

Grangers addressed by officials and legislators

John W. Scott, master of the National Grange told delegates to the 103rd annual session of the Pennsylvania State Grange that the Russian-U.S. grain deal should help prevent "disastrous feed cost levels that plagued American farmers recently."

In the past, he said, Russian grain buying disrupted the market and forced prices up. But with the Soviet Union assured of adequate purchases at world prices, he added, the deal "should benefit livestock producers of this country."

Scott also warned that "this nation must stop putting our government deeper into debt." He pointed out that the present national debt is \$540 billion, and that it will be increased by \$76 billion in the 1976 fiscal year, and an additional \$50 billion in fiscal 1977.

Food stamps, he said, now consume 64 percent of the U.S. Agriculture Department's budget, while funds for agriculture research are being cut.

Welfare programs have

become "a luxury that American taxpayers cannot afford," the delegates were told by J. Luther Snyder, state Grange master.

"We must face the welfare problem realistically. We must restore it as a worthwhile assistance program to help those who deserve and need help. But we must eliminate fraud and abuses which cost taxpayers billions of dollars."

And, Snyder warned, federal financial aid for any program or project is a myth. It is in reality not a grant from Washington, but a share of money paid by the nation's taxpayers.

Welfare reform is but one of a score or more topics that Grange delegates will consider at the policy-making sessions of the convention.

A. Wayne Readinger, past state Grange master, cautioned the group that "leadership seems to be lacking at every level of government.

We must rededicate ourselves and go back to the principles on which this nation and this Grange was founded," he told the group.

A sound, fully productive agriculture is "a very key element of this nation's quest for peace, and the American farmer has become a vital part of this effort," Senator Patrick J. Stapleton, of Indiana, chairman of the State Senate Agriculture Committee, said in his address at the session. "Our agricultural abundance helped open the door to 800 million people on the mainland of China. It helped to improve relations with the Soviet Union. It helped to build bridges to the developing world. It enabled us to contribute over the past 20 years about \$25 billion worth of food to hungry mouths throughout the rest of the world."

But, he warned, family farms have been declining in number in the state and nation for the past 30 years. "It must be the goal of the General Assembly to improve farm income insofar



John W. Scott, Master of the National Grange, chats with Richard Maule, who served as chairman of the convention committee. Scott, a former dairyman from Butler County, spoke at the Pennsylvania Grange's

annual convention in Lancaster this week. As head of the national farm organization Scott has an office just a block away from the White House. Maule is a dairyman from Quarryville.

Scott warns of pollution laws

By Dieter Krieg

LANCASTER - The recent increase in support prices for milk were long overdue; some environmental improvement projects put before farmers should be cost-shared by taxpayers; young people should receive some help in their efforts to start farming, and farmers should receive first priority in an energy allocation plan.

These were some of the comments made to Lancaster Farming by John W. Scott, Master of the National Grange, who was in Lancaster for the annual convention of the Pennsylvania Grange. A former dairyman from Butler County, Scott now heads the influential farm organization and has an office just one block away from the White House.

Commenting on milk prices, Scott believes the recent increases were needed, "and they will really be needed when the flush comes next Spring." He expressed hope that government would refrain from importing large volumes of foreign dairy products, which in his opinion is what killed milk prices a year ago.

The farm leader noted that the parity level will most likely slip down to 75 per cent or less by next Spring when USDA is supposed to readjust it. Asked if he believed Earl Butz, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, would set the April 1, 1976 parity level at 75 per cent, as has been suggested by at least one dairy cooperative leader, Scott answered "no."

He explained that the administration agreed to an 80 per cent parity level, and believes this is an indication Butz will continue to set prices at that level. Scott also pointed out that original legislation set before the administration asked to 85 per cent of parity for milk prices, and if Butz did decide to go under 80 per cent in April, "we'll get legislation to bring it back up to at least 80 per cent."

Asked if he was either pessimistic or optimistic about the future of the dairy industry, the Grange Master hesitated for a moment but indicated in his remarks that better times should now be before the dairyman. "Costs are really high," he began, "but now that we've prevented the Russians from buying up 17-million tons of our grain, we should be able to keep our feed costs down." He added, however, that production costs would continue to increase.

"Dairymen are also hurt by the price of beef cows," he continued. "When I was farming, veal calves in a year's time paid my taxes - now they're nothing," he remarked. Scott farmed all his life until 1962, and in addition hauled milk for 24 years. He had a herd of 50 cows on his farm near Slippery Rock.

The Grange has been seeking legislation to enable young men who want to start farming, Scott told Lancaster Farming in an interview this week. One of the present situations it is trying to change is the inheritance tax laws. "Inflation and ever-increasing property values have made the \$60,000 exemption figure completely out of date," the farm leader stated. Efforts are underway to bring these laws "up to date with the times," and the Ways and Means Committee is now considering raising the limit from \$60,000 to \$200,000. "This should help young fellows who might inherit a farm," Scott said.

Besides that, a bill has been sponsored and introduced before the House which would guarantee loans to young farmers. According to Scott, payments on principle would be deferred for 10 to 12 years and loans would last for up to 30 or 40 years. "This won't really take government funds unless the loan is defaulted," he pointed out, adding that the rate of interest should be favorable but not subsidized.

"Too many times agriculture is accused of being subsidized," Scott proclaimed, "while in reality there are no subsidies at the present time except those involved in conservation programs.

Scott defended such use of government funds, "because

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There was lots of applause for the talent displayed in shows and contests held as a part of the Pennsylvania State Grange's annual convention. Held in Lancaster this year, Grangers filled

the auditorium at McCaskey High School to see what the best talented of them had to offer. The events were held October 27-30.

Lancaster Farming Photo by Dieter Krieg



This family vocal group from Schnecksville delighted a capacity audience of Grangers at the talent contest held as a part of the Pennsylvania Grange convention activities on Oct. 27-30. The

group won first place in its division. The group included: Lynn, Debbie, Joanne, Jimmy, and Andy Schneck; John and Mark Schankweiler; and Michael and Matthew Beitler.