

# Grangers To Discuss Issues At Banquet

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — More than 300 Grange members will gather Monday, May 4th at the Sheraton Inn Harrisburg to discuss issues of importance with their state legislators. This annual event is one way the Pennsylvania State Grange attempts to bring government closer to the people.

"The banquet is our way of saying thank you to the legislature for the hard work they do," said Brenda Shambaugh, Grange legislative director. "It also gives our members an ideal opportunity to discuss one-on-one the problems facing them."

Some of the issues which the Grange is supporting and will be discussed include: HB 496 Nutrient Management - This bill would establish statewide nutrient management legislation. The Grange feels legislation is needed to protect farmers and consumers alike.

HB 829 Bottle Bill - This bill would require a \$.05 deposit on bottles. The legislation would encourage recycling and decrease the number of discarded bottles which can cause injury to humans and livestock.

HB 1313 Loan Forgiveness - Many of the state's colleges and universities train some of the best professionals in the country but often these students are lured out of state. This bill would give loan forgiveness for agriculture and veterinary students if they farm or practice in Pennsylvania after graduation.

HD 1492 Rural Leadership Development - This legislation gives the Department of Community Affairs the authority to establish a rural leadership training program. The purpose is to encourage development of rural community leaders by providing leadership training to citizens and advanced training to elected officials.

HB 1530 DER Agricultural Advisory Committee - Formation of such a committee would require DER to give all policies and regulations to the committee for

review. This bill would ensure that DER doesn't pass policy which could effect agriculture without first consulting with the farm community.

HB 1828 Deep Mine Mediation - This compromise on Mine Subsidence Laws includes a provision that the coal company must replace water and buildings in the event of loss or pollution of the water.

SB 727 School Strikes - The Pennsylvania State Grange is supporting original language which included the use of binding arbitration in settling contract disputes between school boards and teachers.

SB 1238 Seasonal Farm Labor - The Grange is supporting amendments that would benefit farmers who use migrant workers.

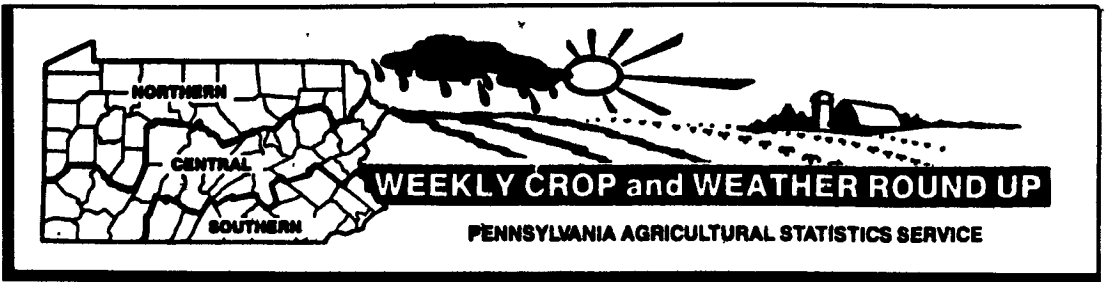
SB 1505 Timber Legislation - This bill would encourage small timber harvest by discouraging high township fees.

Health Care - The Pennsylvania State Grange has recently established a committee to look into the rising cost of health care and what legislative initiatives are possible to reduce costs.

State Budget - The Grange is concerned with the lack of budgetary support given to agriculture in the Governor's proposal. They are particularly concerned with the fact that no appropriations were given to the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

School Bus Drivers - The Grange is seeking requirement changes so that school bus drivers don't have to receive a commercial drivers license, but still must meet certain standards for the safety of our children.

Wetlands - The Grange continues to work with officials to balance the environmental and economic concerns surrounding wetlands. If a farmer has farmed the land in the past, he/she should be allowed to continue to farm it.



FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 26

**POOR WEEK FOR FIELDWORK:** Above-average temperatures and precipitation across the commonwealth allowed three days suitable for field work. Activities included spraying fruit trees, hauling manure, spreading fertilizer, maintaining machinery, spring plowing, planting, and caring for livestock.

**SOIL MOISTURE:** By week's end, topsoil moisture was rated short by 8 percent of our respondents, adequate by 68 percent, and surplus by 24 percent of our reporters. Seven percent of our respondents in the northern region rated soil moisture as short, 67 percent rated it adequate, and 26 percent surplus. In the central region, 5 percent of our reporters rated soil moisture short, 73 percent rated it adequate, and 22 percent rated it surplus. In the southern region, 15 percent of the respondents rated topsoil short in moisture, 62 percent judged it to be adequate, and 23 percent judged it surplus.

**PLOWING:** According to our respondents, spring plowing was 52 percent completed; 3 percentage points behind last year's 55 percent. The five-year average for this date was 56 percent. Spring plowing completion was 31, 59, and 67 percent for the northern, central, and southern regions, respectively.

**OATS:** According to our respondents, oat planting across the state was 52 percent complete. That was 8 percentage points below last year's 60 percent and 9 points below the five-year average of 61 percent. Reporters in the northern region reported 27 percent complete, central region reporters indicated 61 percent, and the southern region reporters indicated 77 percent of the oats planted.

**TOBACCO:** All of Pennsylvania's tobacco beds were planted. Last year at this time, 78 percent was planted, and the five-year average was 85 percent.

**POTATOES:** By week's end, 16 percent of the potato acreage was planted according to our indications. This is 13 percentage points behind last year's 29 percent and 17 percentage points off the five-year average of 33 percent.

**BARLEY AND WHEAT:** Barley was 96 percent in the preboot stage and 4 percent in the boot stage, and none in headed stage. At this time last year, 87 percent was in the preboot stage, 12 percent in the boot stage, and 1 percent headed. The five-year average is 93 percent preboot, 7 percent boot, and none in the headed stage of development. Wheat was 98 percent in the preboot and 2 percent in the boot. Last year at this time, 94 percent was in preboot and 6 percent boot. The five-year average is 96 percent preboot and 4 percent boot. The wheat crop across the state was rated 20 percent excellent, 50 percent good, 25 percent fair, 5 percent poor, and none very poor.

**FRUIT:** Across the state, 54 percent of the peach trees were in the prepink stage and 36 percent were in the pink stage, 10 percent full bloom or past. Last year at this time, 29 percent were prepink, 23 percent were pink, and 48 percent full bloom or past. The five-year averages are 37 percent prepink, 24 percent pink, and 39 percent full bloom or past. Our survey results indicated that 69 percent of the cherry trees were in the prepink stage, 16 percent in the pink stage, and 15 percent full bloom or past. Last year at this time, 27 percent were prepink, 24 percent pink, and 49 percent full bloom or past. The five-year averages for cherries are 40 percent prepink, 25 percent pink, and 35 percent full bloom or past. Apples were 88 percent in the prepink stage, 12 percent in the pink stage, and none full bloom or past. Last year at this time, apples were 51 percent in the prepink, 32 percent in the pink stage, and 17 percent full bloom or past. The five-year averages for apples are 61 percent prepink, 27 percent pink, and 12 percent full bloom or past.

**HAY AND PASTURE:** By week's end, 64 percent of the reporters rate alfalfa hay stands as good, 29 percent rated alfalfa stands as fair, and 7 percent poor. Timothy-clover stands were rated good by 59 percent of our reporters, 30 percent rated it as fair, and 11 percent rated it poor. The quality of feed being obtained from pastures was rated good by 44 percent of our reporters, fair by 38 percent, poor by 15 percent, and very poor by 3 percent.

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