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“Agricultural development within the rural-urban continuum”

## Including Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture in Developing Resilient Cities

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### Abstract

In 2008 the world's urban population outnumbered its rural population and it is predicted that 60 percent of the world's population will live in cities by 2030. Cities in developing countries are confronted with enormous challenges, while their resources are often rather limited. Cities moreover are highly vulnerable to the disruption in critical (food) supplies (many cities have only for a few days food supply) and the changing climate exacerbates this vulnerability. Urban economies may suffer, as rural agricultural production is adversely affected by storms, floods, shifting seasonal patterns, droughts or water scarcity.

Urban and peri-urban agriculture is defined as the growing of food and plants and raising of animals and fish in and around urban areas; by making use of urban resources such as land, labour and urban organic wastes, producing for urban citizens, influenced by urban policies and regulations, land availability and prices, and urban markets, and effecting urban food security and poverty, as well as the urban environment and health.

Over the past 15 years, urban agriculture has grown from individual project and research interest and interventions to interest by various local, national and international agencies in the contribution of urban and peri-urban agriculture, or increased local food production, to more resilient urban food systems. The growing interest for urban and peri-urban agriculture is triggered by recognition of its (potential) multiple co-benefits and contributions to not only improving food security and nutrition, but also to community organisation, city greening, waste management, income and employment generation and —more recently- city resilience and climate change adaptation (including flood mitigation and reduction of urban temperatures).

It is in this context that resilient urban or city-regional food systems increasingly are getting attention by both international as well as governmental actors. These are comprehensive strategies that integrally considers rural-urban food flows, food production, processing and distribution, sustainable resource use, health and nutrition. To develop resilient urban food systems, a holistic approach is required that integrates all aspects of the food system. This includes urban and peri-urban agriculture, but also strengthening the rural-urban interface to ensure connections between rural supplies and urban contexts.

Rural and urban farming systems exist in a continuum with multiple types of flows and interactions between them. It is essential to define in which cases urban and peri-urban agriculture has a clear comparative advantage over rural agriculture.

**Keywords:** Food systems, multi-functionality, urban and peri-urban agriculture, urban planning, urban resilience