



The Covering Environments Seminars

Merle Jensen, PhD

Professor Emeritus of Plant Sciences, CALS&VS University of Arizona of

September 27, 2019 @ 4:00pm
at the CEAC 1951 E Roger Rd, Tucson

SADIYAT: A MIRACLE IN THE ARABIAN DESERT
FIFTY YEARS: THEN & NOW

Modern Hydroponics, growing vegetable crops in soil-less controlled environments, owes much of its advances, global presence and popularity to Dr Merle Jensen. More than twenty five years ago, Merle Jensen was the first to succinctly define it for the world in a White Paper to the World Bank: *(It) "is a technology for growing plants in a nutrient solution (water and fertilizers) with or without the use of an artificial medium (such as sand, gravel, vermiculite, rock wool, peat moss, sawdust...) to provide mechanical support. Liquid hydroponics systems have no other supporting medium for the plant roots, while the aggregate systems have a solid medium of support."*

Today, we can find the impact of this technology globally in large measure due to the inspiring, untiring involvement, and enthusiasm of Merle Jensen. His efforts have brought to the front the concept of controlled environment agriculture for urban food production, food production in the deserts of Egypt, Abu Dhabi and Jordan, and expansion of food production in China, Mexico, the USA and 120 other countries. In addition to Jensen's hands on approach, he has also inspired generations of future techno-farmers through numerous public appearances on TV and in the popular press. In the academic realm he has published numerous papers in peer reviewed journals and authored several books.

Today, Merle will reminisce about his Abu Dhabi project which was started fifty years ago and is still producing fresh vegetables in the Arabian desert even today. He recently returned from a trip to the UAE, on behalf of the State Department, to celebrate fifty years of the Saadiyat Project.

