

## MetroAg Innoversity to Launch Metropolitan Agriculture Initiative in Six Major Cities Worldwide

### Join the Global Process of Creating Sustainable Metropolitan Agriculture

By Karin Andeweg, TransForum

The IAMA TaskGroup on Metropolitan Agriculture was formed by several IAMA members more than two years ago to develop and explore a collective vision for metropolitan agriculture by connecting people, knowledge and communities to a vision for sustainable agriculture in cities worldwide. This evolving project has led to the creation of the Metropolitan Agriculture Innoversity which will provide a framework and mechanism to further refine the vision of metropolitan agriculture development in cities around the world. Six major cities have started on this new expedition. Their first stop will be at the *International Summit on Metropolitan Agriculture* in Rotterdam, the Netherlands on 28 September – 1 October, 2010.

The **MetroAg Innoversity** is a new action learning institution, dedicated to creating meaningful change in the agricultural and food sectors. Starting in six cities (Amsterdam, Chennai, the Detroit/Flint region, Johannesburg, London, and Sao Paulo), the Innoversity convenes multi-stakeholder teams from across the food system, to initiate action-orientated experimentation in the field of sustainable metropolitan agriculture.

The premise of metropolitan agriculture reconnects citizens to agriculture. Through the establishment of intelligent links among producers, sectors, raw materials, energy, waste flows and stakeholders the ever growing metropolitan population can be fed with fresh, healthy and sufficient food while also addressing other concerns related to agricultural production – such as a pleasant green space and recreational environments. By fostering dialogue and supporting action, the Innoversity serves as a forum to advance the innovative use of agriculture to address challenges and create value for metropolitan citizens and consumers.

### Metropolitan Agriculture Around the World

Over the last several months, multi-stakeholder teams in six cities have started practical initiatives which support metropolitan agriculture. The diversity of projects is reflected in the unique needs of each community. Johannesburg is focused on the challenge of food security while the Detroit/Flint region faces serious population and economic decline which has caused almost all fresh food products in the city to disappear. In both cities, the framework of metropolitan agriculture supports the integration of different views in order to create the development of a sustainable food strategy that will also boost the region's

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economy. The London team looks for ways to integrate differing views on agricultural development (small scale vs large scale intensive, community-based vs commercial, high tech vs high touch) in such a way that can support and reinforce each other rather than compete.

Sao Paulo focuses on two other aspects of metropolitan agriculture – integrating agriculture with care, and creating more sustainable user-producer-interaction together with a big supermarket. Chennai works on the linkage between the larger agropark initiatives in the country with the small-scale local agricultural production of small farmers. The development of sound business models in metropolitan agriculture and the financial stimulation of such innovative sustainable projects are a key objective of the Chennai team. The sixth city, Amsterdam, already has a lot of various projects on the run. They will team up during a workshop planned at the end of March. For more examples on sustainable innovative projects in metropolitan agriculture, you can visit the website: [www.metropolitanagriculture.com](http://www.metropolitanagriculture.com).

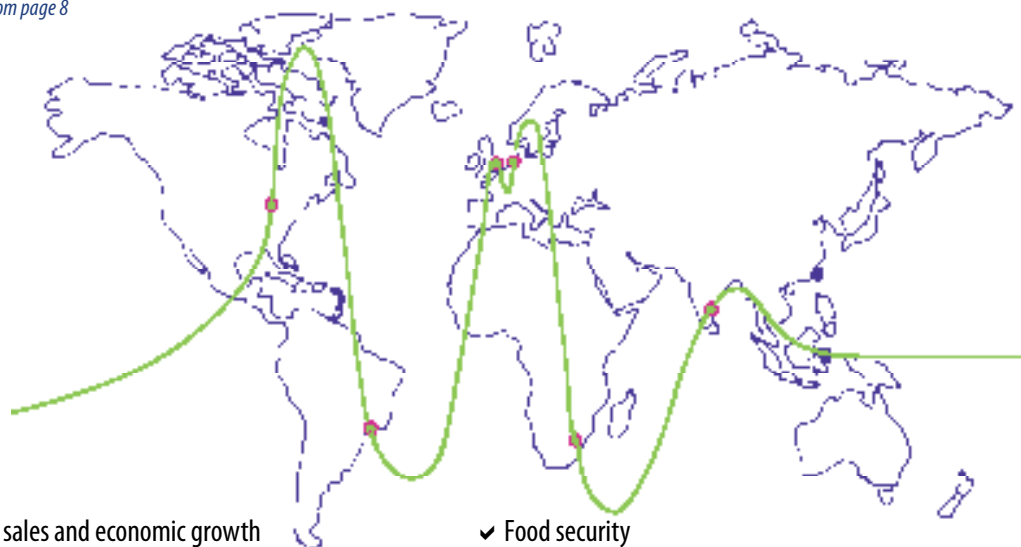
### Sharing Experiences at the Summit

At the First International Summit on Metropolitan Agriculture, the multi-stakeholder teams from these six cities will come together to share their activities, insights, and learning experiences with each other and other global leaders in the sector. How to scale up these activities and new promising initiatives in other cities will also be discussed.

The Summit provides an opportunity to learn from the front lines. With the playing field changing constantly, participants will be able to engage directly with teams who are developing different metropolitan agriculture business models and explore ways of working in these areas:

- ✓ Food production
- ✓ New supply chain models
- ✓ Effective water and waste management

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- ✓ Retail sales and economic growth
- ✓ The connection to nature and the environment
- ✓ Land use
- ✓ Food security
- ✓ Health and nutrition
- ✓ Disease reduction

A range of activities, both experiential and conference-based, will take place. Speakers and leaders from agribusiness, governments, societal organizations and knowledge institutions will be invited to reflect on the opportunities for systemic change in the field of metropolitan agriculture. Additionally, participants will get a chance to visit some interesting metropolitan agriculture examples in The Netherlands.

## Join the Global Process of Creating Sustainable Metropolitan Agriculture

The official launch for the MetroAg Innoversity is the beginning of an ambitious and far-reaching effort to shift both agricultural systems and the sustainability around urbanized areas. An ever-growing network is needed to keep developing the collective knowledge while sharing good practice experiences on how sustainable food and agriculture systems close to cities can be generated. You can join the expedition and get involved in this new network by participating in the *First International Summit on Metropolitan Agriculture*. The launch is just the beginning...

**More information?** [www.metropolitanagriculture.com](http://www.metropolitanagriculture.com) or contact

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Registration materials will be available on the website soon.

### ***First International Summit on Metropolitan Agriculture***

September 28 – October 1, 2010 Rotterdam, the Netherlands

## Who is Behind the Innoversity?

In 2005, the Dutch innovation programme, TransForum, was launched with support from the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Agribusiness, Knowledge Institutions and Societal Organisations. Dedicated to the question of how agriculture can contribute to the sustainability of metropolitan regions, TransForum has since launched and supported numerous experiments. These range from exploring the use of agro-parks in sustainability to the use of agricultural in the provision of health care. The Innoversity builds on five years of action-learning in metropolitan agriculture. Drawing upon their experience, TransForum has partnered with a range of organisations in London, Amsterdam, Detroit, São Paulo, Johannesburg and Chennai, in order to launch the Innoversity. The Innoversity is being convened by the following partners: Reos Partners, The Food Ethics Council (London), Michigan State University (Detroit), Food & Trees for Africa (Johannesburg), University of Witswatersrand (Johannesburg), University of Cape Town (Johannesburg), MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (Chennai), IFFCO (Chennai) and the University of São Paulo.