

CROPS

Vegetable Breeder Wins 2019 World Food Prize

Vegetable breeder Simon Groot of the Netherlands is the 2019 World Food Prize Laureate.

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Vegetable breeder Simon Groot of the Netherlands is the 2019 World Food Prize Laureate. He was honored for his transformative role in empowering millions of smallholder farmers in more than 60 countries to earn greater incomes through enhanced vegetable

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, president of the World Food Prize Foundation, says Groot helped to develop vegetable varieties with enhanced disease resistance and significantly higher yields. "As the use of his seeds spread throughout the Philippines and to Thailand, Indonesia, and across Southeast Asia, farmers' daily lives were uplifted and consumers benefited from greater access to nutritious vegetables."

Groot developed a global network of seed producers who are transforming the lives of 20 million farmers every year, says Quinn.

The \$250,000 prize honors Groot's unparalleled achievements as the founder and leader of East-West Seed, says Quinn. His initiative over the past four decades has developed a dynamic, smallholder-centric tropical vegetable seed industry, starting in Southeast Asia and spreading through Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Today East-West Seed serves over 20 million smallholder farmers in more than 60 tropical countries. Groot has led the transition of millions of subsistence farmers, many of them women, to horticulture entrepreneurs, thereby greatly enhancing their livelihoods and income. These farmers have invigorated both rural and urban markets for vegetable crops in their communities, making nutritious vegetables more widely available and affordable for millions of families each year.

Groot will receive the World Food Prize at a ceremony that will be held in the magnificent Iowa State Capitol building in Des Moines, Iowa, on the evening of October 17, 2019.

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