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Lessons in Failure: The Rice Growers Association Cooperative

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Summary

This empirical study investigates a large California cooperative's closure and identifies lessons learned that might be useful to other cooperatives. It was found that the cooperative's directors failed to effectively supervise management. In turn, management fell short of expectations to fully evaluate complex business decisions.

Introduction

Recently several large California cooperatives including Tri-Valley Growers (TVG) and the Rice Grower's Association (RGA) have closed, while others are experiencing financial difficulties. These developments suggest that California cooperatives may be finding it increasingly difficult to compete in today's agribusiness climate. Given the size and national importance of California's agriculture industry, a decline in the role of the state's cooperatives may be indicative of a larger, countrywide trend.

A survey of former affiliates of RGA has been conducted. The results of this survey and interviews with former members and management form the basis of this paper. RGA closed in August 2000 after nearly 80 years of operation (Wilson). The cooperative's dramatic swing in fortunes, from a dominant cooperative that handled upwards of 70% of the total California rice crop in the early 1980s, to one that handled approximately 5% at the time of its closure in 2000, makes this a particularly interesting research subject.

The goals of this research are to determine the origins of RGA's problems and identify lessons learned that might be useful to other cooperatives. We aim to determine what affiliates of the failed cooperative perceive to be causing California cooperatives difficulty and, more specifically, what led to the RGA's closure. Survey findings have been consistent with patterns observed in other studies of struggling or failed cooperatives (Bhuyan et al., Sexton and Iskow).

We find that RGA's board of directors failed to actively exercise their duty to supervise the management. In turn, the management fell short of expectations to fully evaluate complex business

decisions and was remiss in planning for future contingencies. The report begins with an overview of the analytical framework used in the survey and proceeds with a detailed analysis of survey results. The results section includes discussion of respondent characteristics, attitudes and perceptions, and relative strengths and weaknesses of RGA. In the final section conclusions are presented and recommendations are made.

Analytical Framework

Data for this study was collected primarily through a confidential mail survey. The survey instrument was designed to capture attitudes and perceptions of former management and members of RGA with regard to the state and future of California agricultural cooperatives, and the factors leading to the closure of RGA. Information on the personal background of participants was also collected and included such statistics as age, income, education, and employment status. Individuals who were involved in rice cultivation at the time of the survey were also asked to describe the characteristics of their farming operations and family farming and cooperative history. *Survey Sample*

As the title suggests, the survey was targeted at the former management, membership, and employees of RGA. Membership lists were solicited from the former management, however due to legal considerations; complete membership lists were not available for the last 10 years of RGA's operations. In order to obtain a complete sample of former RGA affiliates, a systematic random sample of rice growers from the 8 main rice growing regions of Central California were sent surveys. Former members of RGA that could be identified were excluded from the random sample. *Sample Size*

A systematic random survey sample was employed to identify possible mail survey targets in addition to a non-random sample of former RGA affiliates. Lists of Central Valley rice producers were obtained from the USDA, CA and sorting by entity size and other characteristics was used to

provide the best coverage of the survey throughout the state. Table 1 below shows the breakdown of sample size, including known RGA affiliates, by county.

Table 1: Sample Size by County					
County	Sample	Percent of Sample			
Glenn	64	15.5			
Placer	12	2.9			
Yuba	104	25.2			
San Joaquin	24	5.8			
Stanislaus	24	5.8			
Yolo	47	11.4			
Sutter	66	16.0			
Colusa	71	17.2			
Total	412	100			

Data Collection

Data collection included an initial and follow up mailing of surveys. A follow up mailing was sent to those individuals who did not respond to the first mailing. To maintain confidentiality, individuals were assigned an identification number. The total number of usable responses was 412 representing a response rate of 24 %. The majority of responses, 74%, came from the four largest rice producing counties: Yuba, Glenn, Sutter, and Colusa. The balance of response came from the smaller rice counties of Yolo, Placer, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus.

Interviews with Former RGA Managers, and Board of Director Members

In order to gain a better understanding of the structure and history of RGA and the rice industry as a whole, interviews with former managers and members were conducted. The interview process began in August 2001 with a meeting of former managers and continued until May 2003. During that period of time nearly 30 former RGA affiliates were interviewed, in many cases multiple interviews were conducted.

Results and Discussion

The sample population was spread over a relatively large area of the Central Valley of California. Results show that the vast majority of respondents were between the ages of 55-70. Nearly all

(82%) of those surveyed worked full time and earned most of their income (82%) directly from agricultural activities. Approximately 26% of respondents had a total income in the range of \$50,001-\$100,000. Notably, the second largest income bracket of the sample reported total income of over \$500,001. Total income was not adjusted for subsidy and program benefits.

The average level of education is relatively high compared to other cooperative membership surveys such as Bhuyan et al. Fully one-half of survey respondents were college graduates and nearly a quarter had high school diplomas. Almost all survey respondents (96%) indicated that there was a family history of farming and 82% had family histories of involvement in cooperatives. Given the family ties to farming, it is not surprising to find that 40% of farmer/respondents had between 21-30 years of farming experience.

It is surprising, however to find that despite family histories of cooperative involvement, only 25% of those surveyed were currently members of an agricultural cooperative. In addition, very few of the respondents indicated that they had ever held a position of leadership at RGA. The majority of involvement occurred as a board of directors member (7%), while the least common leadership position was as an advisory council member (4%). This finding is, however, in line with a priori expectations given that members who held board positions generally remained on the board for several terms, thus there were fewer opportunities for other members to engage in a board leadership role. Low board turnover also reveals that cooperative governance and oversight duties at RGA tended to be held in the hands of a small group of individuals.

Cooperative Attitudes and Issues

The former affiliates of RGA were asked to describe their experiences with cooperatives and RGA and also their outlook for the future of agricultural cooperatives. Answers to these questions are summarized in Table 3 located in Appendix I. Notably, fully one-half of former affiliates said they have had extremely disappointing experiences with cooperatives. Somewhat fewer (33%) had

extremely disappointing experiences with RGA. Although a percentage of affiliates had positive experiences with cooperatives and RGA, the majority of experiences tended to be negative.

Despite generally negative experiences with cooperatives, the vast majority (72%) of affiliates expressed agreement or strong agreement that agricultural cooperatives are a necessary part of the agricultural sector. Even more (77%) believed that agricultural cooperatives have a future in California. In spite of a positive outlook on the future of cooperatives, a large majority of affiliates (70%) felt that cooperative businesses were not managed as well as other types of agribusiness. In addition, a slight majority (54%) felt that cooperatives were generally less successful than other forms of business and only 41% felt that cooperative were equally successful. *Relative Strengths and Weaknesses of RGA*

Several questions were designed to try and identify what affiliates of a failed cooperative perceived to contribute to the closure of RGA. Affiliates were asked to describe both their reasons for joining the cooperative and the relative strengths of RGA. In Tables 4, 5, and 6 in Appendix I, the collected responses are summarized.

Former affiliates were asked to identify their main reasons for joining RGA and rank them as being very important to very unimportant. From Table 4, five reasons stand out as being the most important to cooperative members. In order of importance these reasons are: increase agricultural income, benefits from price pooling, reduced marketing risk, appealing differentiated products strategy, and increased voice in agricultural issues. Few respondents cited prestige or investment opportunities as reasons for joining RGA.

Table 5 summarizes perceptions of what factors contributed to the failure of RGA.

Interestingly, several of the main reasons cited for joining RGA are directly related to what affiliates perceived to be the causes of RGA's failure. This indicates a fundamental gap between what members expected through cooperative membership and what was borne out in reality. For instance, some growers responded that RGA had an appealing differentiated product strategy, yet

affiliates cited poor decision making by management, including the decision to pursue a differentiated products strategy, as a chief contributor to RGA's failure.

Former affiliates identified the high cost of maintaining both the cooperative's assets and contract with the California Rice Transport (CRT) shipping vessel, as important factors in RGA's failure. Expenses from maintaining numerous assets and the problematic CRT no doubt diminished the higher-than-industry average returns that initially attracted members to RGA. Consequently, members may have left RGA after realizing higher profits could be earned by marketing through competitors.

Lack of attention by the board of directors was reported as another important contributor to RGA's decline. In interviews, this survey finding was supported by former managers who frequently stated that the board of directors was passive and ill equipped to scrutinize the business decisions it was charged with overseeing. The survey results also indicate that affiliates perceived the board to be lacking adequate cooperative governance and control abilities.

Numerous factors can be identified as having contributed to RGA's decline. However, it is also the case that many positives aided in the cooperative's survival through years of financial struggle (Table 6). Former affiliates identified relative strengths from a series of possibilities.

Many of the respondents (>90%) agreed that RGA's brand name, the volume of rice handled, and RGA's access to markets were all important relative strengths.

In contrast, the majority of members did not identify the skill of RGA's management team nor their attention to member needs to be a relative strength. Few of the responding affiliates participated in leadership positions at RGA, thus the perception that member needs were not met does not appear to have inspired increased grower involvement in the cooperative. This survey finding gives some support to the hypothesis that both membership and the board suffered from the "free-rider" notion that they did not have to contribute much effort to running RGA in order to benefit from the cooperative's strengths. Many members may have believed that others were

paying attention to the administrative details of running RGA and thus there was no need to exert much time and energy in oversight.

Conclusions

RGA's closure was neither the product of one individual's actions nor the result a single event's influence. Rather was the confluence of many incidents and shortcomings that contributed to the development of an organizational environment that was not sustainable in the long run.

In particular, the survey finds that former affiliates felt RGA's board of directors lacked the cooperative governance skills necessary to effectively direct and control management. This failure represents a possible violation of the "duty of care" which implies that directors serve with due diligence (Baarda) and ensure their own competency to evaluate and pass judgment on the business decisions and actions of management. Through neglect, RGA's directors may have further expanded the gap between member expectations and reality created by an inattentive management.

Furthermore, the survey findings indicate that RGA's management was perceived to be deficient in the skills necessary to guide the cooperative through tough times that included periods of low world rice prices (Decker, Evans), industry scandals, and high costs of maintaining the coop's assets and shipping vessel contract. These effects no doubt diminished the higher-than-industry-average returns that initially attracted members to RGA. Consequently, members may have left RGA after realizing higher profits could be earned by marketing through competitors.

Awareness of the cooperative's struggles and limitations does not appear to have inspired members to become active directors. At a 2001 meeting for former RGA managers, many agreed that members viewed the cooperative as the sole buyer of their rice instead of as an organization that they owned and had responsibilities to. This suggests that free-rider problems were pervasive at the cooperative. Further support for this notion was expressed in interviews with management who revealed frustration in trying to solicit feedback and active participation from members.

Ultimately, the survey findings imply that RGA's closure was the result of a lack of board member education and oversight coupled with an inattentive management and passive membership. Many challenged organizations may identify with the Rice Growers Association experience. However, if these organizations are able to identify and address the above problems and issues in their own cooperatives, they may avoid the same fate as RGA.

Appendix 1

	Number of Valid						
	Attributes	Responses	Al	I Counties			
		•	Number	Percentage			
Age		412					
_	Less than 25		15	3.6			
	25-34		0	0.0			
	35-44		104	25.1			
	45-55		104	25.1			
	55-70		166	40.2			
	70+		35	8.6			
Employment							
Status		390					
	Full Time		320	82.1			
	Part Time		28	7.1			
	Retired		42	10.7			
Total Income		401					
	Less than						
	\$50,000		57	14.3			
	\$50,001- \$100,000		115	28.6			
	\$100,001-		110	20.0			
	\$200,000		29	7.1			
	\$200,001-		40	40.7			
	\$300,000 \$300,001-		43	10.7			
	\$400,000		43	10.7			
	\$400,001-						
	\$500,000		29	7.1			
	\$500,001 or		86	21.4			
% Income	more			21.7			
from Ag		401		81.8			
Education		392					
	Grade						
	School, Less		42	10.7			
	Some High		•				
	School		0	0.0			
	High School graduate		84	21.4			
	Some		04	21.4			
	College		70	17.9			
	College						
	Graduate		196	50.0			
	Advanced						
	Degree		0	0.0			
Lease/Own		405					
Farmland		400	000	00.4			
	Yes		329	82.1			
	No		71	17.9			
				cont'd			

Table 2: Respondent Characteristics, Continued

		Number of Valid		
	Attributes	Responses	All (Counties
	=	•	Number	Percent
Family		_		
History of				
Farming		380	200	
	Yes		366	96.3
	No		14	3.7
History of				
Cooperative				
Involvement		380		
	Yes		312	82.1
	No		68	17.9
Years		005		
Farming	Larabara	380		
	Less than 5 yrs		15	4.0
	5-10 yrs		30	8.0
	11-20 yrs		91	24.0
	21-30 yrs		152	40.0
	31-40 yrs		15	4.0
	41+ yrs		76	20.0
Current				
Cooperative				
Membership	1	385		
	Yes		96	25
	No		289	75
Position of				
Leadership		385		
·	No Position		326	85
	Advisory Council		15	4
	Board of			
	Directors		29	7
	Management Committee		15	4
	Member		0	0
	Fieldsman		0	0

Table 3: Coop	perative Attitudes and Iss	sues
	Number of Valid	
Responses	Responses	All Counties

			Number	Percentage
Overall Satisfaction				
with Cooperatives		412		
	Extremely Disappointed		206	50.0
	Somewhat Disappointed		32	7.7
	Neutral		95	23.1
	Somewhat Positive		63	15.4
	Extremely Positive		16	3.9
Overall RGA				
Experience		412		
	Extremely Disappointed		137	33.3
	Somewhat Disappointed		103	25.0
	Neutral		103	25.0
	Somewhat Positive		52	12.5
	Extremely Positive		17	4.2
Are cooperatives a necessary part of				
the agricultural				
sector?		412		
	Strongly Disagree		16	4.0
	Disagree		66	16.0
	Neutral		33	8.0
	Agree		231	56.0
	Strongly Agree		66	16.0
Is there a future for				
agricultural				
cooperatives in CA?		412		
	Strongly Disagree		32	7.7
	Disagree		0	0.0
	Neutral		63	15.4
	Agree		254	61.5
	Strongly Agree		63	15.4
What is happening to the volume of				
commodities				
handled by CA cooperatives?		412		
cooperatives:	Increasing	414	33	8.0
	_		33 82	20.0
	No Change Decreasing		62 297	72.0
	Decreasing		291	
				cont'd

	Number of Valid					
	Responses	Responses	All Co	unties		
			Number	Percentage		
Are agricultural cooperatives managed as well as other						
agribusinesses?		408				
	Yes		119	29.2		
	No		289	70.8		
Are cooperatives successful than other business						
types?		400				
	More		17	4.8		
	Equally		167	41.7		
	Less		217	54.2		

Table 4: Main Reasons for Joining RGA							
responses listed	as percentage of	f valid respons	ses				
Very	-			Very			
Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Important			
0.0	0.0	25.0	25.0	50.0			
15.8	0.0	21.1	42.1	21.1			
15.8	21.1	42.1	15.8	5.3			
0.0	0.0	5.3	57.9	36.8			
0.0	0.0	21.1	36.8	42.1			
0.0	0.0	10.5	57.9	31.6			
0.0	0.0	27.8	50.0	22.2			
0.0	15.8	26.3	26.3	31.6			
0.0	31.6	47.4	15.8	5.3			
15.8	21.1	31.6	15.8	15.8			
	5.3	21.1	52.6	21.1			
0.0	0.0		02.0				
5.3	5.3	57 9	21 1	10.5			
	0.0 15.8 15.8 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0	Very Unimportant Unimportant 0.0 0.0 15.8 0.0 15.8 21.1 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 15.8 0.0 31.6 15.8 21.1 0.0 5.3	Very Unimportant Unimportant Neutral 0.0 0.0 25.0 15.8 0.0 21.1 15.8 21.1 42.1 0.0 0.0 5.3 0.0 0.0 21.1 0.0 0.0 10.5 0.0 0.0 27.8 0.0 15.8 26.3 0.0 31.6 47.4 15.8 21.1 31.6 0.0 5.3 21.1	Unimportant Unimportant Neutral Important 0.0 0.0 25.0 25.0 15.8 0.0 21.1 42.1 15.8 21.1 42.1 15.8 0.0 0.0 5.3 57.9 0.0 0.0 21.1 36.8 0.0 0.0 10.5 57.9 0.0 0.0 27.8 50.0 0.0 15.8 26.3 26.3 0.0 31.6 47.4 15.8 15.8 21.1 31.6 15.8 0.0 5.3 21.1 52.6			

Table 5: Perceived Factors Contributing to the Failure of RGA

All responses listed as percentage of valid responses

Reason	Strongly				Strongly
	Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree
Changing competitive					
environment	4.6	4.6	9.1	59.1	22.7
Increased cost of rice					
production	13.6	40.9	13.6	31.8	0.0
Increased environmental					
constraints	8.7	26.1	34.8	17.4	13.0
High cost of maintaining assets, i.e. warehouse,					
mills	0.0	13.0	4.4	39.1	43.5
Poor decision making by					
management	4.4	0.0	0.0	17.4	78.3
Negative influence of					
competitors.	8.7	13.0	30.4	26.1	21.7
High cost of contract with California Rice					
Transport	4.4	0.0	8.7	17.4	69.6
Lawsuits and legal					
action	0.0	0.0	17.4	17.4	65.2
Change in level of government					
support of rice growers	8.7	8.7	43.5	21.7	17.4
Lack of grower	0.7	0.7	43.3	21.7	17.4
involvement	4.4	4.4	43.5	13.0	34.8
Lack of attention to cooperative					J
issues by the Board of					
Directors	4.4	4.4	13.0	4.4	73.9

Table 6: Perceived Relative Strengths of RGA					
All responses listed as	percentage of valid resp	onses			
Relative Strength of RGA	YES	NO			
Brand					
name	90.9	9.1			
Volume of rice					
handled	95.5	4.6			
Service to					
customers	71.4	28.6			
Quality of products					
produced	86.4	13.6			
Variety of product					
line	77.3	22.7			
Political Ties	54.0	45.5			
	54.6	45.5			
Skill of management team	20.4	CO C			
Ability to develop	36.4	63.6			
markets	63.6	36.4			
Technological advantages	03.0	30.4			
	52.4	47.6			
Grower	02.1	17.0			
returns	76.2	23.8			
Access to					
markets	90.5	9.5			
Transportation					
network	50.0	50.0			
Size and location of					
facilities	77.3	22.7			
Attention to member					
needs	40.0	60.0			

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Appendix II

Confidential Survey of Rice Growers Association Affiliates

SURVEY NUMBER: _____

If you have not formerly been affiliated with the Rice Growers Association as a grower or employee please discard this survey.

Extremely	Somewhat	Neutral	Somewhat	Extremely Positive
Disappointed 1	Disappointed 2	3	Positive 4	Positive
. Please rate you	overall experien	ce with the Rice G	rowers Associatio	n.
Extremely Negative	Somewhat Negative	Neutral	Somewhat Positive	Extremely Positive
1	2	3	4	5
Strongly		for agricultural coo		ornia? Strongly Agree
Diagonas	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	_
Disagree 1	2	3	4	5

A/. In your opinion, are agricultural cooperatives managed as well as other agricultural businesses?
YES NO
A8. In your experience, have you generally found cooperatives to be than other business types? Please check only one.
More Successful Equally Successful Less Successful
Section B: Cooperative Involvement. This set of questions pertains to your past and present involvement in agricultural cooperatives.
B1. Are you presently a member or employee of an agricultural cooperative?
Yes No
B2. When did your affiliation with the Rice Growers Association begin and end? Please list the <i>Month</i> and <i>Year</i> if possible.
Begin: End: MM/YYYY
MM/YYYY MM/YYYY

B3. If you are a past member of the Rice Growers Association Cooperative please list your main reasons for joining. Please rank your reasons from very unimportant to very important.

Reason	Very	Unimportant	Noutral	Important	Very
	Unimportant	Unimportant	_	Important	Important
Reduce marketing	1	2	3	4	5
risk					
Family	1	2	3	4	5
Ties					
Prestige	1	2	3	4	5
Increase agricultural income	1	2	3	4	5
Access to a greater number of	1	2	3	4	5
markets					
Benefits from price pooling	1	2	3	4	5
Increase voice in agricultural	1	2	3	4	5
policies					
Eliminate the middleman	1	2	3	4	5
Improve community ties/Social	1	2	3	4	5
reasons					
Investment opportunity	1	2	3	4	5
Appealing marketing strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please	1	2	3	4	5
specify)					

B5. Did you	have a position of leadership at RGA? Please	check all pos	sitions that a	pply.
I was no	t in a leadership position at RGA			
	Council			
	Directors Member			
Manage				
	tee Member			
Fieldma	1			
Other	(Dlassa avrilaira)			
	(Please explain)			
	ce Growers Association Issues: This	section pe	rtains to is	sues relevar
sure of RGA	A .			
	Relative Strength of RGA	YES	NO	7
	Reduite Strength of Roll	125	110	
	Brand name			-
	214114 1141110			
				+
	Volume of rice handled			_
	Volume of rice handled			_
	Volume of rice handled Service to customers			_ _ _
	Volume of rice handled			_
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			-
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
	Volume of rice handled			
C2. Histor	Volume of rice handled	competitor?	Please check	c one.
	Volume of rice handled	competitor?	Please check	c one.
	Volume of rice handled	competitor?	Please check	s one.

C3. Do you believe that the manager financial state of the cooperative		kept the mem	ıbership wel	l informed a	bout the
YES	NO		NO OPIN	ION	
C4. In 1987, under the management of Mike Cook, RGA began a strategy of differentiation of their rice products. This strategy included packaging smaller amounts of rice and creating flavored rice packages sometimes using long grain rice. Did you agree with management's decision to pursue a strategy of differentiation in 1987?				ig flavored	
YES	NO		NO OPIN	ION	
C5. What factors contributed to the decline and eventual failure of RGA? Please rank your responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree.					
Reason	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Changing competitive	1	2	3	4	5
environment					
Increased cost of rice	1	2	3	4	5
production					
Increased environmental	1	2	3	4	5
constraints					
High cost of maintaining assets,	1	2	3	4	5
i.e. warehouses, mills					_
Poor decision making by	1	2	3	4	5
management	1	2	2	4	-
Negative influence of competitors.	1	2 2	3	4	5
High cost of contract with	1	2	3	4	5
California Rice Transport	1	2	3	4	5
Lawsuits and legal actions Change in level of government	1	2	3	4	5
support of rice growers	1	2	3	4	3
Lack of grower involvement	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of attention to cooperative	1	2	3	4	5
issues by the Board of Directors		_		·	
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5

Prior to 1992, when CoBank attempted to force the liquidation of RGA, did you notice signs that RGA was having financial difficulties or that the cooperative may be heading for trouble?

C7. Who is responsible for the decline and failure of the former Rice Growers Association? Pleacheck all that apply.	ase
No One	
Growers	
Board of Directors	
Management	
State Government	
National Government	
International Competitors	
Domestic Competitors	
Banks and Financial Institutions	
Lawyers	
Other	
(Please describe)	
C8. Using the experience gained as an affiliate of RGA, what advice would you give to a MEMF of a struggling cooperative? What advice would you give to a MANAGER of a struggling cooperative? Mamber:	
Member:	
Manager:	
·	
ection D: Personal Background Information. This set of questions is about your	
ersonal characteristics and will be used for statistical purposes only.	
ersonal characteristics and will be used for statistical purposes only.	
ersonal characteristics and will be used for statistical purposes only. D1. What is your age?	
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54	
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70	
D1. What is your age? Less than 25	
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D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time	
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time Part Time	
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time	
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time Part Time Retired/ Not Currently Employed	:¢
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time Part Time Retired/ Not Currently Employed D3. What was your total annual income for 2001? Please include subsidies and program payments	if
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44	if
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time Part Time Retired/ Not Currently Employed D3. What was your total annual income for 2001? Please include subsidies and program payments they applied. Less than \$50,000	if
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time Part Time Retired/ Not Currently Employed D3. What was your total annual income for 2001? Please include subsidies and program payments they applied. Less than \$50,000 \$50,001-\$100,000	if
D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time Part Time Retired/ Not Currently Employed D3. What was your total annual income for 2001? Please include subsidies and program payments they applied. Less than \$50,000 \$50,001-\$100,000 \$100,001-\$200,000	if
D1. What is your age? Less than 25	if
D1. What is your age? Less than 25	if
D1. What is your age? Less than 25	if
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D1. What is your age? Less than 25 45-54 25-34 55-70 35-44 70 + D2. What is your employment status? Full Time Part Time Retired/ Not Currently Employed D3. What was your total annual income for 2001? Please include subsidies and program payments they applied. Less than \$50,000 \$50,001-\$100,000 \$100,001-\$200,000 \$100,001-\$200,000 \$300,001-\$400,000 \$400,001-\$500,000 \$500,001 or more D4. What percentage of your total annual income for 2001 was attributable to direct involvement in	

D5. What describes you	rr highest education level?
Grade School Some High Sc High School C Some College College Gradu Advanced or F	hool Graduate
D6. Do you lease or ow	on farmland? If YES, please proceed to Section E on the next page.
YES	NO
Section E: Farm Char and experience.	racteristics. This set of questions relates to your farm operation
Family History	
E1. Does your family h	ave a history (at least five years) of farming in the Central Valley Region?
YES	NO
	nave a history (at least 5 years) of involvement with agricultural cooperatives?
	NO
Personal History	
	, personally, been farming?
Less than 5 years _ 5 - 10 years _ 11 - 20 years	
E4. What is the approxi	mate number of acres you currently farm?
	Acres
E5. If you grew rice las	t year, how many hundredweight (cwt) of rice did you market?
	CWT
E5. Have you ever perform Please check all that	formed the following rice production and processing tasks in return for money? at apply.
Trucking Milling Warehousing Drying Leveling Other	

End of Questionnaire

Thank you for your participation!