

## Abstract

This paper attempts to put into perspective urban agriculture in East Africa. The main themes of the paper are: definition of urban agriculture; characteristics of urban agriculture; role of urban agriculture in employment, income, and food supply; policy and institutional framework for urban agriculture; and urban agriculture and environment. The paper demonstrates that urban agriculture is an important feature of the urban land use system. Since the colonial era, urban agriculture remains outside the urban land use system. Therefore, the sector does not enjoy the much needed institutional support. Although Tanzania has integrated urban agriculture in the urban land use system, it remains officially excluded from Kenyan urban land use system. Despite the fact that it is not integrated into the urban land use system, it is an important feature of the urban economy. It is evident that urban agriculture makes important contribution to employment, income and food supply. It is an important source of income and food supply for the commercial and poor urban farmers respectively. Due to environmental degradation and heighten poverty, there are health risks associated with urban agriculture in hazardous areas or use of unsafe water. The urban economies can greatly benefit from urban agriculture, if all the governments of East Africa can develop a policy and institutional framework on the sector. This would ensure enhanced agricultural productivity and safety of the produce.