

**AGRICULTURE REPORT - World Food Prize Winners***By Mario Ritter*

Broadcast: April 6, 2004

This is Steve Ember with the VOA Special English Agriculture Report.

Scientists from China and Sierra Leone are the winners of this year 's World Food Prize. The winners were announced at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. led by Secretary of State Colin Powell last Monday. Chinese Professor Yuan Longping and Monty Jones will share the two-hundred-fifty-thousand-dollar prize. Both men are being honored for work they did to improve rice production in developing countries. Two-thousand-four is the International Year of Rice.

Professor Yuan is head of the National Hybrid Rice Research and Development Center in Hunan, China. He received his share of the prize for work he did in the nineteen-seventies.

Mister Yuan developed ways to genetically combine different kinds of rice to increase production. He discovered that combining two kinds of rice results in a better, more productive new rice. He established the hybrid rice seed industry in China. He also shared research and helped train scientists from more than twenty-five countries. For his efforts, Mister Yuan is called the " Father of Hybrid Rice. "

Monty Jones is being honored for his part in developing the " New Rice for Africa " or NERICA. He developed NERICA while he was head of the Upland Rice Breeding Program. At the time, the program was part of the West Africa Rice Development Agency in Ivory Coast.

NERICA is a combination of Asian and traditional African kinds of rice. It resists insects and dry conditions and can produce up to fifty percent more rice. It also grows faster and contains more protein than rice native to West Africa. Mister Jones is now a top official of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa in Accra, Ghana.

The two scientists will officially receive their prize on October fourteenth in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Norman Borlaug**

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Norman Borlaug first developed the idea of a world food prize. He wanted to honor people who increased food production to help feed the growing world population.

Mister Borlaug knows something about major prizes. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in nineteen-seventy. He received the award for his work to develop more productive agriculture.

Iowa businessman John Ruan provides the money for the World Food Prize. He began his support in nineteen-ninety. The World Food Prize Foundation has given the prize every year since nineteen-eighty-seven.

This VOA Special English Agriculture Report was written by Mario Ritter. This is Steve Ember.



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