

# OUR DAILY BREAD

## READER RESPONSES

### **A biography that's a page-turner!**

This is a gripping, touching, meticulously researched biography of one of the genuine geniuses and heroes of the 20th Century.

**Norman Borlaug (whom I had the privilege to know personally) had the kind of idealism, tenacity and courage epitomized by Jimmy Stewart in the title role of "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" and Gary Cooper in "High Noon."**

*Our Daily Bread* conveys how difficult much of Borlaug's life was and the odds against which he accomplished so much in cereal genetics and agronomy.

What especially surprised and impressed me about this book is that the author managed to make it a genuine page-turner. There was real uncertainty and suspense about whether the introduction of Borlaug's new wheat varieties and agronomic practices would come in time to prevent massive starvation in India and Pakistan.

Terrific book!

Henry I Miller  
Hoover Institution  
Stanford University

Again, thank you for sending the books. I know my children will learn and appreciate these stories [of their distant cousin]. Just as I did not understand as a young boy the importance of the work Norman had done, I learned over the years to know what impact he had on the world. As my kids were growing up I reminded them of his work, and often said that **it only takes one person to change the world**. I appreciate you taking the time to put it into these books.

Didrik Strand  
Langham, Saskatchewan  
Canada

The photo of Mom and Norman's birthplace and the family log cabin is amazing!! I had not seen that before and I wonder if Uncle Norm ever saw it. . . He would have treasured that shot!!

Ted Behrens [Norm's nephew]  
Minburn, Iowa

I look forward to receiving and giving the books. **Maybe they will inspire the crew and even me to get up a little earlier, stay in the field a little longer, and most of all to visualize the long-term and broader impacts of our work.**

Jackie Rudd  
Texas AgriLife Research, Amarillo, Texas

Through a busy month, I just finished *Our Daily Bread* and declare it an excellent narrative. With much of it in Norm's own words, it moves forward in a continuous rush. I like this format very much. It reads well and it reads fast and that demands attention. It will be well received.

I would like to have seen an index. I'm an index scanner. I like to note of who's there, who's not and how often they appear or disappear by page number. Perhaps something for a second edition.

Paul Vasold  
Defiance, Ohio

I want to say thank you for a marvelous book! I will be passing my copy of *Our Daily Bread* among my siblings so all can enjoy the stories of Saude, even though it is now well over 50 years since we lived there. My husband, some friends and I took a trip to Saude this past summer, toured the farm place and visited church and cemetery. The incredible thing is, except for indoor plumbing, the church is almost the same as it was in the 1950s! A trip down memory lane. Thank you again for helping to keep those memories alive.

Betsy Hermanson  
Wells, Minnesota

I've been struck by the irony of the great good that Dr. Borlaug did in Pakistan and how the Pakistanis have turned a part of it (fertilizer production) into making bombs. It is of particular concern for me because my #3 son, David, is a combat medic in Pech River Valley of Afghanistan. His post overlooks extremely green wheat fields just a few miles from the border with Pakistan. There have been deaths and injuries in his company from IEDs. I'm not sure what lesson I would draw from it, but it does intrigue me.

Scott Linn  
Melbourne, Florida

The book looks just fabulous. I'm again reminded of his extraordinary vision and how much good can be done by people who look beyond what is and never give up.

Pat Pascale  
Nobleboro, Maine

I really enjoyed your writing style with your use of alliteration I wanted to read it aloud just to hear it.

Dawn Stewart  
Victoria, British Columbia  
Canada

Thanks for the latest Borlaug book, Noel. It arrived yesterday and I dived into it immediately. Got through the first chapter before falling asleep way past my bedtime.

That first chapter brought up some memories for me -- of growing up in northeast Nebraska. My father was a railroad agent for the CB&Q [Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad] in a tiny town called Belden. One fall, in my early teens, my buddy and I decided we needed to earn some money, so we hired out to a local, sympathetic farmer we knew. He outfitted us with gloves and hooks, a wagon with bangboard and a patient horse. So we "husked" corn, lasting perhaps somewhat less than a half day. That was work that we were totally unprepared for!

In our living quarters in the depot we had running water -- one tap of cold, no hot (we got that from a teakettle on the kitchen stove!). Complete with outdoor privy - my, what a shock when nature called in the middle of a cold winter day complete with massive amounts of snow, sometimes so bad we had to literally dig our way out of the building through drifts covering the entire doorway.

Nevertheless, good memories, stirred by reading of the early years of Norman Borlaug in northern Iowa. Thanks for helping me to remember.

Bob Frans  
Fayetteville, Arkansas

I thoroughly enjoyed the book. I thought I knew a lot about Norm's career, but your book filled in quite a few gaps I hadn't realized were there. Especially the details of the seed sent to Pakistan were fascinating. I was also unaware about the germination problem of over treated seed sent by Pronase. I was not surprised that they almost screwed up the deal.

I especially enjoyed reading about Rodenheiser, Moseman, Rupert and Narvaez. Nacho [Narvaez] and I shared an office at Purdue as grad students under Ralph Caldwell. I also compliment you on the treatment of Norin 10 dwarfs. I have always thought that Vogel did more for Norm than just the dwarfing trait. The

line Norin10/Brevor also gave excellent tillering in my opinion. I think both parents gave a kick to the "Mexican" wheats.

Bob Romig  
Bloomington, Minnesota

**Borlaug exemplifies the best of the American Spirit.** His obituary in the N.Y. Times read "He Only Saved Six BILLION People". A poor Iowa dirt farmer (from a pre-Depression area and era that had not yet had contact with the industrial revolution) who with an iron will and a belief in himself and all human beings changed the world and gave it the Green Revolution. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and deserved it more than any other nominee. And in his spare time he created Little League baseball in Mexico culminating in the 1957 LL World Series championship won by the Monterrey, Mexico team, this first foreign team to enter the Little League competition. His life story should be made into a movie so that more people can see what he did, and what he went through to do it. **This book is a road map to international cooperation in the service of all mankind.**

Philip J McGuire

We journeyed to Norway last fall and visited the 17th-century house where Norman's maternal great grandparents and grandfather lived before immigrating to America. His maternal grandfather Ole Vaala was only six months old when they set sail. These Vaala ancestors were my maternal great, great grandparents and great grandfather respectively. You can imagine that visiting their home was a rather surreal experience.

Don Henry  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

I have just finished the book and must say I was really fascinated. I first thought that this would be a duplication of your Volume 1 but I found the detail really added a new dimension. I guess I'd say "Our Daily Bread" was more human. Since Norm and I were contemporaries with the Rockefeller Foundation what I had known about him was largely superficial while what you present was the real story.

**Friedman's books talk about innovation as a trait of America's citizens that has enabled the US to be the world leader that we are. This is probably one of the best**

**illustrations you could find.** The number of obstacles Norm had exceed imagination.

You have done an excellent job. A masterpiece.

As I read along I often thought Norm's life should be in a documentary to enable the public to know him much better. Ken Burns could do a great job putting your book into a real Americana.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to share Norm's life.

Wayne Freeman  
Gatlinburg, Tennessee

It's rare to find a book on Ag research that is also a gripping page turner, but that is exactly what you get with *Borlaug, Right off the Farm 1914-1944*, written by Noel Vietmeyer and published by Bracing Books. This is an insider's revealing look at the formative years of one Norman Borlaug, one of the great humanitarians of all time who died at age 95 in 2009. Originally published in 2008, this is the first of a trilogy of books focusing on how the young lad from Iowa rose up from his poor dirt farmer roots to redefine global food production in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and eventually become one of just six people to have won the Nobel Peace Prize, Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

Intertwined in the story of Borlaug's youth are tons of fascinating stories, such as the time the entire nation went on a diet when the 1916 wheat crop failed. "In the absence of flour, life for Americans suddenly became fragile," writes Vietmeyer. "The upper crust had to accept the cornbread and macaroni they'd forever disdained." Or 1932, when farm prices fell so low the rural masses rose up and went on strike, banning shipments of food to cities across America. The book notes how the depression, dust bowl, and some good old fashioned luck led to a robust academic life and career as the groundbreaking research scientist who later saved billions of lives worldwide.

If you're curious like I am about Borlaug's fascinating career, you're not alone. As the *New York Times* wrote in 2007, two years before his death: **"Could there be a man alive today who is virtually unknown to the vast majority of Americans yet is described by those who know his work and accomplishments as 'the greatest human being who ever lived'?"** So it is for Dr. Norman Borlaug."

Fortunately we now have a vast wellspring from which to draw from. Vietmeyer, himself an Ag researcher, worked with Borlaug

for 20 years and compiled dozens of interviews with the man himself as well as his colleagues. Now retired from the National Academy of Sciences, he made it his career to bring recognition to Borlaug. This is the first of three books detailing Borlaug's life adventures. Volume two, *Wheat Whisperer 1944-1959*, captures the many challenges he faced in getting his improved varieties planted on a massive scale. In volume three, *Bread Winner 1960-1969*, Vietmeyer tells readers how Borlaug proved the experts wrong as his groundbreaking plant breeding work begins to make a positive impact on the hungry mouths of the world. If you want a more streamlined look at Borlaug's life, try *Our Daily Bread: The Essential Norman Borlaug*. Here Vietmeyer draws on his trilogy to provide the essence of this agricultural scientist's amazing life story in a single fast-paced volume.

**Can one man make a difference? These books prove, beyond a doubt, the answer is yes.** If you ever find yourself in need of a little inspiration, pick up one of Vietmeyer's Borlaug books. You won't be disappointed.

Mike Wilson  
[mwilson@farmprogress.com](mailto:mwilson@farmprogress.com)

I just wanted to let you know I'm about halfway through your book. It is delightful! I snuck in a few chapters while on holiday, as I couldn't wait to read it. I am really enjoying it. You are a wonderful story teller!

You have done a great service to your friend by writing this book in a way that draws in the reader and makes Mr. Borlaug come alive.

Virlane Torbit  
Catlin, Illinois

Many thanks for this mail. I have been working on wheat improvement from more than 10 years. Our group has active research program on wheat rust and grain quality improvement with national and international collaboration. **Norman Borlaug is one of the greatest humans, a role model for all of us.** As we are in process of generating more food to feed the world's increasing population, all of us are in a way paying tribute to him. Thank you for your time and efforts

Bhushan Dholakia, Ph.D.  
Pune- 411008, INDIA

I read the ebook and learned so much more about Borlaug than I knew before. I started as a student at K-State and recall the

food crisis in India and Pakistan being discussed at the time. I took a student group to CIMMYT in 1980. Always discuss the Green Revolution in my Crop Science class during a lecture on world food production. I will recommend it to my class.

Kevin Donnelly  
Department of Agronomy  
Kansas State University

As a side note, it was interesting to me that a friend of mine was telling me of the interesting Sermon given by a guest minister at her church. As she was telling me the story, I realized she was speaking about your book, and the research of Norm Borlaug. She was intrigued to know that my husband was a cousin of Norm's . . . The word is SPREADING.

Shirley Sutphen  
Montrose, Colorado

I must confess that at this stage of my life, I prefer reading light-hearted mysteries rather than nonfiction. But, once I picked this book up to give it a glance, I couldn't put it down.

It's a fascinating tale of the life of **Norman Borlaug, the agronomist whose research on wheat has lessened the chance of a worldwide famine.**

In addition to tracing Borlaug's life, it gives insights into the struggle people had during the difficult 1930s.

Borlaug, of Norwegian decent was born on a farm near Saude, Iowa in 1914. He attended a one-room school house and if it hadn't been for a school-teacher cousin he probably wouldn't have even attended high school. She said, "As a scholar he's no great shakes, but he's got grit."

In his high school years he learned that rural prosperity depends upon muscular seed and the fertilizer that brings out the best of it.

At that time, hybrid corn seed arrived on the scene. His father and others didn't want to plant it because they had to buy it, and buy it every year. Once his father did, his yields went up from 25 to over 50 bushels to the acre.

Borlaug's athletic abilities in football and wrestling led him to college, which he attended on and off as he struggled with finances. After he received a BS in forestry at the University of Minnesota, he worked briefly for the US Forest Service.

At the advice of one of his professors he decided to focus on plant pathology at the University where he received advanced degrees in plant pathology and genetics.

While in St. Paul he witnessed a brutal strike and concluded that "hungry people are angry people," words he would utter over the years.

After years in Mexico laboring to improve wheat varieties he traveled to India and Pakistan to do the same. In all those places he had to fight absurd bureaucrats who were resistant to change. **His struggle was well worth it. Today, millions of people have been freed of hunger because of his persistence.**

In recognition of his efforts he received the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Gold Medal and a host of other awards.

Some accomplishments for a boy who as a scholar had "no great shakes."

If you're interested in agriculture, this book is a must read.

*Trudy Kominus  
Agro Washington, Fall 2012*

I wanted to let you know I latched onto your book about Norman Borlaug when it came in the mail the other week. What a wonderful story to read and what an incredible life and career he had. So, thank you for the effort and sharing his story with us.

*Joan Miller  
San Antonio, Texas*

There are many good passages in your recent book, but one in particular really struck me: "*Of the many barriers nature imposed on corn farmers, yield was the most inflexible. Neighbors sometimes bragged of getting 30 bushels. None ever claimed more. Clearly, 30 bushels an acre was the limit God had imposed.*" I grew up helping my dad farm land that my great, great grandfather Tiernan, an Irish immigrant, had first tilled by hand and broke sod for cultivation in the 1860s. This was after he got out of the civil war and still a teenager. I was home this past September and rode in the combine with my younger brother while he harvested over **300 bu. per acre** in those old slough bottoms that Irish immigrant toiled so hard to drain a century and a half ago. Clearly God is more generous than Grampa Borlaug could ever have guessed.

*Tom Quade  
Edgerton, Missouri*



I am a Tour Guide at the Iowa State Capitol, which includes talking some about Dr. Borlaug about his life and work. I met him on the occasion of his 90th birthday celebration here in Des Moines, Iowa. I introduced myself as "just a girl from Iowa who admires and respects him a great deal." A dear man. Our Governor has an ongoing and permanent display of his work, and large photographs of him in the private office areas that we are allowed to visit.

One of the governor's speech writers met me there one day and told me something I will never forget: "**Dr. Borlaug's life and work saved more lives during the 20th century than all those killed in wars during that period.**" Another visitor from India commented that Dr. Borlaug was personally responsible for saving his country. We celebrate him annually during the World Food Prize presentations at the Capitol and in our city. Amazing. I am part of that event in a small way as a Tour Guide.

*Carrie K. Coppock  
Des Moines, Iowa*

Thank you very much for the wonderful Birthday present and the personal greeting, message and autograph.

WOW! What a story! I started reading and finished it in 2 days. I just couldn't put it down. I'm a Nebraska farm boy born in 1940, so I can relate to no electricity, outdoor plumbing, work horses, steel wheel tractors, and a 1 room country school house.

So thank you for introducing me to Norman Borlaug. **What an appropriate title *Our Daily Bread* – filled with all of life's lessons for success.**

The best book and best birthday present one can have!

*Roland Temme  
Raymond, Nebraska*

#### **Customer Reviews on Amazon.com**

5.0 out of 5 stars **Great read**

This is not only interesting from a historical perspective, but Norman led an amazing life. **I would recommend this to anyone interested in history.**

Bob

5.0 out of 5 stars **So inspiring!**

This story was thrilling because of the look at the sweeping panorama of change from primitive farming methods around the world to farming as it is today because of one man with enough "try"; Like watching time photography. Hard to believe!

Arlene Kovash

3.0 out of 5 stars **Good reading but only for the topic**

I found this to be a good review of Borlaug's life experiences, however the author was difficult to read IMO. He seemed to forget his audience.

Karl Gingrich

5.0 out of 5 stars **Everyone should read this!**

**More people would appreciate where their food comes from if they read this book.** All farmers would enjoy this book just from the historical standpoint! He sacrificed so much with his family just to feed the world...makes me wonder how many of us would sacrifice the same. What a miracle for the improvements he made to happen exactly when the world needed it!

Timmie R. Schott

5.0 out of 5 stars **The story of one man's dedication to feeding the hungry**

This is an eye opening book (even for farmers) on the effort of dedicated scientists that have produced the plant species that we depend on for our food today. Norman Borlaug, a poor farmer's kid, made it to high school only through the help of adults who recognized his amazing intellect. Growing up in the depression, he was not able to find a job but managed to garner a scholarship to college. He married his college sweetheart and they shrimped and saved until Norman was able to finish his PhD. With difficulty, he managed to find a job with the Rockefeller Institute. The Institute was dedicated to the prevention of starvation in the world and sent Norman to Mexico to help them grow wheat. This is an amazing story of his development of new wheat species by selecting plants and carefully breeding them . It was tediously and backbreaking work, removing pollen producing parts of one plant and pollinating them with another. He hired poor Mexican boys and showed them how to do this procedure which up until this time was considered to be a job that could only be done by a highly educated scientists. The boys grow up, helped in their schooling by Borlaug and go on to become Ministers of Agriculture in Mexico. He shows Mexican farmers how to adequately water and fertilize their crop and fights the problem of the tradition agriculture practices. He eventually enabled Mexican farmers to make Mexico completely self-sufficient in wheat production and greatly reduced starvation in that Country. The book tells the story of the years and sacrifice on the part of his wife and children who practically never saw Norman. He was later invited to visit India and Pakistan to work with their Agricultural Ministers to help those countries become more self-sufficient in growing wheat. However, they weren't too impressed. It is an amazing tale of how he overcame the ignorance and bureaucracy of those governments to take his new varieties and farming practices to the farmers themselves.

**He never patented his marvelous new wheat species which we are still using today. He was an amazing, amazing man.**

I highly recommend this book to anyone who has any interest in where

our food comes from, for those who thinks modern plants and agriculture practices are terrible, those who are just interested in plant growing or **those just interested in a good story about a poor dirt farmer's kid who grew up during the depression and made good (not only good but became one of the greatest but most little known hero of agriculture).**

Marie S. Bulgin

5.0 out of 5 stars **very good.**

good to know the life of a famous scientist.

I love it. This is the first English book I read.

xiaofei

5.0 out of 5 stars **A fascinating biography**

I really enjoyed this book. 'Our Daily Bread' describes how Norman **Borlaug's childhood growing up on a farm and his work in forestry led to his success with wheat breeding in Mexico.**

While Vietmeyer is clearly in awe of Borlaug's achievement, he doesn't fail to describe the influence of key people in Borlaug's research. It is fascinating to see Borlaug's luck in meeting the right people at the right time and how he made the most of these opportunities. Vietmeyer emphasizes Borlaug's tenacity and his ability to inspire others.

[But] there is more to the wheat breeding story (eg Farrer's 'Federation' wheat), something readers may like to explore after finishing 'Our Daily Bread'.

what i thought

5.0 out of 5 stars **Our Daily Bread; The Essential Norman Borlaug**

Excellent and timely read. **An account of the kind of life it used to take to earn a Nobel Peace Prize, saving perhaps as many as 100 Million lives from starvation.** The contrast with recent, politically expedient Nobel Prize pretenders is stark.

Early chapters are a sobering reminder of how difficult life was in rural America a hundred years ago, with malnutrition and disease even in America's breadbasket. **Also a story of how very far we have come with modern agriculture and how much we take for granted, as well-fed we can obsess over trivial risks.**

**Later chapters are a compelling story of an action-oriented visionary struggling against socialist political bureaucracies and lazy, self-satisfied academics hiding behind their credentials and protecting their feathered nests.**

This should be the basis for a powerful screenplay, but probably won't be given it's politically incorrect messages.

purchase and enjoy.

TQ

5.0 out of 5 stars **Great book on the green movement that feeds the world!**

This book is a very inspirational book on Norman Borlaug and a must read as we continue to struggle to feed the world. **His vision and wisdom is truly inspiring.**

David Seilstad

5.0 out of 5 stars **Very good book**

**A real eye opener about how precarious our food situation was just a few decades ago, and how poor many of our farmers were. And a warning for our future as well.**

Steve

Engaging story writing and a great subject makes this book easy to read and informative.

Amazoner

5.0 out of 5 stars **A real page turner, April 1, 2013**

I had heard of Norman Borlaug only once before and was interested in learning more. Once I began this book I could not put it down! **At every turn it seems that disaster or defeat will ruin any chance Norm gets but at the last minute a miracle comes through. I found myself sitting on the edge of my seat rooting for good to triumph.** This Nobel Prize Peace Prize winner changed the world. The fact that he remains relatively unknown is a tribute to his humility. Lovers of biographies, history, and agriculture will enjoy this book. It appeals to anyone who wants to see the underdog make good and to those who like a happy ending

Joyce A. Waldren  
Louisville, Ohio

Thank you so much for your kind thoughts and such an inspiring book! We are honored that you took the time to visit Harry S Truman National Historic Site.

Harry Truman I believe would have also enjoyed reading this historical insight. Mr. Vietmeyer I had a Greek visitor to the Truman Home standing at the front gate and noticed a tear running down his face. I used my best ranger skills to approach the situation. I spoke to this older gentleman and asked if I might help. He told me when he was a young boy he was starving to death in Greece. He then pointed to the Truman Home and said: "This President feed me!"

*Norton M. Canfield  
Harry S Truman, National Historic Site  
Independence, Missouri*

Your books are treasures. They preserve the history of the man and the crops that impacted the world. We especially appreciate

the credit you have given to our father, Staley L. Pitts, who up until your volumes had not been recognized as he deserved.

*The Pitts Family  
La Mesa, California*

The Borlaug books have been a joy to read and such a great inspiration on the McFadden project. Prior to us contacting the McFadden family, they did not know who Norm Borlaug was and they are now so pleased to know about the broader impacts that their ancestor "Mac" made by donating his rust-resistant seeds for Borlaug's research in Mexico. The family was thrilled to receive the books.

*Kevin Kephart  
South Dakota State University*

Thank You SOOO much for what you've written about Edgar McFadden in your books. We are proud to be descended from someone who gave so much to so many.

*Kathy Campbell  
Wimberley, Texas*

Thank you for documenting such a great story! I agree 110% that **every person in the "field" of agriculture should be aware of Norman Borlaug and familiar with his accomplishments.**

I feel fortunate to meet people like yourself and others in the industry that are truly making a difference in the world.

*Dan Moore  
Lincoln, Nebraska*

I have enjoyed reading your biography of Norman Borlaug for all the insights into the variety of problems which he overcame. I didn't know Norm as comprehensively as you did, but **he was not a man to forget or be forgotten.**

*Lloyd Evans  
Campbell, ACT  
Australia*

In 1956, after serving 4 years during the Korean War, I enrolled as a freshman in Agriculture at Iowa State University (then still named Iowa State College). From various classes that I took I learned about Mr. Borlaug's work and early accomplishments. Since then I have followed his accomplishments with great admiration. **I consider him to be one of the most important**

**persons in this last century.** Having been born in 1931, I can relate to life as a farm boy. I grew up during the Great Depression in a small two bedroom house, with 6 siblings, on a 40 acre farm, which my father lost in the mid-30s. As a person trained in Agriculture, I consider Mr. Borlaug's accomplishments to be so totally fundamental and essential to the survival of so many millions of people. I have encourage my 6 children to study his life and accomplishments in hopes that they too may appreciate this man and possibly alien their lives to some service that will make this world a better place. Thank you for writing these books. They will no doubt enlighten a lot of people.

*Duane E. Mann  
Woodbine, Iowa*

I recently finished reading *Our Daily Bread*. It was an entertaining book as well as an excellent biography and history lesson. My wife, Carrie, is an English teacher and she enjoyed it from multiple perspectives. She said afterward, "Scientists usually don't write all that well, but this book was both well written, interesting historically and interesting from a personal experience as well." **Thanks for helping me remember why I've spend my career as an agronomist and a consultant in agriculture.**

*D. Kent Davis  
Dodge City, Kansas*

I love your books, I bought the set and they have been a huge source of inspiration in the process of creating the sculpture of Dr. Borlaug.

[Your Memorial Edition of *Our Daily Bread*] will certainly help promote the upcoming Washington D.C. dedication, and more importantly, will help accomplish our shared mission of keeping Dr. Borlaug's life and legacy in the forefront of people's minds and interests.

I am both flattered and relieved that you are pleased with the sculpture as it nears completion. I have never put as much work into a single creation, but I'm afraid my work pales in comparison with the immense undertakings of Norman Borlaug. **If I can capture an ounce of his spirit in this piece, it will be the most powerful portrait sculpture to ever exist!**

*Benjamin Victor  
Aberdeen, South Dakota*

QUOTE COLLECTION from *Our Daily Bread* and *Borlaug* Volumes 1-3

The man we need now is Norman Borlaug.

*President Josiah Bartlett, January, 17, 2001  
[facing an intractable famine in *The West Wing*, a popular TV show]*

There is a saying in the Gita that, from time to time, God appears on earth in disguise. When the world was in a serious food crisis one of the godly forms who appeared was Norman Borlaug.

*M.S. Swaminathan, Member of Parliament, India*

He made the world a better place — a much better place. Though others helped, the driving force was his.

*Ed Runge, Soil and Crop Sciences, Texas A&M University*

Norman Borlaug spent his youth on a small farm in Iowa, dreaming of becoming a high school science teacher and athletics coach. In the end, he spent his life working to keep food production ahead of population growth. His last spoken words on the day of his death were "take it to the farmer." This was his credo for 65 years, and his research added hundreds of millions of tons of grain to world harvests.

*Christopher Dowsell, CIMMYT, Mexico*

He worked tirelessly, and the result was a high-yield, dwarf-wheat variety with more kernels and a stalk strong enough to support the extra weight. Still unsatisfied, he continued developing those even further, keeping his hand in the Mexican dirt while traveling the world to urge prime ministers and presidents to help their farmers grow more food.

*Ronald Phillips, Regents Professor, University of Minnesota*

During his university days Borlaug was a Gopher wrestler. For years afterwards he often visited the wrestling room. He liked the sweat, the discipline, the dedication, the hard work. Those were things he could relate to — they were the cornerstones of his life.

*J Robinson, Head Wrestling Coach, University of Minnesota*

The message of Norman Borlaug's life is that we write our own destiny, and that one person, bending over seedlings under the Mexican sun, can change the world.

*Pioneer Press, Twin Cities, Minnesota*

Once I asked him: "What is your biggest achievement? What you would like to be remembered for?" I thought he would say his contribution to plant sciences and fighting global hunger. But he replied: "As someone who introduced baseball in Mexico." When I burst out laughing, he gave me a detailed account of the hours he spent playing and promoting baseball.

*Devinder Sharma, Pantnagar University, Uttarakhand, India*

Greatest Human Being, R.I.P.

*Obituary headline in the New York Times*

In South Asia, and elsewhere, conditions were right for Norman Borlaug to solve a problem for humanity, and he did so with spectacular success. We need more like him.

*Avik Sengupta, McGill University, Montreal, Canada*

I never met Dr. Norman Borlaug, the Nobel Prize-winning plant scientist who did more than anyone in history to fight hunger, but I've admired him for years. When I started learning about agricultural development, his name came up so often that I felt as if he were my teacher.

*Bill Gates*

Norman Borlaug was driven to eliminate hunger from the world. It was in his soul that no one should die from hunger. And he was incredibly successful. It is now up to new Borlaugs to be the taskmasters of the future. No one wants to look into the eyes of a starving person.

*John Carver, Decorah, Iowa*

Norman Borlaug's commitment to impact meant that as the potential of the Mexican wheats was revealed by testing around the world he became a powerful, courageous and generally effective advocate for radical policy change in the face of opposition. He pushed for importing thousands of tons of improved seed from across the world, boosting of fertilizer supplies, creating floor prices for grain, and promoting agriculture as the way forward instead of heavy industry.

*Tony Fischer, Canberra, Australia*

To witness the warmth of the welcome Norm would receive from crowds of small farmers and officials alike in the Punjab of India and of Pakistan was as exhilarating as it was undeniable proof of his impact.

*Tony Fischer, Canberra, Australia*

Norman Borlaug remains one of the University's most distinguished alumni — a scientist, educator, humanitarian, and Nobel laureate whose work made him a hero around the world. From his early wheat research in Mexico to his ongoing advocacy for modern farming practices and policy, he saw the human face of hunger in the world and never strayed from his principles.

*Robert Bruininks, President, University of Minnesota*

Even in recent years, Dr. Borlaug continued to push the University — and me personally — to a greater understanding of the world's food needs in the face of growing environmental concerns. Without a doubt, he was still the tough-minded grappler from Iowa who first came to the University more than 75 years ago.

*Robert Bruininks, President, University of Minnesota*

Dr. Borlaug is the giant we in the seed industry look up to.

*Andy LaVigne, Alexandria, Virginia*

There is a song that says, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me," I think this was the essence of Norman Borlaug's motivation as well as the basis of his Nobel Peace Prize.

*Ronald Phillips, Regents Professor, University of Minnesota*

Dr. Borlaug proved that agricultural experts can change the course of history for the betterment of humanity.

*Dr Zafar Altaf, Chairman, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council*



Just think of the despots and warmongers who have gone down in history as "the Great": Alexander the Great, Catherine the Great, Charles the Great (Charlemagne), Frederick the Great, Peter the Great. Wouldn't it be nice to see humanity's benefactors designated as "the Great"? Let us therefore start with the benefactor of the world's poorest people: Borlaug the Great!

*David Boaz, Cato Institute, Washington, DC*

Once I heard Dr. Borlaug give a lecture to undergrads and was struck by how accessible and down-to-earth he was. Given his many honors and accomplishments, this seemed beyond belief.

*Nadilia Gomez, Department of Entomology, University of Minnesota*

So many of us go into grad school hoping we'll help the world, but not Norman Borlaug. He began with an interest in plants, and then by being in the moment and by following his interest he got to help the world.

*Nadilia Gomez, Department of Entomology, University of Minnesota*

Borlaug was a plant breeder of a rare type who did everything in his power to share his seed and his knowledge with those who most needed them. By fostering the free flow of improved crop varieties he had a global impact.

*Phil Pardey, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota*

Norm spent his life helping hungry nations, but by 1990 in California, a pretty big wheat state, every wheat variety came directly or indirectly from him. The financial windfall just from the higher yields in the U.S. is at least \$13.6 billion per year.

*Phil Pardey, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota*

Sonora, Mexico — On the walls of some farmhouses in Ciudad Obregon, a photo of a onetime Iowa farm boy hangs along with a portrait of the pope. The American long ago wrought a kind of miracle in the wheat fields of the Yaqui Valley, one that today's world hungers for anew.

*Julie Watson, ASSOCIATED PRESS*

Some critics say the world's efforts to improve poor people's lives are doomed. But Dr. Borlaug is proof that large-scale progress is possible. He is a genuine hero, and his story should make us optimistic about the future.

*Bill Gates*

#### QUOTES IN *Borlaug* Volume 1 [published 2008]

Norman Borlaug's is the greatest life story never told.

*Peter McPherson, President, Michigan State University*

When Norman Borlaug came to the University of Minnesota as a student athlete in 1934, his ability to do university work was questioned. Today we are proud to have named a building in his honor. Dr. Borlaug's life story should be an inspiration to everyone.

*Mark G. Yudof, President, University of Minnesota*

Norman Borlaug is one of the most honored Members of the National Academy of Sciences. Some credit him with saving more human lives than any other person in history.

*Bruce Alberts, President, National Academy of Sciences*

Norman Borlaug is such a charming and humble man, even though he has saved millions of lives through his genius and perseverance as an agricultural humanitarian.

*Michelle Riley, the Carter Center*

Norman Borlaug is the world's most important peacemaker. There can be no peace when millions are hungry. Dozens of nations would have faced turmoil during recent decades had the food supply not risen so dramatically.

*E.C.A. Runge, Head, Soil & Crop Sciences Dept., Texas A&M University*

I believe that Norman Borlaug will eventually be recognized as one of the 10 greatest contributors to humankind of the 20th century.

*Bruce Chassy, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana*

Norman Borlaug has shown how agriculture can solve immense problems in society. His story will heighten public appreciation for farmers and food production. And that is one of the most vital needs as the new, and probably hungrier, century begins.

*Earl L. Butz, Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture*

Norman Borlaug's concern for the small-scale farmers of the world never wavers. His highly successful efforts to help them access improved food production technologies have saved millions of lives and may one day end our global hunger crisis.

*Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter*

The signal posts of Norm's life were hard work, a clear focus on worthy goals, and science directed at solving problems. He continually stressed the need to tackle problems rather than pursue disciplinary knowledge.

*Robert W. Herdt, Rockefeller Foundation*

Food is an essential element of life. Those who help make it more abundant and more widely available perform an invaluable service to their fellow man. They deserve to be recognized and rewarded.

*Robert McNamara, Former President of the World Bank*

Borlaug's work seemed the product of benevolent destiny, though on close analysis it appears that destiny undertakes few ventures of her own; she awaits the actions of the bold and courageous.

*Donald Paarlberg, U. S. Department of Agriculture*

Norm Borlaug is not only a great scientist; he's a great guy.

*Former U.S. President George H. W. Bush*

#### QUOTES IN *Borlaug* Volume 2 [published 2009]

Norm's work shows how the success or failure of crops depends on a minuscule number of plant genes. The bread of life and the thread of life are intimately entwined in the bonds of DNA.

*Henry L. Shands, U. S. Department of Agriculture*

If plant breeders are artists, Norm Borlaug is a Master. But he is a compassionate artist. He produced useful plants because he was driven by the global humanitarian imperative to eliminate hunger. Yet

despite his accomplishments and global honors, he is still a humble and decent Iowa farm boy who is still working harder than most of us at age 85.

*Alex McCalla, University of California, 1999*

Norm was ever the student and ever the teacher. He lit a spark in the minds of young agricultural scientists in many parts of the world, in the conviction that this spark would develop into a flame that would motivate them to try and make life more tolerable for the less-fortunate.

*Robert W. Herdt, The Rockefeller Foundation*

Dr. Norman E. Borlaug and his many colleagues and team workers are the reason why the high yielding varieties of wheat developed in Mexico by he and his associates, are grown on 125 million acres in the lesser developed areas around the world.

*Edwin J. Wellhausen, Former Director, CIMMYT.*

Dr. Borlaug is a man committed to a cause. He was always constantly challenging as a teacher . . . A very important characteristic is his capacity to inspire people. Anytime I've gone down to visit him, I've found him out in the field, usually surrounded by young plant breeders from around the world. And then he starts to talk, and it becomes a walking, outdoor laboratory.

*Sherwood O. Berg, Dean, Institute of Agriculture, University of Minnesota*

Borlaug was equally effective with farmers in their fields, scientists in their experiment stations, and heads of government in their palaces.

*Dana Dalrymple, Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research*

We probably make more wheat crosses at Purdue than anywhere else in the United States, but for every cross we make Borlaug [in Mexico] makes at least a thousand.

*Ralph Caldwell (one of America's top wheat breeders), 1971*

In 1950 Mexico imported 400,000 tons of wheat. In 1956 she had become self-sufficient. The Mexicans say there are four reasons for the big change: seed, water, fertilizer and Borlaug.

*The Illustrated Weekly of India, March 14, 1971*

#### QUOTES IN *Borlaug* Volume 3 [published 2010]

Dr. Borlaug is already established as the prime candidate for the title of human being who has brought most benefit to humanity during his lifetime.

*John White, CBE, Pro Chancellor, De Montfort University, England*

[Borlaug's seeds] gave us respect in our own eyes. India was no longer a nation going around with a begging bowl ... We could feed ourselves.

*T.N. Khoshoo, Government of India Department of Environment*

By his scientific skill, robust faith, and an all-consuming sense of urgency, Dr. Borlaug has rendered to India-Pakistan a service which is unique and unforgettable.

*Sudhir Sen, A Richer Harvest*

While environmental activists sought to instill fear of the food supply, Norman Borlaug used common sense and courage to eliminate famine in countries where it had been the historic norm.

*Malcolm Wallop, Former United States Senator*

Norman Borlaug is the world's most important environmental statesman. By squeezing more production from the farmland, he and those who followed him kept agriculture within bounds while a soaring population demanded that food production quadruple. These few pioneers spared more land for nature than anyone before or since.

*E.C.A. Runge, Texas A&M University*

The power of Norm's legacy is rooted in his ability to deliver his message to peasants and presidents with equal dignity and candor. For forty years he has been helping people feed themselves. He caused things to happen.

*Dale Harpstead, Michigan State University*

Throughout [the Borlaug] story runs a hopeful and transcendent theme—the triumph of peaceful efforts at human betterment over the destructive effect of war.

*Donald Paarlberg, U. S. Department of Agriculture*

Norm is the only practicing plant breeder to win the Nobel Prize, and the only scientist to win the Peace Prize for his work in science.

*Robert W. Herdt, Rockefeller Foundation*

He is neither intimidating nor intimidated, being as comfortable with kings and presidents and government leaders as he is squatting in front of a mud hut conversing with a peasant farmer.

*George Cummins, Iowa State University*

Borlaug's unique combination of technical innovation, idealism, energy and impatience with bureaucratic inefficiency took entire countries from starvation to self-sufficiency within a few years.

*Biographical Essay – World of Genetics*