



## Iowa America 250 Student Contest

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Essay/Poem

Prompt 4: People

### Norman Borlaug

Iowa is America's heartland. Us Iowans believe we feed the world, not only because we have the best land, the best farmers, and the best technology, but also because we have had numerous Iowans help the world fight famine and save people from starvation. On the eve of America's upcoming 250th birthday, countless excellent Iowan stories can be told with great pride. Of those Iowa legends, one name that should be honored and remembered is Norman Borlaug, the father of the "Green Revolution". Norman was a great agronomist whose impact on mankind over the last century has been enormous, with his contributions worldwide leading to extensive increases in agricultural production.

Born into a family of farmers in Saude, Iowa, Borlaug was taught the importance of cultivation to general welfare. Seeing how much of a difference could be made when malnourished people were given enough food sparked his passion for helping others. As he grew and progressed through his education, the only career he ever dreamed of fulfilling was an agronomist, whose mission was to improve the lives of humans through agriculture. It turns out that he would end up going above and beyond that job description.

Borlaug's achievements first came from years of dedication and hard work in Mexico during the 1950-1960s, which transformed Mexican agriculture from insufficient to self-sufficient in wheat production. He engineered a huge scientific breakthrough with a new, tough, and resilient crop that could thrive in the dry, Mexican climate. Generating yields several times higher than existing wheat strains, millions of Mexicans benefited from his brilliance.

Borlaug's success in Mexico then expanded to other countries in need of assistance. During the mid-1960s, India and Pakistan, both having just experienced a massive population boom, were suffering from war and famine. Inherently, they benefited from Borlaug's newly introduced breed of wheat to South Asia tremendously. With wheat output doubling and even tripling, the result was that millions of lives were saved from hunger, and India and Pakistan becoming self-sufficient in wheat production through the late-1960s.

It is estimated the number of lives Borlaug has saved is more than a billion people, and his contributions to humanity and the world's food supply won Borlaug the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970. He not only saved lives with his pioneering work, but he also went on to become a great educator, mentoring the next generation of scientists and engineers that would build upon his own success in agriculture and improve world health.

Borlaug's story has been inspiring to people all around the world. I grew up attending Norman Borlaug Elementary School in Iowa City, and respect and admiration for Borlaug has been ingrained into my heart since the first day of kindergarten when I saw his name etched into the outer brick wall of the school. I also visited Washington D.C. and paid my respects to his statue. His mindset of trying to shape the world into a better place has become one that I try to replicate everyday.