

Home Grown Politics Across NH Farmland to Concord and Washington

Grace Boatright at the National Grange office has been selected and promoted to the job of the Grange Legislative Director. I think Grace was a great choice. Grace actually put this year's Fly-In together. I believe she has some good ideas that she wants to bring to the job. Grace will be writing a blog periodically, so watch for it.

In a couple of past Columns, I have talked about the ongoing saga of getting federal approval for our NH state meat inspection program. The saga continues. We sent a joint letter from the Department of Agriculture Markets and Food, the House Committee on Environment and Agriculture, and the Senate Natural Resources Committee to Tom Vilsack, the US Secretary of Agriculture, asking him to overturn his food safety people and approve our NH Meat Inspection Program. We have done some lobbying of his staff beforehand. All four members of our Congressional Delegation are writing a joint letter to Secretary Vilsack in support of our program. That letter should be out before this column goes to press.

The State Grange continues to work with the NH Farm Bureau on legislative and policy issues. I sit on the Farm Bureau Government affairs committee, and on the day I write this article I will be presenting Grange positions on issues to the Farm Bureau's Policy Summit.

I will now discuss a couple of things that are not directly Grange events, but are related to our legislative and agriculture positions. I presented, along with Dr. Carolyn Orr to the annual meeting of the Northeast Association of Departments of Agriculture. The topic was Animal Rights groups.

I just came back from a few days in New Jersey at the annual meeting of the Council of State Governments – Eastern Regional Conference. Representative Tara Sad, a fellow Granger, three other Representatives and a Senator from NH went to the meeting. We passed a total of seven resolutions, four of which came out of the Agriculture Policy Committee. Two of the seven were sponsored by NH.

Your House committee on Environment and Agriculture has retained two bills for interim study. We will report those two bills out by October 30. One addresses nitrogen affluent into Great Bay and the other involves an oversight of the Department of Environmental Services. We are also reviewing RSA's 437 and 437A, regarding transfer of pets. The statute has been changed multiple times over 25 years and not reviewed. It needs to be cleaned up. We will make recommendations to do that.

Lastly I will note that I have been accepted to the Eastern Leadership Academy. It is a joint program put on by the Council of State Governments and the Fells Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania That will take place the last week in August. Updates on that program, will be in the next GSG.