

Pa. State Grange Holds Annual Convention

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industry."

He said that the Grange also is appreciated for its "contribution to the economic success of rural Pennsylvania."

Brosius said one goal in the attempt to broaden agricultural markets is to increase exports and offer opportunities to Pennsylvania farmers to enter the international market by expanding markets for value-added products.

To meet that goal, Brosius formally announced the creation of an "International Day" to be part of the state Farm Show (Jan. 6-11).

According to the secretary, foreign ambassadors and trade representatives are being invited to the Farm Show to get a feel for the best that Pennsylvania agriculture has to offer.

"We will work hard to match buyers with sellers, to show the variety of products available from the Keystone state, and to set the stage for future business.

"And if we sustain the profitability of agriculture — increase marketing opportunities for our farmers — then rural communities around the state will ultimately benefit."

Brosius said that agriculture is the state's number one industry — employing one in five residents and contributing 16 percent, or \$40 billion, of the gross state annual product.

"The sale of farm commodities fuels the economic engine of rural Pennsylvania, and the economic success of rural Pennsylvania fuels the economic success of the entire commonwealth.

"Despite our importance to the state, you know that we in agriculture and rural Pennsylvania have many challenges facing us."

As far as policies adopted, Brenda Shambaugh, legislative director for the State Grange, said, As a grass-roots organization, the policies determined here will influence our legislative efforts on Capitol Hill as we work on legislation that will affect agriculture and rural Pennsylvania.

"These issues are of greatest concern to our membership and the Pennsylvania State Grange will see that these policies are addressed at the state and federal level."

Some of the key policies adopted involve the controversial 1995 Farm Bill, the state's program that creates Agricultural Security Areas, the U.S. Delaney Clause which affects testing of residue on foods products (zero tolerance), building code regulations, and water use regulations.

According to Shambaugh, the main objective of the Grange, with respect to the Farm Bill, is to make agriculture more profitable and help keep families on their farms.

"Farmers are unduly taxed and we want a Farm Bill that allows farmers to receive an adequate price for their products, and one that allows farmers to stay in business and provide food and fiber for our nation and the world."

The policy passed at the convention was aimed primarily at dairy provisions.

The key provisions were that the Farm Bill:

- repeal the dairy assessment (part of the budget reconciliation) farmers pay on every hundred pounds (cwt) of milk they sell;
- remove butter and milk powder from the support price;
- support full funding for exports to the limits allowed under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade;

- establish an export agency;
- expand or modify federal milk marketing orders through a hearing process with the provision that failed amendments do not cause the failure of the order;
- continue Class II prices based on Class III price and 30 cents per cwt;

- use multiple component pricing;
- create a national security fund to protect against processor bankruptcy as long as stronger state programs are not pre-empted;
- be created so as to defeat possible legislated formation of a single federal order and pooling of Class I differentials.

As far as water use regulations, for several years the Susquehanna River Basin Commission — a federal-state compact with authority over the entire flows of the Susquehanna Basin — has been trying to decide how to set water-consumption regulations and establish a system to avoid severe water shortages and overuse by any one entity.

Earlier this year, the SRBC had redesigned and condensed most of its regulations into a comprehensive, rational package, except for the issue of consumptive use and a fee structure. That work is ongoing.

The Grange would like to see a policy that calls for the creation of a government-funded reservoir storage of make-up water to satisfy the SRBC consumptive use regulations for agriculture.

Consumptive use is that use which causes inordinate and evaporation and loss of water from basin. The SRBC charges a fee or requires those consuming water to create water storage so that the flows of the river are not overly taxed during periods of low flow, of which the state experienced many during the past decade.

"The Grange is working with other agricultural groups and the SRBC for regulations that satisfy all parties," Shambaugh said, "and the Grange delegate body believes a reservoir is a viable solution that would be equitable for everyone."

Among those presented with awards during the convention was Betty Master, of the Scrubgrass Grange No.1705, in Venango County. Master was honored at the 1995-96 Granger of the Year.

The award is the highest honor bestowed upon a member for their service to the Grange and other organizations.

In addition to serving as treasurer of the Venango County Pomona Grange, lecturer of her local Grange, and a past member of the state Grange Lecturer Department from 1986-94, she has held the office of Flora and served on the county 5th Degree team.

She is also involved in her church, the Scrubgrass Homemakers, serves as director of the Venango County Fair Board, is a member of the Bair/Simcox Women's Association, the Demeter Club, the Clintonville Firemen's Women's Auxiliary, and has been a 4-H leader for 20 years.

"Betty artfully coordinates many of the community activities to include several organizations working for one common goal. It's not uncommon to find her volunteering seven days a week. She is truly the backbone of our Grange," said Glenn Gross, president of the Scrubgrass Grange.

Master is also known for her work with a local Applefest, for which 300 apple pies and 200 apple cakes are made from scratch in her kitchen.

"It's really not work," Master said about the effort which she has been doing for eight years. "It has become a community event that people look forward to every year."

Others honored during the convention include Amy Noble, of Mercer County Pomona Grange No.25, who was selected Pomona Youth Chairperson of the Year.

Annette Kramer and Cindy Liebensperger, of Pioneer Grange No.1777, in Berks County, were

honored as Subordinate Youth Chairpersons of the Year, making it the second year in a row that the subordinate award was won by someone from Pioneer Grange.

Deb Campbell, director of the junior programs for the State Grange recognized members for outstanding service.

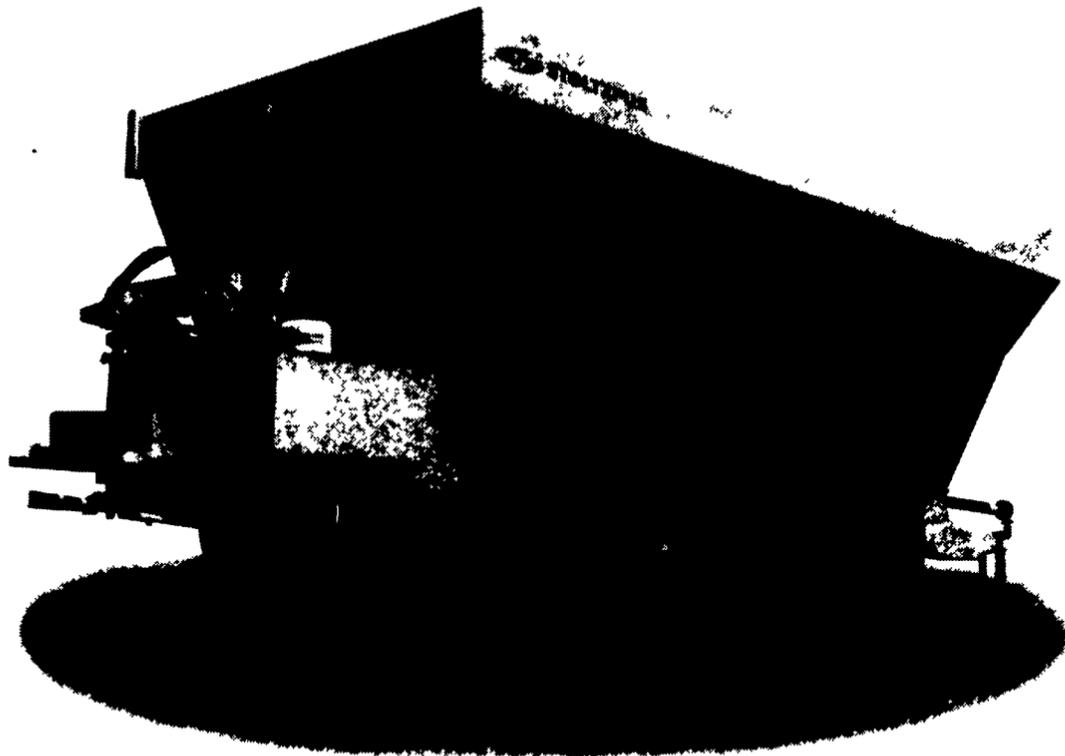
Among them were four Super Junior Grange winners. Jessica Blair, of Perry Valley Junior Grange No.507; Adam Britcher, of Community Junior Grange No.479; Denise Zug, of Walker Junior Grange No.416; and Ron Strong, of Plum Creek Valley Junior Grange No.541.

In other business, Carol Jamison, of Jefferson Grange No.1373, in Butler County, won the annual talent contest, being named best of show from a field performing in front of 600 Grangers.

Jamison said "In Heaven's Eyes" to win the contest and is to compete in the national talent contest this weekend in Harrisburg.

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