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Will the city be the next sanctuary for agriculture? Urban agriculture, local food supply and the influence of an adequate legislative framework

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VERS UNE ALIMENTATION TERRITORIALISÉE ET DURABLE

UNE RECHERCHE PARTICIPATIVE POUR
COMPRENDRE LE SYSTÈME ALIMENTAIRE
DE QUÉBEC



Study's mandate:

1. **RESEARCH** : The role of urban agriculture (UA) in the local food supply and the influence of an adequate legislative framework.
2. **GEOGRAPHIC AREA**: The Metropolitan community of Québec (CMQ)
 1. The city of Québec
 2. The CMQ

METHODOLOGY

How to assess the role of UA in local food supply?

- ✓ Define UA
- ✓ Assess its development and practice

How to assess the strength and adequacy of the legislative framework?

- ✓ collect relevant regulations and documentation
- ✓ Assess their impact on UA as supports, curbs or hindrances

Key sources

- ✓ Provincial, regional and local regulations
- ✓ Reports, articles, etc.
- ✓ Cities websites

A definition of UA

- ✓ Commercial UA and personal (auto production) often distinguished
- ✓ UA should encompass both auto-production and commercial agriculture
- ✓ Further distinctions will occur to frame the practice
- ✓ From a legal point of view : distinction between UA and PUA
- ✓ **Proposed definition** : agriculture within municipal boundaries (white zone v. green zone)
 - ✓ Fruits and vegetables
 - ✓ Chickens
 - ✓ Beekeeping



Questions guiding the research

1/ Is UA needs to be supported by an adequate legal framework?

And why ?

- ✓ UA is mainly informal
- ✓ A bottom-up phenomenon
- ✓ Often ignored by local regulations
- ✓ Often thrives on itself
- ✓ Can be hindered by local regulations, sometimes forbidden

- ✓ Politically supported in Québec
- ✓ Outdated municipal by-laws
- ✓ Internal inconsistencies occur

- ✓ **In order to really thrives UA needs an adequate and dedicated legal framework**

Questions guiding the research

2/ Why is UA important for the city?

- ✓ City cannot be fed by UA
- ✓ Depends on rural and peri-urban agriculture

- ✓ Answer linked to **multi-functionality of agriculture**
 - ✓ UA can help feeding the city
 - ✓ Real asset = multiple benefits
 - ✓ Improves food security
 - ✓ Creates a better living environment
 - ✓ Enhances social connections
 - ✓ Contributes to greener & more sustainable cities
 - ✓ **Could aware consciousness over the need of a better and sustainable food system**

Problematics

- ✓ Is there a correlation between the extent of the legal framework of Quebec and the actual practice of UA in the area?
- ✓ How QC's legal framework related to UA could better contribute to promote local food supply?
- ✓ **Will the city be the next sanctuary for agriculture?**

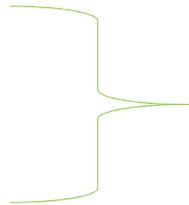
Is there a correlation between the extent of the regulatory framework of Quebec and the actual practice of UA in the area?

Two aspects :

- ✓ **How is UA practiced in Quebec ?**
- ✓ **What UA gets as legal framework in Quebec?**

How is UA practiced in Quebec ?

- ✓ Community gardens
- ✓ Collective gardens



29 gardens recorded in Quebec city

- ✓ Front garden of the National Assembly
- ✓ Edible landscapes
- ✓ Aqua and hydroponics
- ✓ Gardening



What UA gets as legal framework in Québec?

- ✓ No dedicated legislative framework for UA
- ✓ Regulated through unspecific provisions
- ✓ Not clearly authorized so implicitly forbidden
- ✓ Front gardening forbidden
- ✓ Chicken coop tolerated
- ✓ Beekeeping as an ancillary use
- ✓ Green roofs allowed
- ✓ Rooftops Greenhouses in commercial or industrial areas
- ✓ Composting as nuisance and punishable but politically encouraged



What UA gets as legal framework in Québec?

- ✓ Inner inconsistencies
- ✓ Political support
 - ✓ UA as a “thing”
 - ✓ 2015-2025 *Development vision of agricultural and agri-food activities*
 - ✓ UA as a key axis of future development
 - ✓ Funding of \$ 4.3 million over five years in Quebec city
 - ✓ Provincial *Urban agriculture support strategy* up to 2019
 - ✓ Multi-functionality of UA recognized
- ✓ Strong political commitment
- ✓ Lack of legal enforcement hindering UA’s development
- ✓ Outdated legislative framework
- ✓ **No correlation between legal framework and actual practice of UA**

How QC's legal framework related to UA could better contribute to promote local food production and consumption?

What UA needs to thrive?

- ✓ To go over overall inconsistencies
- ✓ Requires a genuine participatory based legislative framework
- ✓ Legal provisions need to be developed and enforced
- ✓ Legislative framework should provide for each aspect of UA :
 - ✓ Production
 - ✓ sanitary requirements
 - ✓ Supply
 - ✓ organized to facilitate local food management
 - ✓ Recycling
 - ✓ control over organic waste materials

Will the city be the next sanctuary for agriculture?

- ✓ Question the place of agriculture in the city – question its place in society
- ✓ Dichotomy between rural/urban areas, city/countryside – taker/provider
- ✓ Cities to know how and by what they are fed
- ✓ Real issue to reconnect urban citizens to their food
- ✓ Point out local food supply as a real issue
- ✓ Quebec to encourage UA as “reappropriation of agriculture by the citizens”
- ✓ Promoting UA through local policies and by-laws
- ✓ Less a productive role than an ideological one

City to be a sanctuary for agriculture as a model of sustainable and local food supply