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Research topic **Social effects of urban agriculture**

Abstract PhD proposal

Urban agriculture is thought to have social, economic and environmental benefits for urban areas. Therefore, policy documents on public space and (urban) food often mention urban agriculture as an effective tool to use urban space in a multifunctional way, contributing to several societal goals at once. Also a growing group of researchers, practitioners and policy makers is gaining an interest in urban agriculture.

However, urban agriculture is rarely integrated in urban planning. An important reason for this is that the anticipated effects of urban agriculture are not well studied. These effects can therefore not be taken into account when comparing urban agriculture to other types of (urban) land use. Hence, clarifying the effects is important. This is particularly so as the direct monetary returns of urban agriculture – compared to other types of land use like housing or business areas - are low.

Aim of this research is to study whether urban agriculture in the Netherlands has social effects, what these are, to what extent they take place and, importantly, what the underlying mechanisms of these effects are. Social effects are studied on the level of the individual (types and strength of relations) and on the level of the community (types and strength of relations between people and sense of community). This is important as knowledge on these effects in a Dutch situation is lacking. Moreover, social integration is an important political and societal issue to which solution urban agriculture can potentially contribute.