

O-54 (7)**URBAN HORTICULTURE AS STRATEGY FOR ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OF CITIES**

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The importance of urban agriculture raised widely throughout the cities of the world. Producing fresh food into urban areas with high demands reduces emissions and mitigates climate change. While in developing countries urban agriculture is mainly a method for producing food and an opportunity for improving food supply to poor inhabitants, in cities of developed countries, urban farming represents an activity with educational functions and an opportunity to re-qualify brown fields, and to develop new works for people. Urban horticulture/farming can contribute to both the modernization and the sustainability of agriculture economic activity since it requires less transportation and refrigeration. An optimal integration of agriculture agrifood system can be reached if its practicability is supported by the municipalities, the city-planners, the SMEs and the research organisations. The health and the environmental risks – potential use of contaminated land and water smells and noise pollution, and inappropriate use of pesticides and of raw organic manure that can leak into water sources - and its economic and policy implications, as well as orientation on techniques for organic agriculture, should be appropriately determined. This paper aims to provide indications on the potentialities of urban horticulture system to decrease pressure from rural agriculture and to decompensate land loss. Analysis are reported on the importance of urban horticulture as innovative activity for improving energy efficiency and the sustainability of cities in terms of social cohesion and recreation of inhabitants, and water and organic waste recycling in urban communities.

Keywords: metropolitan cities, solid and water wastes, energy efficiency, soilless cultivation, agro-food supply chain