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Food security for major urban and metropolitan centers: The convergence of different forms of urban agricultural production in the face of multiple stressors and constraints

For food security in cities and their spheres of influence, a new conceptual framework is developed, building on the FAO's pillars of food security and the authors' research. This framework includes: the availability of adequate food supplies for citizens; the affordability of such food for populations in need in both developing and developed countries; the production of 'healthy' foodstuffs, reflecting the growing market and need for such produce. The framework also includes details on the variety of conditions supportive of these dimensions. "Urban" agriculture initially focused on food production in urban agglomerations, but it has been increasingly expanded to include what used to be called 'peri-urban' agriculture. This reflects the reality that many examples of the former 'urban agriculture' have also been developed in peri-urban areas while some larger scale agricultures can also be found in an urban agglomeration which can include substantial areas of agricultural land and activities. In many urban and metropolitan centers, food is frequently produced on very small parcels of land using innovative technologies and also on roof-top food operations. Such 'urban' foodstuff can be sold 'locally' to populations in need and to well-off citizens. Developing 'urban' food production must contend with many stressors, e.g. climate change and variability, continued urban expansion and competition from producers elsewhere with lower production costs. Within the broad definition of 'urban agriculture', food production relies both on soil techniques (conventional and organic horticulture, SPIN, permaculture) as well as 'soilless' systems (hydroponics, aquaponics, rooftop gardens). All these issues are developed with examples from different countries, cities and their spheres of influence. Included are some very innovative forms of food production, in which land per se is not used as the basis to grow food but where, very small spaces and new technologies can produce large quantities of food.

Biography

Christopher Bryant has a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science (1970). He was a Professor (all three levels) of Geography, University of Waterloo, Ontario, from 1970 to 1990, Chair of the Department (1980-1983), and director of the Program for Local Development, a Canada-wide program in partnership with the Canadian Association of Economic Development, from 1984 to 1990. He was Full Professor of Geography at the University de Montréal since 1990 and Adjunct Professor since September 2014. He is also Adjunct Professor with the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, since September 2012. He is past Vice Chair (1996-2000) and Chair (2000-2006) of the Commission of the International Geographical Union on Sustainable Development and Rural Systems and was Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Regional Science from 1997 to 2010.

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