

2007 Laureate Announcement Ceremony Prepared Remarks

I am so pleased that our founder Dr. Norman E. Borlaug is able to be with us today. Many of you may know that Norm has been quite sick this winter, but having been raised on a farm in northeast Iowa and wrestled his way through high school and college, Norm is incredibly tough.

Norman Borlaug founded the World Food Prize to be the “Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture,” and in the 20 years since he established the Prize it has been presented to Laureates from around the world for their exceptional breakthrough achievements in increasing the quantity, quality, and availability of food, thus ameliorating hunger, malnutrition and human suffering.

For example, last year, our \$250,000 award went to three individuals for their work in opening the Cerrado in Brazil. The previous year it was presented to an expert in small scale fish farming from India who helped raise up the lives of thousands and thousands of very poor women. In 2004, when we were first privileged to hold our first Laureate Announcement Ceremony in the State Department with Secretary Powell, our two Laureates were brilliant agricultural scientists from China and Sierra Leone who were developing incredibly high yielding new strains of rice.

Let me also note that the World Food Prize has had additional international impact. In 2006, the Nobel Peace Prize went to Mohammed Yunus of Bangladesh for his work in microcredit. What may not be so well known is that his first ever international recognition came in 1994 when he received the World Food Prize. With Dr. Borlaug and Dr. Yunus, we now like to say that the road to the Nobel Peace Prize goes through Des Moines.

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In 2007, we have also moved closer to our Foundation headquarters in finding our new Laureate. He comes from the American state of Indiana. Raised on a farm, he was engaged in his family's tomato production and canning business from his earliest years. As a teenager, he even won the title of "Tomato King" at the Indiana state fair for having raised the most perfect tomatoes in the state. Our Laureate's education and life has been centered around Purdue University. He earned a PhD there and then as a faculty member, has focused his professional life in research and teaching about aseptic storage and transportation systems.

Intrigued by the challenge of sustaining the taste and nutrition value of fresh fruits and vegetables in the post-harvest period, our 2007 Laureate devised a technological process to store and preserve significant quantities of cut produce. At first, he developed small scale storage units which could handle only about 100 gallons. But over the years, these capacities were increased to where now his technology is used on super tanker ships to carry up to 8 million gallons of orange juice between continents. His technology has been utilized by significant international food and agribusiness companies for their commercial operations, including Land O'Lakes, Scholle Corporation and FMC to name but a few.

Perhaps most significantly, our Laureate's technology permits food to be stored and transported within developing countries and also allows relief agencies to deliver significant quantities of food and water to remote or cut off areas during times of great crisis such as the tsunami that devastated parts of Indonesia and Hurricane Katrina that ravaged our Gulf Coast.

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Ladies and Gentlemen it is my privilege and honor to reveal to you today the name of the man who has made the technological breakthrough achievement that has revolutionized post-harvest transportation and storage processes: the 2007 World Food Prize Laureate is Dr. Phillip Nelson of Purdue University.

[pause]

Dr. Nelson will be presented the \$250,000 World Food Prize in a ceremony in the magnificent Iowa State Capitol on the evening of October 18. That ceremony will be held in conjunction with our Dr. Norman E. Borlaug International Symposium—October 17-19—which this year addresses the topic “Biofuels and Biofood: Global Challenges of Emerging Technology. Iowa is the biorenewable energy capital of America, so it is the perfect place for a conference that will bring perspective from around the world. We also will hold a special Iowa biofuels expo the evening of Wednesday October 17.

As you leave you will be given a brochure with details about this event and how you can register at our website www.worldfoodprize.org to attend what will be a marvelous event both honoring Dr. Nelson and addressing cutting edge issues in global food and energy security.

In closing I want to thank the State Department once again for welcoming us here for this announcement and to those who have done the work on my staff and at the State Department to organize this including Jack Bobo of the Economic, Energy and Business Bureau.

It is now my privilege to introduce the Under Secretary of Management for the State Department who has been nominated to be the next administrator of USAID

