

*ISAAA Celebrates the Life of its
Founding Patron, Nobel Peace Laureate*

Father of the
Green Revolution

..

Champion of Small
& Resource-Poor
Farmers in the
Developing World

..

Founder of the
World Food Prize



Norman Borlaug
1914 - 2009





Dr Norman Borlaug's Legacy

Dr. Norman Borlaug was an icon of agricultural development for the poor farmers of the developing countries of the world. Born on a farm in Cresco, Iowa, USA, he left his footprints in agriculture through his personal and professional commitment to fight hunger and poverty, pioneering work in the development of high-yielding, and disease-resistant semi-dwarf wheat varieties, and his strong advocacy for the use of genetically modified (GM) crop varieties to alleviate poverty and hunger.

The Nobel Peace Prize

In 1970, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Dr. Norman Borlaug, with the Nobel Prize Committee concluding that, *"more than any other single person of this age, he has helped to provide bread for a hungry world. We have made this choice in the hope that providing bread will also give the world peace... He has helped to create a new food situation in the world and who has turned pessimism into optimism in the dramatic race between population explosion and our production of food."*

Norman Borlaug's strong advocacy of biotech/ GM crops and their contribution to Global Food Security and Alleviation of Hunger and Poverty

On being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for saving one billion people from hunger, Norman Borlaug wisely reminded the world that he had "just bought some time" and that continued investment in improved crop technology was a "must" for feeding the world of tomorrow. "Norm", as he liked to be known to his legion of friends around the world, was an ardent advocate of biotech/GM crops, which he viewed as one of the necessary technology tools for ensuring future food security.

He opined that *"Over the past decade, we have been witnessing the success of plant biotechnology. This technology is helping farmers throughout the world produce higher yield, while reducing pesticide use and soil erosion. The benefits and safety of biotechnology has been proven over the past decade in countries with more than half of the world's population. What we need is courage by the leaders of those countries where farmers still have no choice but to use older and less effective methods. The Green Revolution and now plant biotechnology are helping meet the growing demand for food production, while preserving our environment for future generations."*

The World Food Prize



In 1986 Norman Borlaug established The World Food Prize, initially supported by the General Foods Company for three years, and then by its current benefactor, Juan Ruan, a businessman from Des Moines, Iowa, who



generously endowed the World Food Prize in perpetuity. The World Food Prize event is held annually in October in conjunction with the Borlaug Symposium and an event for the World Food Prize Youth Institute, to help develop future leaders. The prestigious World Food Prize is regarded as the "Nobel Prize for Food" and has been awarded to honored recipients from all over the world who have made a unique contribution to the world's food supply.

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Borlaug's partner in the Green Revolution in India, was the first recipient of the first World Food Prize in 1987. Dr. Swaminathan is also a patron of ISAAA.

Establishment of ISAAA's Global Knowledge Center on Biotech Crops (KC)

Knowledge • Technology Alleviation of Poverty

In 2000, Dr. Borlaug accompanied by ISAAA's Founder & Chair, Dr. Clive James and Randy Hautea, Global Coordinator met with the principals of the Philippines National Academy of Science and Technology to share his views and experiences on the critical challenge of food security and the vital role of science and technology in meeting that challenge. On that occasion he was conferred an honorary member of the Academy. During the visit to the Philippines, Norman Borlaug helped support ISAAA's new knowledge sharing initiatives through the establishment of the Global Knowledge Center (KC) on Crop Biotechnology.

The flagship publication of ISAAA's Knowledge Center is the Annual Report on the Global Status of Biotech/GM Crops, authored by Clive James - remarkably, the major findings of the 2007 Report reached 1.1 billion people (16% of the world's population) in over 70 countries, and in more than 40 languages. Another key product of ISAAA's Knowledge Center is the email newsletter Crop Biotech Update (CBU) that is now distributed weekly to 650,000 subscribers in 200 countries, and growing at approximately 5,000 per month, confirming that there is a great global thirst for knowledge about biotech crops.

A Special Tribute to Norm Borlaug by Clive James, Founder and Chair of ISAAA



Norm will always be fondly remembered as a very special member of the ISAAA family, because of his personal warmth & integrity and his unique contribution to the improvement of the lives of millions of poor people worldwide.



Dr. Clive James

This is a special tribute, in free verse, by Dr. Clive James, (former Deputy Director General CIMMYT, Mexico) to Norm Borlaug, who was his mentor and personal friend for 30 years.

The verse is an adaptation of a verse composed by Huexotzin, Prince of Texcoco, Mexico, circa 1484 at the passing of his grandfather, the famous Aztec King Nezahualcoyotl, who like his grandson Huexotzin, was a botanist and a poet. Given Norm Borlaug's great love for Mexico he would probably be very proud to be honored as the latter-day Prince of Texcoco and the Yaqui Valley in Sonora, where he toiled for more than 50 years.

He would often say of the Yaqui Valley
***"this is where I truly feel at home
and where I am at peace".***

"Bread of Heaven* - Feed us till we want no more"

*You tell me I must perish
Like the millions I helped nourish
Something remaining of my name
Something remembered of my fame
But the wheats I bred in Mexico, are still young
And the Yaqui genes, will still express their
humanitarian song*

*"Bread of Heaven" is the famous British hymn
sung at state occasions, such as Princess Diana's funeral,
and captures the principal goal that Norm lived for
- Alleviation of Hunger -

Photo Courtesy

- 1. International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), Mexico*
- 2. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), India*
- 3. International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), Mexico*
- 4. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), India*
- 5. Nobel Peace Center of the Nobel Foundation, Norway*
- 6. International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA)*

