

The Impact of Absorptive Capacity on the Competitiveness of Brazilian Soybean Exports

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This study examines the role of absorptive capacity (AC) in enhancing the competitiveness of Brazilian soybean exports, a key sector in the global agricultural economy. In the face of rising global population and food demand, Brazil has positioned itself as a leading producer and exporter of soybeans. Using a qualitative research design, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with soybean farmers, agronomists and traders in Goiás, Brazil, to explore how AC facilitates the acquisition, assimilation, transformation and use of external knowledge. The results show that Brazil's dominance in soybean production is due to advances in seed technology, effective soil management and robust pest control, all supported by substantial institutional investment in research and development, particularly by EMBRAPA. In addition, factors such as education, training programmes, cooperative networks and access to finance significantly enhance AC, enabling farmers to adopt modern farming practices, implement precision agriculture and meet global quality and sustainability standards. AC not only improves yields and cost efficiency, but also increases resilience to market volatility and environmental challenges. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, rising input costs and unequal access to training persist, limiting the full potential of AC. The study recommends strengthening cooperative networks, expanding institutional support and promoting inclusive credit systems to overcome these barriers. Theoretical contributions extend the AC framework to the agricultural sector, while practical implications provide actionable insights for policymakers to maintain Brazil's competitive edge in the soybean market. This research highlights the critical importance of knowledge-based strategies in maintaining agricultural competitiveness, and provides a foundation for future studies aimed at improving AC in different agricultural contexts.

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