

## URBAN AGROECOLOGY

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## UA Magazine

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*UA Magazine* facilitates the sharing of information on the impacts of urban agriculture, promotes analysis and debate on critical issues for development of the sector, and publishes "good practices" in urban agriculture.

*UA Magazine* welcomes contributions on new initiatives at individual, neighbourhood, city and national levels. Attention is given to technical, socioeconomic, institutional and policy aspects of sustainable urban food production, marketing, processing and distribution systems. Although articles on any related issue are welcome and considered for publication, each *UA Magazine* focuses on a selected theme (for previous issues, visit: [www.ruaf.org](http://www.ruaf.org)).

## Editors, No. 33

This issue was compiled by Femke Hoekstra from RUAF together with Chiara Tornaghi from the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University, UK.

Language Editor  
Diana Lee-Smith

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Subscriptions  
[info@ruaf.org](mailto:info@ruaf.org)

Address  
Urban Agriculture Magazine  
Postbus 357, 3830 AK Leusden  
The Netherlands  
Tel: +31.33.4343003  
e-mail: [info@ruaf.org](mailto:info@ruaf.org)  
website: [www.ruaf.org](http://www.ruaf.org)

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- Toronto Food Policy Council (Canada)
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# The Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR)

Michel Pimbert

CAWR was created in 2014 with the aim to contribute to the new knowledge and policies needed to develop food and water systems that are resilient and socially just. The 90 people currently working at the centre are a diverse international community, a mix of natural and social scientists making extensive use of co-inquiry and blurring of boundaries between scientific, professional, citizen, and indigenous knowledge systems. CAWR's research focusses on five interlinked research themes:

1. *Community self-organisation for resilience.* In this strand our research seeks to identify processes that enhance community strengths and build equity and resilience through people's agency and self-organisation in the face of adversity, natural and human induced disasters, instability and change. Within this overall framework, our research projects focus on the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions of the relationship between people and the production and consumption of food and water. Particular emphasis is put on the linked nature of social, ecological and environmental systems and the role of communities in mediating resilience to change and transformations for social justice and sustainable living.
2. *Resilient food and water systems in practice.* The Centre aims to understand and enhance the resilience of the technologies and systems we depend on for our food and water security. For example, new knowledge allows us to develop systems that combine food and energy production with water and waste management to create circular economies that have low carbon and ecological footprints in rural and urban contexts. Our transdisciplinary research on agroecological models of production in rural and urban areas also focuses on how to reintroduce biodiversity in farming (intercropping, agroforestry, polycultures...) to reduce farmers' vulnerability to market volatility and climate change as well as re-localise food and water systems in rural and urban territories.
3. *Understanding fundamental underlying processes that confer resilience or lack of it.* This research analyses key environmental drivers of change, such as climate change and its impact on the frequency of droughts and floods in contrasting situations. By doing fundamental research in an applied way, CAWR hopes to use this new knowledge on resilience dynamics to help enhance the capacities of communities, societies, and environments to anticipate and deal with sudden shocks, stresses, uncertainty, and unpredictable changes at different scales.
4. *Enabling policies and institutions for resilient food and water systems.* Our research identifies the policies and institutions needed to scale up and mainstream equitable and resilient systems for food and water security. CAWR's work focuses in particular on exploring the policies and institutional frameworks needed to enhance community self-organisation for social justice and socio-ecological resilience at different scales. Power and the politics of knowledge are central to our thinking, and our research aims to better understand how, - and under what conditions -, can citizens to be more centrally involved in policy-making and the governance of resilient food and water systems in rural and urban settings.
5. *People's knowledge and transdisciplinarity.* Underpinning this cross cutting research theme is the belief that everyone is able to contribute to the production of new knowledge. Some people have formal training as experts. Some people's expertise comes through their life experience. CAWR's work on people's knowledge and transdisciplinarity breaks down the barriers that exist between these two groups using participatory, transdisciplinary and transformative approaches with the aim to change society and create a more just world.

As part of its vision of influencing policy and practice, CAWR is committed to bringing together the science, transformative practices, and social movements working for agroecology, food sovereignty, water justice, and environmental sustainability in rural and urban contexts.