

# State Grange Members Visit Washington

**HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)** — The largest delegation ever of Pennsylvania State Grangers visited their federal legislators during the annual Washington Legislative Tour.

Among the issues to be discussed during the recent visit with U.S. Congressmen and Senators were the reorganization of the United States Department of Agriculture, rural health care, amendments to the Clean Water Act, expansion of coverage by the Occupational Safety and Health Organization (OSHA), and revision of federal crop insurance programs.

Brenda Shambaugh, Pennsylvania State Grange legislative director, said the Washington tour

presented an opportunity for the Grange to voice its position on issues that have been developed through the Grange's grass-roots policies. A summary of the issues and Grange policy follows:

The reorganization of the USDA came one step closer to fruition with the approval of a substitute plan by the Subcommittee on Department Operations and Nutrition.

The core of the plan would reduce the present number of presidentially-appointed, sub-Cabinet officers from 10 to seven and give Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy some discretion to merge separate agencies and offices from 43 to 30. It also requires the reduction in size of the USDA's staff by 7,500 over

five years with a larger reduction coming in the Washington office rather than the field locations. However, Espy would be authorized to reduce the number of field offices through elimination or consolidation.

The Grange advocates moving food welfare programs, rural housing and other non-farm public service programs administered by USDA under one agency such as the Department of Public Welfare. The Grange supports co-located service centers under a 30-30-30 formula where a minimum of 30 farmers would not have to travel more than 30 miles or need more than 30 minutes' time to get to a service center. The Grange also backs converting the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) to the

National Resource Conservation Service, but feels the function of SCS should continue to be technical with priority given to farmers.

The Grange's interest in health care reform dates back decades. At the National level, the Grange has sponsored a multiyear, political, educational, and action program called "Health Care in America."

The Pennsylvania State Grange supports freedom of choice for medical providers and facilities; uniform fee schedules, benefits, and eligibility requirements, including coverage for in-home care; health care that maintains existing preferred or association group health care plans; and contributions based on ability to pay.

The Grange opposes employer mandates and government intervention except to revise current laws and regulations.

Congress is expected to rewrite the Clean Water Act of 1972 as emphasis shifts from point sources of pollution to non-point sources (NPS) such as streets, construction sites, mines, logging areas, and farms.

The Grange has joined a broad coalition of agricultural and agribusiness organizations to form the Clean Water Working Group and is working with members of Congress and their staffs, administration officials, and other interested parties to express agriculture's concerns in adopting practical and workable solutions to NPS problems.

The Grange urges Congress to maintain full funding of up to \$400 million, to be spent with a state's matching funds, on programs to provide educational and

technical assistance to address NPS problems. Full funding, the Grange believes must be a priority in any Clean Water Act reauthorization.

Pollution control programs must be based on voluntary, locally-designed programs that meet the voluntary cooperation of farmers and landowners to use best management practices. The program should be administered by a single federal agency and must protect the rights of farmers and landowners.

Strongly backed by the Clinton Administration, bills to expand the coverage of OSHA are moving through Congress. Two bills would place substantial new safety and health burdens on employers. Both bills include the creation of safety and health committees for employers with 11 or more employees and written safety and health programs to identify and correct work place hazards, including training and education for all employees.

The Grange strongly opposes the provisions that require the committees on safety and health when only a few employees are involved. A farmer hiring extra hands at harvest time would have an administrative nightmare, especially if three or four of the hands were family members. The Grange also opposes unrealistic OSHA work place safety and health regulations.

Included in the trek to the nation's capital will be a visit with Espy, a congressional breakfast with legislators, and a meeting with Pennsylvania's senators and House and Senate Ag Committee staff members.

## Md. Provides Tick ID Service

**ANNAPOLIS, Md.** — Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Robert L. Walker has announced that the Mosquito Control Section of the department will continue to provide free tick identification services at its headquarters laboratory in Annapolis, as well as at the regional laboratories in Riverdale, Salisbury, and Leonardtown.

"Our goal is to help health care professionals and the general public to identify ticks that may be carrying Lyme disease or Rocky Mountain spotted fever," Walker said.

According to Cyrus R. Lesser, chief of the Mosquito Control Section, 329 ticks were identified during 1993. The most common species found was the lone star tick, characterized by a white dot on its back.

This tick is a pest species, but is not known to transmit disease. The American dog tick, which comprised 25-percent of the collection, is a vector of Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Lyme disease is transmitted by the

black-legged tick in Maryland and this species comprised 10-percent of the 1993 collection.

Based on the number of ticks submitted for identification, the Coastal Plain of Maryland appears to have the highest population of ticks. This includes all of the Eastern Shore region, southern Maryland, and those counties bordering the Chesapeake Bay. Only one tick specimen was submitted from the mountainous Western Maryland region.

In 1994, the Maryland Department of Agriculture again will offer free tick identification and information services for Maryland residents. Information on ticks and Lyme disease, including color pamphlets, fact sheets and book-marks, is available on request at no charge. Community service organizations will be loaned VCR tapes upon request.

Ticks to be identified should be placed in a zip-lock plastic bag along with the name, address and telephone number of the donor,

date and location where collected and type of host, whether it be human, pet, livestock, equine, etc. The container should be delivered or mailed to the nearest laboratory. Results of the identification will be available within two working days.

"Our staff will also be available to answer questions about tick life cycles and offer advice on how to avoid tick bites. However, we cannot determine if a tick carries a disease-causing agent," Lesser said.

For details on the Maryland Department of Agriculture's tick identification and information program, contact a regional Mosquito Control Office: Annapolis (410) 841-5870; Leonardtown (301) 475-9123; Riverdale (301) 927-8357; or Salisbury (410) 543-6626.

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