

Urban Farming & The Potential Benefits

California State University Stanislaus Honors Program
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Introduction:

Currently 2% or less of Americans are involved in farm production. These Americans have the responsibility to feed this nation and the world. Since the Second Agricultural Revolution people in this country have benefited from food security. With fewer people needed on the farm labor capital for industrialization and specialization to expand was released.

This has led to an economy that allows Americans to grow in the way we view issues on environment, animal welfare, and resource allocations in the United States. These stakeholders have forgotten to continue the lines of communication to insure a direction of unity for the future.

I am looking at the stakeholders in agriculture, environment, and communities to find out about their ideology in conservation to understand how to break down barriers in communication and start a conversation that focuses on the common goal of Conservation and Food Security in this nation.

Background and Literature Review:

A limited amount of information is directly related to Urban Agriculture. One example is "Produce in the Park" located in a Mid-Atlantic City in a low-income neighborhood. The research was conducted on a 5 acre garden in a park over 3 years to establish trust in the community. Working with local programs researchers were given the opportunity to immerse themselves into the community. They were able to interview leaders in the community and ask questions about the barriers and why they existed (Hu pg.70). Other studies are P-Patch in Seattle, DUG in Denver, and Growing Power in Milwaukee which continue to be productive urban farms.



In Chicago Illinois, the Youth Center Roof provided 1000 pounds of produce last year. It was designed to educate and feed those it served. Photo: Scott Shigley http://www.asla.org/2010awards/images/largescale/377_01.jpg

Research Question

- ❖ How are urban farms in the area competing in the market?
- ❖ Do these farms utilize irrigation technology or methods to conserve water?
- ❖ Can urban agriculture counter-balance some of the negative impacts of urbanization on bio-diversity?

References

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Karaim, Reed. "Vanishing Biodiversity." *CQ Global Researcher* 6 Nov. 2012: 497-520. Web. 29 Jan. 2015.

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Significance:

Produce in the Park and other studies of research contain information about their issues. In California, however, there are factors that are irrelevant to them. Our climate is conducive to a growing season with year round production. Water issues are compounded with the current drought. Urban sprawl is a constant pressure on area farms competing for land.

Working with consumers' need to connect to where their food comes from is what urban agriculture is about. Connecting the importance of agriculture to the community is intrinsic to preserving prime farmland.

Methods:

My goals include interviewing students and faculty who are part of the Sustainable Garden project on the CSU Stanislaus campus, attending local Farmers Markets in the area, and contacting local farmers practicing urban agriculture. I will also identify what type of irrigation is used due to water shortages and if crops have changed to more drought tolerant varieties. I will ask if farmers have incorporated any techniques like mulch or ground cover to reduce evaporation and lengthen the period between watering cycles.

I will conduct surveys of patrons and vendors at farmers markets and with visitors to the campus farm. This will be a broad-based sample that will represent those interested in agriculture and what it produces.

REGIONAL URBANIZATION RANKING Urbanization From All Categories

	2006-2008		2008-2010
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	36,043	SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	19,702
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY	19,346	SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY	15,132
SAN FRANCISCO BAY	5,807	SAN FRANCISCO BAY	3,735
SACRAMENTO VALLEY	5,493	SACRAMENTO VALLEY	2,973
SIERRA FOOTHILL	3,906	SIERRA FOOTHILL	1,419
CENTRAL COAST	1,479	CENTRAL COAST	1,224

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