



COMING TOGETHER TO MEET NEEDS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural communities are **changing rapidly**. The number of rural residents, farms, and other businesses is **declining**. Agriculture is becoming more concentrated and industrialized, and many small farms are **struggling** to keep up.

COOPERATIVELY OWNED
BUSINESSES CAN PROVIDE A
WAY TO **SUSTAIN PROFITABLE
SMALLER FARMS** AND
EFFECTIVE RURAL SERVICES.

Cooperatives are owned and operated by their **members** to meet **common needs**, such as:

Running **effective**
cooperatives is **difficult**.



A TEAM OF **RESEARCHERS AND EXTENSION
EDUCATORS** FROM UNIVERSITIES NATIONWIDE
ARE **IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATIVES**.

Collaboration among scientists, cooperatives, and policymakers has led to **impactful** research and wider distribution of findings.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

CALCULATING THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COOPERATIVES

A closer look at the ways cooperatives improve their local and state economies helps ensure future participation in cooperatives and ease relations with the rest of the community. For example, researchers determined how the presence of cooperatives affects milk pricing and competition (**Wisconsin**).

STRUCTURING COOPERATIVES EFFECTIVELY

Research-based strategies are improving the efficiency and profitability of cooperatively owned businesses. For example, researchers:

- Determined the feasibility and optimal structure of cooperatives for machinery, fertilizer warehousing, international food hubs, wineries, forestry, multi-family housing, and water.
- Identified factors that affect the socioeconomic status and growth of farm cooperative members in **South Dakota**.
- Discovered ways that revenue pooling can provide insurance benefits to risk-averse cooperative members (**California**).
- Provided research and tools cooperatives can use to make equity capital decisions that enhance member profits (**Nebraska & Iowa**).
- Figured out ways cooperatives can maximize returns to farmers and maintain the cooperative's financial strength given current tax regulations (**Oklahoma, Nebraska & Iowa**).

INFLUENCING POLICY

Research shared with U.S. Senate and House staff informed public policy decisions concerning cooperatives (**Nebraska**).

PROJECT FUNDING & PARTICIPATION

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EDUCATING COOPERATIVE LEADERS

Education and outreach help both new and existing cooperatives make good decisions.

- Business development support for 100 people led to two new cooperatives (**Michigan**).
- The Director Certification Program trained over 100 cooperative directors and managers (**Iowa & Nebraska**).
- A forum provided professional development and networking opportunities for 150 directors and managers of agriculture and rural electric cooperatives (**New York**).
- Outreach taught Women in Agriculture leaders how they can engage in cooperatives (**Iowa**).
- Presentations on cooperative finance reached over 350 directors and managers (**Kansas**).

HELPING SCIENTISTS HELP COOPERATIVES

Training and educational materials for students, researchers, and educators are enhancing their ability to study and advise cooperatives.

- The Center for Cooperatives creates educational modules about cooperative finance (**Ohio**).
- Internships provide opportunities for students seeking employment in the cooperative industry (**Oklahoma, Texas & Iowa**).
- The group reviewed a cooperatives textbook by **Minnesota** researchers. With e-book and audiobook versions available, the textbook is now a standard resource for students and cooperative directors.
- After learning about machinery cooperatives for harvesting crops, milling grain, and boarding horses, 25 Extension educators are better prepared to help farmers use shared ownership of machinery as a way to save money (**New York**).