Urban Agriculture in Florida
Overview, Barriers and Opportunities

Catherine Campbell, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist, Community Food Systems
Dept. of Family, Youth and Community Science
Email: cgcampbell@ufl.edu
Presentation Overview

- Define UA & potential benefits
- Describe the current status of UA in Florida
- Discuss barriers & opportunities
- Identify ways to support UA
Background

- Increasing urbanization in Florida – 44 of 67 counties are classified as “urban” by USDA

- 20.5 million Florida residents, 2 million added in the last decade

- CBSAs: Urbanized area plus adjacent territory with a high degree of social and economic integration.

Florida’s Urban Statistical Areas (CBSAs)

Metropolitan: Dark orange
Micropolitan: Light orange

US Census Bureau, 2021
Food Access and Risk Factors in FL

• 83% of Florida residents do not eat the recommended 5 servings of fruits and vegetables
• 64% of Florida residents are overweight or obese
• 13% of Florida residents have been diagnosed with diabetes

• 13% of Florida households are classified as food insecure
• 19% of children in Florida are food insecure

Feeding America, 2018; Florida Department of Health, 2020
What is Urban Agriculture?

• No standard definition in the literature – Definitions differ depending on region, country, and field of study

• General Definition: Food production (or animal husbandry) in urban or peri-urban areas—including commercial, non-commercial, and hybrid operations

• Many different types of operations and goals
Innovators

High-Tech operations, Premium Quality/High-end Products

Photo credits: https://kalera.com/
https://thevillagesgrown.com/
Civic Agriculturists
Connecting farms, food & communities

Photo credit: https://winterparkurbanfarm.com/
Advocates

Working for food justice, equity, and the environment

Photo credits: https://www.infinitezionfarms.org/
Urban-oriented Agriculture
Traditional small farms with urban-focused business models

Photo credits: https://frogsongorganics.com/
https://dirtydogorganicsfarm.com/
Grassroots Agriculture
Non-commercial, Community-based Agriculture

- Removes blighted conditions
- Revitalizes a neighborhood
- Enhances community health
- Improves nutrition
- Promotes therapeutic activities
- Facilitates community connections
Key Themes in Benefits of UA

• Social & Cultural Impacts
• Economic & Community Development
• Health & Wellbeing
• Environment
Social & Cultural Benefits

• Community Cohesion & Social Ties
• Cultural Integration & Preservation
• Youth Development
Economic Development

• Employment Opportunities
• Job Training
• Community Redevelopment
• Entrepreneurial Activity
Health & Wellbeing

- Increases food access & food security
- Source of physical activity
- Mental health/therapeutic benefits
Environmental Benefits

- Potential reduction in greenhouse gas
- Increased biodiversity
- Pollinator habitat
Farmer Interview & Survey Results
Urban Farmer Interviews (n=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extension District</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Urban Farmer Survey (n=53)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extension District</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Survey Results: Farm Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time in Operation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 4 years</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years or longer</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land in production</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1,000 sq. ft and 1 acre</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 and 2 acres</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 and 10 acres</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 acres</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Survey Results: Farmer Characteristics

## Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Hispanic or Latino

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Highest level of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest level of education</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or GED</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, technical, or vocational training</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree or more</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Survey Results: Farmer Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent role</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner &amp; manager</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 and over</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years’ Experience</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender: Woman 45%, Man 52%
Age range: 20-29 8%, 30-39 13%, 40-49 26%, 50-59 21%, 60-69 24%, 70 and over 6%
Respondent role: Owner & manager 57%, Owner 16%, Manager 3%, Employee 4%, Volunteer 4%
Survey Results: Certifications/Enrollment

- Greenbelt
- FSMA
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)
- Private Pesticide Applicator Certification
- FDACS BMP program
- USDA Certified Organic
- Good Handling Practices (GHPs) Certification
- Certified Naturally Grown
Survey Results: Production Methods

- In-ground in beds, rows, or fields: 90%
- Raised beds/garden boxes: 30%
- Containers or pots: 30%
- High tunnel/hoop house: 20%
- Greenhouse: 10%
- Hydroponic: 10%
- Indoor: 5%
- Aquaponic: 0%
Survey Results: Sources of Income

- Vegetables: 60%
- Herbs and spices: 40%
- Fruit: 30%
- Nonedible plants: 20%
- Animal products: 10%
- Value-added products: 10%
- Educational services: 10%
- Agritourism services: 10%
- Animals: 10%
- Mushrooms: 0%
Survey Results: Top 3 Market Outlets

- Farmers’ markets: 45%
- On-farm sales: 35%
- Online: 25%
- CSA: 20%
- Wholesale: 15%
- Restaurants or caterers: 10%
- Grocery or other retail: 10%
- Cooperatives: 5%
- Food hubs: 5%
- Institution: 5%
Survey Results: Top 3 Goals

1. Increase food access/security
2. Environmental sustainability
3. Making a profit

4. Strengthen communities/Health
5. Education
6. Support the local economy
7. Food or social justice
8. Job training or workforce development
9. Create jobs
Urban Farmers’ Goals – In their words

Supporting Food Access:

“Our customers ... [can] buy a container for a **neighbor in need**... and [we give] it to an organization... working with **food access**.... they're delivering boxes of locally grown produce 100 families every other week. We want to scale that up.”

Environmental Goals:

“I don’t want to cause any destruction or damage. I want to prove that environmentally conscious and farming are not two opposing words”

“I'm trying to start making all of my compost on site and kind of create a **closed loop system**... and trying to really work on **building the soil**.”
Urban Farmers Goals – In their words

**Economic Sustainability & Job Creation:**

“I'd like to expand the farm to the point where it's **economically sustainable** and ... get to the point where I can **add more people onto the team** and **give opportunity to other people**.”

“**Creating a sustainable job** where we can care for our bodies for life.”

**Strengthen Communities/Health:**

“We want to make the farm ... a **community** or a **place of education and events**…”

“To really **provide a space for people** to come and ... **connect a little bit more with the foods that they eat**. And just kind of **be a spark or a catalyst or connection to a healthier way of life.”
Survey Results: Top 3 Barriers

1. Labor: 40%
2. Access to capital: 35%
3. Profitability: 25%
Primary Barriers – In their words

**Labor:**
“It's a multifaceted individual that we need to ... use a tractor and also sell stuff at the market. It's been so hard to get even immigrants to work and agriculture, because ... they're doing the painting, and the construction jobs. **For 20 bucks an hour, they're getting is like much better jobs now.**”

**Finances:**
“As a small-scale farmer, even with a [good] credit score... **I was not able to get any type of financial loans for my farm....** To get this farm up and running, **we had to exhaust every bit of our savings.**”
Primary Barriers – In their words

Regulations:
“How do I get around this... dealing with the governmental red tape constantly? ... it feels like a constant uphill battle where you're just defending yourself constantly from what you're doing on your property.”

Land Access/Rural Urban Interface:
“Developers are trying to buy the land so it's being valued as residential. It's taken accessibility away from farmers to buy it, you know it’s agricultural land it's been agricultural forever and now it’s zoned residential. Shifting land use makes it inaccessible for farmers.”
Urban Farmers’ Top 3 Opportunities

- Value-added
- Agritourism
- New fruit crops
- Online sales
- Training or workshops
- New vegetable crops
- Sales to restaurants
- Home delivery
- New animal products
- Institutional sales
- Do not want to expand
Top Opportunities – In their words

Value Added:

“Value added just makes a ton of sense because I'm a super small farm, so any way that I can multiply my profits on the crops... in the very limited space that I have seems to make the most sense for growing the business or multiplying revenue.”

Agritourism:

“Agritourism kind of seems like a no brainer.”

“Agritourism is an amazing opportunity to have additional income without very much effort from us. You know, it just requires one hour of our time to get to give a tour or if it's an event in the in the farm than it's a lot of income. Like for instance, we could potentially make in one weekend, what we would have to make in like three months.”
Most Pressing Issues for UA Workshop

1. Gov't regs
2. Development pressure
3. Limited Extension resources
4. Lack of UA-specific research
5. No unified definition
6. Lack of awareness of resources
7. Lack of business management skills
8. Limited processing knowledge
9. Poor organization/coordination
10. Limited networking
11. Lack of incentives

(n=14)
Summary

CUA operations utilize multiple production methods; most grow in beds, rows, or fields.

Primarily sell direct-to-consumer, most revenue comes from vegetable and fruit crops. Future opportunities in capitalizing on their proximity and increasing revenue on their small plots of land.

Face barriers common to small farms, with additional issues related to permits, zoning, and land availability in urban/urbanizing areas.
Questions?

Catherine Campbell, PhD, MPH
Asst. Prof. Community Food Systems
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