

## Chapter 23

# Role of Peri-Urban Areas in the Food System of Kampala, Uganda

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**Abstract** Peri-urban agriculture, especially livestock and vegetable farming, has deep roots in the food system of Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. The city's population is increasing rapidly: current population is slightly over 1.51 million people whose demand for food is also increasing rapidly. Wakiso district, a peri-urban area surrounding Kampala city, ranks as Uganda's number one and two producer of poultry and piggery respectively. The district of Wakiso accounts for about 7.4% and 6.3% of the total national populations of chickens and pigs respectively. However, agricultural land in these areas is increasingly at risk from urban encroachment, which is likely to adversely affect the city's food security. This chapter examines the role of peri-urban farming in the food system of Kampala city and how it is at risk from urban encroachment. The chapter demonstrates that population growth, artificial distortions to the value of land in Kampala city, the booming construction industry as well as the creation of recreation and leisure facilities have escalated the competition for land in peri-urban areas between agricultural use and urban-type developments.

**Keywords** Food system • Food security • Peri-urban agriculture • Population growth • Urban encroachment • Construction industry • Kampala

### 23.1 Introduction

Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, is one of the 48 African cities that counted more than one million inhabitants (Africa's million + cities) in 2010 (Vermeiren et al. 2012). It is the only city in Uganda and is the centrepiece of economic, political and social transformation. This makes Kampala an attraction for settlement for many people from other areas of the country. Kampala comprises of approximately

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25% of Uganda's urban population, and about 5% of Uganda's total population (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2014). Its population has grown from 1.2 million in 2002 to the current population of slightly over 1.51 million people, representing a growth rate of 2% per year. This population was projected to reach 3.03 million people by 2020 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2006).

Similar to many cities in developing countries, population growth in Kampala is happening in the face of poverty and inflation. This has made access to food in Kampala a critical issue, since the largest proportion of the population depend on the market for their food. They are net buyers of food (Simler 2009); hence they are adversely hurt whenever food prices increase. Inflation erodes their power to purchase food. To make matters worse, pursuing agricultural activities within the inner zones of Kampala is becoming increasingly impossible due to limited land accessibility. Consequently, the peri-urban areas of Kampala (where there still exists some agricultural land) play a key role in ensuring food security. However, farming in these areas is increasingly at risk from urban encroachment. Therefore, this chapter examines the role of peri-urban farming in the food system of Kampala city, and how it is at risk from urban encroachment.

## 23.2 Analysis of Results and Discussion

Kampala is surrounded by the district of Wakiso (to the North, East, West and Southwest, with Lake Victoria in the South East); hence the peri-urban areas of Kampala are located entirely in the district of Wakiso. Kampala, being the financial hub of the country, a large proportion of the population in the district of Wakiso prefer to live in the fringes of the city (peri-urban areas of Kampala). Data from the 2014 National Population and Housing Census (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2014) show that Wakiso is the most populated district in Uganda with over 64% of its total population residing in the areas neighbouring Kampala. These areas are key contributors to Kampala's expanding daytime population. Obviously, this population is exerting additional pressure on food availability and accessibility, which raises serious concerns about Kampala's future food situation.

Although food consumption data are unavailable, a significant share of the total supply of vegetables, pork and chicken products consumed in Kampala are produced from these peri-urban areas. According to the National Livestock Census of 2008 (MAAIF and UBOS 2009), the district of Wakiso registered the first and second highest number of chickens and pigs respectively in Uganda. The district of Wakiso alone accounted for 7.4% and 6.3% of the total national populations of chickens and pigs respectively (Table 23.1). The pigs are mainly fed on crop/food wastes generated in the various markets, hotels, restaurants, schools and homesteads, while the chickens are mostly fed on purchased concentrate feed. The contribution of peri-urban areas of Kampala to the national total production of crops (Table 23.2) is minimal, except for leafy green vegetables (but their production data are unavailable). Data from the Uganda Census of Agriculture 2008/2009 (MAAIF and UBOS

**Table 23.1** Contribution of Wakiso district to Uganda's total livestock population

Livestock	Population	% Contribution to the national total population	National position
Cattle	114,770	1.0	Among the last
Pigs	199,960	6.3	2nd
Goats	132,964	1.1	Among the last
Sheep	27,560	0.8	Among the last
Chickens	2,783,510	7.4	1st

Source: MAAIF and UBOS (2009)

**Table 23.2** Total production of major crops in Wakiso district

Crop	Production (metric tons)	% Contribution to the national total production
Cook-type banana	24,547	0.6
Cassava	21,712	0.8
Maize	5287	0.2
Common beans	1596	0.2
Sweet potatoes	23,200	1.3
Ground nuts	376	0.2
Leafy vegetables	<sup>a</sup>	<sup>a</sup>

Source: MAAIF and UBOS (2010)

<sup>a</sup>The growing of leafy green vegetables is common in peri-urban areas of Kampala; however production data are not available

2010) show that the district of Wakiso ranked among the bottom crop producing districts. This can be attributed to the decreasing land accessibility in the district for crop agriculture. Generally, crop production is more affected by limited land availability than livestock production.

No doubt a considerable amount of food is produced inside Kampala, but most of the staple foods consumed in Kampala are brought in from rural areas (Sabiiti and Katongole 2014). However, the prices of these foods have been sharply increasing since 2007. According to Cohen and Garrett (2010), the impact of high food prices is much more felt by the urban poor who devote more than half of their income to basic food purchases, and thus are highly sensitive to food price fluctuations. The cost of fuel for transport was highlighted by Sabiiti and Katongole (2014) as one of the major factors that directly and indirectly influence these food prices. Fuel prices in Uganda have been perpetually increasing due to inflationary pressures. Several reports (De Bon et al. 2010; Sabiiti and Katongole 2014; Padgham et al. 2015) have suggested that urban agriculture has transport cost advantages compared to agriculture in rural areas; hence ensuring lower food cost within the informal economy. However, due to the urbanisation trends, food production within Kampala is increasingly becoming impossible, leaving peri-urban areas to play a more central role in the supply of food, particularly fresh and perishable products.

Having said that, it must be pointed out that urban encroachment is increasingly placing farming in the peri-urban areas of Kampala at risk. Urbanisation of Kampala is occurring almost exclusively at the expense of agricultural land in the district of Wakiso (Abebe 2013). Currently, limited land accessibility ranks among the most critical challenges in the district of Wakiso. Hence, farmers compete for available land with urban-type developments, such as housing, brick-making and recreational facilities, which have a greater return on financial investment than farming.

Due to the high urban population, accommodation in Kampala has become insufficient and expensive (Nyakaana et al. 2007). Rent for a standard house in a respectable neighbourhood ranges between 200 and 400 US\$ per month, which is far beyond the means of most Kampala dwellers. Hence, many people working in Kampala opt to live in peri-urban areas. There is movement of tenants from the inner zones of Kampala to peri-urban areas in search of cheaper accommodation. In response to the increased demand for accommodation in peri-urban areas, many peri-urban farmers are moving their small land areas away from agricultural activities in favour of constructing rental houses for better income generation (Katongole et al. 2012). This calls for policy and institutional arrangements directed towards supporting and protecting agricultural lands in the peri-urban areas of the expanding metropolitan Kampala. This may arouse public resentment because there is a widespread public perception that urbanisation and agriculture are conflicting activities; hence they do not see anything specifically wrong about Kampala expanding into prime agricultural areas.

The artificial distortions to the value of land in Kampala (largely attributable to speculation and corruption) have made it extremely difficult to construct houses at a price affordable to low and moderate income earners (Giddings 2009). The majority of the population in Kampala can no longer afford housing. This has prompted more people to buy plots of land and construct homes in the peripheries of Kampala (areas in the district of Wakiso), where land prices are a bit lower. This has greatly contributed to the expansion of Kampala into peri-urban areas, which would otherwise be agricultural land. Although land values, or rental on houses in these peri-urban areas, tend to be lower people residing in these areas often incur substantial costs; both in time and money, in commuting to work and where infrastructure and services are lacking or deficient (Giddings 2009).

Brick-making motivated by the high demand of bricks due to the booming house construction industry both in Kampala and the district of Wakiso is another factor which has caused a significant decline in agricultural land in the peri-urban areas of Kampala (Katwijukye and Doppler 2004). The sites where bricks are made not only become unusable for agriculture, but the soils also become predisposed to degradation. The soils at abandoned brick making sites are generally characterised by low fertility and poor physical conditions. This calls for policy and institutional arrangements directed towards identifying alternative materials for making bricks other than topsoil or mud. However, this may also arouse public resentment because brick-making is an income generating activity widely engaged in among the unemployed youths in the peri-urban areas of Kampala.

Last but not least, the creation of spacious recreation and leisure facilities is also increasingly subjecting farming in the peri-urban areas of Kampala to risk. As in other African cities, urbanisation in Kampala has resulted in significant changes in the lifestyles of many people. There is now a tendency for many Kampala dwellers to spend their leisure time in the nearby countryside (peri-urban areas) for a multitude of things (sports, games, entertainment etc.). Outdoor leisure and recreation as a lifestyle has become attractive to many people in urbanised Kampala (Chris 2001). However, most recreation and leisure activities require access to open spaces. For the reason that the inner zones of Kampala no longer have such open spaces, peri-urban areas of Kampala (entirely in the district of Wakiso) have gained a lot of importance as recreational and leisure areas. This creation of recreation and leisure centres/parks is occurring almost exclusively at the expense of agricultural land in the peri-urban areas of Kampala.

### 23.3 Conclusion

Although, peri-urban farming plays an important and positive role in the food system of Kampala city, it is at great risk from urban encroachment. Additionally, there is a strong need to quantify and document the contribution of peri-urban agriculture (excluding agriculture located intra-urban) to the aggregate supply of food in Kampala. This would help to convince politicians and government planners how peri-urban agriculture is central to the food system of Kampala, and hence strengthen its position at the national policy level.

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