

Urban Agriculture Magazine

We invite your contributions to the next two issues of UA-Magazine:

NO. 20: SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER IN URBAN AGRICULTURE JULY 2008

Please send us your contribution before: 15 MARCH 2008

Urban and periurban producers need water (year round or seasonally) for irrigating their crops and provision of drinking water to their animals or fish. Apart from rainwater, other sources of clean water are usually scarce. They use the water of streams and canals (with varying degrees of contamination), shallow or deep wells, pipe-born (potable) water, water collected during the wet season in tanks, drums or other storing method, grey water, recycled municipal wastewater (at different stages of treatment) among others. Producers' choices regarding water sources depend on: the intended uses of the water, available and accessible water sources, the price of the water from each source, their degree of contamination and related health risks, the nutrients the water contains, the costs related to the water lifting, storing and distribution equipment needed, the reliability of the supply, farmers' knowledge (e.g. awareness of health risks), among others.

In case of water shortages or decreasing quality of the available water sources (chemical pollution; coli bacteria and helminths, salt, irregular supply), urban producers may apply various strategies, including:

- seeking to enhance access to actual water source
- complement with -or switch to- other water sources (e.g rainwater collection, use of wastewater)
- seeking to reduce water needs (adapting crop choice or type/number of animals, use of shade nets, mulching, production in plastic tunnels, applying water-saving irrigation methods, shift to other production period, etcetera)

These farmers are important in that they provide the perishable vegetables that feed the cities. In a number of cities around the world, urban producers and other stakeholders engage with policy-makers to develop well-integrated sustainable water management strategies that link provision of water for various urban uses (including urban and peri-urban agriculture) with recycling, sanitation and urban environmental management. In Accra, producers, water users, researchers, trainers, NGOs and policy makers regularly meet and work together in a Multi-Stakeholder Platforms or Learning Alliance, to formulate joint vision, strategies, action plans and projects that integrate water, food and environmental sanitation in the context of sustainable city development. These platforms (or this platform) is supported by RUAF and SWITCH.

This issue is a collaborative effort of RUAF (www.ruaf.org), SWITCH (www.switchurbanwater.eu) and SuSANA (www.sustainable-sanitation-alliance.org). SWITCH (Sustainable Water Management Improves Tomorrow's Cities' Health) is an EU-funded consortium of 33 partner organisations from 15 countries that are working on innovative scientific, technological and socio-economic options for sustainable water management in the "City of the Future". SuSANA, the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance, is an open global competence network of more than 50 organisations active in the field of sustainable sanitation and developing joint initiatives in support of the UN International Year of Sanitation (2008), and to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs.

We are interested to receive your article with well documented experiences regarding sustainable water use in urban and periurban agriculture, especially:

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In the last issue of the UA-Magazine (no. 18: Building Communities), a questionnaire was included. The main question in this survey was whether you would like to continue receiving the free hardcopy of the UA-Magazine. We need this information to clear up our subscriber database: so if you have not done so already, please answer the questions on the form and send this back to us, or use the form on our website <http://www.ruaf.org/renew.html>. We would very much appreciate it if you would find some time to also fill out the full questionnaire, which can also be done at our website at <http://www.ruaf.org/sitesurvey.html>

Many thanks, we very much appreciate your contribution.

The Editor



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