Marked by the very nature: the Imperial Instituto Fluminense
de Agricultura and the agricultural
sciences (1860-1891)

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This thesis analyses the trajectory of the Imperial Instituto Fluminense
de Agricultura (IIFA), a private institution founded by State officials,
landowners and ‘men of sciences’. The Institute’s main goal was to
improve agricultural production in Brazil, through changes in farming
practices, adoption of new equipment and the introduction of scientific
principles into the rural activities. The men of sciences linked to IIFA
aimed at the ‘ideal of progress of civilized countries’ and took as their
‘mission’ to convince farmers to adopt a science-based agriculture.
IIFA was constituted by: the Jardim Botânico [Botanical Garden] da
Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas, which besides being a leisure area was also
responsible for the production of seedling and seeds in large scale
to be distributed to farmers; the Fazenda Normal, a farm with the
purpose of serving as grounds to the practice of technical and scientific
experimentation; and the Asilo Agrícola [Agricultural Asylum], a foster
home that sheltered orphans from the Santa Casa da Misericórdia
and taught them reading, writing and the profession of farming. IIFA
issued the Revista Agrícola [Agricultural Journal] consistently for 22
years. The three-monthly magazine aimed at spreading farming-
related themes, with a view to improving and raising agricultural
production. The thesis shows that the Institute served as a locus for
institutionalizing the scientific fields related to Agriculture in Brazil,
such as Agricultural Chemistry, Forestry, Pedology, Agricultural
Meteorology, Phytopatology and Animal Husbandry, to the point
they could conquer their own spaces.