



THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

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“Father of the Green Revolution” Dr. Norman Borlaug Dies at Age 95

Iowa native and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate committed his life to fighting world hunger

(DES MOINES, IA, USA) -- Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, the man who saved more lives than any other person who has ever lived, died today in his Texas home. He was 95 years old.

Dr. Borlaug was believed to have saved more than a billion lives through his breakthrough work in agriculture. In 1970 he won the Nobel Peace Prize for averting worldwide famine by starting the “Green Revolution,” the greatest period of food production in human history.

Norman Ernest Borlaug was born in the small northeast Iowa town of Cresco on March 25, 1914. After earning a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from the University of Minnesota, he joined the Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico. There, he developed a “miracle wheat” that tripled grain output and moved the country to self-sufficiency. Dr. Borlaug then took his high-yield, disease-resistant wheat to Pakistan and India, averting the mass famine and starvation that had been widely predicted.

For this, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the only time in its history the award was given for achievements in agriculture. Dismayed that there was no award for significant breakthroughs in food and agriculture, Dr. Borlaug set out to create an award of his own. In 1986, Dr. Borlaug founded the World Food Prize to recognize life-saving achievements that increase the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world. The award recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary and is often referred to as the “Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture.”

Dr. Borlaug spent his later years committed to extending the Green Revolution to Africa, working for the Sasakawa Global 2000 program. He also continued to work for the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico, and traveled extensively throughout the world most of the year. He returned to the United States each fall to teach a course at Texas A&M University and to attend the World Food Prize events in Des Moines.

“The world has lost a great hero,” said Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn, President of the World Food Prize. “Dr. Borlaug’s tireless commitment to ending hunger had an enormous impact on the course of history. He will be remembered with love and appreciation throughout the world.”

In addition to the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. Borlaug received more than 150 international honors, including the United States Congressional Gold Medal in 2007 and India’s Padma Vibushan in 2006. Along with Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elie Wiesel, and Nelson Mandela, he was one of five people in history to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, the Congressional Gold Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The World Food Prize was conceived by Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, recipient of the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize. Since 1986, The World Food Prize has honored outstanding individuals who have made vital contributions to improving the quality, quantity or availability of food throughout the world. Previous Laureates have been recognized from Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United Nations and the United States. In 1990, Des Moines businessman and philanthropist John Ruan assumed sponsorship of The Prize and established The World Food Prize Foundation, located in Des Moines, Iowa.