Agriculture in an Urban Context: Policy Barriers faced by Urban Farmers in Vancouver, Canada

バンクーバーの都市農業における政策的障壁

DO, Emi (Graduate Student, Tokyo University of Agriculture)
TAKAYANAGI, Nagatada (Tokyo University of Agriculture)

キーワード:都市農業、地域が支える農業、土地利用、バンクーバー

Urban planning attempts to mitigate issues and facilitate the smooth operations of municipalities in areas including land use, resource management, infrastructure and transportation. Zoning is an example of an approach utilized by urban planners to regulate land use. However, as cities attempt to re-envision and re-design urban areas to adopt innovative concepts of urban design, these land use policies can at times act as a barrier to development. This presentation will address how urban farmers are dealing with this form of policy discrepancy in the City of Vancouver.

As demonstrated by “What feeds us”, the Vancouver food strategy approved by council in January 2013, the City of Vancouver is committed to supporting the development of urban agriculture by listing it as one of five core ‘actions’ of the strategy. However, of the 9 zoning districts in the City, only two - the ‘light industrial’ zones and RA-1 Limited Agriculture zone - permit food production as an acceptable use. In Figure 1, the shaded areas demarcate zones where agriculture is permitted. One can see that the majority of sites where urban farmers are operating are infringements of city by-laws.

Urban farmers in Vancouver have employed various strategies to overcome this, and other barriers they face in legitimizing their businesses. One such strategy is to utilize the Community Supported Agriculture system in which consumers purchase memberships and not food from farmers. Farmers can thus claim to be providing a service rather than engaging in the manufacturing of a product meant for sale. Other policy obstacles urban farmers in Vancouver have to contend with are urban aesthetic expectations, building codes and certification.

Figure 1: Urban Farm sites in the City of Vancouver