

2006 Norman E. Borlaug/World Food Prize International Symposium
The Green Revolution Redux:
Can We Replicate the Single Greatest Period of Food Production in All Human History?
October 19-20, 2006 - Des Moines, Iowa

<p>SESSION THREE: Linking the Public and Private Sectors October 19, 2006 – 3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Panelist Robert Forney</p>

Introduction

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn

President - World Food Prize Foundation

Next I want to introduce our moderator who is going to take us through the rest of the afternoon. And he's a very interesting person because he has the same lineage as the World Food Prize. He was an employee of General Foods Corporation, which started the World Food Prize, then became an employee of Kraft, which he remains now a Senior Vice President today, and Kraft became the new parent of the World Food Prize. And he has been associated with Al Clausi through the Institute of Food Technologists, and he serves as the head of their foundation that runs their wonderful youth programs, in which we feel a kinship with.

He's also involved in support of wonderful external activities such as the Joffrey Ballet and the International Life Sciences Institute. So it's my pleasure to introduce somebody who should feel part of the family and we very much want him to feel that way. Senior Vice President of Global Quality, Scientific Affairs, and Nutrition, John Ruff.

Panel Moderator

John Ruff

Senior Vice President – Kraft Foods

Thanks, Ken. I'm privileged to introduce and to moderate this last session of the day. As I was listening there, I was reminded of that well-known adage about – never act with children and dogs. I think there's a new one – never draw the straw to follow the Gates Foundation and a panel that has Conway, Borlaug, Bertini and Chen. It's kind of a tough act to follow, but I think we can.

We have a distinguished set of speakers to finish the day, and we have an eclectic range of topics. I think you will see the theme of the public/private partnerships, and I want you to be thinking about that as we're going through this – because you need to stay awake. We certainly want your questions both after the first two speakers when we will invite questions, as well as after all four.

So to move on quickly, let me first of all ask our first two speakers, which are Bob Forney and Jim Morris, to come on stage, and I will introduce Bob, to save time, as we're doing that.

Robert Forney became in 2006 the founding president of the Global Food Banking Network, which is an international association of food banks on several continents. In this capacity, Mr. Forney draws on his experience as the president and CEO of America's Second Harvest, which is the nation's Food Bank Network, and it's the nation's largest charitable domestic hunger relief, provides assistance to more than 25 million hungry Americans each year. Yes, we have a lot of hungry people in the United States as well as elsewhere.

Prior to joining America's Second Harvest, Mr. Forney was president and CEO of the Chicago Stock Exchange. He's the founding chairman of the Alliance to End Hunger and is a trustee of the Congressional Hunger Center. And today he'll present about the goals and the operations of this newly launched Global Food Banking Network. So, Bob.

Enhanced Public-Private Alignment to Reduce World Hunger: Increasing Private Sector Participation

Robert Forney

President – Global Food Banking Network

Thank you. Jim Morris and I are the two tall, athletic-looking Indiana University guys. I was trying to get to him, but it's impossible to get to him, to find out whether he really wanted to show up here in Iowa. For those of you – there are probably a couple of you from Iowa, right? – you probably know what I'm referring to then. There was a football game last week. And Jim and I, we've learned how to take football kind of lightly at Indiana. But I know at Iowa it's a totally different story. So keep all the agricultural products, you know, at your seat – that would be nice – and remember to be nice to your neighbors.

Thanks so much. I'm Bob Forney, and I build banks. Jim and I will talk no doubt about different ways to make a big difference. We'll likely spend a little more time talking about the immediate needs and about problems of access. You've had a lot of other terrifically talented, well-informed people talk in important ways about supply. So we'll refocus the conversation just a little bit.

Hunger is indeed a blight on our humanity. I don't think we're going to get any disagreement on any of these points. Hunger is morally unjustifiable. It's against the belief of all faiths but perhaps maybe one of the few things all faiths do agree on.

It's bad for people, obviously, the people who are hungry, but not just them. It relates to the kids that are sitting next to them in class. It relates to the teachers who are teaching them in those same classes, whether they're in Indianapolis, Indiana, or in Accra, Ghana.

It also of course affects communities. A community is not a stronger community when more people in that community are hungrier. Sounds pretty basic – I think we can all agree with that.

This one may take a little bigger stretch, but we're here to talk about ideas: It's bad for business. I've done the math. We are not a richer economy because more of our people become hungrier. We're not saving any money.

And it's of course extremely bad for peace. Want some food? Get a gun. In Chicago that'll put you in as a member of a gang. In other parts of the world you'll be called a rebel or a terrorist. Want some food? Get a gun.

These are terrible things. On top of all this is, of course, there's plenty of food. So with all of this going, how can it possibly be that there are indeed more than 852 million people worldwide who face hunger – more than? And worse than that, how can it possibly be, with all the progress we're making, that the number of people who are hungry are growing? Not everywhere, thank God, but in total their numbers are expanding.

What's wrong? We have the food. Why can't we agree on the focus of this work? What should this focus be? Is it a problem of supply or a problem of access? We've talked at great length about the issues of supply.

It may very well be a problem of supply – but it will always be a problem of access. There may be food in a country, there may be food in a community, there may be food in a neighborhood – but there can still be hunger. Hunger at the roots is an access problem. It's not enough to get more food. If that would be the case, well, surely there should be nobody in America, but the number of hungry people in America are growing, too.

So is it a problem of supply or access? What are we trying to solve? Does it require an immediate or a long-term solution? I'm so tired of hearing this trite – I shouldn't say "trite" – the Chinese phrase, "Teach a man to fish or give him a fish." And I probably have messed that up a little bit. Which is most important? The problem is that fishermen need fish, and there are a whole lot of working poor fishermen all over the world. It is a problem of both immediate need – whether we're talking the most acute and the largest numbers concentrated in ways that a blind person could find them, or we're talking about the pockets of rural poverty in an otherwise perceived rich community. Are we talking about a Native American Indian reservation for the poorest – the first citizens – are again being treated as the last.

Whose problem is it anyway? Do you have the feeling that this is my government's problem, that this is why I pay my taxes – to take care of it? How about that other side of the coin, right? – Keep the government out. And the worst, of course, is – It's their problem. Well, truly it ends up being theirs in most of the 852 million cases. But should it be? I don't think so.

It's time to understand that it is both supply and access, that it is both immediate and long-term, and that it is both a government and a private citizen problem.

We want to spend some time, or I'm going to spend some time talking more about the private sector's response and can we increase the effectiveness of the private sector response? I'm going to use the example of the Global Food Banking Network and food banking in general to provide just a glimpse into a powerful tool that could work. There are other private ways of responding.

The need for this private response results from increasing rates in hunger, both in developed and developing countries (no difference); growing unacceptable waste of food – post-harvest waste, crop loss, processed food loss, grocery shelf loss, restaurant loss, your house loss, kitchens – a growing problem of waste. Forty percent of the post-harvest crop in Ghana is lost. It's kind of hard to make up with that with more supply. It's very difficult, if you're one of those farmers, to think about the health of your farm business.

Hundreds of thousands of independently operated hunger-fighting agencies exist, but they are independently operated. There's a terrific agency in Haifa, Israel – it's run by a great guy named Abraham Israel. He serves an important role to 150 families. But there's 7.5 million people in Israel, and his voice – you know, with the Knesset, with the grocery products industry, with his municipality – it's very difficult. He doesn't have the vetted authority to speak for that whole country.

Too little professionalism in sourcing food. It's all about finding food – this access part. How do we get the food, and how do we get it to people? Takes a little bit of experience to do that. Too few vetted community and national or global voices. The voices of hungry people are pretty soft; you don't hear them. And the public and private sector anti-hunger resources need to be aligned.

Looking then at the opportunity, the flipside of most of this: Global food surplus – it's an issue of access in many places, more typically than supply. The world is smaller. The grocery products companies are growing bigger. There are proven solutions both in supply and access. We need to organize these. People, businesses, foundations, governments believe and trust private donors, volunteers, increased willingness to share; I think that's out there. And I believe, as we heard over lunch today, that there are some signs that suggest this could be a really unique alignment and we could be looking at a much brighter future.

I want to talk a little bit more directly now about food banking, if I can for just a few minutes, and the role of these food banks.

It's defined by the need to bring a voice and work of the hunger agencies together to create authority and leverage. Independently, they do great things. Together – with their voice, their advocacy, their understanding and their hard work – much more effective. Need to create an efficient network of aligned agencies to increase the awareness of public policy and secure more food. A need to achieve a balance of commercial food distribution model from farm through processing through distribution – how does that model look today in your part of the world or in the aggregate sense? Or the way we go about finding food. And a need to create self-sufficiency – sooner, rather than later.

At the core of all of this private-sector response is the fundamental atomic matter that makes all this work. It's a social-service agency, and there are millions of these agencies in every part of the world, that has access in some form or another to private resources and serves some group of people who need help – social-service agencies made up of volunteers, having access, serving food.

The questions are, of course – Are these resources enough, and at what cost? And on the other side – Are those in need being served? And, again – At what cost?

So here's the way it works. In many parts of the world, this is all there is. This is it. Let's look and see if we can improve on this model a little bit. I said I build banks. Let's just build one and see what happens.

The bank, if it's built properly, is a community asset, a community bank. And as such, it's reach into the resources – not just food but dollars and volunteers – is drastically increased. And when it is operating, it serves then multiple of these service organizations, all of them. The only reason any one of those service organizations would accept additional support from that food bank is because: 1) they don't have enough; or 2) it costs too much. It's a shelter for battered women, the cost of the food is too high, I can't therefore hire enough counselors to take care of talking with the people who are at this shelter, about why they don't have to accept a beating every day.

So we add from the community food bank then, community resources – we increase the reach of all that. And there's another benefit that comes about from that, which is the community food bank then is in a position in that community to understand the gaps, the places where agencies need to be consolidated, agencies need to be paired, and at the same time where there are no agencies serving anybody.

The net of all this is we create a much more efficient model in a community. There are some problems with this model, though, of course. And that is that it fundamentally presupposes that all the resources necessary are found in that community.

In Traverse City, Michigan, in July and August, you can find cherries pretty easily. Most folks in that community, whether rich or poor, have plenty of cherries. On that very same day go to New York City and see what kind of luck you'll have finding cherries.

Inside of the country then there's this national grouping of resources – again, dollars, people, food, corporate headquarters. With a national food bank system, we get access to those food supplies. Those resources are distributed again by the community as you can see, and we increase dramatically, then, the leverage of all of those organizations. That also allows for us to create national cross-marketing programs.

Going to the next slide, we can go one step better, and that is to create this view on a global basis. As I said before, our worldwide is becoming smaller, the grocery products companies are becoming bigger, the agricultural companies are becoming bigger. At that point it becomes helpful to realize that all these corporations are not domiciled in the same place, the same country, same community, same neighborhood. They're all over the world. And for us to

get maximum support of ideas, volunteers, food and money, it's appropriate to look at carrying our model along with the model of that industry. And as you can see, this model also allows us then to create additional national networks; and, if there is no national network, this would be the logical place where the community food bank would be created.

By adding this all together, we end up with a vastly improved model. We drop back down and look at the bottom of this slide and compare it to the totality of this slide, I think you can see the terrific leverage that's here. There are so many other things that, of course, this model brings about that we don't have time to talk about.

The value of working together and bringing about alignment not only fosters the immediate relief of hunger, the pains of hunger, but also builds us an ability to find additional food. The mission of the GFN then is, basically, to work collaboratively to reduce world hunger by securing more food and enhancing the ability and efficiency to distribute that food through food banks and food bank networks around the globe.

The support that is provided, which is summarized in those slides – it provides an opportunity for alignment of feeding organizations and the supporters of those organizations. It allows for us to assess the real capabilities of a community. All types of food and grocery products, if you come from that community, from ways that most people will not have enough experience to see. It allows you identify and develop sponsoring organizations, to develop the business plans that are necessary and the strategic plans for development.

In that community, as in previous panel talk, it's most important that the strategic nature of what we're trying to do is defined in that community. And, of course, capacity development is critical, the physical, the logistics. Most critical is the ability to find and source food. And then of course support for implementation and operation, network development alignment, sharing the best practices, partners and relationships from all over the world. And the final one of providing a quality assurance that allows donors, government, people, foundations, to believe that this organization is efficient and that it is doing the job that they say they're doing.

The GFN was founded initially by four national networks: America's Second Harvest, the Canadian Food Bank Network, the Mexican Association of Food Banks, and the Argentine Association. We started on July 1. We've added just recently the UK Association. We have applications for Guatemala City, Bogotá, Tokyo, and we're operating projects to build networks in Israel and Ghana and soon starting one in South Africa. These projects already represent a terrific amount of work.

This is all about, and begins with, the power of one – one person, one idea, one commitment. That power then grows, of course, to the broader community. That community puts its energies to work. In this case, farmers, the product of that is grain, food products. The application of that grain and food product then, a portion of that, makes up the food that's involved in the school feeding program in Ghana.

In the United States there are 200,000 small-family farmers – probably more than that – that live below poverty. That's a family of four, less than \$19,000 a year. There are 200,000 small-family farmers. By definition, they're food-insecure.

We've done a lot, but I think we can do better. Today there are more than a thousand food banks worldwide, and they distribute more than 3.5 billion pounds of food annually. On average, each of these banks sees about 40,000 people. In the larger ones, they see a couple hundred thousand a day, and they distribute 75 pounds or more of food for each of those people.

We reach, though, less than 50 million people. And as we know, there at least 852 million hungry people. So we've got a lot of work to do. And by bringing about the right alignment and the right understanding of the government versus private, the right understanding of the immediate versus long term, the right understanding of your role and my role in this process, and if we can do that more frequently, formally, so that we understand each other's roles, and also informally, much more frequently, I'm much more optimistic that we will find the solutions that will turn this equation around.

Thank you very much.

John Ruff

Thank you, Bob. You've made what looks like an incredibly daunting and complicated task into one that appears simple. We know it isn't, and I'm sure there's going to be some questions you will have for Bob.