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Alison Hodder is expert in horticultural development policy and improvement of horticultural technologies in developing and transition countries, with particular reference to vegetable, fruit, viticulture and edible mushroom sectors, covering both commercial and urban-peri-urban areas.

She has 25 years experience as technical adviser to some 40 countries of Africa, Asia, Oceania, the Caribbean and Latin America within the context of international development cooperation programmes: formulation, technical supervision and evaluation of horticulture-related programmes and projects.

She has been technical officer at FAO since 1984, and is currently leader of the FAO global horticulture programme based in the Agriculture Department, coordinating field programme support functions and inter-agency multidisciplinary programmes related to the improvement of the fruit and vegetable chain.





HORTIVAR is geo-referenced database on performances of horticulture cultivars and a platform for horticulture knowledge management and exchange.

HORTIVAR addresses the needs of producers, public and private sector, seed companies and horticultural research centres for information management related to horticultural crop cultivars in different agro-climatic environments.

HORTIVAR covers six categories of horticultural crops: fruits, vegetables, roots & tubers, ornamentals, mushrooms, herbs & condiments.

HORTIVAR allows users to identify cultivars and cropping practices adapted to their specific requirements and environment.

HORTIVAR is:

- A standard methodology for data collection and record keeping on the performances of horticulture cultivars
- A powerful search engine for easy retrieval and comparison of information (search by: crop, cultivar, country, eco-zone and/or: organic, soil-less, greenhouse production)
- A standard template for educational purposes - A to Z of a crop cycle including all field practices
- A Gateway to horticulture knowledge and statistics (e.g. production data; seed sources; standard cultivar descriptors; photos of cultivars; experts on specific crop, subject; nutrient composition data; climate data per location)

HORTIVAR is accessible on the Internet (www.fao.org/hortivar), on CD-ROM and on forms.

Good Morning HORTIVAR is a message board on the HORTIVAR website (www.fao.org/hortivar) to share information on horticulture and its benefits for food, income and health. New messages are published daily.

The idea is to have a window where Hortivar partners can post news information items in different formats:

- Text
 - Text with images/photos or video
 - Information on new publications
 - Information upcoming conferences/meetings
- A new message will be posted every day.

How to submit messages:

To submit a message,

- Go to the portal www.fao.org/hortivar
- Click on Good Morning Hortivar
- Login with your username and password (or apply for a username and password)
- Go to the tab *Submit daily message*, then:
 1. Choose the message type
 2. Fill out the mandatory fields
 3. Preview /Edit your message
 4. Submit your message
 5. You will receive a confirmation e-mail with the date on which your message shall be published on the Good Morning Hortivar message board

Search messages:

You can search past messages according to different parameters and keywords.

HORTIVAR: a decision support tool

- The web-based interface is tailored for agricultural/horticultural technicians;



- For outreach to non-technicians and producers, the main interface is the IPP card system - building up a data base of adapted Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs);
- Producer-focused field workshops foster understanding development, adaptation and illustration of GAPS for assuring safety and quality of horticultural products.

Urban and periurban agriculture/horticulture

- Rapid urbanization trends and the harsh reality of urban poverty require improved food supply and distribution systems to address increasing levels of urban food insecurity. While rural agriculture continues to be the primary source of basic food for urban dwellers in many situations, urban and periurban agriculture/horticulture (UPA/UPH) has become a key part of the survival strategies of poorer sections of the population while also providing a significant contribution to the urban fresh food supply chain.
- Within this reality, a key challenge is developing policy, strategies and technical support mechanisms ad hoc for the sustainable management of urban and peri-urban agricultural systems, considering crop and fodder production alongside animal husbandry aspects and marketing facilities, as well as criteria of water use efficiency and food safety.
- Support programmes need to consider the broad range of crops and activities that can contribute to the food security, employment, and livelihoods of poor people in urban and peri-urban areas. A multidisciplinary approach has been adopted to respond to the need for effective development and management of urban and periurban agriculture systems, with several FAO departments and divisions involved in supporting programme and project activities. We also engage with local authorities and policy makers to support the development of policy advice, strategies and technical guidelines within

an integrated approach to the sustainable management of agriculture in urban and periurban zones.

✿ **Support for capacity building:**

We are working with decision makers in member countries with the objective of strengthening national capacity for policy and strategy development related to urban and periurban agriculture. This programme has been built up with very strong and continuing support from Belgium but also other donors have recently joined to further strengthen and scale up the programme.

✿ **Strengthening national pilot interventions and projects:**

We are interacting with the donor community to mobilize funds and assist member countries to initiate or strengthen national initiatives on UPA/UPH through the implementation of short- and medium-term projects. Recently, opportunities for “decentralized cooperation” offered by some countries of the North have been captured, enabling a broad stream of benefits to flow from city-to-city programmes of assistance.

✿ **Partnership activities and linkages:**

- The multidisciplinary character of work is reflected in FAO’s links and partnerships with other organizations that are actively working in the field of UPH/UPA.
- Within the implementation of a related programme – **the FAO/WHO Global Fruit and Vegetables for Health Initiative** – UPH and horticulture supply chain improve-

ment are being supported as key components. IDRC and RUAF are long-standing partner organizations, and close partnerships have been forged with CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development), with the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) and with the Global Horticulture Initiative (GHI) and their programmes in the area of urban and periurban horticulture.

✿ **Capitalizing on lessons learnt:**

Through the implementation of these projects, it has been learnt that the long term sustainability and the safeguarding of urban and periurban agricultural activities is based on a **3-S integrated approach** and a decentralised process to involve municipal authorities and related stakeholders:

- **Securing the institutional context** through formal recognition of urban and periurban agriculture and its integration in urban and periurban development and resource management planning;
- **Securing the land**, the quality and the quantity of **water** for irrigation;
- **Securing markets as well as the quality and safety of the produce** for consumers.

With support from the Belgian government we are now shaping a programme component designed to capitalise on lessons learned and to foster a sharing of the knowledge that is being generated by technical assistance interventions around the world.

