

Agriculture Industry Celebrates Father of the Green Revolution on his Centennial

Norman Borlaug's work saved over a billion lives and provides agriculture with a path to achieving a second green revolution

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Today, CropLife International and the plant science industry observe the centennial birthday of Dr Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize Winner and Father of the Green Revolution, for his life-long work bringing agricultural innovations to smallholder farmers to improve crop productivity and food security.

“Dr Borlaug is an inspiration to agronomists, scientists, and farmers worldwide — his pioneering work in plant science and genetics helped bring the Green Revolution to millions of smallholder farmers in Latin America and Asia, which has saved over a billion lives from hunger and malnutrition,” said Denise Dewar, Executive Director for Plant Biotechnology at CropLife International. “As the world’s population continues to rise to unprecedented numbers, the plant science industry encourages today’s young agronomists, innovators, and farmers to continue Dr. Borlaug’s vision for a second green revolution.”

In the 1960s, Dr Borlaug harnessed improved genetics and plant protection technologies to develop farming systems which doubled yields and drove down hunger in developing countries with rapidly expanding populations. This Green Revolution helped feed the world’s population as it grew from three billion in 1960 to seven billion in 2011. The world faces even further population growth over the next 40 years, putting increased pressure on the world’s farmers, especially smallholder farmers, to produce enough food to help ensure sustainable food security. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates grain yields must increase 70% by 2050 to match population needs. Meeting this requires a second green revolution that once again uses agricultural science to develop impactful solutions, such as improved plant protection and seed genetics, for improving global yields.

“Dr. Borlaug believed plant science could ‘free farmers from obsolete, low-yielding, and more costly’ technologies and improve the productivity and profitability of their farms,” continued Dewar. “Achieving Dr. Borlaug’s vision is possible if global leaders work with the agribusiness and plant science industries to expand access to new technologies and help implement science-based solutions.”

Dr Borlaug’s life, work and vision will be celebrated throughout the year by the World Food Prize Foundation, beginning with the dedication of a statue at the United States Capitol building today and through the October 2014 Borlaug Dialogues in Des Moines, Iowa. To learn more about Dr Borlaug’s work and the centennial celebrations visit www.worldfoodprize.org

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Deb S. Carstou

Director of Communications, Plant Biotechnology

CropLife International

Tel: +1.202.805.0475

Email: deb.carstou@croplife.org

Note to Editor:

CropLife International is the voice of the global plant science industry. It champions the role of agricultural innovations in crop protection and plant biotechnology in supporting and advancing sustainable agriculture; helping farmers feed a growing population while looking after the planet; and progressing rural communities. The world needs farmers, and farmers need plant science. CropLife International is proud to be at the heart of helping farmers grow.