

URBAN-RURAL COOPERATION

Rural areas support urban areas. This has always been the case. They provided food, water and labour for urban development. Yet rural areas received benefits in return, such as defense, education, and manufactured products. For long periods there was equilibrium. Rural culture was strong and stability existed in rural areas.

Rapid urban growth has, however; destroyed the equilibrium. In responding to the push and pull of urban demands, rural areas are losing their stability and their identity. Resources and jobs are flowing more quickly into urban areas. Roads, commuting, pollution, and urban values are spreading outwards.

Yet the potential benefits of a new equilibrium are strong. for example, management of rural watersheds can reduce the costs and increase the supply of urban water. Regional medical and educational systems can improve health and opportunities for rural residents. Support for a local food system can improve urban nutrition and generate rural income.

In 2009, the Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City (OBEC) Council met with the President of a local farmers market to discuss ways to increase urban-rural cooperation. The discussion centered around food, of course, and many good ideas were received. To give a boost to this cooperation, the OBEC Council made [Agricultural Biodiversity](#) the first of its [Demonstration Project](#) in 2011.