

# GRANGE NEWS

104th annual convention

## Decisions, resolutions adopted by State Grange

SHARON, Pa. - In a series of major policy-making decisions, the Pennsylvania State Grange last month called for clear and understandable language in legislation; overseeing by the General Assembly of rules and regulations promulgated by state agencies; and a development rights plan for preserving agricultural land. These decisions came during the 104th annual meeting of State Grange, here.

In its proposal for preserving agricultural land, the Grange recommended zoning or rezoning of districts by local government; that development rights be assigned each farm in an area zoned agricultural equal to the number of lots that could be developed on that farm; that before any development can take place in a residential area, equal developmental rights must be purchased from a person in the agricultural area, and that the rights must be used within one year; that building rights must be purchased within the local municipality as long as they are available there. Only after the supply is exhausted could rights be purchased in an adjoining municipality;

and that all land used for agriculture, whether in an area zoned agricultural or residential, be given preferential assessment as long as it remains in agriculture.

General Assembly to take action to clarify the language of all legislation. The organization specifically recommended amending a 1937 law to require that all legislation be "carefully edited to eliminate words and phrases that conflict with clarity and understanding."

Grange delegates also called on Congress to take similar steps to provide federal laws that are "clear, understandable and free of ambiguity."

In action recommending oversight of rules and regulations, the Grange suggested legislation that would permit five Senators or 20 members of the House of Representatives to delay adoption of rules or regulations until they could be reviewed by the Legislature.

The action would have to be taken within 60 days after the rules or regulations had been published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. Failure of the General Assembly to act within 30 legislative days

would automatically make the rules or regulations effective.

In other action taken at the business session, the Grange urged action to limit or control imitation cheese products which threaten the economy of the natural cheese industry, and threaten the stability of prices dairy farmers receive for milk; condemned scare type announcements such as those regarding the low-level increase in radioactive fallout that followed a recent atomic test in China; recommended that the Department of Environmental Resources or other governmental agency, before making such an announcement, clear it with the Department of Agriculture if the report may be damaging to agriculture or reflect undue danger in agricultural products.

At the same annual convention, the Grange also asked for strict enforcement of dairy import quotas to improve the economic stability of dairy farmers and processors. The Grange urged the action as a measure to encourage dairy farmers to remain in business.

The resolution pointed out that imports have increased sharply this year, despite a "plentiful supply of high quality dairy products in the United States." The Grange

also noted that per capita consumption of milk and dairy products has declined, resulting in a tighter economic squeeze on dairy farmers.

Representative Kent D. Shelhamer, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, complimented Grange delegates on their interest and involvement in legislative action after listening to a discussion of resolutions. He also commended the group, which he described as "the largest rural organization in Pennsylvania," for its efforts in supporting legislation beneficial to agricultural and rural areas.

He cited several measures enacted during the current session of the Legislature and called attention particularly to House Bill 217 that he termed "the Grange's own bill."

He explained that the Grange had initiated efforts to have the bill introduced, then actively supported it at each step through the Legislature. The bill, signed last May by Governor Shapp, defers payment of sewer and water line construction assessments for farmers as long as they keep their land in agriculture.

Shelhamer told the Gangers that agricultural interests had a good record of accomplishments in this

session, "the best we have ever had in the General Assembly."

But, he cautioned the Grange to look ahead, and prepare for a much greater involvement in the legislative field. "You need more facilities, more manpower to do the job that will have to be done."

"Remain keenly aware of the issues and what they are, and let your legislators know where you stand," Shelhamer concluded.

Among other resolutions adopted before Shelhamer's address, was one calling on the State Agriculture Department to declare Johnsongrass a noxious weed so that measures can be adopted to control this plant pest that is becoming a problem in several parts of the state.

The Grange also called on Congress to "thoroughly review the present agricultural program with

respect to target prices for farm commodities for our present needs; and provide necessary legislation to bring agricultural loan rates in line with present market prices."

## Sperry

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In addition, all six were interviewed by John Hoffman, executive director of the Pennsylvania Poultry Federation, the organization who sponsored the event.

Prior to the contest, each girl had also been personally interviewed by a panel of judges consisting of Delphine Lynch, former Federation pageant coordinator; and Betty Rode, consumer coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. There was also a male judge on the panel, who was a representative of the Commonwealth National Bank.

While the judges were deliberating, Dawn Heisler, 1975-76 Pennsylvania Poultry Queen, gave her farewell address, reminiscing over some of the good times she enjoyed in her past year's reign. And, as a gift of appreciation from the Federation, William Carlin, Federation immediate past president, awarded her with a self-portrait mounted on wood.

Other contestants in the pageant were Vicki Sherick, representing Lancaster County; Sandra Markey, from York County; Darlene Resh, candidate from Adams County; Pamela Benfer from Northumberland County; and Kendra Wagner, representing Dauphin County.

Agway, Inc. was the sponsor for Miss Sperry.

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