

Grange Master Says Political Advocacy Remains Key Element In Grange Future

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Grange Master Kermit W. Richardson told 35 "2001 National Grange Legislative Fly-In" participants recently, as well as several conference call participants from across the nation, that political advocacy will continue to be a key element in the Grange's future. He thus put to bed speculation that grassroots advocacy activity will diminish under the new, strategic plan to revitalize the Grange. In fact, resources allowing, he envisions the National Grange implementing new advocacy training programs for state and local Granges.

"The D.C. headquarters will continue to implement grassroots legislative directives," Richardson told the audience. The Grange has a truly grassroots method of establishing its legislative priorities.

Each year, starting at the local level, Granges vote on a series of resolutions regarding local, county, state and national issues. Approved local resolutions remain at the local level for implementation. The others are passed up the line for voting and implementation at the appropriate level. This leads to between 300 and 400 resolutions on national issues coming to the floor of the Grange Annual Convention each November. Delegates vote on each issue, and those that pass become National Grange Legislative Policies. From those, various committees select 10 to 20 to make up the Grange's annual "Blueprint for Rural America",

which serves as a guide for headquarters' legislative activities.

Richardson indicated that National Grange legislative activity will continue to focus on "Blueprint for Rural America" issues that are designed to revitalize rural America and return U.S. agriculture to prosperity. He also described how the National Grange leverages its resources by creating or joining coalitions with like legislative and regulatory objectives.

When asked how state and local Granges can help the National Grange further the goals of the "Blueprint for Rural America," Richardson told the workshop participants, who represented 21 State Granges, "Talk to your U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators. You are their constituents, we are not."

Richardson stressed the importance of political advocacy in gaining recognition for the Grange. He encouraged each state to adopt issues and pursue them aggressively and openly. To assist local and state Granges in the political advocacy arena, a new grassroots advocacy training program to be conducted by the National Grange is being considered. Under this program, National staff would train the "trainers" selected from each state.

The "trainers" in turn, would spread throughout their states to train those "committed to the process" in the art of political advocacy. "People have to know how to do their job and what is

expected of them," Richardson said. He also encouraged the group to get "new people" involved in the process. In response to a question on how many would be trained in each state, Richardson did not give specific numbers. He envisions a building process in which states go from a few to as many as twenty trainers. He also envisions the training as an on-going process, with perhaps annual follow-ups after the initial training.

In terms of timing, Richardson

explained that the implementation of a new training program is dependent upon a dues increase. If the dues increase is approved at the November Annual Convention, it will take effect January 1, and the National Grange will start realizing revenue increases in the spring of 2001. At that time, the training program can be started.

Fly-In 2001 participants spent three active days in Washington, D.C. Starting on Sun., Apr. 1, they attended workshops on

Grange history and using the Internet for political advocacy. Apr. 2 saw a series of workshops related to issues in the "2001 Blueprint for Rural America." Speakers included Washington's top experts in their fields, including a White House official. Tuesday, the participants met with their Representatives and Senators on Capitol Hill. Over 50 appointments were set up. This was the fifth annual National Grange Legislative Fly-In.

Veterinary College To Host FMD Seminar

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — You can't pick up a newspaper or watch a television broadcast without seeing something about foot and mouth disease (FMD).

But with all the news coverage, many people — especially dairy and livestock producers — still have many questions about this economically catastrophic animal health issue. They want to know more about the disease, what actions are being taken to prevent its spread to the United States and what role, if any, they can play.

The Center for Government and Corporate Veterinary

Medicine at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and the Maryland Department of Agriculture will host an FMD seminar on April 17 to address these and related issues. The seminar will run from 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Avrum Guldelsky Center at the University of Maryland, College Park. It will feature a list of animal disease specialists speakers:

- Dr. Charles Mebus, former director of the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratories at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center;

- Dr. Roger Olson, state veterinarian at the Maryland Department of Agriculture;

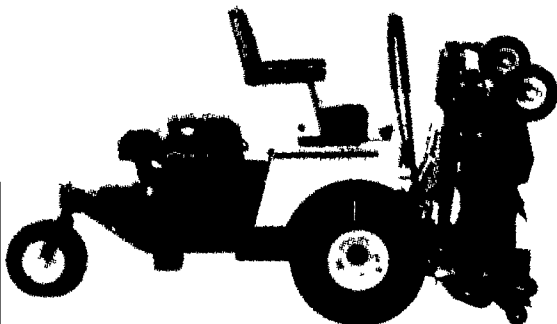
- Dr. Dave Vogt, area veterinarian in charge at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; and

- Dr. Tracy DuVernoy, Center for Veterinary Public Health at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Registration is limited to 50 people on a first-come, first-served basis. To register, send your name, phone number and a check for \$25 payable to the Maryland Department of Agriculture to Donna Ernberger, MDA, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401. For more information, call 301-935-6083.



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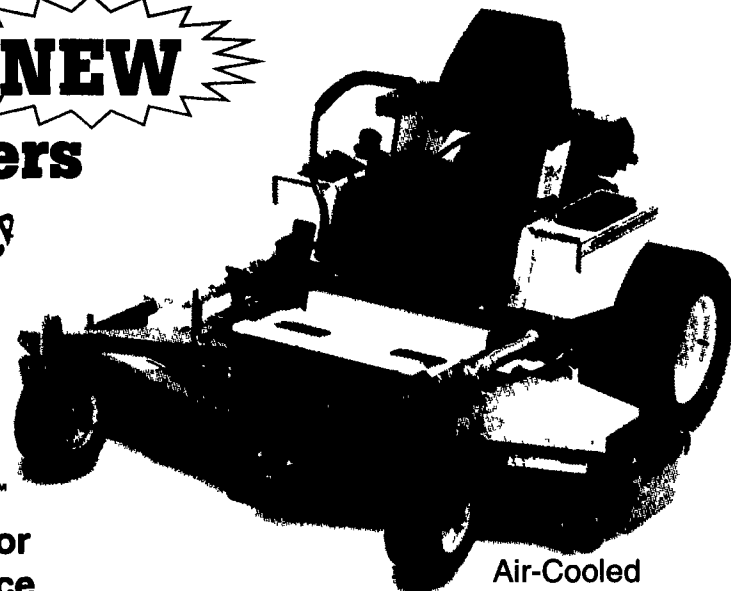
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