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# URBAN ROOF FARMS AS FOOD PROVIDERS IN FOOD DESERTS: A CASE STUDY OF URBAN HARVEST STL'S STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND FOOD FLOW IN DOWNTOWN ST. LOUIS

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Studies of urban agriculture have long investigated crop variety, socioeconomic effects of urban agriculture, and the its impacts on food justice. Less is known about the potential of rooftop farming, a subset of urban agriculture, to both provide subsistence to, and distribute food into, urban food networks, specifically those in food deserts. Using Urban Harvest STL (UH) as a case study, this work examines a rooftop farm's role in an urban food network. Through interviews with network organizations and GIS mapping of providers, distributors, and food deserts, this research identifies UH's food network and its strengths and weaknesses in serving the local food-insecure population. This research quantitatively demonstrates the role of rooftop farming to urban food production and food justice in a local St. Louis Food Network. Additionally, it highlights focus areas for analyzing small-scale urban food networks. Future studies should investigate the production capacities of rooftop farms, barriers to implementing rooftop farms, and ways that rooftop farms interact with, rather than work in isolation from, the greater urban food network. This research provides novel insight on rooftop farm potential in urban agriculture, as well as methods for identifying urban agriculture's strengths and weaknesses in food desert-heavy urban food networks.