

Sustainable Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture

Background

By 2050 the UN estimates that the global population will reach 9.6 billion, with the majority of that growth taking place in urban areas of less developed regions (United Nations, 2012; United Nations, 2013). The rapid expansion of urban populations puts direct pressure on food sources and agricultural production; thus, there exists a serious challenge in supplying enough nutritious and safe food amongst such rapid urbanization. Despite many technological and mechanical improvements in food production, hunger and malnutrition remain central issues as poverty continues to be prevalent in many cities around the world. Specifically, it is estimated that 40% of urban inhabitants are living on less than US\$1 a day, while simultaneously 70% are living on US\$2 a day (FAO, 2012). Similarly, impoverished urban households are estimated to spend 60–80 percent of incomes on food, making them more vulnerable to food price volatility.

Limited and costly space, lack of clean production system, competition for production resources e.g. water are some of the major issue associated with urban and peri-urban agriculture. By and large all urban centers depends on food produced elsewhere in country side and carried to the cities. Cost of fuel, carbon emission and losses of fresh produce in transport adds to the woes. Hence, a new pathway for production and availability of quality and nutritious food needs to be developed. This course aims to provide needed background and current experiences on the issue.

Course Aim

This course meet the training requirement of urban planners, producers of agriculture and allied sectors working in Government, NGO and CSO sectors. It is designed to provide background knowledge and hands-on experiences to enable participants to develop local solutions to the peri-urban and urban food production systems in a manner enhances the quality of life for city dwellers.

Course Duration and Location

Course is designed for a period of 4 weeks and is offered at Asian Institute of Technology, Pathumthani campus with field trips and exposure visits to the various parts of Thailand and in neighboring countries.

Tentative Course Contents

- Current status of the peri-urban and urban agriculture
- Greener cities – how?
- Technological options for peri-urban and urban agriculture
- Composting and waste recycles as a production resource
- Food quality and contaminations