

## **Strengthening the laws regulating urban farming initiatives for food security in Malaysia**

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### **Abstract**

Pandemic, war, global warming and land scarcity are among the factors which caused food insecurity. Towards this end, many initiatives have been designed to solve this problem including urban farming. Although urban farming is not a new concept in Malaysia, there are several issues that raise concerns such as the creation of public nuisance to the surrounding community, namely chemical exposure from pesticides and infectious diseases due to improper waste management. Another issue is the limited access to available land which resulted in illegal urban farming. Under the National Land Code 1965, agricultural activity can only be permitted for land categorised as agricultural land. Hence, farming activity in the urban areas has gone against the category of land use. Breach of the condition attached to the category of land use may subject the land to be forfeited. The laws governing urban farming in Malaysia are scattered. Therefore, these laws need to be strengthened to better control and regulate the activity of urban farming. This article employed a qualitative research methodology by examining the available laws and policy as well as analysing the legal issues and challenges in regulating urban farming. Qualitative methodology was selected for this article as it envisages the most suitable way to obtain proper data as it concerns aspects of reality that cannot be quantified. Amendment to the laws is suggested at the end of the article. This may ensure Sustainable Development Goals 6 on food security and sustainable agriculture is achieved.

**Keywords:** Food security, law, land, nuisance, urban farming

### **Introduction**

Traditionally, farming activities are conducted on land categorised as agriculture land and the location of the land is in the village area not in the city. Due to several reasons namely scarcity of land, conversion of agricultural land to building and industry land and global warming, the production of vegetables, fruits and poultry are affected. Other indirect issues like pandemics also give great impact to the production and distribution of farmers' products. Thus, the method of farming activities has changed. Movement control order ("MCO") which was issued in 2020 to

prevent the spread of COVID-19 triggered urban farming practices (Murdad, 2022). During the MCO period, there were restrictions on movement and transportation, resulting in a growing interest among people in urban farming. COVID-19 has affected the food supplies to urban cities and indirectly created awareness among people living in the cities to produce their own food supplies through urban farming (Zulkarnain et al., 2025).

There are several examples of urban farming practices which have already been implemented in Malaysia. For example, in Semenyih, Selangor, an urban farm called Green Fingers, which relies on an aquaponics technology to grow vegetables, has been established to give nutritious and fresh vegetables to city dwellers (Azuar, 2023). On the other hand, Putrajaya Corporation had already introduced the "*Kebun Komuniti Program*," a project that involved community gardens and Putrajaya's residents since 2008 and this concept improves interaction through community involvement and produces favorable results (Nafisi et al., 2020).

Some urban farms are cultivated on reserved land under Tenaga Nasional Berhad ("TNB") power lines, requiring licenses from the relevant authorities. This is exemplified by the *Kebun-Kebun Bangsar* ("KKB") community farm, situated on a hillside reserve for TNB power lines in Taman Bukit Pantai, Bangsar, between Jalan Cenderai and Lorong Bukit Pantai 4 (FMT Reporters, 2022). The LA21KL programme is another initiative by DBKL in urban farming, and as of 1st August 2022, there are 45 urban community farming projects registered under DBKL's "*Kebun Kejiranan Bandar LA21KL*," (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur, 2023) and the numbers are expected to keep increasing.

Recent developments in urban farming can be seen in the Malaysian government's initiative to introduce the Planning Guidelines for Plant Factories or "*Garis Panduan Perancangan Kilang Tanaman (Plant Factory)*" (GPP KiTa) on 12 September 2024, which streamline the approval process for establishing these facilities nationwide (Utama, 2024). The Malaysian Government's initiative, GPP KiTa, was designed to boost national food security and promote urban farming, particularly in rapidly urbanizing areas (where the population rose from 19.5 million in 2010 to 24.4 million in 2020, representing 75.1% of the population) (Bernama, 2024).

Since urban farming is a concept which has recently been adopted by the society, some of the practices posed disturbance, nuisance and impossible to be implemented. In Malaysia, most local authorities prohibit any animal rearing activity in residential areas. For instance, the Miri City Council prohibits raising livestock in private or public areas for any purpose (personal, commercial, or recreational) due to the potential for odor, noise, and visual disturbances (DayakDaily, 2022). This is a violation of Section 112(b) of the Local Authorities Ordinance 1999 and By-Law 28(4) of the Local Authorities (Cleanliness) By-Laws 1999, which requires written authorization from the council (DayakDaily, 2022).

Apart from the nuisance caused by urban farming, it was also reported by the local newspaper that urban farming has significant environmental implications. Pesticides used in the city may affect water supply and produce air pollution, particularly in densely populated regions, and may impact those with severe respiratory problems, while the abuse of public water supply by these urban farms may generate water shortages in the city, necessitating the usage of treated wastewater (Azuar, 2023). Thus, it is critical that urban farming be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that it does not cause a nuisance or negatively influence the ecosystem in the surrounding area.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the law intersects most clearly and consistently at the local level because urban farmers deal with their neighbours and the city administration,

which policies local behaviours (Witt, 2013). Currently, several stakeholders play critical roles in guaranteeing the success of urban farming in Malaysia.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to discuss the issues stemming from urban farming and how the available laws can be strengthened to better regulate urban farming. Several recommendations will be provided to ensure that urban farming activities in Malaysia continue to develop and are widely accepted by the community. It is to be noted that the urban farming referred to in this article will include vegetables, fruits, crops, flowers and also livestock or farm animals.

## Literature review

Multiple terms are used to describe the act of producing foods in an urban area such as urban farming, urban community farm, urban agriculture as well as urban garden. In developing countries, urban agriculture involves several activities such as cultivating crops, plants, and raising livestock within urban areas to produce food and other farm products (Toku et al., 2024). Witt (2013) in her article used the term urban agriculture and gave a broad definition of urban agriculture “*as the growing of fruits and vegetables and the raising of animals within city limits*”. While Ackerman (2012) defines urban agriculture “*as growing food within cities*”. It can be noted that various practises for raising plants or animals are included in urban agriculture and it is best explained as “*a comprehensive system covering a range of interests, from a usual core of activities linked with the production, advertising distribution, processing, and consumption, to a variety of different benefits and services that are much less generally known and documented*” (Nafisi et al., 2020). Islam and Siwar (2012) in their article also use the term “urban agriculture” which is defined as “*the practice of agricultural activities within urban and peri-urban periphery*”. Witt (2013) in her article, referred to urban farming to include “*larger-scale urban farms*”, “*backyard*” and “*apartment balcony gardening*”. There are similarities in categorizing urban farming as stated in a study by Nafisi et al. (2020), whereby urban farming can be a “*private garden in backyards*”, “*neighborhood gardens*” or “*city farms*” and advocates for urban agriculture frequently promote farms and gardens as ways to “*bring back*” nature to cities.

Under the LA21KL programme, urban farming is divided into several categories namely; (i) landed farm; (ii) institutional or educational institution farm; (iii) strata House Farm or *Kebun Rumah Bertingkat*; and (iv) farm on reserved land or non-profit organization (NGO) (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur, 2023). This article will be focusing on urban farming activities on landed farms and exclude stratified urban farming. For the purposes of this article, the authors will use the term “*urban farming*” which includes any reference to urban agriculture, urban gardens, or urban community farms.

Urban farming provides a powerful tool for cities to mitigate the impacts of rapid population growth, urbanization, food insecurity, and climate change, promoting a more sustainable future (Noor Azmi et al., 2024). People's participation in urban farming practices guarantees that food sources are accessible and safe to eat (Alaimo et al., 2008). Additionally, urban farming enables people to grow food that can be consumed safely while lowering stress levels and enhancing mental health. Analyzing urban farming's potential for food security, Rezai et al. (2016) demonstrated that increasing daily vegetable consumption through urban farming leads to improved fresh food availability, accessibility, and nutritional status, ultimately contributing to individual food security. This aligns with the Food and Agriculture Organization's

(FAO) definition of food security, which ensures everyone has consistent access to enough, safe, nutritious food for a healthy life (FAO, 2002).

While urban farming can support food security and provide many benefits to urban farmers and the community, many past researchers have highlighted the issue of insufficient land allocated or suitable for urban farming in Malaysia. According to Duchemin et al. (2009), the agricultural sector must compete with the residential, industrial, and commercial sectors for the soil that is accessible, and most of the land that is available is privately owned (Barthel et al., 2013a). Meanwhile, Beniston et al. (2014) highlighted that urban farmers who engage in this practise will be impacted by the lack of available land in urban areas. According to Low (2019), the complex and restrictive regulatory framework governing land use in Singapore creates significant space limitations for urban farming, therefore, as Song et al. (2022) indicates, highly productive farming practices become essential to overcome land scarcity. A study by Ishak et al. (2022) indicates that urban farmers in Kuala Lumpur face significant challenges, amongst others, in accessing land for urban farming. This is in line with the latest research finding from Yapp et al. (2025) where farmers who have been interviewed highlighted that government policies and legislative controls are among the challenges faced by them.

Land use regulations in the United States often pose significant barriers to urban farming, as many existing zoning codes restrict such activities in urban areas (Witt, 2013). She highlighted how these regulatory frameworks frequently prevent residents from pursuing urban agriculture initiatives. In addition, if cities want to support urban farming, their zoning policies should be designed to enable various types of urban farming as a matter of right, rather than conditional use, in any land use category in the city. Community gardens, for example, are permissible in residential zones without a conditional use permit under Seattle's zoning law. Nevertheless, where the activity is more commercial than residential, larger-scale urban farms may draw a sizable quantity of automotive or pedestrian traffic and a conditional use permit is then necessary in these circumstances to oversee the activity. In view thereof, the local authorities can distinguish between resident-run community gardens and for-profit businesses that might genuinely have a negative influence on their neighbors based on acreage or output.

It is to be noted that the problem of limited access to available land, as highlighted by past researchers above, leads to another issue of illegal urban farming or trespassing on reserved land for urban farming. Additionally, conflicts between farmers, locals, and the authorities have arisen as a result of these illegal urban farms and recreational urban farming (Razak & Roff, 2007). It is also pertinent to note that Witt's study in the United States clearly highlighted the issue of zoning in town planning and urban farming, in contrast, similar research is not available in Malaysia. Most previous publications on urban farming in Malaysia emphasized the advantages and success of urban farming from a social standpoint rather than a legal standpoint.

Recent literature on urban farming in Malaysia highlights a multifaceted approach encompassing technological advancements, social inclusion, economic considerations, and policy implications. Studies emphasize the importance of integrating smart technologies, such as vertical garden systems, to enhance productivity and sustainability in urban agriculture (Hamidon et al., 2024). Moreover, the adoption of urban farming among elderly populations demonstrates its potential in promoting social innovation and economic sustainability (Khan et al., 2024). However, challenges related to land availability, policy support, and maintenance practices need to be addressed to fully realize the benefits of urban farming in Malaysia (Omar Chong et al., 2024; Saarani et al., 2024). Therefore, this article provides a detail legal analysis on the aspect of urban farming activity.

## Method and study area

This article employs a qualitative research method. The important characteristic of qualitative research is that it involves observation and document analysis that value depth over quantity. This method applies to collecting and analyzing non-numerical data that further helps to have a better understanding of the concepts and development of the laws governing urban farming in Malaysia. Qualitative methodology was selected for this article as it envisages the most suitable way to obtain proper data as it concerns aspects of reality that cannot be quantified, focusing on understanding and explaining the dynamics of social relations (Queirós, Faria & Almeida, 2017). Additionally, the qualitative methodology aims to produce in-depth and illustrative information to understand the various dimensions of the problem under analysis. In conducting research for this paper, doctrinal analysis is used. The analysis constitutes a systematic and rigorous examination of legal principles, rules, and concepts as derived from authoritative primary and secondary sources. This method is centered on the interpretation and synthesis of the 'black letter law,' involving critical analysis of statutes, judicial decisions, and other legal texts to elucidate and articulate the applicable legal doctrines relevant to a specific legal issue. In relation to the issue of urban farming, analysis is made to relevant laws governing urban farming initiatives in order to determine the legal gaps and the loopholes in implementing the laws. The relevant laws subject to analysis are National Land Code 1965, Town and Country Planning Act 1976, Local Government Act 1976, Street, Drainage, and Building Act 1974, Environmental Quality Act 1974 as well as policies and guidelines. The court in interpreting the laws will apply either the literal rule, mischief rule or golden rule. Thus, this guiding principle is used to understand the impact of the strict implementation of the laws to the society. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the technical and legal aspect governing urban farming activity, issues and challenges, a review of relevant previous literature was conducted. Sources from journal articles and books which can be accessed from online databases including LexisNexis, CLJ Law, Emerald and other online platforms such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate were referred to.

## Results and discussion

### *Legal framework for urban farming in Malaysia*

#### a. A legal void: Urban farming and the National Land Code

The primary law that governs land law in Malaysia is the National Land Code ("NLC") which was first enacted in 1965. The NLC clearly gives distinction to the categories of land use as provided in Section 52 of the NLC i.e. agriculture, building and industry. Categorizing land into these three distinct categories serves to achieve specific objectives for the land administrators, which include: (a) ensuring orderly development through zoning for future industrial areas, planning for essential services, and controlling density for health or political reasons; (b) maximizing land utilization; and (c) facilitating the identification of land for future acquisitions (Buang, 2007). The NLC further characterizes land use through implied conditions in sections 115 (agriculture), 116 (building), and 117 (industry). Since urban farming practices are confined within the broad definition of "agriculture" in Section 5 of the NLC, which includes "the cultivation of any crop (including trees cultivated for the purpose of their produce), market gardening, the breeding and

keeping of honey-bees, livestock and reptiles, and aquaculture,” it logically follows that urban farming finds its most natural fit within the agricultural land use framework of Section 115. Conversely, the implied conditions of building (116) and industrial (117) categories present clear limitations, with section 116 expressly forbidding agricultural activities and section 117 reserved exclusively for industrial purposes. The NLC was revised in 2020 (Act 828) which replaced its predecessor the NLC (Act 56) of 1965. It seemed that the NLC, even though it was revised in 2020, did not give consideration to the development of urban farming to be aligned with the rapid urbanization. Therefore, the rigidity of the provisions of the NLC in its definition of land use and the implied conditions attached to each land use category are deemed to be the weaknesses of this act in supporting the development of urban farming in Malaysia.

b. Town Country Planning Act 1976: When urban planning and urban farming collide

The Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (“TCPA”) is another piece of legislation relevant to land development by governing land use planning and focusing on the regulation of urban and rural development. Planning law plays a critical role in shaping the practice and development of urban farming by governing land use, zoning, and development control within urban environments. In Malaysia, the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (Act 172) empowers local authorities to designate land use zones through structure and local plans, which significantly influence where and how urban farming can occur (Ibrahim & Salim, 2020; Salim et al., 2020). Urban agriculture is often constrained by zoning regulations that do not explicitly permit farming activities in residential or commercial zones, thereby requiring special planning permissions or temporary land use licenses, such as the Temporary Occupation License (TOL), for such activities to proceed (Ishak et al., 2022). While initiatives like the Urban Community Farming Policy (*Dasar Kebun Komuniti Bandar*) advocate for the integration of urban farming into city planning, the lack of specific legal frameworks and the temporary nature of land tenure arrangements create uncertainty for urban farmers (Omar Chong et al., 2024). Furthermore, urban farming must comply with environmental, sanitation, and public health regulations, which adds another layer of legal oversight. Thus, the intersection of planning law and urban farming underscores the need for more inclusive and adaptive legal frameworks that recognize urban agriculture as a legitimate and sustainable component of urban land use.

Despite not having specific legal frameworks governing urban farming, policies and guidelines are issued by the federal government and local authorities from time to time. The relevant policies related to urban farming include but not limited to the Urban Community Farming Policy or *Dasar Kebun Komuniti Negara* (“DKKN”), the Guidelines on Community Farming as well as the recent Planning Guidelines for Plant Factories or “*Garis Panduan Perancangan Kilang Tanaman* (Plant Factory)” (GPP KiTa) issued by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and “*Panduan Pelaksanaan Kebun Kejuranan Bandar Local Agenda 21 Kuala Lumpur* (PPKKB LA21KL)” issued by DBKL. The DKKN provides the outline and strategies for community farming which are aligned with the local government’s procedures and regulations. The DKKN will be the foundation for the implementation of urban community farming where it will lay down the best practices of urban farming, the necessary approval process and the restrictions that apply to urban farming activities. On the other hand, DBKL through PPKKB LA21KL laid down the necessary requirements to ensure compliance with guidelines and related legislation. However, although DKKN is issued at the federal level, it lacks legal authority being a mere policy and therefore subject to state authority to adopt such policy which DBKL has implemented via PPKKB

LA21KL. The GPP KiTa guidelines stipulate that plant factory development must adhere to existing laws, including the NLC, the TCPA, the SDBA, the EQA, and other relevant regulations (*Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan*, 2024). However, its implementation remains to be tested, given its recent introduction.

c. The Local Government Act 1976: Regulating urban farming nuisances in Malaysia

In discussing the legal framework connected to urban farming, another piece of legislation that is important to highlight is the Local Government Act 1976 (“LGA”), conferring the powers to the local government authorities to administer functions related to environmental, public, social and development in their area (Maidin & Mubarak Ali, 2009). The LGA empowers the state and local governments to administer the planning system and development control specified under the TCPA. The LGA is relevant in urban farming as the local authority has the power under Section 73 of the LGA to issue relevant by-laws and guidelines in relation to the implementation of urban farming in their area and this also covers the provisions of abatement of nuisances that may be contributed by the activities of urban farming.

In relations to the allegation that urban farming may cause nuisance to the surrounding area, the LGA has define nuisance under Section 2 of the LGA as:

*“....any act, omission or thing occasioning or likely to occasion injury, annoyance, offence, harm, danger or damage to the sense of sight, smell or hearing or which is or likely to be injurious or dangerous to health or property or which affects the safety or the rights of the inhabitants at large.”*

Referring to the definition, rearing livestock in urban farms can be considered as a nuisance since it produces bad smell and unpleasant sight. Section 81(b) of the LGA covers any animal kept in a place, manner, or number that constitutes a nuisance and makes it liable to be dealt with under the LGA. Therefore, local authorities have the power under Section 82 of the LGA to issue warnings to owners whose farm animals create a nuisance.

Therefore, nuisance cases resulted from urban farming can be controlled by applying the provisions in the LGA. However, it will not give solutions and support to the best practice of urban farming.

d. Street Drainage and Building Act 1974: Regulating urban farming nuisances in Malaysia

The Street Drainage and Building Act 1974 (“SDBA”) addresses nuisances related to urban farming infrastructure or inadequate waste management practices. One of the most common issues in urban farming relates to sanitation and waste management. Section 86(a) states that any premises or part thereof of such a construction or in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious or dangerous to health constitutes a nuisance. Urban farms that fail to manage compost properly or allow organic waste to decay in open spaces may emit foul odors and attract vermin, thereby creating unhealthy conditions for nearby residents. Obstructions on public land also present legal issues under this Act. Some urban farms expand onto sidewalks, road reserves, or other public areas without prior permission. These actions can be deemed nuisances which refer respectively to “any obstruction to a public drain or other public place” and to “any obstruction, encroachment or projection in or over any street or public place.” For example, a vertical garden extending over

a pedestrian walkway or planting beds that block public drains may disrupt public access and infrastructure, justifying enforcement action by municipal councils.

Another serious concern is the creation of stagnant water, which often arises from inefficient irrigation systems or poor drainage around planting beds. This directly relates to Section 86(b), which identifies as a nuisance any pool, ditch, gutter, or watercourse that “is so foul or in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health.” In urban areas prone to dengue outbreaks, the presence of stagnant water is particularly alarming, as it provides ideal conditions for mosquitoes to breed, endangering public health.

Further, urban farming activities can sometimes result in the attraction of vermin and stray animals. Improper storage of feed, compost, or leftover produce may encourage the presence of rats, insects, or stray dogs. Such scenarios are addressed under Section 86(c), which, as mentioned, encompasses the accumulation of materials likely to harbor vermin or insects. This is especially relevant in cases where urban farms are left unattended or poorly maintained, becoming a focal point for pest infestations in the neighborhood. Safety concerns also arise when urban farmers build their own greenhouses, scaffolds, or hydroponic racks using substandard materials or without engineering approval. If these structures are unstable, they may collapse during adverse weather or cause injury, thereby constituting a danger to public safety. This concern is covered by Section 86(d), which includes “any building or part of a building...so dilapidated as to be a nuisance or dangerous to the occupants or to the public.” Local authorities may inspect such structures and, if deemed hazardous, require their removal or modification.

In approving urban farming activities, the Local Planning Authority also has power to impose conditions related to the building, and drainage system in line with the SDBA and related guideline for specific farming activities.

#### e. From soil to city: The Environmental Quality Act 1974's essential role in urban farming

Although not directly connected to urban farming, the Environmental Quality Act 1974 (“EQA”) is relevant for the protection of the environment, especially in addressing nuisances arising from pollution of water, soil, or air caused by urban farming activities. Pollution is defined under Section 2 of the EQA as:

*“...any direct or indirect alteration of the physical, thermal, chemical, biological, or radioactive properties of any part of the environment by discharging, emitting, or depositing wastes so as to affect any beneficial use adversely, to cause a condition which is hazardous or potentially hazardous to public health, safety, or welfare, or to animals, birds, wildlife, fish or aquatic life, or to plants or to cause a contravention of any condition, limitation, or restriction to which a licence under this Act is subject;”*

If not managed sustainably, urban farming could contribute to pollution, for example, through pesticide use, runoff, or water disposal, thus necessitating compliance with the EQA. The EQA also deals with waste management, which is relevant to urban farming activities that generate organic waste. Recycled organic waste can be effectively utilized in urban farming to drive local production (Agarwal et al., 2021). Proper waste management is crucial for pollution prevention and environmental sustainability.



### *Legal issues and challenges*

#### a. Zoning and land use obstacles to urban farming in Malaysia

The first issue relating to urban farming is due to the rigidity of the category of land use provided under the NLC 1965 and zoning system under the TCPA 1976. The NLC categorised land into either Agriculture, Building and Industry and the planning laws designate areas for certain activities only, and urban farming is not included as one of the activities considered in the planning zone. Accordingly, all development activities has to be in-line with the category of land use and the zoning of the area in order to ensure uniformity. In the case of urban farming practices, the local authority should formulate a special zoning area to allow urban farming and not as a conditional use in any land use category in the city (Witt, 2013). The location of land used for urban farming is normally adjacent to road lines, rivers, along or under a power line and open spaces. It is less likely to find specific land in urban areas specifically for agriculture or farming as farming is generally considered as a non-urban land use activity in a plan for the urban environment or in formulating the zoning plan. The lack of control in the subdivision of land use will give effect to the fragmentation of land for agriculture and the increasing number of land use conflicts as industries, commercial and residential use are given priority over agriculture (Islam & Siwar, 2012). These resulted in legal issues such as trespassing of land for illegal urban farming and limited land for urban farming.

#### b. Lack of regulatory uniformity: A barrier to urban farming growth

One of the problems with the current legal framework for urban farming in Malaysia is that it involves many different ministries, government agencies, and laws. This always happen when urban farming takes place on reserved land, which requires a Temporary Occupation License (TOL). A clear example of these legal challenges is the case involving KKB community farm, the Federal Territories Lands and Mines Office, and DBKL. In this case, DBKL ordered the removal of animals under Section 82 of the Local Government Act, and the Lands and Mines Office later issued an eviction notice for violating TOL conditions under Section 425(1) of the National Land Code. These actions sparked strong public criticism from those who support urban farming. In addition to DBKL and the Lands and Mines Office, KKB community farm was also being monitored by TNB (Tenaga Nasional Berhad), whose technical requirements reportedly influenced enforcement (FMT Reporters, 2022). This case shows how complex and confusing the regulation of urban farming can be. Overlapping system of rules from different authorities can lead to confusion, conflicting decisions, and inconsistent enforcement, making it harder for urban farmers to operate with confidence.

#### c. Challenges of nuisance and environmental control in urban farming

Urban farming in Malaysia is focusing on community-based urban farming involving vegetation and does not provide much room for animal rearing or livestock except for bees. One of the reasons is contributing to the control of nuisance and environmental protection. The LGA and DKKN clearly prohibit activities of animal rearing or livestock for urban farming in Malaysia. Nuisance can occur by activities of urban farming involving animals as lack of proper maintenance could cause an unpleasant odour and attract flies thus will cause discomfort to the surroundings

especially if urban farming is adjacent to a residential area. This is evident from the case study of KKB community farm. The Land Office and the local authority have also taken action against the farm due to nuisance complaints. Large-scale urban farming could also create nuisances when it involves heavy machinery, causing traffic congestion and emission of excessive noise. Uncontrolled urban farming or illegal urban farming will cause a negative impact on the environment especially when it involves the use of pesticides, improper drainage and waste system and pollution of water sources. Consequently, local authorities must play an effective role in the enforcement and monitoring of urban farming to mitigate nuisance complaints and find a balance between the rights of neighboring residents and the sustainability of urban farming in the long run, as these complaints would disrupt its development.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

Urban farming has become an important part of sustainable living in Malaysia, offering benefits such as local food production, community development, and better use of idle land. However, despite these advantages, many urban farming initiatives face several issues and challenges. These include scattered laws governing the practice, overlapping responsibilities among government agencies, and inconsistent enforcement and nuisance to the surrounding areas. To ensure urban farming can thrive, a clear and coordinated solution is needed.

The first step is to create a unified legal and regulatory framework for urban farming. Currently, different authorities such as city councils, the Lands and Mines Office, and Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) are involved, each with their own rules. This creates confusion for urban farmers. A central policy led by Ministry of Local Government Development should bring all these rules together into one clear guideline. This would make it easier for both farmers and local authorities to understand what is allowed and what is not. Perhaps one specific legislation is needed to govern urban farming activity.

Another important solution is to set aside specific zones in the city for urban farming. These could include unused government land, rooftops, or open spaces in residential areas. By identifying and approving such zones in the local plans, local councils can reduce land-use conflicts and better support farming activities. It would also allow farmers to invest in their farms without fear of being evicted suddenly.

Urban farmers should also be given access to simple and transparent licensing procedures. These licenses can outline important rules, such as how to manage waste, avoid blocking public pathways, and maintain safety. Clear guidelines and technical support can help farmers follow best practices, reducing the risk of nuisances such as bad smells, pests, or unsafe structures.

Finally, non-legal measures are equally important to support the legal tools to regulate urban farming. To make the process more efficient, a one-stop centre for urban farming should be created. This centre can help farmers with applications, inspections, and approvals. It can also offer training and advice to new farmers, helping them to farm safely and sustainably. This one-stop centre can also provide education and create community engagement. With full understanding of what is the importance of urban farming, it is easier to integrate it into city life through the local plan.

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