

Grange involved in Farm Show development

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania State Grange, a 111-year-old fraternal farm organization with the largest rural membership of its kind in the state, played a key role in the creation of what we now know to be the popular annual State Farm Show in Harrisburg.

Because the "State Corn Show" started in 1917 and grown in popularity and outgrown its facilities, the Pa. State Grange launched a movement the fall of 1920 for the establishment of a State Fair to encompass a wide area of agriculture. An article in the Pa. State Grange News brought it to the attention of then Governor William C. Sproul, who liked the idea, as did several other farm leaders. An Act passed by the Pa. legislature of 1921 created a Fair Commission of eleven members including John A. McSparren, Master of the State Grange at the time. The commission was empowered to formulate plans for establishment, organization and management of a State Fair. The result was the Farm Show.

Every year finds the Grange a major exhibitor and participant in the organization of the Farm Show. At the Grange booth, prospective members are given information.

friendships are renewed, and the name GRANGE is placed before the public as thousands of people receive free literature regarding its history, lobbying efforts, and many services.

Historically, the Grange was initiated following the ravages of the Civil War by Oliver Hudson Kelly, a member of the newly formed U.S. Department of Agriculture, who conceived the idea that a fraternal organization, united by farmers, would help improve the economic and social position of the country's farm population. Kelly then acted to form the first official unit of the Grange, with six other founders, called, the Potomac Grange #1 in Washington, D.C. in 1867.

The formation of the first Grange in Pennsylvania occurred in 1871 in Lycoming County. The first state Session (a yearly convention at which legislative policy is set and elections take place) was held two years later in Reading. At that time, there were 25 local Granges from 10 counties with delegates representing most of them at the Session.

Today, membership in the Grange totals over 42,000 with 551 local units in 64 counties. Nationwide, membership totals

450,000 organized in 37 states. Pennsylvania holds about 1/10th of the national membership and is one of the largest state Granges. The Grange itself is the second largest farm organization in America and the largest in Pennsylvania.

While known primarily as a farm organization, the Grange opens its membership to everyone, and concerns itself with the well-being of all people, with policy supporting better schools, improved highways, and an equitable form of taxation.

The Grange is the first organization to include women on an equal basis with men, with equal voting privileges, long before women had voting rights. Children aged 14 and under are also included on an equal basis with the availability of Junior Granges.

The Grange has helped sponsor, without exception, all the major legislation enacted for strengthening agriculture and generally for the well-being of rural America. Many state and national programs, historically, as well as today, such as rural free delivery of mail, an end to rail freight rates that discriminated against agriculture, and in Penn-

sylvania, proper labeling and standards for oleomargarine, came about with strong lobbying support from the State Grange working in concert with the National Grange in Washington.

In Pennsylvania, the Grange also provides a full line of services for members, such as insurance,

credit union, food cooperative, oil and gas leasing, and investment services.

The Pennsylvania State Grange, unique in its historic prominence, can well claim to be one of the originators of the Farm Show, a unique yearly event in the nation.

Lancaster DHIA meetings

LANCASTER — Current economic conditions are forcing dairymen to make some difficult management decisions. DHIA records can be a valuable source of information to help them make more informed decisions.

Several informative meetings have been scheduled to help dairymen learn more about their records, and how to use them. Dairymen are invited to bring their own records and pocket calculators and attend any of the following meetings: January 19th - 1:00 p.m., Union Grove School Ag Room, 7:30 p.m., Solanco High School Ag Room. January 20th - 1:00 p.m., Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

A special meeting is also being held for farmers who are not on DHIA, but would like to learn more

about it and what it has to offer them. This meeting will be at 10:00 a.m., January 20th at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center. Anyone who is possibly interested in getting on test should attend this meeting, or contact the Lancaster Extension Office (telephone: 717-394-6851) before the next DHIA Board meeting on January 28th.

Instructors at the workshops will be John Kline, DHIA fieldman, and Glenn Shirk, Lancaster County Extension Agent.

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