

## William Vogt vs. Norman Borlaug: How two intellectual giants shaped the modern GMO debate

In the book *The Wizard and the Prophet*, Charles C. Mann exposes the implicit controversy between two visionaries at the origin of two diametrically opposed currents of thought: William Vogt and Norman Borlaug. Each proposes a different conception of how to practice agriculture in order to feed humanity.

...

According to Mann, [Vogt's book *Road to survival*] was the inspiration of the environmental movement. He inspired Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring' and Paul Ehrlich's equally famous 'The Population Bomb' .... Vogt violently attacks capitalism and free enterprise. [He] also .... defines a fundamental concept, the "[Carrying Capacity](#)" which defines in ecology "the maximum size of the population of an organism that a given environment can support".

...

In contrast .... we find .... American agronomist Norman Ernest Borlaug .... who is considered the father of the **Green Revolution** .... Borlaug's mission throughout his career is plant pathology .... [According to Mann,] "while the ecology of Vogt was an exercise of humility and limits, Borlaug's pathology of plants was an extension methodology. Isolate the subject of study, repeat the experiment at will and then push the result as far as possible ..."

**[Editor's note: This article was published in French. GLP's English summary was lightly edited for clarity.]**

**Read full, original article:** [Borlaug vs Vogt: limiting the population, or developing precision farming?](#)