



Second International Conference on  
**AGRICULTURE IN AN URBANIZING SOCIETY**  
Reconnecting Agriculture and Food Chains to Societal Needs  
14 - 17 SEPTEMBER 2015 | ROME | ITALY

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**Agriculture in an Urbanizing Society**  
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**Italy, Rome, 14-17 September 2015**  
[www.agricultureinurbanizingsociety.com](http://www.agricultureinurbanizingsociety.com)

In May 2007, a major demographic milestone was passed. For the first time, the earth's population became more urban than rural. This process of urbanization will accelerate in the decades to come: most of the growth in the world population – to 9 billion people in 2050 – will occur in urban areas. By 2050, the urban population will be approximately twice the size of the rural population.

However, this does not mean that urban areas are or will become more important than rural areas. On the contrary, they have always relied heavily on each other, and will become even more mutually reliant during an era of rapid urban population growth. Cities will continue to need resources such as food, fibre, clean water, nature, biodiversity and recreational space, as well as the people and communities that produce and provide these products and services. Hence, key questions for the coming decades are how, where and by whom these products and services for the urban area will be produced and provided, and if and how this can be done in a manner that is considered to be socially, economically and ecologically sustainable and ethically sound.

In recent years, multifunctional agriculture has emerged as an important topic in debates on the future of agriculture and the rural area and its relations with the wider and predominantly urban society. This is an expression of the fact that agriculture is not only valued for its contribution to food and fibre production and the economic development of agro-industry, but that it also needs to be assessed according to a much wider range of social, environmental, economic and ethical criteria. At the farm level, multifunctional agriculture is characterized by a variety of entrepreneurial strategies and activities, such as processing and direct marketing of food products, energy production, care for the elderly and disabled and tourism. In the first conference on Agriculture in an Urbanizing Society, this was the main focus.

Developments go fast: there is a growing interest among people living in urban environments in the origin of our daily food and in the development of short, recognizable sustainable food chains. Moreover, we see a growing number of local initiatives of local food production in urbanized areas. Besides local food production for consumption, the focus of these initiatives is on the effects of growing local food on health aspects, social cohesion and education. Although urban food production is growing both in the North and the South, drivers for this differ. With a loss of connection between consumption and production being one of the important drivers in the North, and the direct access to fresh healthy food being an important driver in the South. Based on these developments, the focus of the second conference on Agriculture in an Urbanizing Society has shifted towards *Reconnecting Agriculture and Food Chains to Societal Needs*.

Research on this topic demands a multidisciplinary approach. Hence this conference aims to advance the scientific state of the art in research on multifunctional agriculture, local food chains and urban-rural relations by bringing together scholars from a wide range of disciplines (sociology, economics, spatial planning, land-use planning, regional planning, urban planning, crop sciences, animal sciences, soil sciences, architecture, etc.) from many parts of the world.

The Conference will be part of the programme that the Latium Region is organizing in connection with the EXPO 2015 "Feeding the planet energy for life" that will take place in Milan, Italy from 1<sup>st</sup> of May to 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2015.

## Call for working group convenors

The programme committee is aiming for a conference with much interaction in the working groups. Therefore we propose a conference with a large number of different parallel working groups. The conference facilities allow for a maximum of 20 parallel working group sessions.

The key concept of the conference is the link of multifunctional agriculture, food chains and local food systems to old and new societal challenges, for example food and nutritional security, climate change, scarcity of resources, distributional equity, sustainability. On this regard, we would like to stimulate a debate on how these aspects are addressed in different contexts. Therefore, we would like to encourage convenors to involve co-convenors and participants that cover a broad range of countries and disciplines.

The programme committee has proposed 23 working group themes (see below) and is inviting prospective working group convenors to submit a concise (maximum of 400 words) text on the theme they propose to convene. This text will be used to call for abstracts on the theme. For each theme, the committee has identified several questions/topics that it considers relevant. However, prospective convenors are free to suggest other and/or additional questions and topics. To foster interaction between various disciplines and geographical contexts, for each working group 2-3 prospective convenors will be asked to collaborate by integrating their proposed theme texts. They will then co-convene the working group. The members of the scientific committee will also be available to co-convene working groups.

### **Prospective convenors are requested to send their proposals for a working group theme to the chair of the scientific programme committee by email ([andries.visser@wur.nl](mailto:andries.visser@wur.nl)) before 7 January 2015.**

The deadline for submission of abstracts will be 31 March 2015. Abstracts will be submitted to the chosen convenors. For this we will use the conference management system 'EasyChair'.

### **Proposed working group themes**

1. Short food supply chains (regional products; farmers' markets; collective farmers' marketing initiatives; alternative food networks; CSA).
  - *How can short food supply chains contribute to meet new societal challenges such as climate change and food and nutrition security?*
  - *Which strategies and arrangements have or could be implemented to create more direct relations between producers and consumers?*
  - *Which halo and displacement effects are occurring due to the development of short food supply chains?*
  - *What are critical factors for success and failure?*
  - *Which new developments are emerging in logistics and distribution of local food.*
2. Revaluing public sector food catering – local experiences
  - *How can food procurement contribute to food and nutrition security in different contexts?*
  - *What is the impact of sustainable food procurement by public institutes on farm and regional development?*
  - *Which rules and regulations support or hamper re-localization of public food procurement?*
  - *How do or can home-grown school feeding programmes support the development of smallholder agriculture?*
3. Agricultural and rural policy and governance.
  - *Which new governance arrangements can contribute to address new societal challenges?*

- *How and to what extent is the development of multifunctional agriculture fostered or hampered by international agreements such as TPPI?*
  - *Which regional, national or international (e.g. EU policy) agricultural and rural policies support the development of multifunctional agriculture?*
4. Connecting local and global food systems and reducing footprint in food provisioning and use.
    - *How can we couple global, regional and local food systems sustainably?*
    - *Which solutions for food waste are successfully being developed?*
    - *How might the foodprint be reduced at micro, meso and macro scale?*
    - *What is the impact of suitable solutions?*
    - *Which kind of policies might be effective?*
  5. Economic impact at the farm level.
    - *How can multifunctional agriculture contribute to societal challenges?*
    - *What is the contribution of multifunctional agriculture to farm family income?*
    - *Does multifunctional agriculture strengthen or weaken the economic resilience of the farm enterprise?*
    - *What are the economic relations and interdependencies between primary production and other on-farm activities?*
  6. New business models; farm enterprise development models.
    - *What business models are better suited to address societal challenges?*
    - *Is multifunctional farming still characterized by the logic of the family farm or are new business models emerging?*
    - *What are the relations between different business models and land ownership?*
    - *How can Multiple values be integrated in new business models?*
  7. Entrepreneurial skills and competences, knowledge and innovation systems and new learning arrangements
    - *What entrepreneurial skills and competences are important in the context of multifunctional agriculture when considering societal challenges ?*
    - *Which political, economic, social and cultural factors influence the development of entrepreneurial skills?*
    - *Which tasks, roles and emerging needs for knowledge and skills of actors and institutions can be identified, and what are the consequences for education and training?*
    - *Which changes are occurring and which are needed regarding learning and innovation in agriculture in view of food & nutrition security and climate change?*
    - *Which learning approaches, methods and tools are used in newly emerging learning and innovation networks, why are they used and how effective are they?*
  8. Transition approaches.
    - *Which concepts and theories enable a better understanding of the dynamics of agricultural and rural transition processes in relation to old and new social challenges?*
    - *Which interventions and transformation strategies are effective (or promising) in fostering the transition from a productivist agriculture paradigm to a multifunctional agriculture paradigm?*
    - *How do the different spatial layers (from farm to national and international policy) of multifunctional agriculture influence one another?*
  9. Regional branding; the socio-economic impact at the regional level.
    - *Is regional branding an effective means to support the development of multifunctional agriculture in the region?*
    - *Can regional branding contribute to address societal challenges ?*

- *What institutional arrangements are helpful or necessary to stimulate regional branding?*
  - *What is the contribution of multifunctional agriculture to employment opportunities in the region?*
  - *Which indicators and methods are used, or can be used, to assess societal impact?*
10. Urban, peri-urban and regional planning.
- *To what extent is multifunctional agriculture included in urban, peri-urban and regional planning processes?*
  - *How can urban, peri-urban and regional planning contribute to address food & nutrition security and climate change?*
  - *How do planners deal with and attempt to overcome competition between different land-use claims (e.g. housing, infrastructure, agriculture, nature, recreation)?*
  - *Which decision-making approaches (e.g. government command and control, citizen participation, stakeholder consultation) are used to resolve disputes regarding competing interests?*
11. Land-use transformations.
- *What are the main trends in land-use transformation?*
  - *How do land-use transformations impact on food & nutrition security and climate change?*
  - *What are the causes of contemporary land-use dynamics in different geographical settings?*
  - *What are the consequences of land-use transformation for society, the regional economy and the natural environment?*
  - *What measures can strengthen the sustainable use of natural resources in urban, peri-urban and rural areas?*
12. Urban agriculture I: Policies, food strategies and planning.
- *What is the importance of urban agriculture for food and nutrition security in urban areas?*
  - *Which other functions can urban agriculture fulfil?*
  - *Is urban agriculture a means to strengthen urban-rural relations?*
  - *Which food policies are emerging?*
  - *What are the main principles for planning for urban agriculture?*
13. Urban agriculture II: Grass-root initiatives and community gardens
- *Which new initiatives are emerging in the global North and in the global South, and what is their impact?*
  - *How do they scale-up? What are critical factors for success and failure?*
  - *How can they be connected with and/ or strengthen food policies*
14. Urban agriculture III: Effects of UA
- *What are the main benefits and impacts of Urban agriculture for different groups involved (socially, economically)*
  - *What impact has urban farming on the diet of people involved?*
  - *What is the effect on climate (food miles, CO2 emissions, heat effects etc.)*
15. Consumer/citizen demand for products and services.
- *Which rural or green products and services do urban dwellers in the North and in the South demand?*
  - *Are there geographical, socio-economic or cultural differences regarding the urban demand for rural products and services?*
  - *What is the untapped potential urban demand for rural products and services, and what is needed to realize this potential?*

16. Green care (social farming; farming for health).
  - *What is the evolution and the potential of social farming/care farming at geographical scale in developed and developing countries?*
  - *How is transition regulated and managed and what are the emerging policies?*
  - *What is the impact of green care on the health and well-being of patients/clients compared to conventional care?*
  - *Which new institutional arrangements are emerging within green care, why are they emerging and what is the impact of these arrangements on the further development of green care?*
  - *How may the impact of social farming / care farming be evaluated at different scales?*
  - *How can social farming contribute to address development issues in the global South?*
  
17. Rural tourism (agri-tourism) and changing urban demands
  - *What are the connections and interactions between rural tourism and local economic, social and cultural activities?*
  - *Which new institutional arrangements are successful in promoting rural tourism and sustainable development?*
  - *Which new marketing & communication concepts are emerging (role of social media) in relation to changing urban demands and changing urban customer groups*
  - *Can rural tourism be a development tool in the South?*
  
18. Environmental services / public goods (nature and landscape management; biodiversity schemes; water management).
  - *How are environmental services affected by global change?*
  - *What is the relation of environmental services with food & nutrition security and climate change?*
  - *How are environmental services organized and financed?*
  - *How are environmental services linked to other products and activities such as rural tourism and alternative food networks?*
  
19. Gender aspects of multifunctional agriculture
  - *Which respective roles do men and women play in the development of multifunctional agriculture?*
  - *How does gender apply to the growing diversity and inequality of rural areas and rural people?*
  - *What role can gender issues play in development strategies based on multifunctional agriculture?*
  
20. Civic agriculture / Society oriented agriculture
  - *What is the meaning of civic agriculture in different contexts?*
  - *Which forms of civic agriculture/ society oriented agriculture can we consider?*
  - *How do they fit specific needs in the society?*
  - *How are they organized?*
  - *How can social innovation be stimulated in the agro-food system?*
  
21. Enlarging access to food: food security in the north and the south- meanings, practices and politics
  - *What innovative solutions emerge for increasing access to food for less empowered people?*
  - *How to balance access to food on a geographical scale?*
  - *How may we reduce gaps in food access for the poorest?*

22. Redesigning access to sustainable proteins on a local scale

- Which sources of protein could support world population and provide sustainable solutions on a local scale?
- Which tensions do exist between animal and vegetal sources?
- How can sustainable diets be defined and implemented?

23. Revolutionary solutions for local food systems

- Which new (practical) solutions emerge in relation to new societal challenges?
- How are they designed and organised?

**Scientific Programme committee**

| Name                       | Affiliation   | Country         | Discipline / Thematic expertise   |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Dr. Andries Visser (chair) | Wageningen UR   | The Netherlands | Multifunctional agriculture / Urban agriculture / (functional) biodiversity                                       |
| Prof. Gianluca Brunori     | Pisa University – Department of Agronomy and Management of Agroecosystems     | Italy           | Agricultural and rural economics / Alternative Food Networks / Rural District approach                            |
| Dr. Ken Meter              | Crossroads Resource Center  | United States   | Food system analysis, Local food, economics   |
| Dr. Juliet Kiguli          | Makerere University, Department of Community Health and Behavioural Sciences, | Uganda          | Food policy, development studies, gender studies  |
| Prof. Han Wiskerke         | Wageningen University – Rural Sociology Group                                 | The Netherlands | Rural Sociology / Food Sociology / Rural development studies  |
| Dr. Neil Argent            | University of New England – Division of Geography and Planning                | Australia       | Human Geography / Rural Community Development / Migration   |
| Prof. Sergio Schneider     | Federal University Rio Grande do Sul – Faculty of Economics                   | Brazil          | Development sociology / Rural policy / Public food procurement  |
| Prof. Talis Tisenkopfs     | Baltic Studies Centre   | Latvia          | Sociology / Social Capital / Community Development / Agricultural and rural restructuring in transition economies |
| Prof. Ye Jingzhong         | China Agricultural University – College of Humanities and Development         | China           | Development Sociology / Rural migration / Rural education / Farmers' initiatives                                  |
| Prof. Francesco di Iacovo  | University of Pisa, Dept. of Veterinary Science                               | Italy           | Agricultural economics, Social development in rural areas, Multifunctional agriculture, civic agriculture/economy |

**Local organization committee** (will be expanded)

Prof. Gianluca Brunori (Chair), Pisa University– Department of agronomy and Agroecosystems

Prof. Francesco Di Iacovo, Pisa University, Dept. of Veterinary Science

Sylvia Paolini, MSc, AiCARE

Angela Galasso, MSc, AiCARE

Daniël de Jong, MSc, Wageningen UR

**Website**

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