

Qatar hails veggie growing trial success

August 25 2015



A successful two-year trial of the Zulal Oasis hydroponics project, saw tomatoes grown in greenhouses without soil and using recycled irrigation water, by Hassad Food on farmland west of the capital, Doha

Desert nation Qatar will use "cutting-edge technology" to grow up to 70 percent of its own vegetables by 2023—a four-fold increase, officials from Doha's biggest agricultural group said Tuesday.

The prediction comes after a successful two-year trial of the Zulal Oasis

hydroponics project, which saw tomatoes grown in greenhouses without soil and using recycled irrigation water, by Hassad Food on farmland west of the capital, Doha.

A spokesperson for Hassad said the scheme could now be rolled out and could allow the country to register the huge increase in production of its own [vegetables](#) within eight years.

Currently, between 11 and 16 percent of vegetables are grown locally, depending on the season.

The trial focused on tomatoes but could be used to grow other popular vegetables in Qatar, including cucumbers, aubergines and courgettes.

"We are pleased to announce that this pilot project has achieved great success," said Nasser Mohamed al-Hajri, chairman and managing director of Hassad Food.

"The technology proved to be perfectly suited for Qatar's climate; it also exceeded expectations regarding the yield and quality.

"The Zula Oasis [technology](#) is a long-term sustainable production model, with the capability of producing high-grade crops 12 months a year regardless of the season."

Food security is a big issue for Qatar, which imports the vast majority of its needs.

A National Food Security programme, designed to increase Qatar's and [food](#) self-sufficiency, was launched in 2013 and will continue until 2030.

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Citation: Qatar hails veggie growing trial success (2015, August 25) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-08-qatar-hails-veggie-trial-success.html>

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