

## **Keynote Speaker Lauren Baker - Harnessing the Potential of Urban Agriculture - 10:30am**

*Lauren was here a few years ago advising on how to create Food Policy Council  
Food strongly embedded in London's official plan —> Urban Agriculture strategy is poised for  
action and implementation.*

### **Key Questions:**

- What are cities doing to support urban agriculture?
- What are the benefits?
- How can we use Urban Agriculture as a tool for city building?
- Can Urban Agriculture help us meet our priorities and goals?
- How can we embed Urban Agriculture more broadly and widely?

Urban Agriculture is the growing and selling of plants, raising of animals in an urban, peri-urban context. Involves processing, distributing, retailing, — *a systems approach*.

Discussed a series of Cases:

### **Havana, Cuba**

—> *Interesting example of how city supports urban agriculture.*

After economic crisis in late 80s and early 90s more than 200,000 gardeners/farmers were growing food in Havana on 35,000 acres of land, 3 million tonnes of food meeting 90% of Havana's food needs. It was dense and intensive food production. Neighbourhood seed centres with an agronomist were funded by government to support local growers.

### **New York City**

Great work from Five Burroughs Farm. They developed a matrix of health, social, economic and ecological benefits for different kinds of Urban Agriculture

### **Nairobi**

—> *good example of how UA is place based, context specific, meets needs of unique populations*

There is a lot of livestock farming in city boundaries, cattle, camel and milk production. Interesting food safety issue for public health, instead of centralizing milk production like we do, they took neighbourhood approach, bring milk to neighbourhood centre.

### **Netherlands**

Local business incubators, more extensive UA projects, landscaping work, all part of active re-use strategy for old industrial neighbourhoods.

### **Toronto Ontario**

Action plan endorsed in 2013, tried to keep in mind other city priorities, parks strategy, regional food strategy, strong neighbourhood strategy, helping decision makers at city see potential of UA. It started with a community gardens program.

2015 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact: this is a global pact cities made about importance of food.

2016 - Pledge to market city strategy, food retail markets, public markets.

### **Achievements:**

- Community Garden Program,

- Soil assessment guide
- Community orchards
- School gardens
- Foodshares Ontario, rooftop gardens
- Small businesses such as Annex Organics which grows and sells food,
- Markets in public parks
- Francis Beavis Community Garden at Paper and Gerrard - Highly productive, run by small and tight knit Asian community living there
- The Stop Community Food Centre - provides help to those experiencing poverty, urban agriculture projects, greenhouses, food banks, drop-in meals, composting demonstrations.

Themes: Urban Agriculture as a doorway into Toronto's incredible diversity, the power of entrepreneurship, power of soil for ecological connection and literacy, social engagement

Real potential to integrate Urban Agriculture into:

- Urban Ecological Systems
  - storm water management
  - pollination
  - climate change
  - air quality
  - soil quality
  - water quality
  - biodiversity
- Urban Economic Systems:
  - Urban Agriculture linked to employment, labour, access to food, organic waste.
  - Opportunities exist to help small urban farmers, perhaps new Canadians or second career farmers, access market —> \$800 million opportunity
  - *Creative financing*, i.e. Western Food Coop - offering community bonds from which you receive interest and invest in local community. Forte cheese (Stratford) - raised money from customers to buy shares in company, go to farmers market to spend, allows them to leverage capital
  - new food enterprises that include *unique partnerships* such as relationships with local farmers and distribution companies. i.e. Fresh City Farms
- Urban Social Systems:
  - Conservation authority supporting projects like Black Creek Community Farm at Jane and Finch. —> *Anchoring community amenity, on conservation authority property*
  - After public consultation some developers beginning to see food as key amenity in condos i.e. collective kitchen/meeting spaces
  - Local produce auctions, food and farm events and festivals, food box programs, community shared agriculture