Farmers Join Forces

How farm organizations shaped daily life and economic reform

SS24.US1.18a "Develop an argument supporting the significance of the National Farmers Alliance, Colored Farmers' National Alliance, and the Grange in shaping the life of farmers and promoting economic reform."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by each organization, circle a problem each action addressed, and number one sentence that shows a limit to the groups' success. Use your marks as evidence for an argument about why the groups mattered.

From Farm Troubles to Public Demands

1 In the 1870s, a farmer could harvest a full wagon of grain yet owe money after selling it. Railroads charged to move crops, while local merchants often set steep prices for supplies bought on credit. The Grange, founded in 1867, offered farm families places to meet, learn, and buy goods together. Its members also pressed state lawmakers to regulate railroad rates and grain storage charges. Such laws faced court challenges and did not end farmers' debts. Still, the Grange showed that shared action could turn a private struggle over prices into a public argument about fair rules.

2 The National Farmers Alliance grew from organizing in Texas in the late 1870s and built a strong base in the South. Its members created cooperatives to buy supplies and market crops, hoping to depend less on merchants who controlled credit. They also supported a plan for federal warehouses where farmers could store crops and borrow money against them at low interest. This would let farmers wait for better prices instead of selling at harvest, when many crops reached the market at once. Congress did not adopt the warehouse plan then, but the Alliance made national credit policy a subject of public debate.

3 Black farmers faced falling crop prices along with racial discrimination that made credit and political influence harder to obtain. The Colored Farmers' National Alliance organized Black farmers separately in a segregated society. Its members promoted cooperative buying and backed the federal warehouse plan, which could help growers avoid selling crops as soon as they were harvested. Organizing also gave Black farmers a way to speak collectively about economic pressures that white-led groups did not always address. Segregation limited cooperation between the alliances. Even so, these groups and the Grange built networks and pushed officials to consider new rules for markets and credit.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was the Grange significant beyond giving farm families a place to meet? Use one action from the passage to support your answer.

2. How did the National Farmers Alliance try to give farmers more control over when and how they sold crops? Support your claim with two details.

3. How did the Colored Farmers' National Alliance respond to a barrier Black farmers faced while also pursuing a reform shared with the National Farmers Alliance?

4. A critic says the farm groups achieved nothing because Congress did not adopt the warehouse plan then. Challenge this claim with evidence about the Grange and at least one alliance.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph arguing which shared strategy, working together or pressing for new laws and policies, best explains why all three groups mattered. Use a distinct action by each group, explain how those actions shaped farmers' lives or economic reform, and acknowledge one limit to their success.

ANSWER KEY

Farmers Join Forces

GRADE 10 · SS24.US1.18a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by each organization, circle a problem each action addressed, and number one sentence that shows a limit to the groups' success. Use your marks as evidence for an argument about why the groups mattered. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was the Grange significant beyond giving farm families a place to meet? Use one action from the passage to support your answer.	**The Grange pressed states to regulate railroad rates and grain storage charges, turning farmers' struggles over costs into a public debate about fair rules.**
2	How did the National Farmers Alliance try to give farmers more control over when and how they sold crops? Support your claim with two details.	**It created cooperatives to market crops and supported federal warehouses with low-interest loans. The warehouse plan would let farmers wait for better prices rather than sell immediately at harvest.**
3	How did the Colored Farmers' National Alliance respond to a barrier Black farmers faced while also pursuing a reform shared with the National Farmers Alliance?	**It organized Black farmers separately in a segregated society, giving them a collective voice. Like the National Farmers Alliance, it backed the federal warehouse plan.**
4	A critic says the farm groups achieved nothing because Congress did not adopt the warehouse plan then. Challenge this claim with evidence about the Grange and at least one alliance.	**The Grange pressed states to regulate railroad and grain storage charges. The National Farmers Alliance made credit policy a subject of public debate, while the Colored Farmers' National Alliance gave Black farmers a collective voice.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Working together best explains why these groups mattered: it gave farmers a way to challenge businesses and officials they could not easily influence alone. The Grange brought families together and pressed states to regulate railroad and grain storage charges. The National Farmers Alliance formed cooperatives and proposed federal warehouses so farmers could wait for better crop prices. The Colored Farmers' National Alliance organized Black farmers despite segregation and promoted cooperative buying. These actions eased some farmers' isolation and brought questions about rates, loans, and crop prices into public debate. Their success had limits because Congress did not adopt the warehouse plan at the time.

Accept either shared strategy if the argument uses a distinct, accurate action by each organization and explains its significance. The stated limit should match the passage, such as segregation or the warehouse plan's failure to pass at the time.