

# National Grange Lecturer



**2026 Program Guide**

# **National Grange Lecturer's Programming 2026**

## ***Education at the Heart of the Grange***

At its core, the Grange has always been an educational organization. Long before classrooms were common in rural communities, Grange halls served as places of learning, where neighbors gathered to exchange ideas, build skills, and strengthen their communities through shared knowledge. The Lecturer's Department of the National Grange exists to carry that legacy forward.

### **Our Purpose**

The purpose of the Lecturer's Department is to educate, engage, and inspire Grange members of all ages through meaningful programs that reflect the needs of today's communities while honoring the values upon which the Grange was founded. The National Lecturer's Programming for 2026 is centered on learning, learning that is practical, relevant, and rooted in service.

### **A Shift Back to Educational Roots**

The Lecturer's Department is intentionally returning to its educational roots. While contests and awards have played a role in the department's history, the emphasis moving forward is on participation, engagement, and impact, rather than competition. Education may take many forms, such as guest speakers, workshops, demonstrations, discussions, hands-on activities, cultural programs, or collaborative learning experiences. All are equally valuable when they create opportunities for growth and understanding.

### **Empowering States and Community Granges**

This renewed approach to Lecturer's Programming provides greater flexibility for state and community Granges, encouraging broader participation from members with diverse interests, talents, and abilities. By shifting the focus away from rigid structures and toward meaningful learning, programs are better able to respond directly to local needs and priorities, while reaffirming the core purpose of the Lecturer's role, to educate.

State and local Granges are encouraged to develop educational programming that reflects local culture, concerns, and opportunities, while exploring new formats, topics, and ideas.

Partnerships with schools, libraries, extension services, and other community organizations are strongly supported. We must think of the Grange as a modern learning space, one that fosters dialogue, skill building, and community connection, not just meetings.

The role of the National Lecturer is to support, encourage, and share ideas, providing guidance and inspiration while allowing creativity and innovation to flourish at the state and local levels.

As the Grange continues to evolve, education remains our strongest tool for building informed members, resilient communities, and a vibrant future.

The Lecturer's Department invites all Granges to reimagine education, rediscover the power of learning together, and reaffirm the Grange's historic role as a trusted source of knowledge, leadership, and service.

Fraternally yours,

Dr. Richard Stonebraker, National Grange Lecturer

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# National Grange Lecturer's Department

## (EPIC) Educational Programming Ideas Calendar

February – December 2026

### Aligned with Project Sustenance

Project Sustenance focuses on strengthening communities through food security, civic engagement, education, and sustainable local systems. The following monthly themes intentionally align educational programming with those goals while allowing flexibility for local adaptation. For more information on Project Sustenance, visit:

<https://www.nationalgrange.org/projectsustenance/>

### February – Civic Education

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Civic Engagement & Community Voice*

- Understanding local government and civic processes that influence food systems
- How legislation impacts agriculture, rural life, and food access
- Encouraging informed citizenship and advocacy for community needs
- Exploring how community voices shape local food security initiatives

Connection: Strong civic engagement is essential to sustaining local food systems and rural communities.

### March – Agricultural Literacy & Education

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Education & Awareness*

- Telling agriculture's story as the foundation of food security
- Ag Literacy Week activities tied to community education (see page 6)
- Connecting agriculture to everyday life, nutrition, and sustainability
- Helping the public understand where food comes from—and why it matters

Connection: Agricultural literacy builds informed communities capable of sustaining themselves.

### April – Environment, Conservation & Stewardship

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Sustainability & Stewardship*

- National Grange Month activities highlighting stewardship
- Soil health, water conservation, and sustainable farming practices
- Pollinators, habitats, and long-term food production
- Earth Day as a moment to connect conservation with food security

Connection: Sustainable environmental practices ensure long-term agricultural productivity and resilient communities.

## **May – Food Systems & Local Agriculture**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Food Security & Local Systems*

- From field to fork: understanding local food systems
- Food access, food deserts, and community-based solutions
- Community gardens, farmers markets, and local producers
- Strengthening connections between producers and consumers

Connection: Local food systems are at the heart of Project Sustenance.

## **June – Rural Life & Community Resilience**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Community Resilience*

- Rural challenges and opportunities affecting food access
- Broadband, healthcare, and infrastructure as supports for rural vitality
- Community problem-solving and local leadership discussions
- Building resilient communities that can sustain themselves

Connection: Strong rural communities are essential to a strong agricultural future.

## **July – History, Heritage & Storytelling**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Cultural Continuity & Community Identity*

- America's 250th Anniversary through an agricultural lens
- Grange history, traditions, and rural advocacy
- Oral histories and storytelling about food, farming, and community
- Exploring why the Grange still matters in today's food systems

Connection: Understanding where we come from helps guide how we sustain communities moving forward.

## **August – Youth, Leadership & Mentorship**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Leadership Development & Future Generations*

- Youth leadership development in agriculture and community service
- Mentorship across generations
- Encouraging youth voice in Grange and community decision-making
- Preparing the next generation to lead sustainable food systems

Connection: Long-term food security depends on empowered youth and strong leadership pipelines.

## **September – Education & Lifelong Learning**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Education at Every Stage*

- Career and technical education related to agriculture and food systems
- Supporting schools, educators, and community learning spaces
- Lifelong learning as a tool for adaptability and resilience
- Sharing skills that support home and community sustainability

Connection: Education is a continuous investment in community strength.

## **October – Health, Wellness & Safety**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Well-Being & Quality of Life*

- Farm, home, and community safety
- Mental health awareness in agricultural and rural communities
- Nutrition education and healthy food choices
- Connecting wellness to access to nutritious food

Connection: Healthy people are essential to healthy communities and food systems.

## **November – Service, Gratitude & Community Impact**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Service & Community Support*

- Service-learning projects tied to food and community needs
- Reflecting on community challenges and responses
- Measuring and celebrating Grange impact
- Gratitude for those who contribute to community well-being

Connection: Service strengthens the social fabric that sustains communities.

## **December – Reflection & Vision for the Future**

Project Sustenance Alignment: *Sustainability & Forward Planning*

- Year-in-review learning and reflection
- Goal setting for future community and food initiatives
- Visioning exercises for local sustainability
- Planning how the Grange continues to meet evolving needs

Connection: Reflection and planning ensure Project Sustenance remains active, relevant, and impactful.

# National Grange Agricultural Literacy Week

March 16–20, 2026

Grangers are encouraged to take part in **Agricultural Literacy Week**, March 16–20, 2026 by sharing the story of agriculture with students, families, and communities across their state. Agricultural literacy helps connect people to where their food comes from, who produces it, and why agriculture matters every day—not just during planting and harvest seasons.

This year, the National Grange is highlighting two outstanding books that spark meaningful conversations about farming, food, and rural life:

- [\*The Pie That Molly Grew\*](#)
- [\*Tales of the Dairy Godmother\*](#)

Whether you read in a classroom, host a community story hour, or partner with a local school or library, your participation helps plant seeds of understanding and appreciation for agriculture. Together, let's use Agricultural Literacy Week to educate, inspire, and strengthen the connection between agriculture and our communities.

All books are available for purchase through Amazon or other book retailers. The National Grange is providing one activity resource for each book that can be used alongside the reading. Be sure to review the activity in advance, as many require specific materials. After that, it's simple: read the book, then do the activity. If permissible, take photos and share the fun!

A Few Things to Keep in Mind:

- Contact the school or teacher you plan to visit in advance. This is a great opportunity to build new relationships if you do not already have a connection within your local school.
- If your activity involves food, ask about food allergies and plan accordingly.
- Be mindful of any school rules or regulations that may apply during your visit.
- After your visit, consider donating the book to the classroom teacher or school library. Be sure to include your Grange's information inside the book—an excellent way to promote your Grange and its commitment to agricultural education.



# NATIONAL GRANGE AGRICULTURE LITERACY WEEK

March 16 - 20, 2026



## Ice Cream in a Bag

Join Chuck, who wishes for unlimited ice cream and is taken on a magical journey to a dairy farm to learn where it comes from

- Introduce yourself and your connection to agriculture.  
Read the book *Tales of the Dairy Godmother: Chuck's Ice Cream Wish*. (15 minutes)
- After reading the book, transition into the below activity. (Activity is based on 30 students).

### Materials Needed:

#### Per student

- 1 sandwich bag and 1 quart bag
- 1 sugar packet
- 2 salt packets
- 1 spoon
- 1/2 c. ice per quart bag
- 1/3 c. half & half per student (or the volume of a 3oz dixie cup)  
(1 quart of half & half will serve 10 students)
- 1 tsp. vanilla

### Activity Procedures:

#### Interest Approach (5 minutes)

1. Ask students, "What happens to the milk when it gets very cold?"
2. Inquire, "Why do we add salt to the ice when making ice cream? How does shaking or mixing help make ice cream?"

## Ice Cream in a Bag Activity (15 minutes)

1. Each student should open their sugar packet and put the sugar in the sandwich bag. The teacher can move to each student and add the half and half and vanilla to the sandwich bag. Push out excess air and seal.

- Alternatively, vanilla and half and half can be pre-measured in a cup for students to pour into their own bag.

2. In the quart bag, empty the 2 salt packets and add ice.

3. Put the sealed sandwich bag into the quart bag with the ice. Seal the quart bag and let your students shake vigorously for 3 minutes until the half and half has become thick.

- This process will not take long with such a small amount of liquid.
- The ice cream won't be hard; it should be the consistency of soft serve.

4. Remove the sandwich bag from the quart bag, open, and dig in! Students can eat directly from the sandwich bag, or they can transfer it to a bowl or cup.

### Conclusion (3 minutes)

#### Ask the students:

- What did you find interesting about making ice cream today?
- How much ice cream do you think we could make a day from one cow? (Roughly 2-3 gallons per day. This depends on the breed of dairy cow, among other factors).

Remember to share your photos (if permissible) and stories about your experience presenting this Agricultural Literacy Activity with your community.

You can also send information to: [lecturer@nationalgrange.org](mailto:lecturer@nationalgrange.org)

\*this activity is brought to you as part of Project Sustenance.





# NATIONAL GRANGE AGRICULTURE LITERACY WEEK

March 16 - 20, 2026



## Pumpkin Pie in a Bag

Join Molly on her seed to table journey as she carefully explores each stage in her pumpkin's lifecycle, all to end with her own celebration and sharing of the pie that grew from the seed she sowed.

- Introduce yourself and your connection to agriculture.  
Read the book *The Pie That Molly Grew*. (15 minutes)
- After reading the book, transition into the below activity. (*Activity is based on 26 students*).

### Materials Needed:

- 1 gallon-size Ziploc Bag
- 2 2/3 cups cold milk
- 2 boxes instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin puree
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice mix
- 13 packages graham crackers
- 26 portion cups
- Measuring cup
- Measuring spoons
- Scissors
- Can opener
- Spoon or small spatula
- Food service gloves (recommended)

### Activity Procedures:

Interest Approach (5 minutes)

1. Ask students, "What did Molly need to grow her pumpkins?" She needed soil, sun, seeds, and water.

2. Inquire, "How long do you think it took Molly to grow her pumpkin from a seed to a ripe fruit?" (Pumpkins take anywhere from 90-120 days to grow fully ripe.)

## Pumpkin Pie in a Bag Activity (15 minutes)

1. Ask, "Have you ever made a pumpkin pie?" Explain that today we are going to make our own pumpkin pie, but just a little differently than Molly. She roasted the pumpkin she grew in the oven and then made a pie, and we are going to use a method with no oven necessary.
2. Share that we are going to work together to make pumpkin pie filling in a bag.
3. As the adult, open the can of pumpkin and explain that farms grow special varieties of pumpkins for baking. These pumpkins have more flavor, are smaller, and hold less water than carving pumpkins.
4. Ask for three student volunteers to help with making our delicious dessert.
5. Instruct one student to use the measuring cup to add 2 and  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups of cold milk to the gallon Ziploc bag as you hold it.
6. Ask another student to open both packets of instant vanilla pudding mix into the same bag.
7. Close the bag, hold it at the top zipper, and move around the room asking the students to gently knead the bag with their fingers until the ingredients are completely blended (around one minute).
8. Open the bag again and have a student volunteer add in the pumpkin and ask another to measure 1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons of pumpkin pie spice and add it to the bag.
9. Reseal the bag, hold it at the top zipper, and move around to the students, asking them to mix the contents again with their fingers until blended (about two minutes).
10. Lay out enough portion cups for each student. Cut the corner of the Ziploc bag and squeeze the filling into the cups. Give each student a cup and a graham cracker, using the graham cracker to scoop and eat their pumpkin pie filling in a chip and dip fashion.

Conclusion (3 minutes)

Ask the students:

- What makes a pie pumpkin different than a carving pumpkin?
- What did you like about our pumpkin pie in a bag recipe?
- How do you think Molly felt when she baked and shared her pie for her friends and community?

Remember to share your photos (if permissible) and stories about your experience presenting this Agricultural Literacy Activity with your community.

You can also send information to: [lecturer@nationalgrange.org](mailto:lecturer@nationalgrange.org)

*\*this activity is brought to you as part of Project Sustenance.*



# Distinguished Grange



This recognition program for Granges that fulfill their service and advocacy missions and provide support for members and their community was launched in 2009.

We encourage every Grange to complete as many requirements or optional components of the program as possible and improve upon their tally each year. Doing so not only allows Granges to be recognized but also solidifies their presence in their communities and the meaning for their members.

This program is open to Community, Pomona, State, and Junior Granges.

The 2025-2026 Distinguished Grange program counts all activities from July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. Applications are due by September 1, 2026.

If you have any questions about the Distinguished Grange program, please contact Connie Johnston, Program Administrator, at [distinguishedgrange@grange.org](mailto:distinguishedgrange@grange.org)

**More information and applications:**  
[nationalgrange.org/distinguished](http://nationalgrange.org/distinguished)



# Grange In Action

The **Grange In Action** program encourages all Granges to be active in their communities and complete events or projects, no matter how small. Any Grange that does not complete the application for Distinguished Grange can participate in this program. Granges that wish to be recognized at the 2026 National Grange Convention as a “Grange In Action” should complete the following requirements:

- Submit 1 letter-sized page with color photos and a brief caption (Suggested: ***Only 140 words***) of three (3) different events/activities; with no more than 1 photo for each event for a total of 3 photos, from September 1, 2025, through August 31, 2026. Anything over 1 page will be disqualified.
- The Grange name, number, and state must be on the front of the page.
- On a separate page, please include the name, address, phone number, and email address of the person who submitted the Grange In Action report.
- Granges that qualify for the 2026 Distinguished Grange Award are not eligible for this recognition.
- If one of your events/activities/meetings is on **Project Sustenance**, you will qualify as a **“Diamond Grange in Action.”**
- If one of your events/activities/meetings is on mental health, you will qualify as a **“Golden Grange in Action.”**
- The deadline to submit your application to the National Grange is midnight on September 1, 2026, either by postmark or by email.
  - Mail to National Grange, ATTN: Loretta Washington – 1616 H Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006.
  - Email to Loretta Washington - [lwashington@nationalgrange.org](mailto:lwashington@nationalgrange.org). Please write “Grange In Action 2026 report” in the subject line.

To be named a **“State Grange in Action,”** a State Grange must have at least 6 Granges recognized as “Grange In Action.”

Some of the entries might be displayed online.

Granges that submit an entry will receive a certificate of recognition from the National Grange.

# PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT SUSTENANCE



## What is PROJECT SUSTENANCE?



Project Sustenance is the National Grange's signature program, designed to align and elevate the community-based work Granges are already doing through three clearly defined pillars:

### FOOD SECURITY

**Food Security** projects focus on improving access to affordable, nutritious food while strengthening local food systems. Granges may consider community gardens, seed libraries, food pantries, meal programs, or partnerships with local farmers, schools, and food banks. These efforts can address hunger, reduce food waste, and promote healthy eating, while reinforcing the vital role agriculture plays in every community. Food Security initiatives help ensure neighbors have reliable access to food today while building stronger, more resilient food networks for the future.

### COMMUNITY & PERSONAL RESILIENCE

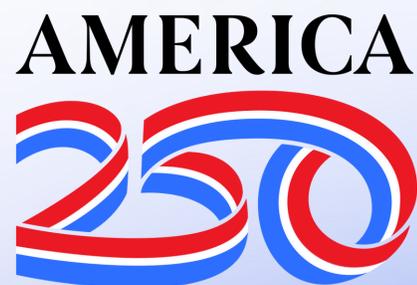
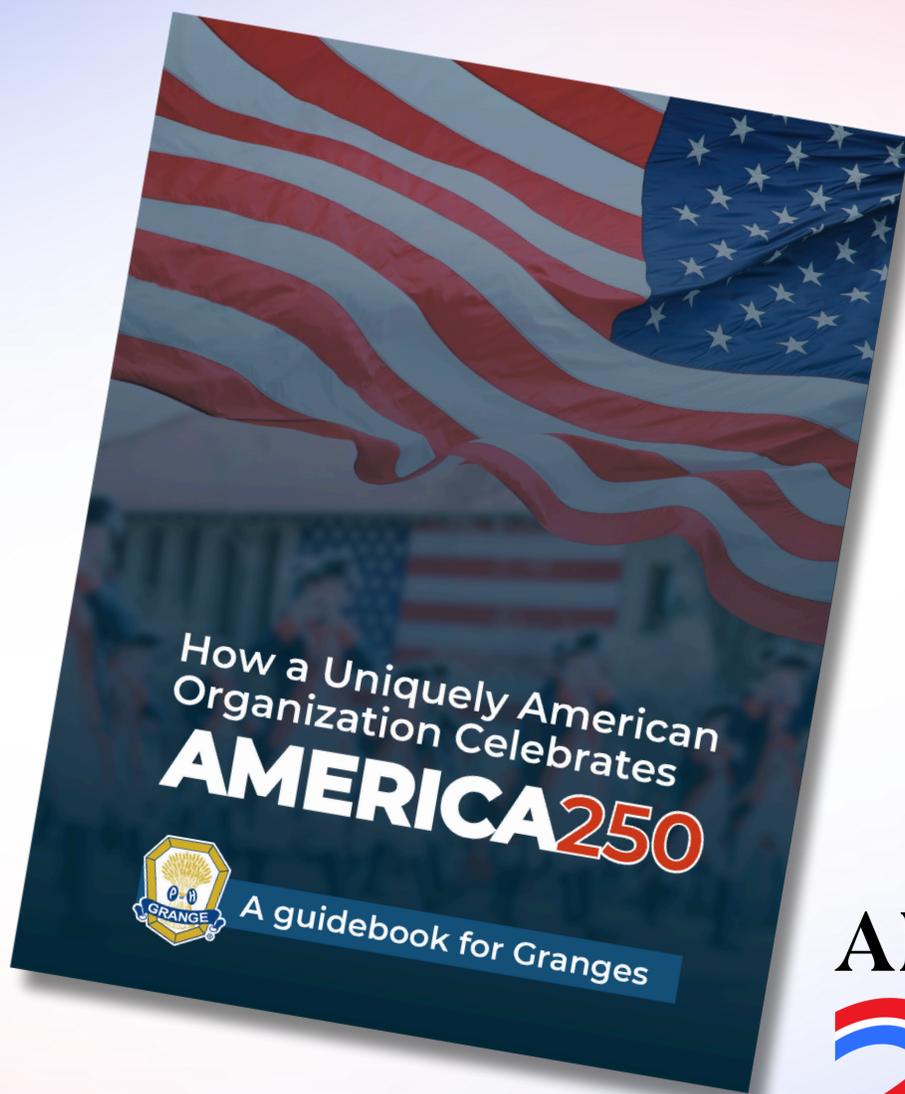
**Community & Personal Resilience** projects help individuals and communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from challenges. This may include disaster preparedness efforts, mental health awareness, wellness programs, emergency supply drives, or activities that strengthen social connections and reduce isolation. These projects emphasize building strong relationships, local leadership, and support networks so communities are better equipped to adapt, respond, and care for one another during times of change or uncertainty.

### SELF-SUSTAINABILITY

**Self-Sustainability** projects build practical skills and long-term independence for individuals and communities. Granges might host workshops on gardening, food preservation, financial literacy, home efficiency, or skill-sharing across generations. Other ideas include tool libraries or repair events. By empowering people with knowledge and hands-on experience, these initiatives promote confidence, adaptability, and a culture of self-reliance that strengthens both individuals and the community as a whole.

**Learn more and access ideas and resources at**  
<https://www.nationalgrange.org/projectsustenance>

# Celebrate America250 with the Grange



Grangers of all ages are encouraged to participate in America's semiquincentennial - 250 years of patriotism, freedom, and shared values.

The *Guidebook for Granges* can be accessed at  
<https://grange.biz/America250>