

2016 AGRICULTURE POLICY STATEMENT

Agriculture is, as always, a foundation of America's economy, providing directly, or indirectly through value-added processing, currently 5.7% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For 150 years the National Grange has been working to improve agriculture in America, and the welfare of those who work the soil or care for the creatures of the field. Our roots are in agriculture and our future is tied to our faith in the perennial cycle of planting and harvest.

Conservation of our soil, water and air quality remains a priority for the Grange, keeping in mind that all pertinent regulations should reflect local conditions. A key component of the future security of our water supply for both domestic and agricultural uses is the ability to store it. Challenges from environmental groups and climate change have brought progress in that area to a standstill. The National Grange will continue to promote water storage projects that benefit agricultural and domestic needs while appropriately safeguarding fish and wildlife safety concerns.

Agricultural producers have been leaders in protecting the environment. The National Grange urges Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) agencies to implement Nutrient Management Plans (NMP's). Good soil health, including proper nutrient management is a priority and we encourage all farmers to develop and follow a Nutrient Management Plan to insure that no more nutrients are applied than are needed to grow the crop.

The National Grange recognizes that other additional challenges facing producers are the precipitous drop in commodity prices coupled with ever-rising cost of inputs and the yearly increases in property taxes. We will continue to work on solutions to help minimize their impact on the agriculture sector. The National Grange continues to monitor issues concerning GMO-related food production and labeling. The National Grange supports voluntary labeling of Genetically Modified products. We further request that the National Grange Legislative Director share the latest reliable research on this subject with State Granges on a continual basis.

Support for Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is a long-standing position of the National Grange and is favored by consumers. We support voluntary labeling programs that provide clear information about country of origin and processing so that consumers can make informed choices about the food they feed their families.

Food safety continues to be a significant issue for Americans in light of the ever-increasing amount of our food that is imported. We believe the responsibility for all food safety inspection should fall under one federal agency, preferably the US Department of Agriculture. Healthy bee populations are critical to food production in the US. We are pleased that the USDA has information available to assist first-time beekeepers in learning how to begin production. The National Grange supports ongoing efforts to preserve proven bee health practices, while identifying new pesticide crop treatments that are not harmful to bee populations.

The use of drone or UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) technology is rapidly becoming an important tool for agricultural production. However, privacy concerns have arisen as drones have become more popular. The National Grange supports the implementation of developed FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) regulations governing the use of drones, and will continue to work with USDA, FAA and other agricultural organizations to address issues related to drone use as they pertain to agriculture.

The National Grange continues to support extensive research by our Land Grant Colleges and Universities into both short-term and long-term effects on the environment and on human nutrition, of all new crops, whether Genetically-Modified or traditionally bred. One of the major issues facing animal agriculture in our country is the effort for certain “Animal Rights” groups to define “Humane Treatment” of animals. The National Grange should work together with other like groups, to ensure that sound science is used in determining humane treatment of animals.

The National Grange strongly supports agriculture education at all levels including agriculture science as well as Cooperative Extension Service and encourages the partnership between 4-H, FFA and Cooperative Extension Service to draw on and develop leadership abilities. Adequate funding of Extension must be continued and increased if we wish to ensure the availability of innovative practices and new tools beneficial to agriculture and society. We support educational programs, such as Farm to Table or Farm to School, that teach the importance of proper diet and nutrition. It is more critical now than ever to help consumers understand the basic food system, where their food comes from, and what, if any genetic-alteration was integral to its development. It is vital that we encourage the younger generation to enter into farming. We support programs or policies that will enhance the ability of young farmers to be successful as they pursue production agriculture as an occupation. Opportunities exist to expand agricultural tourism as an additional source of income for farm families. The National Grange urges government at all levels to remove unnecessary laws and regulations that hamper its expansion.

The National Grange recommends that the 2018 Farm Bill address several issues. Among them is the USDA Margin Protection Program (MPP), which has not been an adequate safety net for dairy farmers, and does not properly calculate the milk margin over feed price in various regions of the United States. We recommend that it be addressed in the next farm bill so as to correct its current deficiencies. The National Grange also strongly supports retaining adequate levels of financial support for the USDA Risk Management Division and the Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCI) so that coverages accurately reflect cost of production and premiums remain affordable. Disaster Relief programs are also a critical component of farm income safety nets and must be addressed in the 2018 farm bill. We also strongly urge that provisions are made to adequately address the needs for a reliable source of seasonal as well as year-round farm labor.

Individual incomes in developing countries are rising, leading to changes in diet that will increase demands on the world’s food supply even as population growth adds its inevitable impact. Cooperative nonpartisan effort and an understanding of the direct relationship between science and the natural world will be required, to answer the question “How will we feed them all?” It is a well-known fact that a strong agriculture makes a strong country. Who will be “the do-er’s”?

2016 CITIZENSHIP AND TAXATION POLICY STATEMENT

'Govern' is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "to conduct the policy, actions, and affairs of (a state, organization or people)." Inherent in the governing structure of both our Grange and our United States is the important challenge of fostering unity while encouraging diversity of opinion, allowing for change but not so quickly and easily as to threaten the stability and future of the whole. In each there is room for strong disagreement between well-intentioned members/citizens who believe they have the best interests of their institution of heart, and strong protection for the rights of the minority. Ultimately we all want the best for our Grange and our Country and our elected leaders must keep this in mind at all times. If winner-take-all politics is practiced in our Granges, we risk losing membership which diminishes us as an organization. Good leadership acknowledges that even those members who oppose also contribute to the strength and viability of the Grange simply by continuing to be members. If winner-take-all politics is practiced in our government the result will be an endless series of power struggles and stalemates, and poor or no governance. As Grangers and as citizens of our great nation, we can and must do better.

150 years ago, in response to the needs of a divided nation, 7 men and one woman created the Grange way to reestablish unity at the community level and nationwide. Our example of family values and non-partisan community involvement has much to offer today as our country begins to heal from a divisive election. Let us not hide our light under a bushel, let us tell our story and show our example for all to see, and to join in. (From Master's External Address)

Economic recovery stubbornly avoids rural and farm communities and our legislators must not lose sight of this constituency. Broadband connectivity is increasingly important for many reasons including education, health, security and communication. It is taken for granted by those who have it, but sorely missed by those who do not. Increasing the availability of high-speed broadband connectivity to rural and low-income areas, at reasonable cost, is of vital concern to the recovery and growth of rural America. (From Master's External Address)

We as citizens of the United States are stewards of our resources, rights and way of life. It is our responsibility to ensure these are intact for future generations. The National Grange renews our dedication to the farmers and working people of this nation, and will make every effort to oppose legislation which would further enrich the powerful or diminish the rights to education, health and prosperity promised to our citizens in the founding documents of our country and our Grange organization.

We support the efforts of veterans groups such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion in their efforts to secure benefits and services for our veterans. The National Grange should join forces with such groups whenever it serves our veterans and is practicable and proper. We specifically oppose cuts to promised benefits for veterans, such as the monthly housing stipend for children of veterans who are using educational benefits. We would urge care and caution when considering changes to veteran's medical benefits such as increases in co-pays for TRICARE (formerly known as CHAMPUS).

2016 EDUCATION AND HEALTH POLICY STATEMENT

A quality education opens minds to new possibilities and encourages students to think for themselves. While the Grange commends those who have followed the traditional path for higher education, we need to encourage those who fall outside the term “traditional student” to look at the educational opportunities available offered by vocational or trade schools or other nontraditional degree programs to expand their personal and professional lives. We implore the students of the technological age to pursue studies in the agricultural implement field due to the increasing complexity of the machinery. The purpose of education is to open the minds of young people to the world around them, to the lesson of the past, and the possibilities of the future. An understanding of the past is a part of education that is too often neglected. These important facts are even more powerful and useful when an understanding of their context and background are taught. The Grange will continue to promote the teaching of American Civics in our educational system. One of the core values of the Grange is the right to free expression and the respect of differing opinions. We especially see these as relevant in educational institutions.

We believe we must have a partnership between Federal, State and Local officials who all have a seat at the table when it comes to educating our children. Parents must be an essential part of the decision-making process. The National Grange encourages the teaching of patriotism and financial literacy as a major point of education if we are to see productive, prepared, responsible citizens and future elected officials, while contributing to our local and national economy.

The National Grange offers its continued support of OCRE (Organizations Concerned about Rural Education), the National School Boards Association and other educational associations as well as supporting the efforts to reduce the pupil to teacher ratio at all levels of education through 12th grade. The National Grange supports the idea of more study in regards to Common Core to determine the educational benefits.

The Grange urges educators at the primary, secondary and undergraduate levels to include basic knowledge of agriculture in their curriculum. Agriculture is man's basic interaction with the environment. Every farmer learns to adapt and work with nature in order to be successful. The most simple and basic lesson, such as water is needed to grow crops, is critical for every American to understand. The National Grange supports legislation requiring education on prevention and handling of bullying of adults and children to be administered by employers and schools. We strongly encourage Grange members nationwide to play an active role in their local school systems and communities. It is essential for our members to invest in our children's education through volunteering. Some examples of this are the donation of school supplies (such as the Words for Thirds dictionary program) and exposure to volunteerism and community service. These contributions will help us remain positive role models for school children and increase the awareness of our organization. The National Grange encourages individuals to become educated consumers. Consumers, using modern technology, should research their purchasing and borrowing options carefully and make decisions that positively benefit their future and that of their community. The National Grange renews its historical commitment to free primary and secondary education, affordable higher education and support of the arts, music and athletics, recognizing their value in elevating the standard of social and intellectual life.

Health

It is important that each of us take responsibility for our own health. The National Grange continues to support efforts to target the epidemic of childhood obesity, to return responsibility to the local communities to develop their own guidelines and to seek waivers on requirements that would allow farm to table produce and products to be fed to our children. We would recommend and encourage that the guidelines include healthy lunches, choice of milk and flavored milks, increased physical activity and limited access to soda and snack machines.

The National Grange supports the efforts of legislation to include cost effective, early intervention medical care to be covered by private and public insurance programs.

The National Grange encourages all Americans to be mindful of the opioid crisis that is sweeping America with a strong concentration in rural areas of our country.

The National Grange encourages all Americans to be mindful of prescription drug safety. Educational information should be provided by the prescribing physician, as well as by their pharmacists. We believe the information available through the FDA and the DEA should be provided to patients to give an unbiased opinion of the medication. Patients should be allowed to purchase their prescription from whatever reliable source they choose. The National Grange insists that all prescriptions drugs purchased from within the boundaries of the United States should meet or exceed the standards of the FDA and the DEA. Increased efforts must be made for the continuing education of Medicare recipients on the benefits available to them through Medicare.

The National Grange continues to support the prescription disposal program, while encouraging local Granges to get training and to take part in this program in their own local communities.

While not all products that enter the United States can realistically be tested to determine if they are defective or contaminated, we encourage government agencies and consumer safety advocates to be diligent in safety inspection on imported products. The National Grange requests that all products sold in the United States be labeled with the country of origin.

National Grange urges its members to be diligent in their communications with their legislators to continue the cost of living increases to Social Security recipients.

The National Grange encourages a commitment to quality healthcare for all. We encourage Congress to look for areas of common ground to continue to reform health care. We support further research and potential

coverage by insurance or Medicare/Medicaid for alternative therapies for medical conditions such as acupuncture for pain management.

We support paid maternity leave and working with businesses to build a comprehensive policy that benefits both the employee and employer.

2016 GRANGE LAW POLICY STATEMENT

Just as our Ritual provides the vehicle to present and understand our teachings and principles, our codified law provides the unified structure for us to function with unity of action.

Understanding why we have our code is as important as understanding the code itself. Over the past 149 years, many hours have been spent by many minds crafting a document that will serve and protect the interests of the Grange at all levels, as well as its individual members. It is with a great deal of respect and caution that we approach the task of amending these laws, and sincerely hope that the changes made are in the best interests of the Grange as a whole.

The advent of social media has afforded the opportunity for instant communication of Grange activities and successes, as well as the opportunity to publicly criticize and condemn. While we understand that not all will ever agree with all policies and undertakings of our Order, and that constructive criticism of such is a normal part of life, we strongly oppose the posting of personal grievances, the purpose of which is to divide and destroy. As such speech, despicable as it is, is protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, we are thus powerless to stop it, but we would challenge all to apply the high standards demanded by our Fraternal bonds to conduct our personal participation on social media sites accordingly.

Given that many Granges have chosen to incorporate under their respective State Laws mainly for the purpose of liability protection, and that following the dissolution of these Granges by whatever means the legal corporations remain, we would recommend that State Granges investigate the Corporations Law within their respective States and seek legal counsel in relation to amending their respective by-laws to reflect the authority of the State Grange to properly address the matter.

As members we all enjoy the protection of our Digest of Laws and it is up to all of us to abide by them. Failure to do so results in strife and discontent. Let us practice our motto – “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity.

The National Grange Executive Committee has engaged legal counsel and a by-laws committee to review the National Grange By-laws. Therefore we are referring Resolution GL-715-OH to this committee.

During her life time sister, Caroline A. Hall was widely acknowledged and recognized for her substantial contributions to the founding of the order of Patrons of Husbandry. Her example and diligence has been an inspiration to Grange members for the entire 149 year history of the Grange. A ‘quiet, peaceful citizen”, who rarely sought personal approbation, the formal recognitions of her work by the National Grange and Assembly of Demeter in 1892, 1915 and 1919 appear to have been appropriate for her temperament and wishes.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of Sister Hall’s death in 1918 and the Centennial Anniversary of passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the

right to vote, in 1919/1920 the Grange Law committee strongly encourages the National Grange to prepare a "proper Testimonial" to the life of Sister Caroline A. Hall to celebrate her life and her inspiration to Grange Members as well as women in the United States.

2016 LABOR, JUDICIARY AND TRANSPORTION POLICY STATEMENT

The Grange has long been a defender of our Constitution and the rights and privileges it protects for each and every citizen. We are a nation of law and order and as such must work to draft, pass, and maintain legislation aimed at ensuring a peaceful society and a fair judicial system. Our police officers and other law enforcement officials work hard and fight bravely on a daily basis to maintain this order and the National Grange will forever fight to grant them the support and respect they deserve.

The 2nd Amendment guarantees our right to keep and bear arms and the Grange has long been a defender of this important privilege. We stand in opposition to legislation geared towards 2nd Amendment restriction, such as mandatory gun owner liability insurance and other constraints on law-abiding citizens engaging in the responsible use of firearms. In addition, we stand in support of legislation that protects firearm manufacturers from lawsuits over the illegal use of their products.

However, realizing the difficult situations faced by police officers, we also support legislation that would prevent the production of handguns that look like cell phones, fountain pens and other everyday items, just as we oppose the production of toys that resemble real guns. The Grange also encourages law enforcement agencies nationwide to consider the use of body and dashboard cameras in their daily operations to help ensure fair proceedings in the event of an incident.

The Grange understands that citizens and the officials they elect are the best candidates to write the laws by which we will be governed and that administrative agencies, commissions and other unelected governing bodies should be prohibited from drafting and implementing such statutes that dramatically impact our daily lives. We urge elected officials at all levels to periodically review and purge outdated laws and reduce burdensome and unnecessary regulations that stifle economic growth and fundamentally impede the free market system.

We oppose statutes that prohibit the ability of property owners to buy blanket coverage when purchasing flood, home and other types of insurance. We also oppose the use of eminent domain to confiscate such private property for commercial use or any project that does not directly benefit the general citizenry.

The Grange has long fought for the rights of both employers and employees to live and thrive, understanding that worker protection and prosperity are not in conflict with company success and solvency. We believe that the hardworking men and women of America's workforce deserve the opportunity to earn a fair wage in a safe work environment and the guarantee that their pensions and subsequent benefits will be protected and preserved. We encourage businesses across the country to be proactive in

ensuring the future growth and stability of employee pension benefits and to guard against their loss in the unfortunate event of a company merger or bankruptcy.

The global economy has allowed American businesses to reach markets once inaccessible and has increased the demand for many of our goods, including our agricultural products, in far regions of the world. The Grange continues to be an advocate for the implementation of fair free trade agreements that encourage international commerce while also incentivizing domestic job growth and economic output for American companies. We do not; however, support the bailout of any country, state, or territory that has engaged in wasteful spending and behaved in a financially irresponsible manner.

Transportation

In many ways, agriculture is the “original” business and as such has driven the establishment of a multitude of subsequent industries down the economic food chain, including infrastructure development. The need for farmers to get their products to consumers drove the establishment of our nation’s railroads, highways, and waterways and today continues to drive the development of our national infrastructure.

We continue to support laws requiring drivers to slow down and move over while passing an emergency vehicle that is stopped with lights flashing and believe all drivers should be held responsible for their driving and guard against distractions from cell phones and other such devices. We also support increased visibility devices for school buses.

We support the designation of English as our national language and thus believe that all road and highway signage should be printed in English only. We further urge that all drivers’ tests, licenses and permits be printed in English as well.

2016 CONSERVATION POLICY STATEMENT

Since the birth of the Grange in 1867, our organization has advocated and taught that we are the stewards of the land and should leave the Earth in a better condition than we found it. The National Grange recognizes that the protection of the environment and the conservation of our national resources are vital national priorities. To protect our most vital resources – water and farmland- we encourage increased efforts to educate the public on the importance of our natural resources as a necessity for life of all types.

We believe that Americans must not sacrifice their property or surrender their constitutional rights in order to preserve our environment including our oceans, waterways, and the air we breathe. Adequate and full compensation should be paid in all cases of eminent domain, including, but not limited to, government grazing permits, water easements and areas designated as critical habitat for endangered species. The National Grange must continue to work closely with the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition to continue to work toward reform of this act.

The Grange recognizes the importance of protection of all watersheds and understands that major watersheds do not adhere to boundaries of private and public lands. The National Grange opposes any mandate that suggests all watersheds are to meet the same water quality standards and the “locking up” of watersheds or portions thereof for a single use by any person or agency. The National Grange encourages localities and municipalities to consider building small watershed dams for flood control and water supply. The National Grange continues opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2015 proposed changes to the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) regulations. The federal government has no basis for extending its regulatory arm across all waters everywhere in the country.

The National Grange advocates a national energy policy that will encourage the development of all forms of domestic energy. Traditional fossil fuels as well as alternative forms of energy such as wind, solar and hydroelectric should be used in an environmentally sound manner, including continuing research for improving methods of recovering petroleum fluids. We recognize that pipeline expansion and upgrades are also keys to U.S. energy independence. However, we want to assure the rights of private property owners are preserved in the process of leasing rights of way. We further recognize U.S. agriculture must be part of the solution to the country’s energy needs.

We encourage the responsible stewardship of our natural resources from all who own or use them. We recognize that responsible stewardship is a balance between use and preservation. The National Grange supports coordination among Federal, State and Local Governments when developing land use management plans. We urge Congress to include voluntary incentive-based assistance for conservation practices by farmers, ranchers, foresters and landowners in future Farm Bills, which will maintain a commitment to conservation.

2016 Grange Growth and Development Policy Statement

The growth of our Granges and the development of our members are vital to the continued existence and future of the Grange. These goals are intertwined. Without continued development in leadership and programming the Grange will not grow, nor possess the experience to face future challenges. We have the knowledge to address these problems and achieve these goals. We must keep our attitudes positive and unified as we work together as a team to develop programming that will mold today's leaders and those of tomorrow.

A true leader should recognize they are to serve the membership and not seek the position but rather let the position seek the person. Every leader in the Grange should strive to build a cohesive team to lead the Grange in the pathway to success.

In today's ever-changing world, Granges, at all levels, should strive to create new ways of encouraging all members to be involved in the Grange process. Granges should also be encouraged to remind their officers regularly of the duties with which they were charged during the installation ceremony and provide them with the mentoring and tools to accomplish these tasks. Granges should also be encouraged to think outside the box, and not be afraid of change that will provide opportunities to create leadership skills, membership development, and transformative programming.

To improve communications, we encourage Granges to work across borders by developing and sharing programs, promotional materials, publications and tools with each other. We advise state Granges to make available to their subordinate Granges subscription information about the quarterly National Grange magazine, titled *Good Day!* and Grange Radio at www.grangeradio.org.

We encourage Granges at all levels to pursue new revenue sources including but not limited to grant opportunities. Granges need to find other avenues in raising funds for their many projects. We need to get other organizations and businesses to help do good work in our communities.

We recommend that the National Grange Executive Committee review the structure of the membership department to assist in defining the roles of the membership director and any potential team members. We remind the National Grange that their role is to assist by providing the tools and training but the State and local Granges need to provide the effort for it to be effective.

We must get back to the basic structure of effective meetings including an opening and a closing format, a vibrant and educational literary program and taking action to improve our communities.

We recommend that the National Grange review all Grange contests for relevance and to provide guidelines for each contest to the State Granges. State Granges should be

encouraged to determine the criteria to be used at the state levels. Granges across the country are encouraged to recognize the dedication and hard work of our law enforcement officers, emergency medical technicians, fire fighters, teachers and others who serve the community. They are often overlooked for the services they provide.

We encourage Granges across the land to celebrate our organization's sesquicentennial. This is an important milestone for us and we need to make sure that the public is aware that the Grange is relevant, as it has been for the past 150 years.

The Grange will only succeed and grow with the positive attitude and hard work of its members. We must remember to have pride in our organization. We must continue to review our programming and update it as needed. We cannot cling to outdated ideals or programming that holds us from growth. With the assistance, teaching, and respect of veteran members, we are able to train and develop our members who will one day be the officers, delegates and leaders of the Order. This is our future and it is our responsibility to ensure that it endures forever.