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INTRODUCTION
BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Today's cities operate on a throughput model, in which resources are imported and wastes are exported. Metropolitan agriculture can help to close the loop between inputs and outputs by converting what are traditionally viewed as waste products into food and fuel. For example, sewage sludge from treatment plants can be added to other organic by-products such as leaf litter, garden trimmings, and food scraps. When composted, this mixture yields rich mulch which can be used as fertilizers to nurture the growth of quality organic edibles in metropolitan agriculture gardens (Laurence, 1996). The convergence of producers and consumers which occurs with localized food production also reduces the need for the intakes from the larger resource stream, lowers the amount of pollution generated by long distance transportation, and conserves energy normally lost to system (Barrs, 1996).

Metropolitan agriculture (MA) can be defined as the production of food (for example, vegetables, fruits, meat, eggs, milk, fish and non-food items such as fuel, herbs, ornamental plants, tree seedlings, flowers) within the metropolis and its periphery; for home consumption and/or for the metropolitan market, and related small scale processing and marketing activities (Hovorka, Zeeuw and Njenga, 2009). It is the practice of producing vegetables, food and fruits within the metropolitan environment for household consumption as well as sale to the rapidly growing metropolitan population (Dima et al., 2002). Metropolitan agriculture takes place on private, leased or rented land in peri-metropolitan areas, in backyards, on roof tops, on vacant public lands such as industrial parks, school grounds, roadsides, in prisons and other institutions as well as ponds, lakes, and rivers.

Metropolitan agriculture is food and fuel grown within the daily activities of the metropolis / town or city/ produced directly for the market and frequently processed and marketed by the farmers or their close associates. Metropolitan agriculture includes aquaculture, livestock raised in backyards, orchards, and vegetables.

The metropolitan agriculture referred to in this study is defined as an industry that produces food and fuel, largely in response to the daily demand of consumers within a metropolis, a town or city, on land or water disposal throughout the metropolitan and peri-metropolitan area, applying intensive production methods, using and reusing natural resources and metropolitan wastes, to yield a diversity of crops and livestock.

For a long time now the importance of Metropolitan agriculture was overlooked or dismissed as merely the result of traditional habits brought by rural migrants to the city, expected to fade away overtime when these people integrate into the city economy. There was opposition to Metropolitan agriculture from public health and metropolitan agriculture planning circles, which perceived MA either as a threat to public health that should be abandoned, or as a low-rent land use that would not be able to compete with other metropolitan land uses. Such perceptions were institutionalized in restrictive by-laws and regulations at national and city levels, although these have remained largely ineffective

(Hovorka et al, 2009). However in 1996 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimated that 800 million people worldwide were engaged in MA, 200 million of them were market producers employing about 150 million people full time (UNDP, 1996). Since then the numbers have increased.

In Nigeria, prior to the implementation of the economic reform measures in 1986, the immense urban boom in the early 1980s attracted people into cities and towns to seek employment in more buoyant sectors than agriculture. But the implementation of reforms has the socio-economic and ecological environment of the cities and towns. For instance, following the mass retrenchment of workers in both the public and private sectors in a bid to restructure these sectors of the economy, and with the government's reluctance to increase wages and salaries to match the inflationary trend, poverty became the hallmark of the urban dwellers, and the stage was set for all to go back to land in order to

survive. To avoid being crushed by the depressed economy, almost family units in most Nigerian urban areas were compelled to become “emergency” farmers cultivating every piece of idle and vacant land within and at the periphery of the metropolis. As a result of this conversion, the cultivable area of land available to these farmers has reduced drastically resulting to overexploitation of land resources by the “emergency” farmers who are strangers to soil conservation techniques (Arene 1995).

From all indications, this exploitation will surely attain a suicidal proportion if appropriate measures are not taken to “renew” the soil. The core of this research focuses on the resource aspect of urban agriculture. The relationship between urban agriculture and resources can be described as being three pronged. First, some urban by-products, such as waste water and organic solid waste, can be recycled and transformed into resources or opportunities for growing agricultural products within urban and peri-urban areas. Second, some areas of cities such as idle lands and bodies of water can be converted to intensive agricultural production. Third, some natural resources, such as energy for cooking, can be conserved through urban agriculture.

At present, there is no information on the commercial potentials of urban agriculture in Nigeria. The closest attempt to this study is the work of Ughenu (2001), which addressed urban farming in Onitsha but did not estimate the economic implication of metropolitan waste-use in a bid to evaluate the profitability and sustainability of urban agriculture in the area. This study, therefore, attempts to fill the gap.

Metropolitan agriculture is presented as a large and growing industry that uses metropolitan waste water and metropolitan solid-waste as inputs which close ecological loops when processed on idle land and water bodies (Smit and Nasr, 1992). The positive impact of this neglected industry includes:

Improved nutrition and health

An improved environment for living
Increased entrepreneurship
Improved household food security of the metropolitan poor
Reduced food insecurity as it increases access to food—especially fresh nutrient-rich foods—among populations suffering from food insecurity (the poor, temporarily or permanently vulnerable).

Metropolitan agriculture opportunities to some groups in particular and thus has positive impact on equity. In many cultures and places, metropolitan agriculture is women’s agriculture. Moreover, metropolitan agriculture by its nature is low-capital high-labour industry and attracts small low income entrepreneurs and employs part-time and temporary low-skilled workers (Freeman, 1991). Thus, the metropolitan agriculture industry provides income for new arrivals in the city, teenagers, and retired persons.

Yet all these activities are almost invisible to researchers and development professionals, and are ignored or even prohibited by most city planners and policy makers. As a result, metropolitan farmers complain that lack of access to land, water for irrigation, inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and tools and credit are the biggest problems limiting their productivity and discouraging consistent investment in their farms (Helmore and Ratta, 1995).

The benefits of metropolitan agriculture vary with time and place. It is a first line of defense against hunger and malnutrition at times of stress. It is a major process of poverty alleviation during period of economic recovery as is seen in Nigeria and most sub-Saharan African countries embarking on structural adjustment programme (SAP), aimed at revamping their already depressed economies. Metropolitan agriculture is viewed as a veritable option to the disposal of these natural wastes, as it can convert metropolitan waste to resources, put vacant and under-utilized areas into productive use, and conserves natural resource outside the cities while maintaining and improving the environment for metropolitan living.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Metropolitan agriculture has become a contemporary issue, gaining prominence especially in developing economies because it has been discovered to be a viable poverty intervention strategy for the metropolitan poor. The presence and potentials of Metropolitan agriculture in

Nigeria especially in the big cities is not indoubt. However, policy makers and government have deliberately neglected this veritable sector and have failed to acknowledge it and channel attention to it. Until recently, poverty was synonymous with rural areas but the rapid metropolitan agriculturization of many developing countries has given birth to a large class of metropolitan poor. Access to adequate food constitutes the most serious problem for metropolitan dwellers in Nigeria. High inflation rate, food price instability and relatively low wages of income earners have made the average Nigerian metropolitan dweller liable to food insecurity (Okolo, 2006). Observation shows that metropolitan agriculture is being carried out in most metropolitan areas of Enugu State, but it is not known why such dwellers chose to engage in such a venture and what constraints they face. Consequently, this study was designed to address the following research questions: What are the socio-economic characteristics of participants of metropolitan agriculture in Enugu state? What are the types of agricultural enterprises being carried out in metropolitan areas in the state? What are the socio-economic benefits of metropolitan agriculture to the participants? What is the contribution of metropolitan agriculture to household income of the respondents, and what are the constraints facing metropolitan farmers in the study area?

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of the study was to investigate the economics of metropolitan agriculture in Enugu metropolis of Enugu state, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. describe the socio-economic characteristics of metropolitan farmers in Enugu metropolis;
2. identify the types of agricultural activities being carried out in the area;
3. describe the circumstances that lead to metropolitan agriculture in the area;
4. analyze the scale of agricultural production of metropolitan agricultures in Enugu metropolis.
5. describe farmer's perception of metropolitan agriculture in the area;
6. estimate the cost and returns of metropolitan agriculture to farmers in the metropolis
7. identify the problems encountered by the farmers engaged in the area; and
8. proffer policy guides based on the findings from the study.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Metropolitan agriculture seems to be a viable intervention strategy for the metropolitan agriculture poor to earn extra income and grow their own food. However, in Nigeria, policy makers and governments have neglected this veritable sector. There is need to highlight the potentials and constraints to its development so as to capitalize on the potentials and integrate them into the city system in a more viable and sustainable way.

The study is significant in the sense that it will bring to limelight the contributions of metropolitan agriculture to food security, job creation and poverty alleviation. Data generated from this study will help the policy makers, researchers and extension workers in policy recommendations and development of improved technologies to enhance metropolitan agriculture. It will also enable town planners to integrate metropolitan agriculture in metropolitan and regional planning in a more sustainable basis to guarantee food security for city dwellers.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF STUDY

This study is based specifically on crop and animal production of metropolitan agriculture. There are not much problems encountered in the course of this study. The only problem was the absence of farm record keeping. This means that most of the responses especially on the component of gross margin analysis are mainly based on memory recall. Also some of the respondents feel reluctant to give information on some of their socio-economic characteristics especially on their monthly income level. In spite of these limitations, the results of the study are good approximation to the aim of the study.

ECONOMICS OF METROPOLITAN AGRICULTURE IN ENUGU METROPOLIS OF ENUGU STATE

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