



THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

Quinn: A Tribute to Norman Borlaug on the Fourth Anniversary of His Death

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Norman Borlaug

By **Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn**

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September 12 marks the fourth anniversary of the death of **Dr. Norman Borlaug**, the Iowa native and Nobel Peace Prize laureate who founded the World Food Prize, and after whom our **Hall of Laureates** building along the Des Moines River is named.

Known as the "Father of the Green Revolution" and "the man who saved 1 billion lives" for developing "miracle wheat," Dr. Borlaug is considered perhaps our state's greatest hero. His statue will be installed in the U.S. Capitol next March 25 in recognition of his extraordinary leadership to reduce hunger around the world.

Dr. Borlaug's last words were "Take it to the farmer." Just before that, he said, "I have a problem: Africa," referring to his unfulfilled goal of bringing enhanced agricultural production to that continent.

Two recent events show that Dr. Borlaug's last wish and his legacy are continuing to inspire individuals all around the world, just as he did during his 95 years on Earth.

On September 11 in New Delhi, Governor Terry Branstad was to lay a wreath at the foot of a statue of Dr. Borlaug, erected by the agricultural leaders of India. It recognizes the critical role that Dr. Borlaug played in bringing his new highly productive wheat to India in 1963, as

that country faced imminent mass starvation. His innovation brought about a dramatic change as, in just a few short years, India went from the specter of millions of deaths to self-sufficiency. It was the beginning of the Green Revolution and led to Dr. Borlaug being acknowledged as the “man who saved more lives than any other person who ever lived.”

There are also statues in honor of Dr. Borlaug in Mexico where he did his pioneering research in the 1940s and '50s. One is at the International Center for Wheat and Maize near Mexico that grew out of his work at that center. The other, and in some ways the most touching, is near the city of Obregon, erected in gratitude by the local Farmer's Association, made up of the descendants of those poor farmers with whom Dr. Borlaug worked side by side to help lift them out of poverty.

It is truly remarkable that a small-town farm boy from Howard County, Iowa, is revered by leaders, scientists and farmers in so many different parts of the world. It is a great point of pride that the World Food Prize and the Hall of Laureates is the organization and the place carrying forward his goal of eradicating hunger from the face of the earth.

A good example of that endeavor came last week, in Maputo, Mozambique, when a 38 year old Kenyan agricultural scientist named **Dr. Charity Mutegi** was called to the stage of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa Forum to be introduced as the 2013 recipient of the World Food Prize **Dr. Norman Borlaug Award for Field Research and Application, Endowed by the Rockefeller Foundation**, this \$10,000 award honors a scientist under the age of 40 who best emulates Dr. Borlaug's work in the field with farmers and producers when he was just a young man in Mexico. This Kenyan woman scientist had been chosen from nominees around the globe for this honor based on her work in confronting the deadly aflatoxin mold that was taking lives in rural areas of Africa, in the same way Norman Borlaug had overcome wheat rust disease in remote parts of Mexico.

Most appropriately, Dr. Mutegi will be presented this \$10,000 award at a special ceremony in Des Moines on October 16, which is by decree of the Governor and the Iowa Legislature “Norman Borlaug Day” in Iowa. This event will be held at the Norman Borlaug World Food Prize Hall of Laureates with individuals from more than 65 countries looking on. It is significant that the World Food Prize is today carrying forward Norman Borlaug's dreams for the future and Dr. Mutegi is carrying on and fulfilling those very last words that Norman Borlaug ever spoke: she is “taking it to the farmer.”

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