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Urban Agriculture Potential and Challenges in Mid-Sized Cities: A Case Study of Neishabour, Iran

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Abstract : Urban agriculture, in the face of burgeoning urban populations and unchecked urbanization, presents a promising avenue for sustainable economic, social, and environmental growth. This study, set against the backdrop of Neishabour, Iran, delves into the potential and challenges inherent in this domain. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical approach, field survey data were predominantly collated via questionnaires. The research rigor was upheld with the Delphi method affirming the validity and a Cronbach's alpha score exceeding 0.70, underscoring reliability. The study encompassed Neishabour's 2016 populace, pegged at 264,375, drawing a sample size of 384 via Cochran's formula. The findings spotlight Neishabour's pronounced agricultural prowess, as evidenced by a significance level under 0.05 and an average difference of 0.54. Engaging in urban agricultural ventures can notably elevate job quality, spur savings, bolster profitability, promote organic cultivation, and streamline production expenses. However, challenges, such as heightened land valuations for alternative uses, conflicting land engagements, security dilemmas, technical impediments, waning citizen interest, regulatory conundrums, and perceived upfront investment risks, were identified. A silver lining emerged with urban locales, especially streets and boulevards, securing average ratings of 3.90, marking them as prime contenders for urban agricultural endeavors.

Keywords : urban agriculture, sustainable development, mid-sized cities, neishabour.
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