

T2 S40 - Urbanization and Agricultural Land Use: Empirical Evidence, Models, and Policy Implications of Telecoupling

Today as rural households in the developing world become increasingly integrated with urban economies and regional and global markets, agricultural land use is increasingly under the influence of macro-level forces and processes. These new dynamics can have significant consequences for agricultural land use and food security locally and globally, as well as on sustainable land use and development. Urbanization in particular has been identified as a major macro-level process that affects agricultural land-use systems.

Besides creating competition for land between agriculture and urban development, urbanization can affect agricultural land use in several other important ways. First, a growing urban population can increase the demand of certain agricultural products and cause agricultural land-use change in not only peri-urban areas but also remote areas through regional and global markets. Second, urban expansion can affect agricultural land use in peri-urban areas not only through providing access to agricultural product markets but also by creating local non-farm jobs. Third, urbanization creates non-farm work opportunities, activating rural-urban migration streams that consequently affect rural livelihoods and agricultural practices.

This session aims to deepen our understanding of how urbanization affects agricultural land use through these mechanisms across different contexts in the developing world. We will present empirical studies and/or modeling work from different geographical regions that have different policy and institutional settings, especially in Latin America, Africa, Asia etc. The implications of these patterns and trends for global land-use change and telecoupling will be explored. The session will encourage policy discussions through comparison of cases from different developing areas.

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