

# Rurban Revolution: Can ruralising urban areas through food growing create a healthy, sustainable & resilient food system?

## Project Overview



[www.lancaster.ac.uk/lec/rurbanrevolution](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lec/rurbanrevolution) @RurbanRev



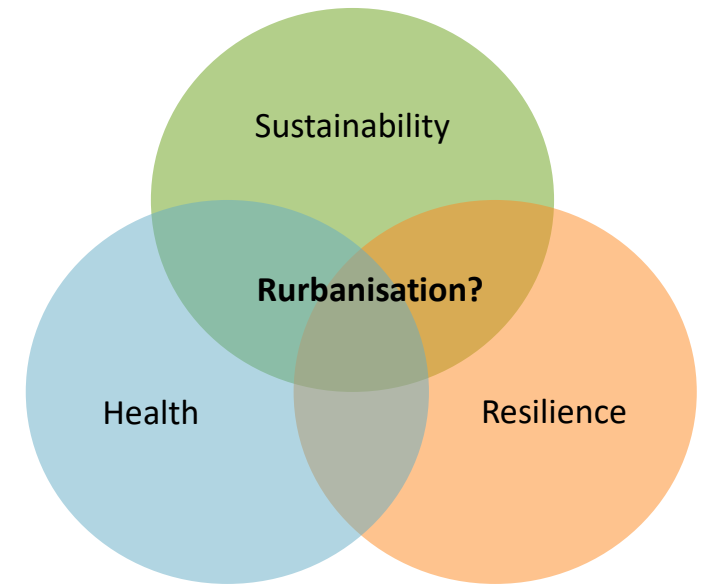


# Aim

Build an initial **interdisciplinary evidence base...**

...that helps us understand the potential that 'rurbanisation' may have for **transforming our food system...**

...in terms of **health, sustainability** and **resilience.**



# What do we mean by “rurban”?



Who: Community-led, corporate, public

How: Low tech & high tech

Where: Private gardens, public spaces, disused spaces, redevelopment

What: Focus on fresh fruit and vegetables

# Approach



Geospatial  
analysis

Cross-  
sectional &  
longitudinal  
surveys

Systematic  
review

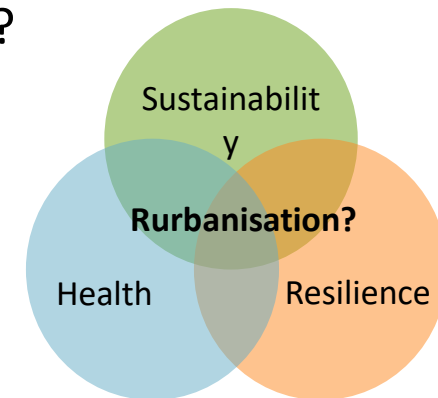
Citizen  
science

Field & Lab  
work

Interviews

## Key questions

- How much fresh fruit and vegetables could we produce in UK urban areas and how does this compare with domestic production and imports?
- How does proximity or engagement in food growing affect health and dietary change?
- How does ecosystem service delivery in urban growing spaces compare to green spaces?
- What would rurbanisation mean for food quality and safety?
- What are the barriers and opportunities for rurbanisation?



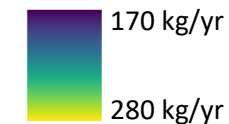
# Main findings

## Boosting fresh fruit & vegetable supply sovereignty and resilience

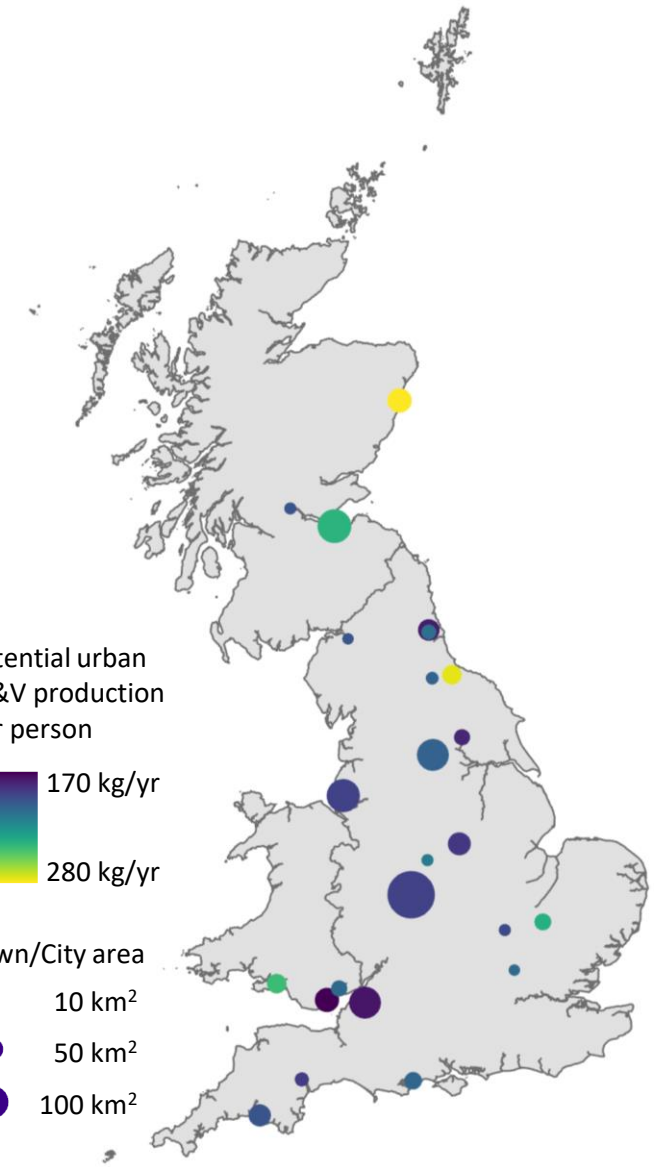
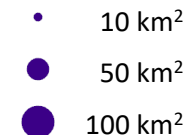
- Urban green spaces could support at its upper limit 4x domestic production+imports of UK grown fruit and vegetable categories.
- For all town/city regions we analysed, urban greenspace could support more than the recommended dietary guidelines of 165 kg of FF&V per year for their local populations
- More than 50% urban greenspace is private residential and private amenity grounds – targeting use of these spaces

Walsh, Mead, Hardman, Liu, Falagan, Kourmpetli, Evans & Davies (manuscript in prep.)

Potential urban  
FF&V production  
per person



Town/City area



Geospatial  
analysis

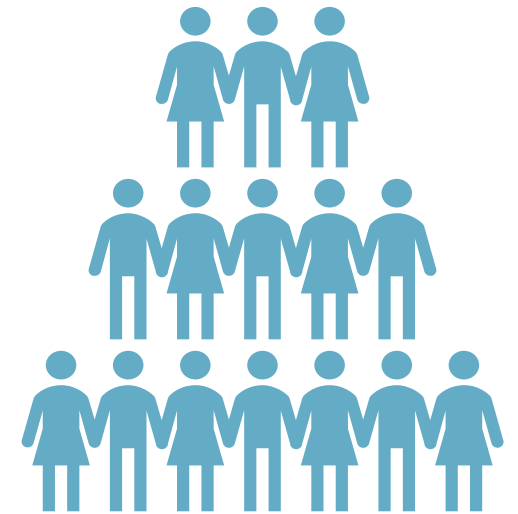
# Main findings

## Boosting dietary health and well-being

- Proximity to and engagement with urban food growing is associated with better dietary quality
- Linked to healthy and ethical food choice motivations
- During covid crisis those engaged in, or exposed to urban food growing felt less stressed and had better perceived access to food during lockdown one

Mead, Christiansen, Davies, Falagan, Kourmpetli, Liu, Walsh, & Hardman. *Appetite* 163 (2021) 105218 <https://authors.elsevier.com/c/1coGZiVKTZiia>

**UK Cross sectional survey**  
**N = 583 Participants**



Cross-sectional surveys

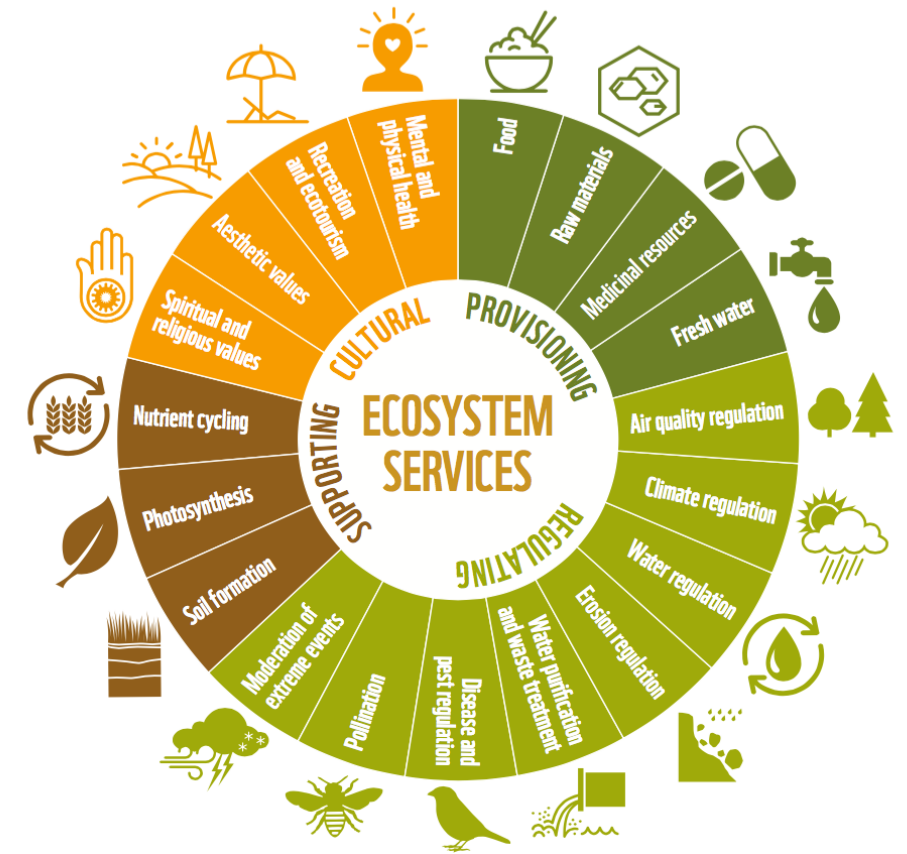


# Main findings

## Boosting ecosystem service delivery

- Food growing spaces can offer many of the ecosystem service benefits of greenspaces
- Pollination and biodiversity win-wins can be created through combining edibles and non-edibles
- Growing spaces beyond community gardens, allotments, and garden contexts are less well studied (e.g. green roofs, edible walls, indoor food growing)

Evans, Falagan, Hardman, Kourmpetli, Liu, Mead & Davies (manuscript in prep.)



WWF Living Planet Report 2016

Systematic  
review



# Main findings

Safety and quality of urban grown food

- Air, soil and vegetable produce quality from our household growing study, Lockdown Lettuce, is currently being analysed

Falagan et al. (manuscript in prep.)



Field & Lab  
work

Citizen  
science

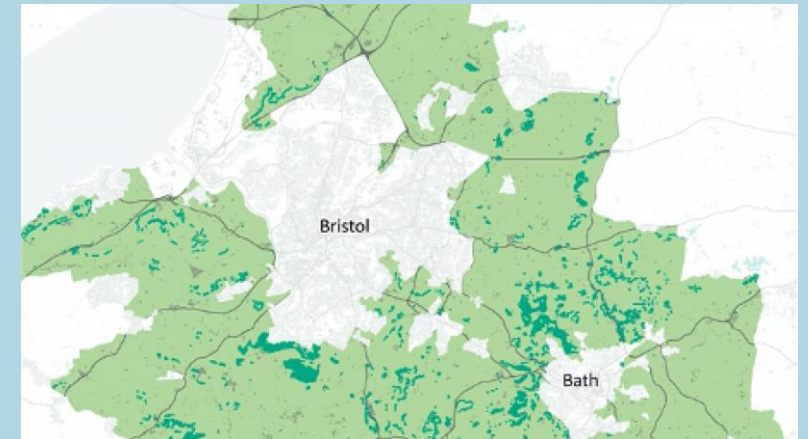


# New projects: Rurban hope spots



Urban Agriculture Consortium

- Finding the hope spots: win-wins for people and environment
- Starts next week!
- Lead researcher: Rachel Marshall
- Adding food growing into the Hope Spot tool and trialing in Lancaster District



# Thank you

Staying in touch

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[www.lancaster.ac.uk/lec/rurbanrevolution](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lec/rurbanrevolution)

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