



## When Chinese Agricultural Machinery Arrives in Brazil, It Sows More Than Just Seeds

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On the vast lands of Brazil, about 77% of agricultural production units are family farms, with tens of millions of farmers bearing the responsibility of feeding the nation. Unlike the highly mechanised agro-industrial systems, around 70% of the food on Brazilians' tables is produced by smallholder farmers. Yet, these farmers have long faced multiple challenges: outdated farming tools, labour shortages, and stalled land reform. For them, using agricultural machinery is not only a matter of improving productivity—it is also a pursuit of social justice, a form of daily resistance and perseverance. This makes new cooperation and transformation especially urgent and necessary.



It is precisely in this context that, since 2023, a fleet of small and medium-sized agricultural machines from China has crossed the ocean and arrived in Brazil. Manufactured by companies such as Huilai Bao, Sifang, Zoomlion, XAG, Xinyuan, Debont, Hebei Yihang, and Sinomach Digital, these machines have been introduced into family farms in Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Maranhão, and Paraíba.

This cross-border collaboration has been authentically documented by the *Brasil de Fato* team in the documentary *Chinese Machinery, Workers' Lands*. Filmed from the perspective of frontline farmers, the documentary focuses on a key question: How can agricultural technology truly serve smallholders? From the fields of Brazil, it tells the story of how each small machine has taken root, greatly improving production efficiency, reducing labour intensity, and especially empowering women, enhancing their technical capacity, social status, and fostering mutual support networks that are reshaping traditional gender roles.

In the film, we witness farmers no longer as passive recipients of technology, but as active users, improvers, and promoters. With their experience and wisdom, they are transforming machinery into productive power and into tools for improving their lives and defending their dignity. What the film presents as “mechanical democratisation” is not merely the dissemination of tools, but a powerful response to the question: Who owns the technology, and who defines the future of agriculture?

Between 1949 and 1950, shortly after the success of the Chinese revolution, China launched its own land reform, abolishing large landholdings and redistributing land to farmers. On this smallholder-based agricultural foundation, China gradually industrialised and developed agricultural machinery tailored for small-scale farming. Today, China produces more than 4,000 types of agricultural equipment. In this regard, despite the vast geographical distance, China and Brazil share a surprising convergence in terms of smallholder adaptation, rural mobilisation, and pathways toward technological equity.

Thus, this cooperation of Chinese agricultural machinery arriving in Brazil is not a simple act of technical export. It is a deep exploration of land justice, agroecology, and technological democratisation, and a powerful example of South–South cooperation and exchange.

In the face of growing global challenges around food security and ecological agriculture, this China–Brazil partnership offers a compelling alternative: the future of agriculture should not be controlled by a resource-rich few, but should belong to those who live with the land and reshape rural life through collective action.



Machines may sow grain, but people sow the future.

We invite you to watch the full film, hear more moving stories, and witness this cross-border agricultural collaboration.

**Watch the documentary here:**

<https://youtu.be/A1GZgz2dUIU?si=mZq2y2GunHy8v4lR>

## Reference

1. [https://www.tjjw.gov.cn/lly/2025/06/30/detail\\_2025063085885.html](https://www.tjjw.gov.cn/lly/2025/06/30/detail_2025063085885.html)
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