

Sustainable Food Systems in Periurban Areas: Strategies for Agroecological Transition and Territorial Innovation in the Cilento Region

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Abstract

In the face of growing environmental, social, and economic pressures on food systems, periurban and rural agricultural landscapes are emerging as key arenas for sustainability. This work focuses on the Cilento area (Campania, Southern Italy), a UNESCO-listed territory rich in biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and ecological value [1,2]. The aim is to explore how decentralized, bioregional food strategies can contribute to a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable agroecosystem, while promoting high standards of food quality and safety. Unlike metropolitan contexts where urban agriculture has been leveraged to regenerate public space and combat food insecurity, the Cilento region offers a complementary perspective. Here, dispersed settlements and multifunctional rurality provide fertile ground for agroecological innovation, short supply chains, and community supported agriculture. Drawing on successful periurban practices in urban areas, the Cilento case invites reflection on how food systems can be rooted in territorial identity and environmental stewardship [3].

The study emphasizes the importance of participatory governance, access to land, and multifunctional land use in enhancing rural-urban linkages. It also explores how underutilized areas, cultural landscapes, and protected zones can become platforms for ecosystem services, educational farms, and sustainable food networks. This territorial model agrees with emerging European objectives in biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation, and food justice.

Ultimately, the Cilento experience demonstrates how a rural region, through integrated planning and social innovation, can offer alternative paradigms to metropolitan-centered food governance, grounded in bioregionalism, equity, and ecological integrity.

Keywords

Cilento, sustainable food systems, agroecology, territorial innovation, bioregionalism.