that stand out: Paraná, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and Mato Grosso do Sul, which together represent 95.5% of the total. The fact that the state of Paraná is solely responsible for 58.51% (more than half) of the imports leaves the other four states with the share of 36.99%, which may explain why such a high percentage of imports lays in the hands of only five states.

The comparison of the exports and imports by Brazilian Cooperatives in 2015, shown in Picture 1, serves as a summary of those two activities that make up the Brazilian trade balance.

Picture 1: Comparison of exports and imports by Brazilian cooperatives (2015)

2015	Total (US\$)	Main Products*	Main Countries	Main States
Export	5,348,979,945	1. Coffee 2. Chicken pieces and giblets 3. Soy 4. Other sugars 5. Soy bean oil	1. China 2. USA 3. Germany 4. Arab Emirates 5. Japan	1. Paraná 2. São Paulo 3. Minas Gerais 4. Santa Catarina 5. Mato Grosso do Sul
Import	289,568,235	1. Barley 2. Malt 3. Soy 4. Urea 5. Machinery for preparation of meats	1. Argentina 2. Paraguay 3. Belgium 4. USA 5. China	1. Paraná 2. Santa Catarina 3. São Paulo 4. Rio Grande do Sul 5. Mato Grosso do Sul

Source: Elaborated by the authors, data MDIC (2016)

* Full name of products can be found in Tables 3 and 6

According to the MDIC (2016b), the Brazilian trade balance closed 2015 with a balance of \$19,685,273,675, \$5,059,411,710 of which come from the export and import activities of Brazilian cooperatives. This shows that the return that cooperatives gave the Brazilian trade balance in 2015 was 25.7% of the total balance. Therefore, it is evident that these organizations have importance in stimulating the country's economy.

In relation to the recipient and provider countries, China and the USA occupy highlight positions in the two activities, thus showing to be big buyers, but also countries that supply the Brazilian market with their products. The states that have appeared in both activities, Paraná, São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Mato Grosso do Sul, show that it is important for the country's cooperatives to export products but also, that they need products from other countries. The state of Paraná, responsible for 35.98% of exports and 58.51% of imports, is the leading supplier in both activities.

With respect to the main products exported and imported by Brazilian cooperatives, we can highlight soybean demand (in various forms). In addition to export, soy purchase, coming from neighbouring countries, Paraguay and Argentina, is an important part of the total imports of these companies.

Another fact is that, although the country has 6,827 cooperatives in various sectors with about 11,433,062 members, almost all of the sector's exports come from agricultural cooperatives.

Final Considerations

With the objective to analyze the Brazilian trade balance by concentrating on the behaviour of the country's cooperatives' export and import activities in 2015, it was possible to consider that Brazil has more than 6,800 cooperatives divided into 13 business segments. We can consider that these have an important role in the economy, since, according to the data presented, their participation in the Brazilian trade balance in 2015 achieved a surplus of \$5,059,411,710, 25.7% of the total balance from organizations in the country.

The countries identified as major buyers of products from Brazilian cooperatives were China, the USA, Germany, the United Arab Emirates and Japan. Countries of origin of goods that the country's cooperatives import are Argentina, Paraguay, Belgium, US and China. In addition, China and the US occupy highlight positions, because at the same time, they are both buyers and sellers in the Brazilian market.

Regarding the 28 Brazilian states which showed export and import activities, Paraná, São Paulo, Santa Catarina and Mato Grosso do Sul, stand out in both activities, and the state of Paraná is the main supplier and purchaser, accounting for 35.98% of exports and 58.51% of imports.

Regarding the main products sold by Brazilian cooperatives, demand for soy stands out (in various forms), in regards to the exporting tradition of the commodity in the country, when in need of import for domestic consumption. Imports made in neighbouring countries, Argentina and Paraguay, rank third on the list of products purchased by Brazilian cooperatives. In imports, products that serve to develop the productive operations of these cooperatives also stand out, as in the case of machinery for preparing meat and cotton harvesters. Another important factor is the role of agricultural cooperatives in Brazil; these organizations are the most responsible in their segment for both exports and imports. This fact is understandable due to the characteristics of the Brazilian commercial development based on agricultural production (commodities and derivatives).

A limitation encountered in carrying out the research was the fact that the data relating to cooperativism in Brazil was from 2013 and did not provide an updated cooperative panorama view of the country. The suggestions put forth for other studies would be to analyze cooperative movement in other countries, as well as the role of cooperatives in their trade balance in order to verify if they play an important role, such as in Brazil.

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