

2014 BORLAUG DIALOGUE

October 16, 2014 - 2:45 p.m.

Speakers: Iowa Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, Paul Schickler

Introduction:

Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn

President - World Food Prize Foundation

So now moving to the next part of our program, if I could invite the Lieutenant Governor and Paul Schickler to the stage. So you just heard from the panel that sometimes you have to use a stick to hit public officials about acting. And so I'm sitting there next to the Lieutenant Governor of Iowa, and she's kind of looking at me about what have I organized here. But I want to introduce her by saying that on the issue of leadership in STEM education and in bringing the importance of young people to focus on science, technology, engineering, math and agricultural science, that she's been out beating everybody else with a stick to get them going and interested in this.

And you just saw one of those young men who's possibly the next Norman Borlaug in that video, and they have been in the leadership role of the STEM Food and Ag Council. And I was there the day it started, and I was so excited, because I said here at last is the national entity that can really bring this issue to every state in the union.

So I am so pleased to have been able to partner with them, and I'm extremely honored to introduce to you today the Lieutenant Governor of Iowa, the Honorable Kim Reynolds.

STEM FOOD AND AGRICULTURE COUNCIL

Kim Reynolds

Lieutenant Governor of Iowa

Well, good afternoon, and thank you, Ambassador Quinn, for your ongoing support and for providing such a notable stage to share what we think is some pretty exciting news today. I also want to take this opportunity to commend you for everything that the World Food Prize does to really engage and encourage our young people to think of innovative ways of how they, too, can feed the world.

Today truly is an important day for STEM Food and Ag. Over the past year, Paul and I have had the distinct honor to serve as the chair and the vice chair of the STEM Food and Ag Council with an outstanding membership, with the backing of STEMconnector, the Council commissioned today's report so that we could better understand what we need to do as a

government, as an industry, and as educational institutions to move and to support a robust STEM talent pipeline, a pipeline that will invigorate our scientific technology and business leadership in food and agriculture, so that we can lead the way to global food security.

You know, we all understand that the greatest challenge confronting our generation is to feed a rapidly growing global population that will rise from seven billion to over nine billion by 2050. Answering that call requires us to inspire, nurture and engage young people to passionately pursue food and ag careers. This, this is the mission of the national STEM Food and Ag Council.

The inaugural annual report is the culmination of our work, and today is the beginning of a dialogue to discuss the findings from the report. And I'm going to take a few minutes to highlight some of those findings.

First, although the supply of students is steadily increasing, in fact, over 30% over the last eight years, it is not sufficient to keep up with the broader demand from food and ag employers. The fact is that the vast need will require that ag's future workforce will come from a population that, unlike previous generations, has no natural connection to agriculture.

Second, the report recommends that the impacted industries work closely with the educational institutions to communicate and work together to find that skill set and close that employment gap.

And third, the six job fields featured in the report are expected to grow by 4.9% between 2014 and 2019, and that is great news when you consider currently there are more than 682,000 total jobs in the six fields that are highlighted in the report.

So there is no question that opportunities are there for our young people in the food and ag industry. And by working together, we can make sure that they are ready to take advantage of them.

You know, recently I had the chance to get involved in one such opportunity – the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute. One of the many legacies of Dr. Norman Borlaug is the Global Youth Institute. The institute engages high school students in developing solution-based presentations addressing some of the world's most complex problems and awards top performers with life-changing internship experiences. And it attracts students from around the world.

As an outcome of the Youth Engagement Committee, I reached out to my fellow lieutenant governors to encourage each of them in their state to consider establishing a state youth institute, and their responses have been extremely positive. And I think it's a really good indication that the institute will continue to grow and thrive in the future.

But most importantly, as states add youth institutes, we will be fulfilling the dream of Dr. Borlaug, his dream of creating a program that potentially will reach into every high school in America and by doing that, inspire the next generation of leaders in science and ag and the fight against hunger.

So thank you again for giving us the opportunity to be here. And I just would like to take this moment to encourage all of you out there to jump on board and be a part of this exciting initiative.

So at this time, I would like to invite DuPont Pioneer President and STEM Food and Ag Council Vice Chair Paul Schickler to the podium. Paul.

Paul Schickler

President, DuPont Pioneer – Vice Chair, STEM Food and Ag Council

And thank you, Lieutenant Governor. But I do hesitate to always follow the Lieutenant Governor to the podium. She has a certain level of excitement and energy that is tough to follow. But at the same time, that's why she's been such a great chair to the STEM Food and Ag Council initiative, because of that energy and enthusiasm. So thank you very much.

This is, as the lieutenant governor said, a tremendous report. And I am going to encourage you to pick up a copy of it and also follow the information on the Internet, and we'll provide that information later. But it is an important report, because it specifically focuses upon students who have chosen to focus in the disciplines of STEM and as a result take advantage of the opportunities that are in front of them and make a difference in feeding the world and really stepping up to this greatest challenge that we have in our time.

As president of DuPont Pioneer, I truly know the need that we have, the opportunity that we have, but also that there is a gap—and that is the gap that must be addressed. So while I know that, I'm going to speak a little bit about the view of others.

Earlier today in this same room I was on a panel, and we had the fortunate opportunity to hear from the president of Sierra Leone, and then the other panel members were the minister of agriculture from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. And then also an extraordinary farmer, woman farmer from Ethiopia. So what was the common theme across all those messages, whether it was minister of agriculture, a farmer, or the president of Sierra Leone? Focus on youth, focus on education—that is what will help move us forward in solving this greatest challenge that we face.

So I would encourage everyone to take a look at this report and really think about how you can learn from it and take your action. In fact, just last week I was with Secretary Vilsack, and I believe Secretary Vilsack is next on the agenda. And what we were talking about is the image of agriculture, the image of agriculture and food, and at the same time the opportunity. We were talking about things like how are farmers perceived by the public? What's the environmental actions that farmers take to improve the environment, to improve soil health? How well do we do to tell the story about the opportunities that exist in food and agriculture? We have a great food safety system in the United States. How do we appreciate that food safety system and take it globally? And then also—what are we going to do about continuing to inspire and engage the youth through education?

So we talked about that quite a bit, and then he looked right at me and said, “What are you going to do?” And my answer was, “Come to Des Moines next week, and you’ll hear from the STEM Ag and Food Council about what we are going to do jointly between government, academia and private institutions to really take this message forward.”

So that’s what I’m going to leave with you, is ask you the same question that Secretary Vilsack asked me last week – What are you going to do? The first thing that you should do is pick up the book. But the next thing that you should do is think about what you can do to make a difference. Are you going to mentor a young child so that they appreciate the opportunity and challenge that exists in food and agriculture? Are you going to coach a student so that they can develop the skills necessary to succeed in this field? Or finally, consider joining the STEM Food and Ag Council. We need talent, we need help, we need to get this message out throughout the nation.

So that’s my call to action, quoting Secretary Vilsack – What are you going to do? And I hope it is to take part in this greatest cause, this greatest challenge that we have that we are facing in our time. I think that’s the one thing that we can all do collectively to really fulfill Norman Borlaug’s mission and his request of all of us – and that was to make sure that we inspire and engage youth through education.

Thank you very much.

Ambassador Quinn

So, lieutenant governor, Paul, thank you so very much. We are so thrilled at the World Food Prize to be partners with you in this. Paul is so modest, but he and his wife Claudia have also personally helped us inaugurate the Iowa Youth Institute, which is the model that we are creating. And Catherine Swoboda, who’s over here working, is a member of the governor’s STEM Advisory Council and also built that program for three years, and now Jacob Hunter is taking over with this. But we’re thrilled to work together. I hope you’ll do this every year and come back, so it can be part of the World Food Prize, because, as you said, this is Norman Borlaug’s most heartfelt passion, inspiring the next generation of young people. And 92% of those who do full participation in one of our youth programs ends up majoring in agriculture in college, and 77% go in the workforce, so pretty good. So thank you again, lieutenant governor and Paul Schickler.