

High Yield Variety Crops:
USAID's Global Fight Against Communism

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When first deliberating what topic to choose for NHD, a couple of subjects were immediately intriguing. The first was the field of agriculture and the critical innovations within that were typically overlooked. The second was the unique methods of diplomacy and manipulation the U.S. used to win the Cold War. Within agriculture, the topic of Norman Borlaug and his HYV crops was especially interesting. His innovations were crucial to feeding the growing world population, yet are typically overlooked. Additionally, we were interested in American food diplomacy and agricultural aid during the Cold War. A pivotal part of the U.S. victory in the Cold War, yet commonly overlooked. We managed to connect these two fields of interest, as U.S. aid heavily relied upon agricultural aid in the form of HYVs.

We first began our research by exploring the story of HYVs, from their creation to how they greatly improved crop yields globally. At the same time, we began to look at U.S. agricultural aid policies during the Cold War, exploring the creation of the USAID and the Food for Peace program. We quickly noticed a link between the two topics, that the U.S. agricultural aid programs focused on distributing agricultural technology in the form of HYVs. Next, we focused on finding secondary sources to get more detailed information on HYVs, agricultural aid, and the impact of said aid. Finally, we gathered newspapers, speeches, and other primary sources that gave us a better understanding of the thoughts of Borlaug, U.S. officials, and other world leaders.

Deciding our the format for our presentation was challenging. Initially, we thought an exhibit would be the best way to present our story. However, as we continued with our research we began to feel that an exhibit would fall short and would fail to provide an in-depth experience. We deemed that an exhibit would make our presentation dull and unexciting, our topic just didn't work with an exhibit. We concluded that to provide an interesting yet in-depth

presentation, a website was necessary. Thus, in the end, in order to provide an informative experience we decided to create a website.

By themselves, HYV crops were a major achievement in agriculture and one of the most significant turning points in all of agricultural history. HYVs revolutionized agriculture across the world and allowed nations to feed their growing populations, while excess food prompted even greater population growth. Additionally, through their implementation into U.S. agricultural aid, HYVs were a turning point in the Cold War. Throughout the Cold War American agricultural aid focused on delivering agricultural technology, in the form of HYVs, to developing nations around the world. This food diplomacy was a tactic unique to the United States, as Soviet agriculture was too underdeveloped for the USSR to emulate it. This was such a significant turning point, as it allowed the United States to gain an extreme political advantage over the Soviets, while also staving off communism from several developing nations.