

High-yielding desert crops? Soil-free growing system could boost food security in world's arid regions

A lush, green mat of fresh animal fodder is an unlikely sight in the harsh Sahara Desert, but a project from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is helping crops flourish in unexpected places. Using purpose-built hydroponic systems, Sahrawi refugees in Western Algeria have been able to grow barley grass to feed their livestock, in turn increasing milk production and meat quality. By selling surplus fodder, the refugees have been able to earn additional income

The project is part of H2Grow, an initiative that aims to solve hunger in arid regions and help vulnerable communities become more self-reliant by securing food resources With the help of agritech systems, the hope is that desert-dwelling communities may overcome food scarcity and gain resilience against some of the most immediate impacts of climate change.

The secret to H2Grow is hydroponics, a soil-free cultivation technique that uses up to 90% less water than traditional agriculture, according to Nina Schroeder, head of scale-up enablement at the WFP Innovation Accelerator. Better still, hydroponic agriculture doesn't require lots of land or depend on seasons. As long as you have the right basic ingredients (seeds, water, light, and nutrients), crops can grow year-round.

Read full, original article: [No soil? No problem. H2Grow can cultivate crops practically anywhere](#)