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The Status of Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture in Khartoum, Sudan

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Abstract

Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, is located at the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile. The city has grown rapidly in recent years and today has an estimated population of six million people including two million refugees fleeing the past civil war in the southern Sudan as well as the ongoing civil war in the western Sudan. Khartoum is located in the semi-arid savannah belt of the Sudan, with an average annual rainfall of 200–300 mm and a long dry season from September to June, though there is much variation in both the amount and frequency of rainfall from one year to the next. A wide spectrum of production systems can be found ranging from household subsistence to large-scale commercial farming. Horticultural crops grown in Khartoum state comprise a long list of vegetables, fruit trees, ornamental plants, and medicinal and aromatic plants. Some of these crops are indigenous to the country while others are exotic. Some are considered of major importance in the world while others are of minor importance and local usage. In addition, intensive livestock production systems for milk, meat, and poultry or egg production are operational within and around Khartoum city. In view of the large gap in data on food and related nutrient-flows between urban and peri-urban, studies must be conducted to minimise nutrient depletion and to maximise environmentally sound land management. Therefore, a research project founded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is launched with the objective of quantifying nutrient fluxes and understanding nutrient replenishment and waste recycling. The knowledge obtained from this project will help to minimise nutrient depletion and maximise environmentally sound land management and offer the opportunities for effective involvement of the urban and peri-urban sector in nutrient recycling.

Keywords: Nutrient fluxes, urban and peri-urban agriculture, vegetables, fruit production