

**ACCEPTATION SPEECH BY  
NORMAN E. BORLAUG  
UPON BEING AWARDED  
AMERICA'S THIRD CENTURY ACHIEVERS  
AWARD IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE**

It is for me a great honor to have been named recipient of America's Third Century Achievers Award in the field of agriculture. The significance of this award, as far as I personally am concerned, is greatly enhanced when I consider the stalwart leaders who have been designated recipients in the other fifteen categories in which the ACHIEVERS AWARD is granted.

I accept this award with gratitude but also with humility. I recognize full well that with my ten weak fingers and with average academic and scientific ability, working alone, I would have been able to have achieved little or nothing in the complex undertaking of improving agriculture and increasing food production to meet the needs of four billion people. I have tried to serve as a catalyst to get scientists in different disciplines and from different countries to work together in attacking the complex problems that restrict production. I have tried to encourage farmers to adopt new economically viable technology so as to expand food production and in the process improve their standard of living. And finally, I have tried to stimulate political leaders to adopt policies that will stimulate production. At the same time, I have always tried to discourage and lessen the stifling grip of bureaucracies that worldwide are enormous barriers to agricultural and social progress.

In all of these complex endeavors I have been but a minor cog in a grand wheel. Recognizing this, I accept the America's Third Century Achievers Award in agriculture in the name of the many ten's of thousands of agricultural

scientists, extension workers, educators and administrators and the many millions of farmers and livestock producers who play the unsung heroes role in producing this mundane product - food - that the privileged sectors of the world's societies all too often take for granted.

In my keynote address to this Convention yesterday, I indicated the enormous problem that lies ahead in trying to produce the food, fiber and forest products for the exploding world population.

When agriculture first became a way of life, apparently about 10,000 to 12,000 years ago, world population was probably about 15 million. World population reached 4 billion in late 1975 which represents an increase of 256 fold - or eight (8) doublings since the discovery of agriculture. At the current world rate of population growth, population will double again in the next 40 years, reaching 8 billion by the year 2015. This means that in the next 40 years, world food and fiber production must be increased more than it was increased in the long 10,000 year period from the discovery of agriculture up to 1975. This clearly indicates the urgency of dealing effectively and humanely with the population monster.

This is a tremendous undertaking. It is of vital importance to the future of world civilization. Failure to achieve this goal will plunge the world into social and political chaos.

Today, nevertheless, some privileged individuals and groups in the affluent nations seem to believe the greatest threat to the survival of the high standard of living of the world is pollution of the air, water and food by industries.

agriculture and cities. Others see carcinogens in everything we touch, breath and eat even though we live a longer and more pleasant life than ever before.

To me one of the greatest short term threats to future of world civilization is the elitism that is manifesting itself among certain privileged groups in the affluent nations. Their attitudes threaten to make it more difficult, if not impossible, to produce the basic needs for a growing world population. Unless the basic needs of adequate food, fiber and forest products are met, the strife between the rich nations and poor nations, as well as between the privileged sectors and poor sectors within the affluent nations, will worsen. With the destructive powers that are present in the world, if these fall into the hands of the extremists in their agony, frenzy and wrath they could well trigger a series of events that could pollute the atmosphere and bring about a solution to the world human population problem for thousands of years, or solve it permanently by annihilation of Homo sapiens and turn the planet Earth back to the insects.

In order to produce the needed increased production of food, fiber and forest products in the decades ahead, we must increase yields of product per hectare by the widespread use of improved technology. I am a firm advocate of the widespread use of improved technology in both agriculture and forestry. If we continue to improve the technology and yields of food, fiber and forest products, more land will be available for other uses such as recreation, wildlife, etc.

I firmly believe that the U.S.A. must greatly intensify the management of its forest lands in the next decade. There is no good reason why the United States should be importing about 20-25% of the volume of forest products that

it consumes. The increased production can be achieved while providing more land for recreation and wildlife habitat if balanced management programs are developed and if the nation refrains from the child-like emotional debates that have characterized forest land use in recent years.

There is great need for increasing the area for recreation, especially near the densely populated urban areas. The majority of the people in these locations are not primarily concerned about establishing wilderness areas but rather in the establishing or expanding parks and campgrounds that are readily accessible to them.

But there is also good reason for expanding the wilderness recreational areas. I personally enjoy them immensely, but while doing so recognize I am a very privileged individual. I recognize the need for striking the proper balance in expanding the areas for parks, campgrounds and wilderness.

Moreover, I am opposed to arbitrarily locking up hundreds of millions of acres in wilderness areas while the United States is importing 80 to 100% of its consumption of 15 essential minerals, and 40 to 80% of the consumption of another group of essential minerals, which includes petroleum.

I am convinced that skilful forest managers - in both the industrial and public sector forests - have the knowledge, ability and social motivations to successfully manage our forests for the combined multiple objectives of increased wood production, watershed protection, wildlife management, recreation and aesthetics. I am, however, fearful that the flexibility in management is increasingly being removed from the hands of the professional foresters and wildlife biologists by an avalanche of lawsuits and restrictive laws, resulting

from effective lobbying sponsored by special interest groups. More and more of the management decision making will be done by remote control from the nations capital and details will more and more fall under the stifling grips of the bureaucrats.

I urge all interest in the use of public lands to put aside their petty biased and narrow interests and look at the entire forest rather than the individual trees. I urge everyone to contribute their bit to controlling the human population monster or all of our efforts to save the many endangered species will be in vain.

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