

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

OPENING CEREMONY

October 19, 2006 - 8:00 - 8:15 a.m.

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn; Ellen Bergfeld

Introduction by Frank Swoboda

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Des Moines, Iowa for the 2006 20th Anniversary World Food Prize International Symposium. Please join me in welcoming to the stage the participants in the opening ceremony for this morning's symposium. And I would also like to introduce to you the president of the World Food Prize Foundation, Ambassador Kenneth Quinn.

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn

President - World Food Prize Foundation

Thank you. Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the 20th Anniversary of the World Food Prize. This is a great time for us, and it has been a great week of activities going on.

We started last Friday, and rather unexpectedly, with the announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. And, of course, you know, always looking at that, and it's a big event. But to have a former World Food Prize Laureate, Dr. Muhammad Yunus, be named as the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate – that was a wonderful moment for us. And I got interviewed [applause], and, yes. I had a couple of interviews about that and people calling, and I said, “Well, you know, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, they're a little slow, but they finally got there and did the right thing.” But Dr. Borlaug and the Selection Committee back then, they were really on the money with Muhammad Yunus. And so we are so pleased and so proud.

So that was Friday, and over the weekend on Monday, World Food Day, October 16th, we had wonderful ceremonies and events here to honor the founders of the World Food Prize and those who have brought it and gave birth to it and then kept it alive. And so I want to ask you to join me in welcoming Dr. Norman Borlaug. Norm, stand up for a second. John Ruan III, representing the Ruan family, and his dad John Ruan, Sr. Al Clausi who was there at the beginning. And I know that we are so sad that Bob Havener couldn't be here to see this moment that he also helped create. But, thank you for all you did to get the World Food Prize started.

Now, the week continued, and we're having meetings, and I try to tell people – it's a long list when I try to tell people what's going on, on Tuesday and Wednesday. And then last night at our reception Peter McPherson said to me, he said, “You know, this is where we come to have

our conversations.” And I said, “You’ve captured it.” So I ran back to the office, I got Frank Swoboda, 10, 11 o’clock last night, I said, “We have to make a slide and put this up tomorrow morning so I can tell everybody, you know, ‘Peter has captured it exactly.’” Because these are all the groups that we had here during the week having their conversations and then coming to join us. With USDA, the Borlaug Fellows from countries around the world – I think there are 60 of them here, some of them in the room now; the U.S.-India Agricultural Initiative there. The USAID BIFAD Board, the Truth about Trade and Technology, Kemin Industries bringing its scientists here, the U.S. Grains Council, and the Corn Growers from Iowa and Nebraska here with their group, and NASULGC, the land-grant colleges, all here having their conversations.

Tonight this will continue at the Iowa State Capitol when we will present our 20th Anniversary World Food Prize to our three 2006 Laureates. And I want to introduce them to you at this time: Alysson Paolinelli, Edson Lobato, and Colin McClung. Their work and leadership in opening the Cerrado was a story that will become legendary, and if you’re not able to join us at the Capitol, it’s going to be live on Iowa Public Television. And to further my plug for IPTV, beforehand at 6:30 and then again at 8:30 there’s going to be a program about Dr. Borlaug, “Borlaug and the Green Revolution, Out of Iowa”. It’s a terrific program that they produced.

So today we have our 2006 World Food Prize International Symposium. Always trying to think of interesting topics that will make people want to get on the plane and come to Des Moines, and we have the Green Revolution Redux this year. Over the last five or six years that I’ve been here, I’ve tried to have interesting topics, and have conversations as part of those. So in 2001, those of you who were here know, that we had bio-terrorism and agroterrorism in October. We put the topic on in May of 2001, and then with the tragic events of 9/11 we had seven of the world’s leading experts on bio-terrorism here, the first conference ever after that. And Bern Schwetz, the head of the FDA, said to me, he said, “You know, the conversations and discussions we had in Des Moines really helped shape the U.S. government’s response to those threats in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.”

And the following year we had discussions about Africa and hunger and what could be done while the U.N. was working. And Jeff Sachs said to me later, he said, “You know, the conversations we had in Des Moines really helped inspire and helped us develop the ideas that were the Millennium Development Goals, and the U.N. Hunger Task Force’s work.”

And last year we were told by people, the first-ever conference to address malnutrition and obesity, get all the people who deal with this in the same room and have that conversation. So this has been exciting for us, and we want to, for the 20th Anniversary, expand in this approach in a new approach and have more inspirational talks and more dialog and more conversations with this.

So we thought we should have something new. And if you’re going to have a new dialog, you need to have a new name. And so we said, “Well, let’s have a name that will really inspire people and make them want to come.” So I’m pleased and proud to announce to you today that henceforth the World Food Prize International Symposium will be known as the Dr. Norman E. Borlaug International Symposium. Norman...

And I want it to be, you know, 25, 30, 40 years from now, people will still want to come to Des Moines, because Norm will be here and he'll be talking, and you'll still be able to have the conversation with him. Now, this "Borlaug dialogue," as I like to call it – and I never thought I was going to find a word that rhymed with "Borlaug," but "Borlaug dialogue." We're going to start this morning with a terrific program – "The Green Revolution Redux" – looking back and looking ahead, with Gordon Conway, Ismail Serageldin, and Roger Thurow. And Gordon Conway is going to be the moderator to take us through both days. And, Gordon, thank you so much for being with us for this.

Also, we're going to have as part of this the Third Annual Governor's Lecture, sponsored by Humanities Iowa, with Dr. M. S. Swaminathan. And, you know, I knew that Dr. Swaminathan knew a lot of important people, and then I got this picture, and I said, "Wow! He's really operating at the top level." And he's been out in small towns in Iowa and colleges. And, thank you so much, Dr. Swaminathan. And Jeff Heland, thank you, and Humanities Iowa. Please stand up for your sponsorship of the Governor's Lecture and making it possible to bring Dr. Swaminathan here.

Then we're going to have the Secretary's address, another new feature. Mike Johanns, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, will be here later this morning to be with us. And then we're going to have a dialog on the African Green Revolution. We'll have some today, and then Dr. Calestous Juma on tomorrow on this. And then you'll see down at the bottom, we're going to have all of our African ambassadors who are here up on the stage, and you'll be able to ask them questions and have discussions with them.

And then we're going to have additional keynote addresses. Bob Gates will be here tomorrow, the former head of the CIA, now president of Texas A&M, and Josette Sheeran, the Under Secretary of State for Economics, Business and Agriculture is here. And Secretary Sheeran, please stand up. Thank you so much for being here with us. I told the Laureates they wouldn't be Laureates except for Secretary Sheeran because she hosted us at the State Department for our Announcement Ceremony.

This afternoon the dialogue will continue. Dr. Rajiv Shah is here from the Gates Foundation. We're going to have an hour-long colloquium – he's going to lay out for you what they're thinking about at the Gates Foundation. And then Norm Borlaug and Catherine Bertini and Dr. Chen Zhangliang will all have a chance to react to that, and you'll have a chance to ask questions. And then later in the afternoon, "Building New Private and Public/Private Partnerships," some distinguished leaders from the business world and new initiatives.

And then tomorrow some cutting-edge and controversial issues, so I've got a lot of controversial guys here, Pedro and Hans Herren and Mike Osterholm and Dr. Bob Watson will be here. And then we're going to finish with our Laureate Luncheon and Laureate Roundtable. Silvio Crestana, the head of EMBRAPA will be here, and Dr. Ed Schuh, talking about Brazil and the Cerrado with the Laureates, and you'll have a chance to hear them and ask them questions.

And then for good measure, our Youth Institute will be here, about 75 or 80 high school students and high school teachers – we’re going to kind of throw them in here with all of you for this discussion and enrich the mix.

And part of the long-term plan is that this is going to move to the Norman Borlaug Hall of Laureates. You notice everything’s named after Norman Borlaug – I’ll have to get some shirts or something made, Norm, with your name on it. But this is going to be a beautiful new home for the World Food Prize. And our goal, my goal, audacious as it sounds, is I want to have the most significant observance of World Food Day anywhere. I want to have a Davos-type summit in addressing critical, cutting-edge topics of food security. And this, I think, with our panel and the participants today, we’ve got the people, we’ve got the players, and we’re soon going to have the building. And this that was started by Norm and by Al Clausi and John Ruan, Sr., I hope can only get bigger and better.

So thank you very much for being here and for being a part of this. I wanted to outline, lay this out for you. I want to now invite Dr. Ellen Bergfeld, the Executive Vice President of the American Society of Agronomy of Crop Science and Soil Science, who has some remarks to make. She and I have a connection, though, with Brazil, as we met in Philadelphia at the World Congress of Soil Scientists, they were watching Brazil play in the World Cup on TV. So we were there talking and she was explaining to me about what she has in mind, and I jump up, as there’s some exciting play, and then sit down again. Ellen Bergfeld.

Dr. Ellen Bergfeld

Executive Vice President

American Society of Agronomy, Crop and Soil Science Societies

Thank you, Ambassador Quinn, for your very kind invitation. Welcome, distinguished guests, World Food Prize Laureates, both past in the audience and present here on stage. It’s a true honor for me to be here with you this morning to help celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the World Food Prize. Those 20 years really belie a much richer connection and history between the recipients and the many organizations that they support.

As a leader of three such organizations, as Ambassador Quinn has mentioned, Agronomy, Crop and Soil Science Societies, we’re truly grateful for the longstanding connection that we’ve had with Dr. Norman Borlaug, the founder of the World Food Prize, as well as many past recipients. Those include M.S. Swaminathan, Ed Knipling, Hank Beachell, who just turned 100 last month and had a really nice birthday party, Pedro Sanchez, and of course Dr. Colin McClung, one of the three that is here on the stage with us this morning.

As we honor the past, we also look forward to the future and some of the great opportunities to collaborate. And as Ambassador Quinn has mentioned, while we talked in Philadelphia in July this past summer, we looked at all the opportunities and the historic connections that our organizations have together as well as those that we’re looking at the future.

One of those is the Smithsonian soil exhibit that we are planning to open in 2008. This is going to be greater than 5,000 square feet at the Natural History Museum on the mall in DC, to educate more than six million people who come through that particular museum per year, about the story and the importance of soil science in the world today.

Another great program that is really predicated on the Youth Institute here with the World Food Prize is our Golden Opportunity Scholars Institute that we're kicking off this year. And we've got one of the prior youth interns, Addie Hall, who will be one of our scholars at the institute. And this is really in collaboration with the World Food Prize. We're working to inspire the next generation of individuals to come through and to work in the agricultural, food science, and natural resources areas. And we're very excited about that. We've got more information; if you'd like to stop by, we've got a booth here if you'd like to learn a little bit more about what we're doing.

I'd like to take a moment this morning and also recognize the contributions of John Ruan and the Ruan family in regard to the World Food Prize and the generosity that the family has shared with all of us here to keep this going. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention Al Clausi and bringing this to the Ruan family, as I was reminded of this morning, as we had the opportunity to talk.

Mr. Ruan has had both the vision for the World Food Prize as well as for this downtown area of Des Moines and protecting the agricultural lands that surround Des Moines in his revitalization projects. As an example, one of the great projects – we're sitting and standing in the cornerstone of the legacy that he built, starting back in 1980, six years before the World Food Prize was endowed, was begun. And that's the Marriott Hotel as a cornerstone of his revitalization project here.

Also, this legacy continues. Again, as we look at the past and look at the future, Mr. John Ruan III has succeeded his father as the chairman of the World Food Prize and will continue that historic legacy. I say to the past 20 years, to the next 20 years and beyond, congratulations and thank you.

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn

Thank you, Ellen. That concludes our opening ceremony, so I want to invite all of our participants, you can leave the stage now and to your seats. And then we'll get on to the heavy meat and potatoes.