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“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Mapping Urban Foodsheds – A Comparison of Tamale and Ouagadougou

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Abstract

Cities as major hubs of consumption induce an inflow of food from the rural to the urban areas. To meet the growing urban demand cities increasingly have to rely on large-scale, long distance transportation of food. On the other hand, in many cities, urban and periurban farming contributes noticeably to certain niche food markets. Analysing food flowing through a city's foodshed reflects the integration in international and national markets, and the importance of local, i.e. urban and periurban agricultural production.

This study was carried out by the UrbanFoodPlus project in Tamale, Ghana and Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, two of the fastest growing cities in West Africa. It is part of ongoing PhD projects and will answer the following research questions:

1. What are the major food flows entering the cities of Ouagadougou and Tamale, and how did they change over the years?
2. What is the extent of the urban foodshed of both cities and hence, what is the relative contribution of urban and periurban production (locally produced food) vs. imports (from regional, national and international sources)?
3. How do size and shape of the foodshed change across seasons?

Food flows were recorded at roads entering the cities and at major markets during the peak and lean season. First results indicate that flows vary considerably across seasons in both cities with the major staple crop supply covered by local and regional production during the peak season. In the dry season, both cities provide the urban population with fresh vegetables from urban irrigated production. Ouagadougou's status as national capital is reflected in the larger diversity of food items in the markets and the relatively longer distances food travels.

Keywords: Food flow analysis, foodshed, urban and periurban agriculture, West Africa