



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

HAPPY GRANGE MONTH!

April 3, 2020

Dairy farmers first felt boom, now bust thanks to COVID

By Betsy Huber, National President

By now we are all pretty familiar with social distancing and the related problems caused by the coronavirus. Many of our members are out of work and possibly not being paid; students are out of school and may or may not be learning virtually.

Fortunately our farmers' daily work is not affected by the virus--or is it? Agriculture has been deemed a life-sustaining business so it is not mandated by any stay-at-home orders. However, other factors will certainly harm our farm businesses. So far I've heard from mushroom farmers who lost a large portion of their market with the closing of restaurants. Most of the mushrooms grown in my county (the mushroom capital of the world) are for fresh market and they don't keep fresh very long.

Secondly, I've just become aware that the COVID stimulus package signed by the President last week contains a provision to "provide flexibility for the disposal of milk and limit the financial impact to producers... Milk historically associated with a FMMO (Federal Milk Marketing Order) will be allowed to be dumped at the farm..." I can't imagine anything more depressing than laboring and pouring your heart into producing a nutritious, healthy product only to be forced to throw it out.

The fluid milk pipeline is full. At least two Northeast milk processing plants have closed, and these plants are unable to switch to making retail milk products. USDA is asking all processors if they can retool to manufacture dairy products to fit specifications for government purchase. The challenge will be whether and how fast the industry can retool to meet those specifications. USDA has authority to purchase several kinds of dairy products for feeding programs and foreign aid, and through the \$2 trillion relief package USDA does have the funding to make these purchases.

It is a fact that school lunch programs use a lot of milk, which of course they are not using right now. But these children are still eating lunch at home and should still have access to nutritious milk. Unfortunately I've also heard of stores rationing milk and only allowing the purchase of one or two gallons per shopping trip. If this is a distribution problem it really needs to be fixed! While fluid milk consumption is on a downward trend, cheese, yogurt and butter demand is increasing. There is no reason that farmers should need to discard milk when it can be made into these other products, ice cream, or even powdered milk.

So, Grangers, do your part! On your weekly (or less) outing to the grocery store, pick up an extra gallon of milk or pound of cheese to keep our farmers in business. The added nutrition will also keep you healthy.

During COVID, Grange challenged in new ways to Cultivate Connections

Grange Month is upon us and the theme could not be more apt: Cultivating Connections.

Yet, it's hard to think of connections when many of us are under stay at home orders or otherwise staying isolated to protect our health.

Still, every member is urged to remain connected – holding or taking part in virtual Grange meetings, using a phone tree to check in on one another or sending letters to reduce the feeling of isolation.

The National Grange has also taken steps to keep members connected and cultivate connections with those who may wish to be part of our Order including suggesting tools like freeconferencecall.com and Zoom to hold meetings – something that was made official, including voting by members in attendance, thanks to a ruling by National Grange President Betsy Huber in 2016 – and offering a daily Facebook Live web series with various presenters and topics ranging from the serious to the fun.

The series, called “Cultivating Connections in the time of COVID” is hosted by National Grange Communications Director Amanda Brozana Rios, and appears at various times, but most frequently thus far during the afternoon or early evening (Eastern time zone).

Brozana Rios said she plans to host one each day for as long as many states have stay at home orders in place to give members something to look forward to.

If you miss an episode, you can go onto the National Grange Facebook page at any time and replay any of the previously live-recorded webcasts. While you do not need a Facebook account to access the videos, there are also plans to move the content to YouTube for an additional way to see the content.

On Saturday, starting at 8:30 p.m. Eastern, National Grange Lecturer Chris Hamp and Brozana Rios will co-host a Date Night In: Grange Virtual Talent Show. The event will showcase the talent of a few members from around the country and viewers with the means will be asked to contribute what they can to the Grange Foundation or purchase a Foundation t-shirt with the message: “We’re in this Together.”

Other upcoming episodes include a look at how to make balloon animals, a review of what the Grange Foundation is doing to preserve our history and help communities, Granges and their members; a discussion about the role of the Assembly of Demeter (which will be held on the Grange Heritage Forum, a member-only group on Facebook), and fun lecturers programs by State Lecturers and others. Ideas and suggestions for the webcasts are welcome and should be sent to Brozana Rios at communications@nationalgrange.org.

“We’re just excited to be able to use technology to keep us all connected and engaged at this time,” Brozana Rios said. “Plus, most of the content we will be putting out throughout Grange month, especially including the talent show, would be of interest to anyone, so you can share the invitation to virtually attend with people you know who are bored at home. Grange membership encouraged, but not required.”

Brozana Rios said most of the live sessions encourage participation by the audience by way of comments and questions entered into the field below the video. You can also text questions or comments if you don't have a Facebook account but are watching, to her directly at (301) 943-1090.

Pandemic shut-ins discover Victory Gardens

By National Grange Legislative Director Burton Eller

During World War II, Americans in urban centers and suburban towns planted victory gardens to assure they and their neighbors would have food.

As the economy faltered and food worries grew, school and community gardeners produced close to 40 % of the country's fresh fruits and vegetables from 20 million garden plots.

This outbreak seems to have rekindled a desire among many people to grow their own food. And it's not just toilet tissue and meat that's flying off store shelves; it's seeds!

Community gardening is booming. Seed suppliers report they're scrambling to restock inventory in early April.

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange in Mineral, VA, just down the road from the home of this National Grange staffer, reports having to rework its website because it couldn't keep up with the demand.

High Mowing Organic Seeds in Vermont says they're having way more conversations with folks who have never gardened before and want to get into it.

Amid some really tough times for all Americans, it's heartwarming to see our neighbors rediscover where their food comes from.



CHECK OUT OUR GRANGE YOUTH ITEMS!

Hooded Sweatshirts, Sweat Pants with Pockets, Sling Back Packs, Drawstring Back Packs, Magnetic Journals, Retro T-Shirts, Stainless Steel Tumblers, Pop Up Phone Stands, Stainless Steel Insulated Vacuum Bottles, Structured Contrasting Stitch Caps and Yowie® Express Multi-Functional Rally Wear!

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New visual material released for Grange Month

By National Grange Communications & Development Director Amanda Brozana Rios

On April 1, just as many members were about to share social images in celebration of Grange Month, you should have received an email with new images for use.

The original Grange Month packet, provided digitally in March, had an image of two hands meeting with words about connectedness written on the illustration. Due to the isolation many of us are under because of the COVID virus, the image seemed to feel out-of-place in this very new landscape of social distancing and virtual interaction.

The new materials provide the same message - Grange is here to help Cultivate Connections – with a different look. In these items, someone is using a mobile device to interact with others, but feeling disconnected, indeed as many of us are today.

We hope you'll use this material that is likely to resonate with anyone in your community struggling to adapt or missing more typical face-to-face human interaction at this time.

Consider printing and placing some at the doors of your neighbors. Let them know that when things get back to normal, you hope they will come and feel the fellowship Grange has provided us all for these many years.

Definitely share it on your social accounts. I bet you'll start a conversation and maybe that will lead to welcoming a friend into our fraternity.

This may just be the time where disconnection connects us all.

Foundation offers fundraising t-shirt for sale to help Granges

The National Grange Foundation launched a fundraiser last week with hopes to appeal to the masses – far outside the Grange – but with a goal of assisting those Granges who are impacted by the COVID crisis or are working in their communities to assist others, potentially to the financial detriment of the Grange.



The Grange network was built to last, even in these difficult times.
We welcome you to become a part of the Grange, where we've been
cultivating connections since 1867, and have always known, we're in this together.

Such is the case with several Granges that have opened their Halls free-of-charge to other groups doing good work, or who have put together free food deliveries to local hospitals and more. These actions are what Granges are built to do, but sometimes come at a cost to perform.



LET THEM KNOW YOU KNOW
WE'RE IN THIS
together

Have a nurse, janitor, teacher, cashier, truck driver, banker or any other essential worker in your life? Show your appreciation and solidarity with the gift of a shirt.

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FREE SHIPPING IN U.S. ONESIES, CHILDREN'S, WOMEN'S AND UNISEX STYLES. \$12-\$17.50.
PROCEEDS GO TO GRANGE FOUNDATION TO BE USED TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO LOCAL GRANGES ACROSS THE NATION WHO ARE PROVIDING IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND ASSISTING EFFORTS OF ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL IN VARIOUS WAYS.

So too, Granges are missing out on events that often double as fundraisers or rental income while still doing things to help individuals in their community or the community as a whole.

Joan Smith, Foundation Board President, said she hopes everyone will share the shirt information with friends and family.

“The appeal is there,” Smith said. “The shirts look great, they fit great, and they speak to so many of us at this time with all kinds of professions and lifestyles referenced around the big COVID virus looking object and the positive message: ‘We’re in this together.’”

She said she hopes Grange members and others will buy a shirt as a gift for those who are essential workers as well as one for themselves to truly show unity at this time.

“They’re out there, putting themselves at risk so we can get care or get food or gas or whatever,” Smith said. “They’re heroes, but we’re also part of the solution when we’re staying home and helping to flatten the curve. This shirt helps show that and I’m sure someone would find it a great gift to receive one and know you were thinking of them because there’s nothing we can do to thank them enough.”

Shirts are available for purchase at inthistoggethershirt.weebly.com and all shirts are shipped free within the U.S.

They are red, 100% cotton, and come in sizes from newborn onesie to unisex 5XL, with youth and children’s sizes available, ranging from \$12 to \$17.50 based on size and style.

Smith encouraged everyone to wear it when it comes in the mail and share photos with friends as well as the link so they can also buy a shirt. For discounted bulk orders, contact Amanda Brozana Rios at communications@nationalgrange.org or by phone at (301) 943-1090.

Older Americans Act applauded by Generations United, Grange

WASHINGTON - During the current health crisis, Generations United applauds Congress for passing the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020, now signed into law by the president. The Act - which includes a series of intergenerational provisions for which Generations United advocated - has been reauthorized through 2024.

The intergenerational provisions include grants for multigenerational programs and increased opportunities to serve grandparents and other relatives raising children.

The reauthorization comes during the current COVID-19 health crisis, where older adults over the age of 60 and people with compromised immune systems are asked to isolate themselves and not have contact with children and young people.

This isn't possible for the 2.4 million grandparents who have primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren. Like our first responders, grandparents and other relative caregivers are the first line of defense for the children in their care, keeping them safely with family and out of foster care.

These grandfamilies - older and younger members alike - can't take a break from each other.

We are pleased that the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act supports grandfamilies by removing the 10% cap on using National Family Caregivers Support Program (NFCSP) funds to serve grandparents and other relatives raising children.



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STEP 1: Write a check, get a money order or make your \$20 donation online at grangefoundation.org/20for20

STEP 2: Open up your camera app and your wallet and pose with a \$20 bill to show you've made the \$20 for '20 Promise

STEP 3: Post the selfie in the comments below

Eugene Fletcher, MI, the man behind the \$20 for '20 Promise idea, shows off his donation

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