

Benrd Pölling

Conference Review:

4th AESOP-Conference “Sustainable Food Planning”

Berlin, November 1st – 3rd, 2012

Basics

The 4th AESOP-Conference “Sustainable Food Planning” took place in Berlin from November 1st until 3rd. AESOP, the Association of European Schools of Planning, conducted this Conference in cooperation with the Chair of Landscape architecture and open space Planning of TU Berlin. This year’s conference title “*Evolving places, processes, products - Changing food systems in an urban world*” highlighted urban agriculture as the main topic. About 90 participants from Europe and worldwide including Brazil, South Africa, Canada, the US and Qatar discussed urban food systems.

Review “in a nutshell”

Due to the heterogeneity of the participants’ background – planners, architects, agronomists, sociologists, geographers, etc. – view on Urban Agriculture (UA) was broad and undefined. Every project or initiative presented defines Urban Agriculture suitable for the specific purpose. Within this discussion the different motivations in the global north and the global south “to do urban agriculture” have to be noticed. Focussing on the global north, the presentations and discussions revealed the different meanings and understandings of urban agriculture. Many different terms / definitions emerged. The most often used terms are listed below.

- Urban ...
- peri-urban ...
- metropolitan ...
- city ...
- ... farming
- ... agriculture
- ... gardening

These seven words have been used in an enormous variety and overlay, which made a common understand impossible. This should encourage us in COST-Action UAE to commonly define an understanding of Urban Agriculture.

Some notes of selected presentations

Keynote-Speakers

- Prof. Dr. Friedrich von Borries (Hamburg): Urban Food Trends
 - Totally different aspects North – South
 - Crucial nowadays topics: land grabbing, fuel/biomass, culture of wasting
 - 1/3 of global food production is being wasted
 - Concerning urban gardening: bottom up vs. top-down approaches
- Dr. Maria Gerster-Bentaya (University of Hohenheim):
 - “sustainable intensification” necessary to feed more and more people with less farmland and less non-renewable energies
 - Farmland has to supply locally and globally
 - Especially in the favoured European climate farming cannot neglect the global context

- But local products & regional loops (production – processing – distribution – acquisition – consumption – disposal) are becoming more important in a more sustainable systems
- Land tenure: issue of high importance
 - Including land grabbing of nations especially in Africa, but also high and even rising rents in Europe

Session “Places”

- Caroline Brand (University of Grenoble): food service companies / catering
 - Important element of urban food systems
 - In France ca. 10 mio catering meals per day
 - In EU 3 big caterer account for 60 % of the market
 - Rising awareness & demand for regional and organically produced meals
- Dirk Wascher (FU Berlin): project FOODMETRES
 - Food planning and innovation for sustainable metropolitan regions
 - Considering professional urban farming and the urban gardening initiatives
 - Investigation of some European metropolitan areas
 - Netherlands, Berlin, Ljubljana, ...
 - goal: higher degree of sustainability on metropolitan agriculture
- Aurora Cavallo (CURSA, Rome): peri-urban agriculture in and around Rome
 - Massive urban sprawl and more wood → loss of farmland
 - Rome province: ca. 50 % farmland, >20.000 farms
 - Rome municipality: ca. 28 % farmland, 2.500 farms, even 100 farms cultivating more than 100 ha within the city boundaries
- Alison Blay-Parker (Wilfried Laurier Uni Ontario): improving rural-urban linkages
 - Important to consider the individuality of the farmers (personality)
- Ina Hartmann (ZALF, Müncheberg):
 - Typology / definition of urban agriculture
 - Highlighting the differences and similarities of urban agriculture (in terms of activities of urban dwellers “urban gardening”) and the peri-urban agriculture (in the meaning of professional urban agriculture/farming)