

## **An introduction to Urban Agriculture and the RUAF programme** **By Henk de Zeeuw, Director RUAF Foundation**

### **Introduction**

This paper has been developed to serve as a background paper for a presentation at the World Urban Forum (WUF). The WUF will take place from June 19 - 23 2006 in Vancouver, Canada. This Forum will bring together almost 10.000 participants from all over the world to discuss urban issues. RUAF Foundation was requested to host one of the networking sessions on urban agriculture organised by IDRC and RUAF Foundation. This session was called: "*Cultivating Inclusive Cities: Multi-stakeholder Policy Making and Action Planning for Urban Agriculture and Food Security*" and during this session 4 different perspectives and 4 different stakeholders in urban agriculture presented their cases. As perhaps not all visitors of the session would have enough background knowledge of urban agriculture and the work of the RUAF Foundation, Mr. Henk de Zeeuw, director of the RUAF Foundation, developed this paper and will present this at the WUF to provide a framework for the other presentations.

The paper will explain what we mean by "urban agriculture", why (some) cities are integrating urban agriculture into their policies and planning and why others do not. Followed by an overview of the ongoing RUAF programme: Cities Farming for the Future and the approach followed in this programme: Multi-stakeholder policy making and action planning on urban agriculture is explained in the final paragraphs.

### **Introduction to urban agriculture**

Urban agriculture can be shortly defined as gardening and livestock keeping for food (vegetables, fruits, eggs, milk, meat, mushrooms, fish, etc.) and other products (medicinal and ornamental plants, herbs, fuel, etc.) and related activities like compost making from urban organic wastes, water harvesting, food processing, marketing, etcetera often undertaken by urban poor (especially women) on field plots in the peri-urban areas as well as in home yards, hospital grounds and schools and on vacant public land in the city (intra-urban agriculture).

After an extensive review of the literature Mougeot comes to the conclusion that urban agriculture is an integral part of the urban ecological, social and economic system, as:

- the farm operators are urban residents
- urban agriculture is competing for land with other urban land uses
- uses urban resources (organic wastes, irrigation water, transport)
- produces for urban consumers and is part of the urban food system
- is influenced by urban policies, plans, norms and regulations
- has impacts on the urban economy, ecology and especially the livelihoods of the urban poor

Hence urban agriculture is not a relict of rural habits that will fade away when the city grows, to the contrary: urban agriculture grows with the city and forms an important area for local government support.

There are many different urban farming systems available, of which some pictures are showed below:

### 1) Urban Agriculture



### 2) Allotment Gardening



### 3) Community Gardening



#### 4) Intensive urban livestock keeping (poultry)



#### 5) Hydroponics



#### 6) Urban greenhouses



## 7) Rooftop Gardening



## 8) Urban Livestock



## 9) School Gardening



## 10) Container Gardening



### **Why do cities invest in urban agriculture?**

More and more cities have recognised the importance of urban agriculture and are supporting it actively for a number of reasons:

#### *a. Urban food security and nutrition*

- Urban food insecurity is growing (FAO, 2000)
- The costs of supplying food from rural areas to the cities are rising; lack of cool storage/ transport
- About 15-20% of the world's food is produced in urban areas; for perishable products up to 60 or 70%
- Urban agriculture complements to rural agriculture

#### *b. Local economic development*

- Urban poverty is growing and cities have problems to create sufficient formal employment opportunities
- Urban agriculture is an important primary or secondary source of income for many poor citizens
- Urban agriculture realises good net returns to capital invested
- Agriculture stimulates enterprise development in input supply, processing, marketing and agro-tourism

#### *c. Urban environmental management*

- Recycling of urban organic wastes and wastewater in agriculture
- Greening the city, improved urban micro-climate
- Maintaining green belts and buffer zones
- Reduced energy consumption (less transport, cooling, packaging)

#### *d. Social impacts*

- Social inclusion of newcomers and disadvantaged groups in the urban system
- Clean up of derelict areas and revival of degenerated neighbourhoods

- Recreational and eco-educational services for the urban citizens

### **Why some cities hesitate to support urban agriculture?**

- Ignorance; lack of data
- Perceived health and environmental risks
- Lack of farmer organisation (no voice)
- Urban bias
- Conventional city concepts and institutional mandates
- Existing restrictive city laws and regulations

### **RUAF: An International network of Resource centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security**

The network initiated in 1999 and gradually evolved. In 2004 the network consolidated as the RUAF Foundation. There are 8 RUAF Partners: 7 Southern and 1 Northern organisations. The main funding agencies are: DGIS (the Netherlands) and IDRC (Canada). At the moment, the partner organisations are executing the *Cities Farming for the Future Programme* (2005 - 2008).

### **RUAF: Cities farming for the future**

The main objective of this programme is to support the inclusion of urban agriculture in local policies and action programmes.

To that end RUAF is undertaking the following activities:

- Capacity Development
- Initiate and accompany a Multi-stakeholder Policy making and Action Planning process (MPAP) in 20 pilot cities
- Establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; action learning; systematisation and dissemination of lessons learnt
- Gender mainstreaming in urban agriculture

### **Why multi-stakeholder policy making and action planning on urban agriculture?**

- MPAP brings together all major stakeholders in a joint process of dialogue, policy formulation and action planning and implementation
- MPAP strengthens partnerships, promotes ownership and commitment and involves under-represented groups in "formal" structures
- MPAP thus increases the quality and credibility of decision-making and improves the likelihood of successful implementation and positive impacts

### **Main elements of the MPAP-process**

- Stakeholder analysis; Awareness raising; Capacity building
- Establishment of a Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Urban Agriculture; Participatory problem analysis and pilot projects
- Joint reformulation of existing policies and regulations on UA
- Joint action planning and mobilisation of resources (shared budgeting)
- Participatory implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Integration of UA into the institutional programmes of the participating organisations

**Conclusion**

- Urban agriculture is an integral part of the urban ecological, social and economic system
- Cities integrate urban agriculture in their policies since they realise its potentials for poverty alleviation, enhancing urban food security, recycling of urban wastes, etcetera and want to prevent/reduce associated risks
- Multi-stakeholder policy making and action planning on urban agriculture improves the likelihood of positive impacts