

Hot ag issues coming before Pa. State Grange

HARRISBURG — Provisions for the 1985 Farm Bill and a state litter tax versus a mandatory bottle and can deposit law will be two of the hottest issues debated by delegates attending the Pennsylvania State Grange annual session in Gettysburg, Monday through Thursday.

More than 100 resolutions will be considered by representatives of the Grange's 552 local and 55 county units. Each local and county grange is entitled to send two delegates to the session, which are usually the master and his/her

spouse. An estimated 600 delegates are expected to be in attendance at the four-day meeting.

Resolutions submitted by one grange support a dairy price support program supported by dairy organizations in the northeast. The proposal, which comes from Northumberland County, asks for dairy price supports to be automatically tied to a formula which moves up or down in response to supply and demand, or the rate of surplus milk purchased by the Commodity Credit Corporation. The resolution also calls

for an extension of the national dairy promotion program only after a referendum vote, and an emergency standby diversion program in the event that surpluses climb to an alarming level. The resolution also asks for a six-month extension of the current dairy diversion program which is set to expire in April, 1985.

Statements favoring both a litter tax and retaining the Grange's position in favor of mandatory deposits on bottles and cans will be presented to Grange delegates. The issue has been a hot one in the farm community, as litter along roadsides and in fields costs farmers thousands of dollars in equipment breakdowns and loss of livestock. A bottle deposit law support by farm organizations has seen little action in the State Legislature.

Other issues to be decided by the State Grange include:

- * Elimination of the popular use of agricultural investments as income tax shelters by non-farm enterprises;

- * Animal rights legislation appropriating money for research on the economic impact if farm animals are to be "wild-raised" as proposed by animal rights liberalists;

- * Research on prevention and cure of avian influenza and rabies, and a State Grange program encouraging local granges to conduct rabies vaccination clinics;

- * A state or federal indemnity program for hogs lost to pseudorabies;

- * A three-tiered payment schedule for milk payments in which dairy farmers would receive 75% of their payment within a month;

- * A change in the criteria for pricing milk from butterfat content to a solids not fat content; and

- * A federal program providing incentives to put marginal (high erosion) farmland in wood fiber production using animal wastes and sludge as fertilizer.

These and other issues will be voted on by delegates at the State Grange meeting. Policy

development begins at the local level of the Grange and is used to direct the organization its legislative representation of 42,000 farm and rural members throughout the state. Resolutions passed during the session which pertain to national issues will be brought before the National Grange convention in November in Portland, Maine.

USDA, PDA begins hunt for bee parasites

HARRISBURG — Inspectors from the Pennsylvania and U.S. Departments of Agriculture are working to prevent the importation of tiny honeybee parasites into the Commonwealth.

The honeybee tracheal mite, *Acarapis woodi*, known to infest hives in areas of New York, Texas, Florida, Louisiana and South Dakota, adheres to the breathing tubes of young bees.

Under a nationwide program, USDA officials plan to collect 50 hive samples from throughout Pennsylvania. Inspectors from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Entomology Division will collect half the samples under the cooperative program, with federal officials responsible for the remainder. The samples will be processed and analyzed for signs of parasites in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Entomology Laboratory.

The parasite is known to have been transported interstate in colonies shipped by suppliers. Inspectors urge those beekeepers involved in migratory shipping

activities to avoid movement to infested areas and to require certification that shipments are free of the parasite. Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture inspectors provide certification for Pennsylvania bees shipped interstate.

The majority of hives in the state are maintained by "hobbyist" beekeepers not engaged in migratory shipping. In 1982, the state's 1,788 beekeepers obtained over 1.3 million pounds of honey from their 27,183 colonies.

Cover Crop

NORRISTOWN — Now is the time to think about planting a cover crop to protect your open fields over winter.

Rye can be planted this fall and in the spring plowed down as a green manure crop or cut for rye silage and corn or beans can then be no-tilled into rye stubble. This cover crop can be beneficial to the soil in many ways; as a cover over winter, it also improves tilth by adding organic material; and in a no-till system, it can also be utilized by harvesting it for the animals.

Rye is a very versatile crop. It can be planted in many ways, and can fit into many different operations. Rye cover cropping can probably fit into any operation, and it can bring reassuring thoughts that fields have a cover on them over winter when bare fields are subjected to the elements that can cause severe erosion.



Conrad Fisher, left, and Phil McMahon, both of Green Lane, showed their steers to top honors at the annual Montgomery County 4-H Steer Show. Conrad was named reserve Champion Fitter while Steve won Champion Showman and his steer named Reserve Grand Champion Animal. Both members will be exhibiting their steers at the Eastern Pennsylvania 4-H Beef Show and Sale at the Allentown Fairgrounds in October.



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