



**WORLD FOOD PRIZE
FOUNDATION**

Heidi Kühn

2023 LAUREATE



PLANTING THE ROOTS OF PEACE

Heidi Kühn of the United States will receive the **2023 World Food Prize for her farmer-focused development model that revitalizes farmland, food security, livelihoods and resilience after devastating conflict.** For more than two decades, she has shown over a million people living in war-torn regions around the world a way forward for restoring peace and prosperity through agriculture.

After winning her own battle with cancer, Kühn was inspired to found the non-profit organization **Roots of Peace** to remove an insidious “cancer of the earth” — replacing the remnants of war with bountiful farmland. Since 1997, the work of Roots of Peace has impacted over one million farmers and members of farming families, spanning Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Israel, Palestinian areas and Vietnam. It has facilitated the removal of unexploded bombs and landmines, and restored the land to agricultural use with the planting of millions of grapevines and fruit trees.



“For the past 25 years, Roots of Peace has been committed towards transforming former battlefields into thriving farmlands and empowering local communities to achieve self-reliance. By working hand-in-hand with farmers, governments and global partners, we have endeavored to turn conflict-ridden lands into vineyards and replace the remnants of war with the roots of peace.”

HEIDI KÜHN, 2023 LAUREATE

Kühn began her work in Croatia, partnering with vintners in her home state of California to raise funds to remove landmines left behind by the Croatian War of Independence and replant vineyards and orchards on the cleared land. This experience led Kühn to **design a strategy for promoting high value commodities by building agricultural value chains from production and processing to market support and distribution.** She worked with Afghan farmers, including over 5,000 women, to increase the yield and quality of table grapes, pomegranates, apples, almonds, apricots and melons to restore Afghanistan as the “Garden of Asia.” Her efforts **facilitated agricultural exports worth over \$491 million as well as a four-fold increase in farm household income.**

Kühn led Roots of Peace through the government take-over by the Taliban in 2021 to safely continue their important agricultural work in all provinces of Afghanistan. Because of her uncommon success in the midst of war, the U.S. government and the United Nations Development Programme provided funding for Roots of Peace to continue sustainable agricultural programs. The economic resilience and trust she has painstakingly built with the Afghan people has provided a viable alternative to poppy production and allowed communities to resist further calls to violence, making her efforts instrumental to peacebuilding in the country.

In the Vietnam provinces which saw the heaviest bombardment of the Vietnam War, Kühn partnered with the U.S. Department of State and Mines Advisory Group to clear mines from densely populated farmland to make way for more than 1.6 million black pepper trees. Since 2010, **more than 3,500 farmers have benefited from this work**, exporting over 50 metric tons of high-grade black pepper to new



markets in the U.S. and expanding into vanilla and cashew production with the help of Roots of Peace.

With conflicts proliferating in so many parts of the world — notably Ukraine, where Kühn is now beginning work to revive vineyards — war is a growing threat to farmlands and food security. An increasing number of nations are finding it necessary to confront the daunting challenge of rebuilding food systems, livelihoods and communities after conflict. Kühn's work turning “mines to vines” shows the world **the vital role agriculture must have in the resilient recovery from conflict and restoration of peace.**





Harnessing Change

Join us for the 2023 Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue on October 24-26 in Des Moines, Iowa. The theme **Harnessing Change** is a deliberate progression of the 2022 theme, *Feeding a Fragile World*. After focusing on the impacts of COVID-19, climate change and conflict, this year we will address harnessing innovation, adaptation and diversification to improve systemic resilience, recover from shocks and sustainably nourish all people.

Concurrent with the Borlaug Dialogue, students from across the United States and around the world will join us in Des Moines for the Global Youth Institute, an integral educational experience in agriculture and global development.

To further explore these pressing global challenges, the 2023 Borlaug Dialogue will consider the following **six subthemes** in its roundtables, keynotes, side events, youth programs and more:



TICKET INFORMATION

The 2023 Borlaug Dialogue will continue to offer **both in-person and virtual programming**, providing unparalleled opportunities for engagement and networking while also ensuring global access to these critical discussions.

Early bird tickets are available until July 15 for in-person attendance. Virtual attendance is available at no cost. Ticket purchase does not include an invitation to the Laureate Award Ceremony on October 26, which is by invitation only.

