

BOOK REVIEW

Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance
Issue 19: December 2016
<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/cjlg>

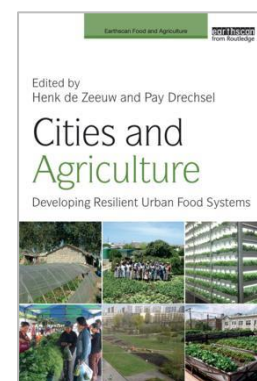
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Cities and Agriculture by Henk de Zeeuw and Pay Drechsel (eds)

(Routledge. ISBN 978-1-138-86059-9)

Free online at www.ruaf.org/publications/cities-and-agriculture-developing-resilient-urban-food-systems



As people increasingly migrate to urban settings and with more than half of the world's population now living in cities, it is vital to plan and provide for sustainable and resilient food systems which reflect this challenge. The book '*Cities and Agriculture*' presents experience and evidence on key dimensions of urban food challenges and types of intra-and peri-urban agriculture, in 15 extremely well-researched and written chapters. The book has shed light on an urban challenge that has been ignored for a long time in urban studies as well as in urban policies and planning, i.e. food-provisioning. Neglecting the dynamics and sustainability of food provisioning in scientific research on sustainable urban development is a serious omission, because feeding cities arguably has a greater social and physical impact on us and our planet than anything else we do.

This holistic book covers all aspects of urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) from urban food systems and security; urban and site planning; policy on UPA; livestock keeping and horticulture in urban areas; UPA and climate among others. The book provides a bridge between urban food and agricultural research and planning in the South and North. It thus contributes to the sharing of research results and policy and planning experiences between different regions and countries and to facilitate innovation and more effective urban food system research, policy planning and implementation.

This book captures the concept of urban food supply and the many roles this activity can play, providing snapshots of experience from several countries to reveal the scale of opportunities at hand, if only we can adopt the strategies to seize them. No one denies that UPA plays a great role in food resilience. The potential benefits are manifold, and include: improved security in nutrition; increased availability of healthier food; opportunities to secure the livelihoods of small producers and their businesses; increased

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Citation: Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance 2016, 19: 5454, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/cjlg.v0i19.5454>

local participation in decision-making and engagement with food culture; improved scope for sustainable management of landscapes and the natural assets they sustain, and increased opportunity for synergy in meeting other key priorities for example in relation to energy, waste and water security. All this and more can be achieved from a more integrated and socially inclusive approach at the city level.

This timely and thorough overview about the opportunities for enabling city regions to drive a transformation towards much more sustainable, resilient and healthy food systems will, I hope, raise awareness as to the potential for a different direction of travel to current practice. Urban and peri-urban agriculture has a place in cities and towns all over the world and has to be accorded the potential critical role it can play.

It is clear that this book provides urban planners, local policy makers and urban development practitioners on one hand, and academics, NGOs, producers and consumers on the other, with an overview of crucial aspects of urban food systems based on an up-to-date review of research results and practical experiences in both developed and developing countries. By so doing, the international team of authors provides a balanced textbook for students on the growing number of courses on sustainable agriculture and food and urban studies, as well as a solid basis for well-informed policy making, planning and implementation regarding the development of sustainable, resilient and just urban food systems.