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Katia Abreu Named as Minister of Agriculture of Brazil

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Report Highlights:

President Dilma Rousseff announced the appointment of Katia Abreu as Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply on December 23, 2014. She is Brazil's first female Minister of Agriculture and will replace Minister Neri Geller.



President Dilma Rousseff announced the appointment of Katia Abreu as Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply on December 23, 2014. She is Brazil's first female Minister of Agriculture and will replace Minister Neri Geller.

Born in Goiania, Ms. Abreu is a Senator from the state of Tocantins and President of the National Agriculture and Livestock Confederation of Brazil (CNA), which is similar to the American Farm Bureau Federation. In 2008, she became the first woman to be elected president of CNA, an organization comprised of 27 state federations, 2,142 rural unions and more than one million producers. CNA is responsible for representing farm interests on local and national levels and has been particularly active in helping renegotiate farm debt as well as securing extra lines of credit for its members. Ms. Abreu supports restructuring the Brazilian rural credit programs, aimed at providing an income safety net to Brazilian farmers. Brazil's agricultural sector represents 24 percent of gross national product (GNP), employs directly and indirectly 37 percent of the workforce and accounts for 36 percent of Brazil's total exports.

Senator Abreu became involved in farming when her husband passed away in 1987. At the age of 25 and with three young children, she took over the affairs of the family farm near Gurupi in the state of Tocantins. Senator Abreu entered politics in 1998, winning a seat as federal deputy in the Brazilian national Congress and was re-elected in 2002 as member of the Liberal Front Party (PFL, today called Democratic Party (DEM)). In 2006, she was elected Tocantins' first senator as a member of DEM and re-elected senator in 2014 as a member of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), which supports the current President of Brazil Dilma Rousseff. She was also reelected president of CNA in December 2014. She has been an important member of the rural farm lobby and has been an outspoken critic of agricultural subsidies.