



FOOD *for* THE CITIES

Urban food market infrastructure and services

Transport costs often represent the bulk of marketing costs. Food transporters need roads, parking, loading, unloading, resting facilities, vehicle and cargo security



Wholesale activities are often dispersed over the urban area, limiting the potential benefits to be derived from organized wholesale markets

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Challenges...

To achieve cost-effective food marketing, minimize post-harvest losses, reduce health risks and ensure an adequate stability of basic food supply to cities, efficient market infrastructure such as assembly, wholesale and retail markets, storage facilities, as well as basic handling and transport facilities

and services, are essential. Market infrastructure, facilities and services, equipped with new technology, such as refrigerated transportation and storage and information systems that track inventories, should be planned at the regional, metropolitan and urban levels. As traditional systems are important sources of employment and revenue collection, authorities have often been reluctant to promote their modernization. However, improvements are now being considered as increasing awareness of food safety issues, in unimproved traditional marketing systems, is now becoming evident and therefore the conflict between traditional and modern arrangements needs to be addressed.

An important aspect for policy consideration is the role played by the informal sector in making food available to low income urban areas and in generating income for poor families. This requires a positive attitude by the authorities and special programmes to facilitate safe, informal food trading activities.



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Waste from markets and slaughterhouses threatens health and contaminates food, soil, water and air

FAO's response...

Market infrastructures, facilities and services are essential elements of the food supply and distribution system (FSDS). These must be properly planned, maintained, managed and developed to accommodate the rapidly increasing food quantities coming to cities. There is growing awareness of the need for city and local authorities to be directly concerned with feeding their cities, and take on a proactive and coordinating role in the development of sustainable market infrastructure and marketing services. FAO's Food Supply and Distribution to Cities initiative, a component of FAO's Special Programme for Food Security, promotes an interdisciplinary, multisectoral and participatory approach to finding sustainable solutions in planning and implementing decisions to improve FSDS to cities, with direct involvement from the private sector.



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Congested urban markets cannot accommodate increasing quantities of food. The lack of space and adequate facilities in the markets increases food losses and marketing costs



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Non motorized transport helps keep food prices low, provides employment for young and poor people and does not pollute but contributes to traffic congestion in and around markets

FAO's action...

Food Supply and Distribution to Cities. This initiative includes components particularly aimed at policy makers, local authorities, technical staff and researchers:

- technical documentation as well as information and training products, distributed with the Food for the Cities collection;
- sensitisation seminars and workshops at regional, sub regional and national level;
- training services on demand;
- technical assistance for the preparation of specific case studies;
- technical support in the formulation and implementation of local policies, strategies and action plans.

Key thematic areas of study and intervention:

- modern distribution systems and facilities;
- integrated development of intra-urban food transport;
- hygiene and food handling, processing, storing transporting and marketing;
- services to urban market users;
- policies and strategies to make FSDSs more efficient and dynamic;
- role of public and private institutions, including promotion of market traders, shopkeepers, consumer associations and organizations.

Information and training products. FAO has produced a number of briefing guides to help policy makers and planners understand the benefits of improving FSDS to Cities. In particular, a number of planning guides related to planning, establishment and management of market infrastructure, are available for downloading from the FAO website. <http://www.fao.org/ag/agss/subjects/en/agmarket/agmarket.html>

Institutional strengthening. Various seminars and workshops, held in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Near and Middle-East, strengthened the capacity of local authorities and institutions responsible for devising FSDS policies, strategies and action plans. Examples are:

- FAO regional seminar Feeding Latin American Cities, La Havana, Cuba, 2003;
- FAO-WHO-ONUDI national workshop Food safety in Algeria, Algiers, Algeria, 2003;
- FAO-CIHEAM-ONUDI national workshop Food Supply and Distribution to Algiers, Algiers, Algeria, 2003;
- FAO-CIHEAM sub regional workshop Feeding North African Cities, Meknès, Morocco, 2003;
- FAO-WB-Municipal Authority of Addis Ababa sub-regional workshop Feeding Cities in the Horn of Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2002 (in collaboration with FAO-TCIR World Bank Horn of Africa Food Security Initiative);
- FAO project Urban Food security in the city of Greater Amman, 2001 (TCP/JOR/8923);
- FAO-AFMA-CITYNET regional seminar Feeding Asian Cities, Bangkok, Thailand, 2000;
- special event at the UN General Assembly on Food for the Cities with the occasion of the Habitat+5 meeting, New York, June 2001.

The design, location and management of wholesale and retail markets are important determinants of investment profitability and the cost of access to food by low-income households



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Spontaneous markets cause hygiene, security and traffic problems but provide food where it is needed and create employment



Food for the Cities - Multidisciplinary Area
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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