

VIEW FROM THE TOP: World Food Prize

WORLD'S PREMIERE AGRICULTURAL EVENT

Name: Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn, President World Food Prize Foundation

Education: Graduate of Loras College, has a M.A. from Marquette University, Ph.D. from the University of Maryland.

Career: On January 1, 2000, Kenneth M. Quinn assumed the presidency of the World Food Prize Foundation following a 32-year career as an American diplomat and culminated his service as U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia.



AM: What is the founding of the World Food Prize (WFP).

KQ: After receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, **Dr. Norman Borlaug** felt that there should be a Nobel Prize for agriculture. When the Nobel committee told him that was not possible, being an extremely determined Iowan, he found a sponsor – the **General Foods Corporation of New York** – that joined with him in creating **The World Food Prize** in 1986.

In 1990, when the corporate sponsor withdrew, **John Ruan Sr.** stepped forward to rescue The World Food Prize and with Dr. Borlaug relocated it to Des Moines.

In 1999, I was engaged to fulfill both of their dreams: having The World Food Prize to be seen as the “Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture” and making central Iowa the “Agricultural capital of America.”

AM: What are its activities?

KQ: The World Food Prize has become a week-long set of events drawing over 1,000 participants from over 50 countries.

In addition to the Laureate Award Ceremony, the World Food Prize series of events include the: Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium; Global Youth Institute for high school students; Iowa Hunger Summit; Laureate Lecture Series; and presentation of the Dr. Norman Borlaug Award for Field Research and Application, endowed by the **Rockefeller Foundation**.

AM: How does the World Food Prize benefit humanity?

KQ: The \$250,000 annual World Food Prize is to inspire and recognize the breakthrough achievements that increase the quality, quantity and availability of food in the world, thus reducing hunger, poverty and malnutrition.

The World Food Prize Laureates have been the leaders of the greatest period of food production and hunger reduction in human history.

Given the challenge that our planet faces in feeding over 9 billion people by 2050, The World Food Prize will provide the inspiration for those innovations needed to ensure that there is enough nutritious and sustainably produced food for all of those people.

AM: What successes has it had?

KQ: Among the successes during my tenure as President of The World Food would include:

- Building the annual Borlaug Dialogue Symposium so it is considered the “premier conference in the world on global agriculture;”
- Having our Laureate Award Ceremony in the magnificent Iowa State Capitol referred to as the “Oscars of Agriculture;”
- Building our Global Youth Institute into one of the most highly acclaimed programs to inspire high school students – particularly young women
- To pursue education and careers in STEM, agricultural science and food security;
- Transforming the former Des Moines Public Library into the Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates;
- Chairing the committee that selected the artist and raised the money to place a

statue of Dr. Borlaug in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., and;

- Hosting such global leaders as President **Xi Jinping** of China, former Prime Minister **Tony Blair**, Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** of the United Nations and **Bill Gates** as speakers at our World Food Prize events.

AM: How can agribusinesses become involved with The World Food Prize?

KQ: From its beginning, The World Food Prize has addressed the issues involved in global food security that are directly related to the products developed by agribusiness companies in America and around the world.

Included have been such issues as the safety of genetically modified crops, the importance of research and the role that trade plays in helping uplift poverty stricken populations.

Each year The World Food Prize brings more agribusiness and food industry CEOs to Iowa than any other organization in the state.

I am personally gratified by the comments made by **Iowa Department of Economic Development** head **Debi Durham** in regards to the role that The World Food Prize plays in promoting Iowa businesses and bringing global agribusiness leaders to our state.

AM: What else should we know?

KQ: I take enormous pride in the awards that we have received for all of our efforts, including:

- The **American Farm Bureau Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award**;
- The **FFA Distinguished Service Citation**;
- The **George Washington Carver Distinguished Service and Innovation Award**;
- The **Indian Council of Food and Agriculture Global Leadership Award**;
- The **Crop Science Society of America Presidential Award**; and
- The **AFA Leadership in Agriculture Award**

Not too bad for an organization with only a staff of 10 people. **AM**