



The Patrons Chain

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GRANGE

April 21, 2023

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Congress must include funds for agricultural research in Farm Bill

By [Betsy E. Huber](#), National Grange President

This week, I spent an entire day advocating for funding for agricultural research in the 2023 Farm Bill. I serve on the board of the [National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research](#) which held its annual meeting and fly-in on Tuesday.

The National Coalition for Food and Agriculture Research (NCFAR) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, and customer-led coalition that brings together food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders to serve as a forum and unified voice supporting increased federal investment in [USDA Research, Education, and Economics](#) (USDA REE).

NCFAR supports federal investment in the USDA Research, Education, and Economics enterprise because this USDA mission area underlies the tools necessary to build resiliency for humanity's most basic needs, particularly relating to climate change and nutrition security for all Americans.

U.S. public agricultural research & development spending returns, on average, \$20 in benefits for every \$1 invested. The food and agriculture system is an economic powerhouse, creating one-fifth of the country's economic activity and directly supporting nearly 20 million jobs with a total output of \$7 trillion.

Yet U.S. investment in agricultural research has declined by one-third since 2002. In 2019 (the last year for which complete statistics are available), public agricultural R&D spending in the United States totaled \$5.16 billion, about a third lower than the peak in 2002 when spending was \$7.64 billion (in constant 2019 dollars). At the same time, other countries have maintained or increased their spending on agricultural R&D. (ers.usda.gov)

It is urgent that Congress include an increase in spending for agricultural research and development in the [Farm Bill currently being drafted](#). As I stated in my column here last week, we must continue to improve if we are to feed 9.7 billion people by 2050.

Energy & Agriculture – The Nexus We all Depend Upon

Grangers in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia (and beyond!), here is a great conference to attend if you are interested in ag and energy.

"Energy and Agriculture – the Nexus We All Depend Upon" sponsored by [America's Rural Energy Coalition](#) and the National Grange.

May 3-4, Canonsburg PA, Hilton Garden Inn
Registration:

<https://arenergyc.org/conference-2023/>

Great nationally-known speakers from government, energy, and ag sectors.

In March 2023, more than 50 organizations wrote a letter urging Congress to invest in the farm bill's research title to spur scientific breakthroughs, keep pace with our global competitors, modernize facilities, and ensure nutrition security and a sustainable food system.

The promise of food and agricultural research:



Ensure our role as a leader in agricultural innovation.



Strengthen national security and competitiveness.



Improve resilience, sustainability, and productivity.



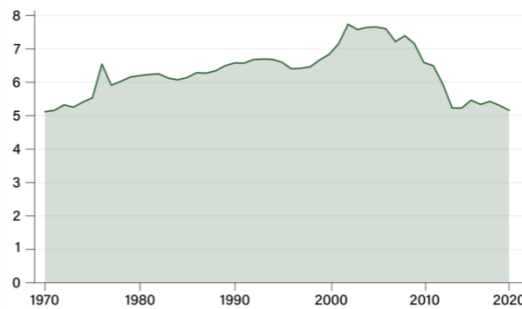
Stimulate the economy.



Enhance food and nutrition security.

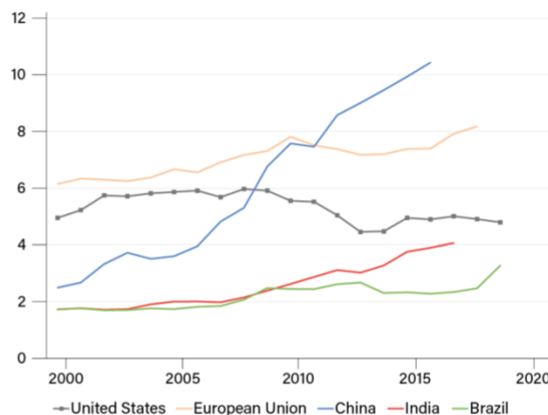
Support \$8 Billion in Mandatory Research Title Funding in the 2023 Farm Bill

- Past innovations have increased food production by 300% since the 1940s.
- According to USDA, every \$1 invested in public agricultural R&D from 1900-2011 generated on average \$20 in benefits to the U.S. economy.
- But today, gains in productivity are in deep decline, putting at risk global food security. Declining R&D investment is directly tied to declining productivity.
- Crumbling research facilities and equipment is driving top tier talent to better funded disciplines. The number of agricultural scientists has dropped by nearly 30% since the early 2000s.
- The food and agriculture industry contributes more than \$1 trillion to the U.S. GDP and accounts for 21 million jobs. Robust funding is critical to maintaining our trade competitiveness.
- The farm bill is our opportunity to secure critical funding to build resilience in our food system before it is too late.



U.S. funding peaked in 2002 and has declined by 1/3 since, hitting the lowest levels since 1970.

Source: USDA ERS, inflation-adjusted 2019 dollars, billions



Meanwhile, China's funding has grown to more than \$10 billion – double what the U.S. spends.

Source: USDA ERS, inflation-adjusted 2015 dollars, billions



nationalgrange.org



National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research

[in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nctar) [t](https://twitter.com/nctar) [f](https://www.facebook.com/nctar) ncfar.org

The National Coalition for Food and Agricultural Research (NCFAR) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, consensus-based, and customer-led coalition that brings together food, agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and natural resource stakeholders to serve as a forum and unified voice supporting increased federal investment in USDA Research, Education, and Economics.

Is it time for a change? You tell us!

By [Samantha Wilkins](#), National Junior and Youth Development Director



Happy Grange Month!

We are smack-dab in the middle of Grange Month, a time when we are celebrating the great accomplishments of our organization and celebrating all the amazing things our members are doing!

I don't know about you, but this month is one of those times when I get so jazzed about our organization! Conversations are happening, stories are being shared, and we are in 'Grange Mode' throughout the month of April. And sometimes when we are in that 'mode', we begin to think of things that need to change or that we should bring back from 'the good old days,' or we think about new things we could be doing.

Either way, those wheels are spinning about all the possibilities.

I have kind of been stuck in that mode for a few months now. At the beginning of 2023, we created a committee of youth and youth leaders to look at the needs within the Youth Department. These ladies have been amazing and together we have discussed many things related to youth programming across the country. We have discussed and worked on defining the purpose of the youth department; we have discussed old programming, new programming, and even the ages surrounding the youth/young adults. No topic has been off-limits, which has been great! We have had so many great discussions. However, while we are working hard to ensure that we are creating the best programs for our youth and young adults, we really want to hear from you, the members.

In 2016 when I was asked to oversee the Junior Grange department, I said and continued to say 'This is not my program, this is yours', and that same mindset continues with the youth.

While I can come up with my own thoughts on how this should go, there are thousands of you out there, and this program works for you all in different ways. **I want to hear directly from our members and our youth what you enjoy, what you do not enjoy, and how we can work together to create the best programming for you.**

I am asking that you take a few moments to take this survey (linked below) and be honest with us about how you see the Youth/Young Adult program. Tell us what you find important, what more you would like to see, etc. While there are some very specific questions, we did leave room for you to leave thoughts about any piece of the Youth/Young Adult program.

With this survey you will help provide insight to the National Youth/Young Adult Committee as we develop programming for the next year: <https://form.jotform.com/231084072119045>

Final weekend to register! National Grange Virtual Legislative Fly-In

The National Grange Virtual Legislative Fly-In is coming up on April 26th! The event will take place via Zoom, where you'll hear updates from National Grange staff and some guests, including:

- **Senator [Debbie Stabenow](#)** (D-MI), Chair, [Senate Committee on Agriculture](#)
- **Representative [GT Thompson](#)** (R-PA), Chair, [House Committee on Agriculture](#)
- **Laurel Leverrier**, Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Programs, [Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)
- **Janet McUISky**, President, [McUISky Health Force](#)
- **Jenna Alsayegh**, Senior Director, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, [USTelecom](#)
- **Mikayla Bodey**, Staff, [U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Nutrition](#)
- and other government officials and advocacy partners

The event will take place starting at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern) on Wednesday, April 26th.

Even if you cannot attend, please register so we can share videos and information from speakers with you after the Fly-In is completed.

Register Today!



Grange Month wraps up

Thank you to everyone who has tuned in for our **Grange Month** events and who has been spreading the awesome work of the Grange through communities across America.

You can catch up with this month’s presentations on our [YouTube Channel!](#)

Our final week of special Grange month programming includes the bi-monthly Lecturer’s Forum, “Long-Term Care & Estate Planning” sponsored by the Grange Foundation 1-in-1000 Club, the Legislative Roundtable, and a seminar called “What’s Next?” about continuing the working of Grange month.

Have you held a successful Grange Month program, open house, or event? We’d love to hear about it! [Send us an email](#) – we might be able to use it in future publications or on next year’s Grange Month page!

GRANGE MONTH EVENTS
APRIL 23-29

Join all at <http://bit.ly/grangemonthzoom>

ALL TIMES EASTERN 8:30 P.M.

25: LECTURER'S FORUM
National Grange Lecturer Ann Bercher will present ideas for programming in Granges around the country. *This forum is not just for Lecturers!*

26: LONG-TERM CARE & ESTATE PLANNING
Sponsored by the 1-in-1000 Club 8:30 P.M.
This forum is great for anyone planning for retirement and the future. Presented by John T. Griffin, Esq.

27: LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE 8:30 P.M.
National Grange Legislative Director Burton Eller & Legislative Assistant Sean O’Neil bring a roundup of National Grange legislative initiatives.

29: WHAT'S NEXT? 3:00 P.M.
Where to we go from here? This seminar will provide some suggestions on how to keep the Grange Month spirit moving with work still to come!

RAISED • RIGHT • HERE™

JUNIOR GRANGE FOCUS AREA:
AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS

YOUTH PILLAR FOCUS AREA:
ACTION




APPLY FOR A DEAF AWARENESS GRANT

DEADLINE: MAY 1

AWARDS UP TO \$1,000!

All details and application available at grangefoundation.org/deaf





157th Convention Registration to open May 1st



Get ready to "Flow into the Future" at the 157th Annual Session of the National Grange, hosted by the northeast region states of New York, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

This year's Convention will be in Niagara Falls, New York - just blocks from the falls! The [Sheraton Niagara Falls](#) is an incredible hotel, and the convention itself and many of the evening activities will be held at the [Niagara Falls Convention Center](#), just across the street!

We invite ALL Grange members to participate in the Convention activities, so please save the dates and make plans to attend!

This is your early warning to ensure your passport is up to date. You won't want to miss the opportunity to pop over to Canada when you're just a few steps away:

<https://www.usps.com/international/passports.htm>

Registration for this year's convention opens on May 1st - we hope you're ready!

Stay tuned over the coming weeks and months for more information about speakers, tours, and other opportunities (both fun and educational!) for all Grange members during the Convention.

The Gift that Keeps on Giving

An editorial by [Kay Stiles](#), National Grange Pomona and First Lady of Maryland State Grange

If you've ever lived, worked on, or visited a farm you know that there's danger everywhere - but until it happens to your family, it's not something you think about. For us, that reality hit hard recently.

For farmers, holidays are like every other day... And for us, St. Patrick's Day started like any other day.

Allen milked the cows and I prepared to go to work. However, my instincts kept telling me to stay and work remotely that day. I thought I was avoiding the boss who was to be in the office for a meeting with the Administration that afternoon. As I started up the driveway, in my rearview mirror I saw Allen walking around the barnyard - which is not unusual - and again my instincts said turn around and make sure everything is OK. But I thought I was being silly, because if something was wrong surely Allen would flag me down. In hindsight, there was something in the way he was walking around that said turn around, something is wrong.

Before I got to the first town which is 5 miles down the road, I met our local VFD ambulance coming towards me and ultimately the farm - lights, sirens, and going as fast as I've ever seen an ambulance move. Again, I thought I should pull over and call to make sure everybody was OK, but I had just seen Allen so surely everything was fine. It was not until I almost got to the office (a good hour and a half commute) that my phone rang, and it was Allen asking me if I was at work yet - "No, what's wrong?" They just flew Michael (our nephew) to Shock Trauma. That's when I learned that Michael had fallen from our hay loft and landed on the concrete below. When I asked if it had happened before I left, I was told yes.

Lesson Learned: Always listen to your instincts and never let your spouse drive away even if there's nothing they can do.

I called my sister-in-law to see what I could do for them. I am forever thankful that I was told to come to meet them at the hospital. I finished my work meeting very quickly and got to the hospital at the same time as the family (Michael's parents, his sister, and his brother-in-law). It wasn't until we met with some of the trauma team that we learned that Michael was in very critical condition. I know that we were all praying for a miracle for Michael, and Shock Trauma has an excellent reputation (95% survival rate) but we were not to get a miracle.

Shock Trauma has strict rules about visitors – 2 at a time – but our pastor was able to get permission for all five of us to be at Michael's bedside that night for a prayer service. One person was allowed to stay overnight and Susie, Michael's sister, said she was staying – she never left the hospital for that next week. As we live on adjoining farms, I became the chauffeur/Uber service for my sister- and brother-in-law.

On Saturday, we discovered that Michael had signed up to be an organ donor which changed everything. I remember a conversation with Michael wherein we were talking about a kid in need of a transplant and Michael saying he would do that to save a child. However, when you're in the middle of a crisis, you're not going to remember conversations.

Lesson Learned: Have those difficult conversations with your loved ones and let them know what you want and don't want.

Because of the organ donation and not being able to get that team together on a weekend, we were to get several more days with Michael. On Sunday, we got our first glimmer of hope when Michael moved his arm when the nurse pinched his shoulder which couldn't be explained. Were we to get our miracle after all? We knew that hundreds of people around the world were praying for Michael, and we had seen a neighbor get a miracle a few months before at the same Trauma Center. On Monday, we were told that there was a faint glimmer of hope and, for the first time, I felt like I could breathe.

But on Tuesday reality came crashing back in as we were told that there would be no miracle and they weren't going to be able to save Michael. Bring back the organ donation team which was originally scheduled for Wednesday afternoon but then moved to Thursday morning and Michael saved at least 4 or 5 people through the organ donation program.

When we walked out of Michael's room for that last time on Thursday morning, I was not prepared for what I would see. There is a Walk of Honor for the donor – the teams lined each side of the wall, shoulder to shoulder, with no empty spaces in sight. Michael's nurses were closest to his room and they all held battery-powered votives, which we were also given. To say it was so emotional to see everyone is an understatement and something I will always remember. They then wheeled out Michael's bed, followed by his parents and his sister and brother-in-law. They do a short service in the hallway and then started Michael's bluegrass playlist for his journey to the OR.

Why would I share our story with you?

If I could protect one person from having to go through the tragedy we just went through would be worth it. However, more importantly, is to share and urge you all to take the time... Talk about those "what-ifs," what you would want your loved ones to do or not do for you, the decisions that have to be made – I know how much turmoil my in-laws must have gone through making those tough decisions on behalf of Michael.

But also take the time to think about organ donation. I would be the first to admit that I would be the squeamish one when it comes to thinking and/or talking about that subject. But how much I've learned these last few weeks – we were given the opportunity to direct where the organs would go (as long as the recipient was on the organ donation list), not to mention the lives that can be saved (and their families and friends who will be able to spend more time with their loved ones), that organ donation is the ultimate gift you can give to anyone.

I hope and pray that every level of Grange – whether it be subordinate/community, Pomona, State and/or National – will consider having organ donations as part of your program or partnering up with an organ donation agency. What better gift can you give than to give life to someone, even a stranger?

Last Lesson Learned: 2023 will not be one of my favorite years – I lost a co-worker and friend in February and then Michael's tragedy in March – but it will be a year that has forced me to grow. I saw such faith, grace, and dignity in Michael's parents and their willingness to share Michael with all of us is so inspiring. The real miracle was Michael himself – if you're not part of the dairy industry, just Google "Michael Heath" to learn how important Michael was around the world and not just to my beloved Jersey breed – how he was willing to take time to talk to everybody, answer kids' questions and inspire us all to be a better person. The bond I have always had with Allen's family deepened. I

always feel closest to God and my faith strengthened during the worst moments imaginable. So, for me, the last lesson learned is to be there for family and friends, don't take anybody for granted, love with all your heart those special people in your life, and keep your faith growing. You never know what impact you may have on others and if you can save a life.

April is designated as **National Donate Life Month**, an event to focus national attention on the importance of [registering your decision to be an organ, eye, and tissue donor](#), and to honor deceased and living donors for their selfless acts. In 2022, more than 42,000 transplants from 21,300 donors brought renewed life to patients and their families and communities; but more than 100,000 people remain on the national transplant waiting list for lifesaving transplants. More than 170 million people are registered donors. Learn more at www.donatelife.net.

Register for the Rural Mental Health Caregiver Challenges Webinar



In keeping with our mission to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, [Rural Minds](#) and the National Grange are pleased to present another Rural Mental Health Connections Free Webinar.

This webinar will be held on **May 10th at 7:00 PM Eastern / 4:00 PM Pacific**.

Many people in rural communities struggle with mental illness, and their loved ones who provide care face challenges that are often overlooked. This webinar will feature:

- Two rural caregivers sharing their stories of lived experience providing care for their loved ones
- A conversation about stigma and the personal and professional sacrifices necessary in order to provide care
- Sharing of relevant free resources for the mental wellness of rural caregivers.

[Register Today!](#)

The Pandemic Pushed Rural Philanthropy to Change

By Kristi Eaton, courtesy of *Daily Yonder*

From helping with vaccine hesitancy to shifting church services online, some rural philanthropic organizations pivoted and changed their direction and focus areas during the height of the pandemic.

At Con Alma Health Foundation in New Mexico, Executive Director Denise Herrera said she learned that relationships in rural philanthropy really matter. Herrera joined the foundation in May 2021 from a position based in Austin, Texas.

"I've noticed that relationships really, really matter when it comes to rural philanthropy," she told the *Daily Yonder*. "Because sometimes the community doesn't have access to the nearest clinic, which is four or five hours away, and hundreds of miles away. So sometimes you really have to rely on the people and the communities and the organizations on the ground doing the work. And you're not always able to go visit a community or get to know them as closely as you might get to know communities that are a little bit closer by."

She said that New Mexico is home to 23 Tribal Nations and Pueblos. When the pandemic first hit, the Navajo Nation had some of the highest rates of Covid cases per capita in the country, she said.

“And these are communities that don’t even have running water,” she added.” So when people are saying, ‘Oh, wash your hands,’ and they don’t have access to hand sanitizer and they don’t have access to basic things like running water, that’s a really difficult situation. And fast forward once the Covid vaccine became available, Navajo Nation has some of the highest vaccination rates per capita in the country.”

One community, she said, requested money to refurbish a nearby playground that was near a community clinic where people were getting vaccinated against Covid.

“I do think there are definitely examples here in New Mexico, where people are being creative,” she said.

At the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation in Freeport, Maine, Executive Director Gabriela Alcalde told the Daily Yonder that the organization launched a rapid response in 2020. It was developed prior to the pandemic, but shifted to focus on pandemic-related needs.

“I think the pandemic disproved many fears foundations have operated under regarding multiyear, general operating support,” she said. ‘It also showed foundations that the sky didn’t fall when we didn’t require so much reporting.”

She said that initially, there seemed to be a recognition that foundations should fund organizations serving communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic, but, she added, she has already observed that changing back to pre-pandemic ways.

“Not much has changed in terms of funding BIPOC-led organizations, and I am unsure about grassroots and small organizations,” she added.

David Jordan, president and CEO of the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, based in Hutchinson, Kansas, funds access to care. Most of the work the organization does is in the rural western two-thirds of Kansas.

“Immediately during Covid, we recognized there were needs on the ground,” he said. “[The church congregations] knew what they needed – whether or not it was like support to transition their ministry to online methods, resources for community food banks, materials to make masks. So we immediately sort of repurposed funding to help provide a Covid special grant ... largely in rural communities.”

Like others, Jordan said the pandemic has exposed long-standing structural issues with supporting rural communities.

“You see that on the ground, whether or not it’s lower vaccination rates, higher prevalence of chronic disease, you see rural hospitals more financially vulnerable, it’s tougher to sustain a workforce in rural communities,” he said. “So I think the pandemic, in some ways, exacerbated the challenges. It met with sustaining some of the key structures in rural communities, and also some of the disparities that exist from a health status standpoint. So I think it helped to refocus the need for engagement to the rural philanthropy and also that it should be centered on the needs that exist on the ground.”



LECTURER
NATIONAL GRANGE

a quarter's worth
A quarterly publication for Grange Lecturers

Submission Deadline: May 1st
(but sooner is better!)

Email articles, ideas, etc. to lecturer@nationalgrange.org

Grange Foundation Krispy Kreme fundraiser



Americans consume more than 10 billion (with a “b”) donuts each year. Why miss out on the craze? Through Grange Month, you can purchase a gift certificate for a “digital dozen” donuts through the Grange Foundation’s fundraiser, not only securing sweet treats for yourself but giving back in the process.

Digital dozens are good for a glazed dozen donuts at all Krispy Kreme locations, and never expire. For \$15, you can enjoy an American classic while the Foundation earns about half of each purchase to put toward programs including support for Youth and Juniors.

Hurry! April is almost over.

Simply buy your dozen online, visit a Krispy Kreme store near you and redeem using your code! Guarantee your doughnuts here: <http://bit.ly/grangekrispykremes>



Photo by Nina Hill

Grange Supply Store Notice

Effective May 1 – the price of all “Years of Service” Seals will increase to \$5 (with \$3 shipping) and Golden Sheaf pins will increase to \$25.

To save money now, place your orders with [Loretta Washington](#) by midnight Eastern on May 1st (postmarked or in email inbox).



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

NEW GRANGE 4TH DEGREE PIN



This is a **BRAND NEW** 1" pin with 1/4" clutch back. Perfect for welcoming new members into the Grange, celebrating milestones, and more. Featuring the Grange emblem, surrounded with the names of the 7 Founders.

Limited quantity available.

Order online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

\$10.00
PLUS SHIPPING



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

SEVEN-SIDED PATCH



\$2.00 EACH
PLUS SHIPPING

AVAILABLE IN MAROON OR GREEN

These patches feature the Grange emblem in Junior (maroon/dark red) and Youth (green) colors. Perfect for sewing onto jackets, totes, or more.

Order online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.



SUPPLY STORE

www.grangestore.org

"RAISED RIGHT HERE" VINYL STICKERS



Great way to celebrate Grange month and to have at other Grange activities and events.

Die-Cut Vinyl Stickers - in two designs, celebrating the National Grange "Raised Right Here" theme
25 stickers of each design

\$12 for 50 stickers stickers
plus shipping

Get yours by ordering online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

Grange Member Benefit: Wyndham Hotels



As a member of the National Grange, you will receive up to 20% off the "Best Available Rate" at over 7,500 participating locations worldwide.

Book online or call and give the agent your **group ID number**

1000007487 when booking to receive a discount. So start saving now!

[Click here](#) or call our member benefits hotline at 1-877-670-7088 and reserve your next room today.
http://www.wyndhamhotelgroup.com/?corporate_id=1000007487

GRANGE JEWELRY



Grange Jewelry is now in stock at the Grange Store. Pins include years of service and member recognition pins from 5-80 years, past officer pins, Degree recognition pins, and much more!

Some jewelry is now on clearance!

Prices vary

Order online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.



www.grangestore.org

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