

Pa. State Grange To Celebrate Grange Week In Harrisburg

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania State Grange has scheduled its annual Grange Week activities to be celebrated Monday in Harrisburg.

The national Grange Week is officially April 19-25 this year, though the Pennsylvania Grange set April 27 as its official celebration, to coincide with its legislative day activities, day-long workshops and legislative banquet at the Sheraton Inn-East in Harrisburg.

According to Grange spokesman James C. Mentzer, about 300 members from across the state are expected to attend the event, which includes visits with respective legislative representatives in their Harrisburg Capitol Building offices, as well as a series of workshops and the banquet at the Sheraton Inn.

While the state budget is no longer an issue, the Grange announced that it was pleased with Gov. Tom Ridge's proposal for agriculture, which is effectively what the governor signed into law Wednesday.

According to Grange legislative director Brenda Shambaugh, "The Department of Agriculture did fairly well, getting increases in their general operating budget and in agriculture promotion and research," Shambaugh said.

"The legislative reception and banquet is grass-roots at work as our members meet with the legislators to affirm Grange policy and express their concerns about agricultural and rural issues," she said. "It also gives our members an opportunity to discuss, one-on-one, the problems facing them."

The workshops are to begin at 1

p.m. at the Sheraton with scheduled speakers, state Attorney General Michael Fisher who is to talk about his office's activities and legal issues.

The rest of the workshops are concurrent. One set, called Track 1 workshops, focuses on political issues, the other set deals with service and motivation.

Under the Track 1 schedule, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., David Hess, deputy secretary of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is to discuss the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency initiatives and mandates under the Clean Water Act, such as its adoption of the term, "Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations" (CAFOs), as opposed to Pennsylvania's use of Concentrated Animal Operations as defined in the state Nutrient Management Act.

From 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., George Wolff, a private consultant, and John Shirvinsky, with the Civil Justice Coalition, are to discuss the Lawsuit Abuse Reform Act, and its implications.

From 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., Barbara Knisely, with the National Grange, and the state Grange's Brenda Shambaugh are to discuss issues of concern.

For Track 2, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., Deb Campbell, state Grange junior director, and Martha Ebersole, state youth director are to give a presentation on building energy and momentum into youth programs.

From 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., Joan Keith with the Lincoln Grange is to give a presentation on community service through the Grange.

From 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., Grange Service Corporation representatives are to discuss programs and services available through the Grange.

Some of the other issues of concern to Grange, to be discussed are an alternative to a long-proposed, but always defeated, mandatory deposit on returned beverage bottles, to curtail the amount of roadside disposal going into farmers fields causing large losses through

animal injury and death, and equipment damage.

The alternative proposal is to create a compensation program to pay for some of the damages incurred to livestock and equipment.

The state Clean and Green program is being proposed for change. Some of those proposals are to be discussed.

Other topics expected to receive attention include dairy issues, such

as the Northeast Dairy Compact; property rights to provide better compensation and more difficult processes for state condemnations; a plan to fix the diesel fuel tax refund; continuing the Ag Loan Forgiveness Program; and amend the Right To Farm Act to add protection for new technologies.

The state Grange represents 30,000 members in 66 counties across the state.

Beekeeper Inspection Program Under Way

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The annual bee inspection program will get under way on May 18 throughout the commonwealth to check hives for brood diseases and parasitic mites, according to Agriculture Secretary Samuel E. Hayes Jr.

"Bees are a very valuable resource for Pennsylvania agriculture, and the inspection program is designed to protect honeybees. There has been a dramatic decline in the number of bees and beekeepers in the past 10 years, and that has serious implications for pollination of crops," Hayes said.

The 1994 amendments to the Bee Law require beekeepers to register with the Agriculture Department. The registration program helps the department maintain an accurate listing of beekeepers and has greatly improved the efficiency of the inspection program.

Hayes noted that all registered beekeepers are inspected at least

once during the two-year registration period.

A fee of \$10 must be submitted with a registration form, and covers all apiaries owned by the beekeeper.

Benefits of the apiary registration program include an ability to notify beekeepers of potential dangers and benefits to their apiaries, and the observation of trends in the distribution of bees.

Hayes noted that with fewer

beekeepers and a corresponding increase in honey prices, it may be a good time to consider beekeeping.

Because successful beekeeping requires knowledge of good management practices, department personnel can direct inquiries to the proper specialists.

For more information on registration or brood diseases and mites, contact Jim Steinhauer, 2301 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408.

Summer Grazing Field Meeting Kickoff

BLOOMSBURG (Columbia Co.) — Penn State Extension in the Central Susquehanna Valley area is planning a kickoff meeting for the 1998 summer grazing field meetings.

The kickoff meeting will be

held on Friday, May 1 at 10 a.m. at Yoder's Restaurant on Route 45 west of Mifflinburg.

The guest speaker will be Craig Williams, an extension agent in Tioga County. Williams will speak on extension and on-farm research work he has done in grazing and pasture management. He will also profile his home farm in

Dauphin County where management intensive grazing has been utilized for the herd of Jerseys for many years.

No reservations are necessary for the meeting. For more information, call David Hartman at the Columbia County Extension office at 717-784-6660 or 1-800-254-6470.

Penn State encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact David Hartman at 717-784-6660 in advance of your participation or visit.

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