

I am greatly honored to have been invited to deliver the address at the Siehl Prize presentation honoring three such illustrious and worthy individuals as the laureates being honored here today. They are part of a rich history and fabric of the University of Minnesota and Minnesota agriculture, and follow an array of distinguished achievers including my dear friend Dr. Ron Phillips, one of America's foremost plant scientists and a great friend of the World Food Prize Foundation.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to Dean Al Levine for his invitation to me to be here today. You all know Al as a brilliant agricultural scientist who was a pioneer in linking food and nutrition issues to health over the past many years. On the other hand, I know him as a musician and composer. And I would like to think that one of the highlights of his professional career was being at the World Food Prize ceremony a few years ago as his original composition entitled “Growing Borlaug Wheat” was performed for the first time and received thunderous applause.

The fact that this year's Siehl Prize presentation takes place between two of the great dates in American agricultural history makes this an even more auspicious occasion. On May 15, Secretary Tom Vilsack and the U.S. Department of Agriculture celebrated the 150th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's establishing USDA as an integral part of American government. And just one month from now, there will be an equally significant event on June 26, with the sesquicentennial observance of the

passage of the Morrill Act, creating the Land Grant college system. In recognition of the great achievements of these two institutions, the World Food Prize will present our Norman Borlaug Medallion to USDA and APLU in a special ceremony later this year. The Borlaug Medallion was created to recognize great institutions that would not be eligible to receive the World Food Prize, but have made extraordinary contributions to providing food in the world. This is certainly well deserved.

During that century and a half, these two institutions, USDA and the Land Grant colleges and universities, have uplifted consecutive generations of Americans and dramatically improved nutrition and health. In addition, in conjunction with the efforts of American farmers and agribusinesses, they turned the American Middle West into the epicenter of the single greatest period of food production and hunger reduction in all human history. The farmers, scientists, extension workers, agribusiness leaders, and educators from this state and this university, and indeed all across the American

heartland, should be so very proud of the role that they played in this process.

Surely, this is one of the greatest achievements of the United States of

America since its founding.

The fact that the individual who is credited with leading this great

achievement, and the single most distinguished individual to have ever

graduated from a Land Grant institution, and the single most distinguished

employee to have ever worked at the U.S. Department of Agriculture is an

alumnus of the University of Minnesota, is an extraordinary tribute to this institution and all who have been part of it, from its beginning in the 19th century. That person, of course, is Norman Borlaug. Norman Borlaug is the link that brings my World Food Prize Foundation together with the Siehl Prize, because there is the extremely touching story of how shortly before he passed away, Eldon Siehl and Norman Borlaug finally met and were able to exchange stories and ideas about how to inspire future leaders. They both shared the vision of the critical importance of passing the torch to succeeding

generations, both to recognize their achievements as we do today with these three recipients of the Siehl Prize, and as I did earlier in hearing the presentations by young World Food Prize Borlaug-Ruan Interns who are now here at the university.

The last time I spoke on this campus was at the memorial service for Dr. Borlaug, shortly after he passed away in 2009. At that time, I noted that it could be a little difficult for me – an Iowan – to be here, since we tend to

think that the University of Minnesota stole Dr. Borlaug from Iowa, much the way you stole Brett Favre from the Green Bay Packers. Of course, I could not help but note in reading Eldon Siehl's biography that he too was born in Iowa, so I guess you stole him from us as well. Speaking of football, I know that there can sometimes be controversy regarding the tradeoff between a university supporting an athletic program and its academic and research mission. It is probably significant to note that the conversation that convinced Norm Borlaug to come to Minneapolis to for a campus visit came

from a boyhood friend, who convinced him that the university of Minnesota football program was looking for some athletes like Norm. He made the trip and, as is said, the rest is history. If not for football, Norm might have been a really good high school teacher in Iowa.

But thank goodness that he came to the University of Minnesota, because it was here that he saw firsthand on the streets of the Twin Cities the human face of hunger among the thousands of homeless people who were sleeping

on the sidewalk and seeking desperately to find any way to get food. It was that experience that deeply imprinted Dr. Borlaug's soul with the images that motivated him for the rest of his life to help confront hunger everywhere on our planet. And it was here at the university that Norman Borlaug heard that lecture by Dr. Evan Stakman that inspired him to give up his career in the Forestry Service of USDA and to become a plant pathologist. And, thank goodness as well, that Eldon Siehl came to Minnesota, so that he too was exposed to those experiences which so motivated him to want to encourage

successive generations to build upon and enhance agricultural research, production and business.

The Siehl Prize was created to honor very specific parts of the world of agriculture, which for some has been rather sharply divided between those who did research, those who worked the land, and those who bought and sold commodities. What seems increasingly clear is that in the future, it will be

critical to continue to knit together these three areas if the great challenges of the 21st century are to be met.

It was my privilege last Friday to be in Washington at the conference organized as part of the G8 summit meeting, at which the New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition was announced. It was truly a dramatic moment when it was revealed that over 45 agribusiness companies had committed over \$3 billion for investment in Africa in order to help lead the struggle to

reduce that terrible number of people – 1 billion – who suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition. Minnesota can again be proud that a number of its leading agribusinesses were at the forefront of this endeavor. One of the phrases repeated again and again at this daylong conference was “public-private partnerships.”

This October 17 to 19, our Borlaug Dialogue international symposium in Des Moines will build upon this same theme. The title of our conference will be

“Partnerships and Priorities: Transforming the Global Food Security Agenda.” It is clear that no one institution will be able to carry out the work that is necessary in the 21st century if we are to succeed in almost doubling the food supply by the year 2050. The critical role to be played by agribusiness companies, many of which are headquartered in Minnesota and are great friends of the World Food Prize, will be critical.

Distinguished universities also have a special role to play in that regard, as both the intellectual meeting place for such endeavors, with the ability to provide the “catalytic nudge” in order to help instill confidence as new partners come to the table in widespread areas around the world. The Land Grant university’s reach is no longer measured by the counties in its home state to which extension representatives can travel, but rather the developing countries it reaches around the world, where its professors and alumni are

building new connections and transferring knowledge to smallholder farmers who are the great hope for a second Green Revolution.

One of the challenges put forth at last week's conference in Washington was to lay out a vision for Africa – one Big Idea or Grand Dream. As I sat there, I recalled my many conversations with Dr. Borlaug over the decade in which we worked together. Time and time again, our discussions would come back to the model that was established in the American Middle West and built

around its universities. And that model combined the research and extension service, developed by the Land Grant system; and the public roads and infrastructure, which only the government could develop.

As I saw myself in 1968 when I was sent as a brand new State Department officer to work in the rural areas of the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, the incredible transformative power of rural roads and extension can bring dramatic transformation almost overnight. Norman Borlaug used to talk

about that same thing: How you could bring new seeds and new techniques to farmers, but if there was no road to get their crop to market, it was all for naught. I like to think of myself as a foot soldier in the Green Revolution, because I witnessed firsthand how the new IR-8 miracle rice patterned after Borlaug's wheat brought incredible uplifting change. But of course, this was the model that transformed Minnesota, Iowa and all of the great Midwestern bread basket states. And just as Norman Borlaug and Eldon Siehl provide inspiration to those who have developed American agriculture in the 20th

century, so too will their legacy and those of all the Siehl Prize laureates serve to drive the research and development that will be critical if we are to preserve stability and tranquility in the world by ensuring sufficient nutritious food for all. That is the meaning of today's ceremony, and that is the meaning of the work that all of you who are here today do. You here at the University of Minnesota have ensured that Eldon Siehl's legacy will live on, and you have done the same for Dr. Borlaug through the building you have named in his honor.

I want you to know that we in Iowa are carrying our part of this responsibility as well. The World Food Prize has just completed a \$30 million restoration of a historic building in the heart of Des Moines, which is now known as the Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates. I very much hope you all can visit to see how we have endeavored to preserve his legacy and make it a place of inspiration. In addition, I want you to know that I am chairing the committee in Iowa which is charged with placing a statue of the

University of Minnesota's greatest graduate in the United States Capitol in Washington. Our legislature has approved the statue of Dr. Borlaug being created and established in Statuary Hall. And while it will have the name Iowa on the front of the statue, I know that everyone from Minnesota and Texas A&M and Mexico and India and Pakistan and Africa who will visit, will feel that Norman Borlaug's statue is as much a part of them and their state and country as he is of Iowa.