



European Commission
Agriculture and Rural Development



Europe's peri-urban potential: beyond urban-rural links

A future for peri-urban agriculture: how to bring food production closer to citizens

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Context

- Food production fundamental to citizens, but EU policies (CAP, trade) so successful that issue invisible until problems arise (supply, price, quality)
- Urbanization often also meant loss of awareness about farming and natural environment
- Now greater awareness of need for more sustainable use of resources (land/water/energy) and of potential fragility of production systems and supply chains



CAP/Rural Development and peri-urban areas

- Peri-urban areas also covered by CAP/RD policy
- 2006 Community Strategic Guidelines for RD already recognized peri-urban areas as one end of spectrum of highly diverse rural areas
- CSG and RD programmes also recognize that peri-urban areas may face special pressures and opportunities
 - Pressures on peri-urban areas tend to be environmental (land use, water resources, degradation of natural environment)
 - Opportunities for peri-urban areas tend to be economic (local markets, short supply chain, affluent consumers, bulk purchasers such as hospitals or schools)



CAP/Rural Development and peri-urban areas

- RD measures most relevant to bringing food production closer to citizens:
 - Axis 1: especially measures for quality, innovation, entrepreneurship and support for non-food production (e.g. renewable energy materials)
 - Axis 2: especially measures encouraging environmental/ economic win-win situations (e.g. provision of environmental goods as basis for diversification) and promoting territorial balance (e.g. land management measures)
 - Axis 4: LEADER support for Local Action Groups in peri-urban areas



Benefits of local food production

- Local food production provides good match with interests of farmers, consumers and EU sustainability agenda
- Benefits for farmers of nearby large-scale demand, short supply chain; opportunity to offer products with added value. Outlets range from mass catering to farm shops and farmers' markets
- Social trends: consumers looking for local, seasonal, high-quality food with 'green'/low-carbon credentials
- Peri-urban farming also
 - facilitates understanding between producers and consumers: where food comes from, how it's produced, what consumers want
 - maintains natural heritage close to towns



Pre-conditions for local food production

- Triangle of resources – producers – consumers
- Resources: essential to protect and maintain peri-urban farmland (area, good agricultural condition), water supply, soil condition
- Producers: must have resources, infrastructures and know-how to meet demand
- Consumers (incl. suppliers): increased demand based on better understanding of food production and benefits of local food chain



Looking ahead

- Peri-urban farming illustrates inter-dependence of town and country: enables more sophisticated understanding of rural-urban relationships
- AGRI Commissioner's 2008 message that peri-urban areas "must not be allowed to fall off policy map" valid now and for future
- President Barroso's vision of an "EU2020" strategy integrating economic, social and environmental issues