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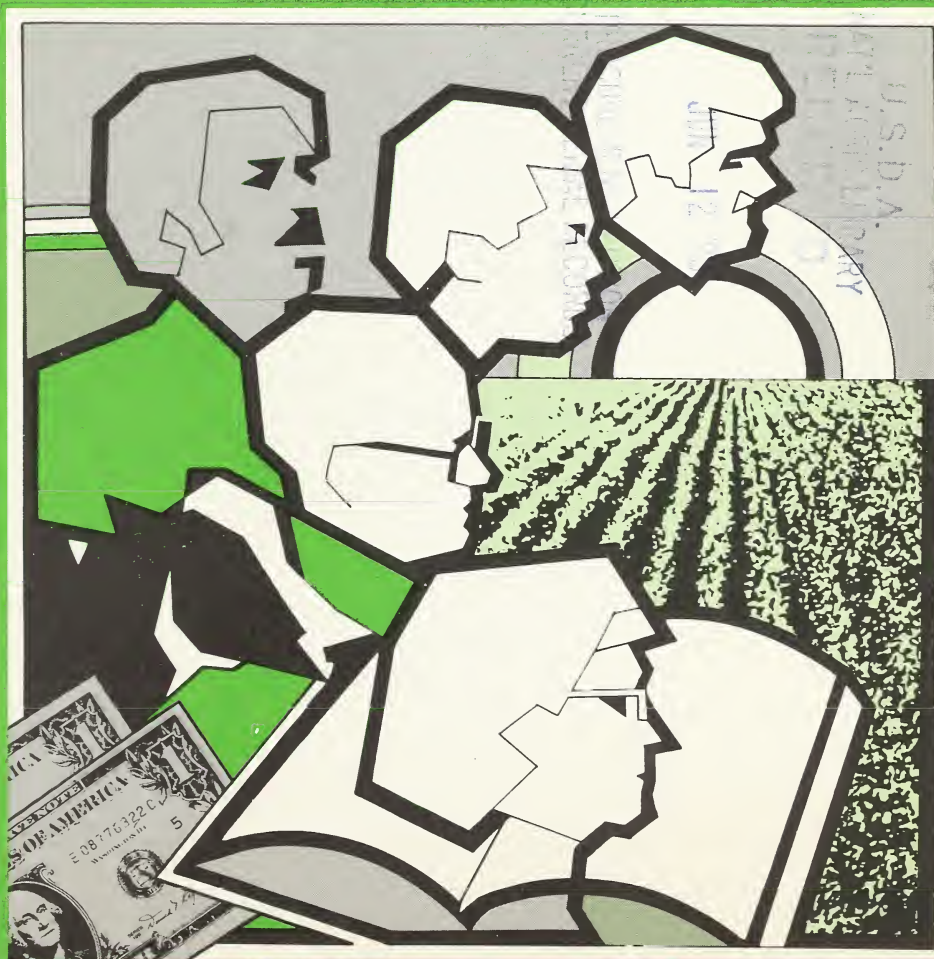
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# Cooperative Education and Training



FARMER COOPERATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES  
COOPERATIVE INFORMATION REPORT 1  
SECTION 10

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE SERVICE





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# Cooperative Education and Training



Cooperatives are organizations whose members are both owners and users. These organizations are experiencing an accelerating rate of growth and acceptance in the American private competitive enterprise system. Consequently, members have a growing responsibility as owners to understand the control, financing, and operation of a successful cooperative. Developing such an understanding requires continual education and training in several areas and from various sources.

Nonmembers, young farm couples, and rural youth need information about cooperative principles and practices, if they are to become members and loyal patrons. Educational institutions, Government agencies, and the public must understand the basics of cooperatives, if they are to support them as a way of improving the welfare of members and local communities.

Business education is also needed, primarily in marketing, supply, and related services cooperatives that are business enterprises, governed by boards of directors and operated by managers and other employees. These people need business training plus education on cooperative organization and commodities handled or services provided.

Cooperative leaders view cooperative education and training from many different backgrounds and approaches. Their perceptions and objectives vary from one geographic area to another. They use various terms to express similar viewpoints or to describe the legal types of business firms: individual ownership, partnership, and corporate—with the latter consisting of two kinds—the investor-owned corporation and the member-user-owned cooperative. Knowing what cooperative education and training programs are most effective then becomes difficult to determine because program techniques are not universally accepted. Some efforts may work in a given situation and not work elsewhere.



## **A Continual Process**

Nothing is static about cooperative education or training. Just as cooperative membership continually changes, education and training of directors, managers, and employees is a continual process. Not only do changes occur in boards and personnel, but cooperatives grow, diversify, and become increasingly complex. They are faced with many new external problems arising from inflation, energy shortages, electronic technology, health and safety standards, Governmental regulations, changes in land ownership, and others.

Cooperatives are a major segment serving agriculture. They face increasing and continuing challenges to provide more basic education and training on the cooperative form of business. These challenges stem from several primary factors: changing membership as young farmers join; rapid growth, including acquisition and merger, requiring management, employee, and member adjustment to a more complex business operation; variations in organizational structure—from the local centralized organization to multicooperative national or international federations; continued criticism from groups challenging public policies on cooperatives; and environmental regulations and sociological and economic changes.

Cooperative education and training need to be broad based and, although approached in diverse ways, are necessary to develop and maintain informed and committed participants in cooperative business.

## **Cooperative Lead Role**

Public schools, trade associations, and Government are trying to improve public understanding of cooperatives, but cooperatives themselves must make the principal effort. Their management team—directors, executive staff, and key employees—must see the need and either budget funds or contract for educational materials and programs.

Educational and training programs, key elements of total member relations activities, are successful only when membership is motivated and personnel improve performance. Success depends on the ability of cooperative educators and trainers to keep members, directors, and employees aware of the business and political importance of the agricultural segment of our economy and cooperatives' role in it.

Cooperatives package and label educational and training programs in a variety of ways. Techniques may include in-house training, on-location seminars, correspondence, audiovisual packages, financial support, contract training, internships, scholarships, pleasure outings combined with

programs, committee work, or tours. Subject matter most often covers cooperative principles, legal foundations and history, organization, management, and business operations including finance and taxation.

A recent survey produced a loud and strong message that "basic" educational and training programs and activities are exceedingly important. Listed most frequently among basics were: director workshops or cooperative leaders' conferences, programs or seminars for young farm couples, and youth activities.

## **Small Cooperatives**

Managers in small cooperatives carry major responsibility for education and training. Beyond issuing an annual report, the manager may write a monthly newsletter, hold employee meetings, and personally contact members. As the cooperative grows, specialized programs may be needed to keep members and employees informed.

Local level education and training focuses heavily on communicating the knowledge, skills, and qualifications of the manager and employees through daily contacts. As cooperative operation requires increased people contact, the need grows to educate employees on the distinctiveness of the structure and operation of the cooperative.

Many local cooperatives develop their own programs. For example, Farmer Union Oil Company of Opheim, Mont., takes its education program to members one on one, face to face. The manager and directors see members on their home turf at least once a year and explain present programs and future goals. A good educational program evolves from member ideas and feedback. The process of involving members builds understanding of their role in the cooperative.

Local level educational activities are often complemented with coordinated and regionally planned efforts, when the cooperative is part of one or more regional cooperative organizations.

Local cooperatives also rely on State and national councils or trade associations and State extension specialists for educational material counseling, guidance, and assistance in conducting programs. Materials include newspapers and magazines, specific publications, and films and slide sets.

## **Large Cooperatives**

Regional and national cooperatives have well-rounded comprehensive programs. These organizations, especially farm supply and grain regionals, leave member contact largely to their member local associa-

tions. But these larger associations make many efforts to eliminate the seemingly wide chasm that exists between them and individual farmer-members of local associations. Programs and activities encompass information, member and public relations, public affairs, personnel training and development, and public image and institutional promotion. These larger cooperatives communicate directly through a monthly or biweekly publication to their farmer members or the farmer-owners of member cooperatives. They use the mass media to reach the general public.

Education and training is finely targeted in larger cooperatives—employees, supervisory personnel, executives, members, and directors. Subject matter is based on cooperative principles and practices, adapted to individual cooperatives, and complemented by instruction on good business management. Employees, directors, delegates, local committees and district meetings are used to inform members.

Southern States Cooperative, Richmond, Va., for example, holds a series of director community conferences. The objective is to meet in a community with relatively small groups to enable management to better understand farmers' needs and problems and identify areas where members could be better served. Another objective is to give farmers the opportunity to meet management on a personal basis so they can better evaluate management style and guide future direction. Some 137 topics were discussed in 63 conferences in 1 year. Follow-up educational programs are conducted in areas of most concern.

Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative, Southampton, Pa., provides similar member participation opportunity. Its directors conduct quarterly district meetings for members without paid management or employees. This stimulates directors to learn about cooperative business, tell about its operation and get feedback from members. In such an environment members are more honest in discussing their needs, knowing the director is a fellow member-producer.

Many cooperatives encourage their member leadership to speak and participate in meetings—civic, church, industry, agricultural—throughout the cooperative's territory to broaden understanding of cooperatives. The practice also develops and improves cooperative leadership.

Dairymen, Inc., Louisville, Ky., is an example of a multidairy cooperative organization reaching members at local installations. Employees conduct barn meetings with a few member-producers in a local community and provide opportunity for one-to-one discussion of organization and producer concerns. These barn meetings help coordinate educational and training programs and build organization unity with members.

Farmland Industries, Kansas City, Mo., makes extensive efforts in its people-oriented educational programs to involve men and women in the local cooperative affairs. Its management is dedicated to helping farmers and ranchers become better members and patrons through understanding cooperative characteristics and operations. Long known for its educational center and leadership development programs, Farmland has many programs emphasizing member contact and member relations activities. Its family camp program slogan echoes: "The family that plays together stays together."

Farm Credit Banks provide educational materials and training aids, and conduct workshops for cooperatives and local Production Credit and Federal Land Bank Associations. The detail and quality, for example, of the Columbia Farm Credit Banks annual meeting material kit could be the reason PCAs and FLBAs in the district have led the Nation in attendance for several years.

Omaha Bank for Cooperatives, through its Resource Development Center, has designed management skills programs to deal with uncertain economic conditions and narrow margins. The Bank conducts training throughout the district to place it within easy reach of cooperatives.

The New Orleans, Columbia, Baltimore, and Springfield Farm Credit Districts have organized informal multistate research and education committees involving State cooperative councils, land-grant universities, Farm Credit Banks, and other cooperative personnel. These committees sponsor publications, institutes, and workshops, and help coordinate cooperative educational programs for local cooperatives throughout their districts. The Spokane Farm Credit District has a similar multistate organization with the four State council executives and a bank representative as incorporators.

These multistate committees and State cooperative councils realize that many specific needs may exist in cooperatives they serve. Many committees and councils are surveying their cooperatives to determine these needs and develop programs to sharpen skills.

Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Epes, Ala., provides technical services and a variety of support programs to agricultural, consumer, handicraft, and credit union cooperatives organized by low-resource people in the rural South.

Programs for special audiences of regional cooperatives pertaining to young farmers, rural youth, and women and special training programs for directors and employees are discussed in a later section.



## **State Assistance**

Cooperative educational, training, and workshop activities at the State level are intricately interwoven, making it difficult to distinguish between sponsors, coordinators, and helpers. Programs and activities involve land-grant universities and their extension services, State cooperative trade associations, State departments of agriculture, farm organizations, and others.

## **University and College Responsibilities**

Historically, land-grant universities' educational and research programs have contributed to the development and understanding of farmer cooperatives. Many cooperatives trace their beginnings to county extension agents, who labored above the call of duty to get a farmer cooperative started. University staff and their extension services have helped organize and guide new cooperatives, mergers, and acquisitions. They offered internships and continuing education programs for staff, management, and directors. They developed student courses on cooperative principles, practices, and operations.

Most State land-grant universities have one or more extension specialists, usually in the agricultural economics department, assigned to cooperative work. While their educational services are available through local extension service offices, many work directly with cooperatives and organizing groups. Specialists are involved in cooperative educational programs with members, directors, management, employees, youth, young farmer couples, or others. They frequently cosponsor and conduct workshops, institutes, clinics, or other educational programs with State cooperative organizations. Where no council is available, cooperative organization, education, and training are the responsibility of the extension service working with farm organizations.

About two-thirds of the land-grant system offer some exposure to cooperatives through marketing, finance, and business courses. In the school year 1977-78 more than 7,000 students were in these courses.

The University of Wisconsin at Madison is perhaps the leading university in cooperative education. In the 1981-82 school year, Wisconsin had about 175 students enrolled in cooperative courses. The course is offered three times annually. Additionally, two correspondence courses are offered. A Wisconsin State law requires majors in secondary education for agriculture and social science to complete a course in cooperatives.

During the early and mid-1970's educators working with cooperatives became concerned about deemphasis on cooperative education and research at State agricultural universities. Reasons ranged from emphasis on the agribusiness approach to curriculum development, fear of bias, lack of budget, low student registration for cooperative courses, attrition of knowledgeable and interested instructors, and redefinition of positions. Consequently, cooperatives must be increasingly aware of and involved in university cooperative educational and research efforts, if they expect to maintain favorable efforts from these institutions.

Four regional studies analyzing cooperative educational programs indicate a continuing gap in teaching about cooperatives in universities and colleges that have been traditional leaders in this area.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, cooperatives indicated a strong reliance on the land-grant university system as a source of talent. Courses cooperative leaders ranked highly important included management and operation, principles and philosophy, organization, structure and types, financing methods, legal and tax status, and history and evolution.

The studies suggest cooperative education opportunities could be improved if cooperatives established liaison committees in each State composed of State cooperative council secretaries, cooperative leaders (including farm credit), university administrators, and educators and researchers responsible for agribusiness curriculum.

These committees' objective would be to encourage a university course series on cooperatives with a qualified staff to handle teaching and research. The series should emphasize topics rated highest by regional, local, farm credit, and electric cooperative leaders.

The studies recommend continual effort to: Increase education about regional cooperatives, fund distinguished professorships and cooperative chairs, develop explicit incentives for staff members, and monitor staff turnovers and replacements.

The studies found the three items universities most frequently indicated as being helpful in fostering their programs were financial assistance for intern and scholarship programs, educational materials concerning cooperatives, and increased on-campus visibility.

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<sup>1</sup>Cooperative Education Analysis of Upper Midwest States. Thomas P. Schomish and Randall E. Torgerson. Economics, Statistics, and Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. 1978. 62 pp. Cooperative Education Analysis of Northeast and North Central States. Thomas P. Schomish, Cooperative Management Division, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1979. 59 pp. Cooperative Programs of Land-Grant Universities in 14 Southeastern and South Central States. Martin A. Abrahamsen. Cooperative Management Division, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. 1980. 63 pp. Education Concerning Cooperatives by Land-Grant Universities in the Thirteen Western States 1978-1979 Academic Year. Clinton B. Reeder. Cooperative Management Division, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. 1980. 44 pp.

Improving research and education interest concerning cooperatives, the studies indicated, can be attained through helping the university understand cooperatives as distinctive business enterprises. Incentives include inviting faculty and students to cooperative meetings and conferences and providing travel funds for selected meetings; developing forums for exchange of ideas; establishing scholarships through grants or endowments for students seeking careers in cooperatives; giving receptions or scheduling cooperative educational events on campus; including seminars and guest lectures to broaden the scope of cooperative exposure; and distributing informative material about cooperative logos, labels, and products, and local, regional, interregional, and multinational cooperatives.

Among additional ways cooperatives can encourage university activity on cooperatives are annual monitoring of instruction and course requirements, maintaining a close working relationship with the department responsible for cooperative instruction, serving on advisory boards and committees, providing funds for teaching courses, offering consulting opportunities, promoting cooperatives with administrators, helping the university on noncooperative concerns, publishing articles and research results for faculty, helping sell the school of agriculture budget, understanding and influencing priority-setting systems regarding research and education on behalf of cooperatives, encouraging different approaches, improving communications, developing adequate understanding of research programs, and broadening the base for cooperative research.

The studies reveal cooperatives must be more active in supporting State councils, conducting research, supporting national cooperative trade associations, educating personnel on cooperative principles, practices, and systems so they can intelligently tell others, conducting public education events, educating members of cooperatives regarding the whole system, and returning "cooperative" to the corporate name.

The reports conclude with these other suggestions: increase educational efforts among the various cooperative training departments, put educational and research program needs out for bids, foster community college support, educate farmers and the local community concerning cooperatives, develop and sell a cooperative course to universities, coordinate a stronger extension staff with teachers and research workers, and establish multistate educational and research committees to renew academic interest in cooperatives and stimulate ideas for education and research projects.

Universities can and should continue to be a source of research and educational assistance to cooperatives. One key university agricultural



economist says universities can develop and evaluate ideas on needed industry changes and alternative cooperative strategies for achieving these changes; analyze internal organization and operations, both in terms of manpower and money, and recommend improvements; assist in long-range planning; assist in identifying and solving intercooperative problems and opportunities such as helping develop merger, consolidation, and acquisition plans; assist feasibility and educational work on organizing new cooperatives; assist in training employees and board members, and in developing an adequate capital growth plan to make most efficient use of member equity; and do research to strengthen assembling, processing, and marketing capabilities of cooperatives, including formulation of new marketing strategies and technologies.<sup>2</sup>

Post-secondary schools and colleges conduct cooperative education programs between the school and the business community in which many of their students enter a cooperative work program. The student studies a structured classroom course for half the day and works the remainder of the day in a cooperative business.

Post-secondary instructors and administrators have shown continuing interest in suitable cooperative teaching material to supplement existing general economics, business, social studies, agricultural, or other courses. Their request for and use of Agricultural Cooperative Service information publications on agricultural cooperatives indicate their interest. This instigated development of a visual presentation, *Understanding Your Cooperatives*, for their classroom use.

The cooperative community has responded and now looks to these post-secondary institutions and colleges as a source of employees with business administration and agribusiness training.

## **State Cooperative Councils**

Cooperative trade associations, called councils, associations, institutions, or committees, are organized in about 40 States. Their programs encompass the total cooperative educational endeavor, including legislative programs. Their employees work closely with extension specialists or regional cooperative personnel who conduct programs targeted for members and nonmembers, both farm and nonfarm.

Youth programs are the only activity in which all councils participate when last studied. Work with youth varied from actively conducting training programs to contributing funds for awards. Councils working

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<sup>2</sup>Commitment to Research and Education is a Must. William E. Black, *American Cooperation* 1976-77. American Institute of Cooperation, Washington, D.C., pp. 400-405.



with Future Farmers of America often furnish cooperative education material, teaching aids, and prize money for various types of competition. Vocational agriculture cooperative teaching programs lend themselves well to council-sponsored awards.

Councils working with 4-H usually furnish cooperative educational material, aid staff training programs, and provide prize money. Some extension services conduct training contests usually sponsored by councils on a statewide basis only, but many conduct county and district elimination contests before the State finals. While programs vary from State to State, most councils underwrite costs of sending youth to the National Institute on Cooperative Education.

The 4-H programs include the study of cooperatives' place in the American private competitive enterprise system, demonstrations or illustrated lectures, and essay contests, camps, seminars, conferences, speaking contests, and other programs planned by State extension staffs.

Educational work on cooperatives is conducted with about 14 other national youth organizations.

Some councils offer college scholarships. Others make annual efforts to include cooperative education in college curriculums or provide speakers for classes. For example, The Kansas Cooperative Council initiated a long-range plan to upgrade the courses offered in agricultural marketing at Kansas State University (KSU). The Council and supporting farm organizations lobbied to get more money allocated from the State's general fund to increase the staff and expand the agricultural marketing program at KSU. Legislation was passed and KSU staffed the expanded program.

The Minnesota Association of Cooperatives (MAC) has several outreach programs for State colleges and universities. Its University-Cooperative Advisory Committee works with the University of Minnesota. The committee reviews university teaching, research, and extension activities relating to cooperatives. As a direct result of the committee's investigation, the "Principles of Economics" course devotes one class to the role of cooperatives in the economy.

MAC also sponsors a "Co-op Day on Campus" each year at the University of Minnesota. The cooperative representatives and the university staff meet and discuss methods to improve the training of agribusiness students for key positions in cooperatives.

The Ohio Council of Farmer Cooperatives and Pennsylvania Association of Farmer Cooperatives have contracted with their respective land-grant universities to provide extension cooperative education.

Numerous councils distribute the American Institute of Cooperation's yearbook and publications of the Agricultural Cooperative Service to secondary, post-secondary, or university libraries.

Councils realize the growing influence of young farmer couples as a business team and the importance of involving them in rural programs and organizations. This subject is discussed further in the young farmer couples section.

Most councils combine director and manager training programs into 1- or 2-day workshops. Some hold a series of director-manager training workshops throughout the State. Others combine such workshops with their annual meetings. A few councils conduct training sessions at member cooperative headquarters. Often, manager-director workshops are jointly conducted with extension specialists.

Public education is difficult to pinpoint because many council activities either directly or indirectly educate the public. However, during October Cooperative Month most councils use personal contacts, public speaking engagements, and news releases to educate the general public.

About half of all council secretaries work with State legislatures in formulating bills affecting cooperatives and in getting them presented and passed. In addition, they guard against undesirable legislation. Increasing numbers of councils are providing members information about State and national legislative activities affecting cooperatives.

## **Other State Assistance**

*Farm organizations* — American Farm Bureau, National Grange, and National Farmers Union—have emphasized forming cooperatives as part of their overall program. Some cooperatives continue to carry the farm organization as a portion of their name. The major farm organizations today still strongly endorse farmer cooperatives and support their legislative and educational efforts. In the North Central area, many cooperatives apportion a percentage of their net margins to the Farmers Union for conducting educational activities about cooperatives. Farmers Union has increasingly invested in research and education for strengthening cooperative marketing.

Farm organizations in States where council secretaries serve part time often carry the major legislative program for cooperatives. Where there are no State councils, farm organizations assume with extension services the educational and training responsibilities.

*Statewide rural electric cooperatives* are organized in about 35 States. Their offices work quite closely with National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in educational and human relations programs.

*State departments of agriculture* in some instances employ specialists on cooperative organization and operation. These specialists work with State councils and extension specialists in cooperative education.

*Credit union leagues* operate in most States, serving both rural and urban credit unions. Their employees conduct extensive educational programs for members, employees, and management.

State organizations involved with cooperatives work with the Farm Credit Banks in their districts to provide local cooperative education.

## **National Assistance**

Cooperatives have established trade associations at the national level to provide education and training. U.S. Department of Agriculture is also mandated by Congress to provide assistance.

### **Trade Associations**

*American Institute of Cooperation (AIC)*, Washington, D.C., is a national educational association of about 1,000 agricultural cooperatives—marketing, supply, farm credit, and rural electric. It serves as a catalyst, provides publications and visuals, and assists or sponsors educational programs. The largest program is the annual National Institute on Cooperative Education conducted for members, employees, directors and managers of cooperatives, extension service staff and others in State universities, agricultural teachers and local extension agents, Federal and State Government representatives, young farmer couples, young people, women, and others specifically interested in agriculture and cooperatives. A university conference and a collegiate and new employees' seminar accompany the Institute. AIC also co-sponsors programs in member relations, training personnel and directors, cooperative relations, and related subjects.

*Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA)*, Washington, D.C., is a national federation of all types of cooperatives. These include housing, credit, consumer goods, farm supply and marketing, mutual insurance, rural electrification, and travel. League services include cooperative education, legislation, and development.

The League has six major functions: to advance public knowledge of cooperatives; to improve the skills of cooperative directors and employees; to encourage wise cooperative financing and operating policies; to help cooperatives strengthen their member relations; to seek Federal laws and administrative decisions consistent with cooperative aims and purposes; and to promote development in the world's less-

developed areas, both at home and abroad, through cooperatives. CLUSA also produces a wide variety of cooperative educational and training materials, including basic how-to manuals.

*National Council of Farmer Cooperatives* (NCFC), Washington, D.C., promotes growth and effectiveness of agricultural cooperatives, primarily through monitoring national legislation and regulations and activities of Government agencies. Educational information, including probable impact of pending legislation, is provided members, State and national legislators, and the general public.

*Agricultural Cooperative Development International* (ACDI), Washington, D.C., represents most major farmer cooperatives of the United States and a majority of the farm credit banks. The 42 members of ACDI are agricultural cooperatives deeply involved in helping ACDI provide technical and managerial assistance to develop agricultural cooperatives and farm credit institutions in the less-developed countries.

*National Rural Electric Cooperative Association* (NRECA), Washington, D.C., emphasizes human relations skills in member, director-manager, and employee training programs. Courses, taught by a psychologist, include human behavior, communications, and motivation. A team of training and development specialists instructs in handling consumer complaints, and conducts inquiry sessions geared to group participation, using films, case studies, exercises, role plays, and videotapes.

*Credit Union National Association* (CUNA), Madison, Wis., provides educational and training programs through State units in financial and economic research, education and development, communications, finance and accounting support, public relations and advertising services, and governmental affairs.

“Organizations Serving Cooperatives,” Section 5 in this series, lists additional organizations.

*Association of Cooperative Educators* (ACE) is a body of professionals whose principal work is in the areas of training persons who work for and with cooperatives; educational programs for managers, directors, members, and other key persons involved with cooperatives; personnel development and enrichment among cooperative leaders, members, and employees.

ACE focuses on the major areas of concern to professionals in cooperative education and training, such as advancing cooperative concepts using present cooperative operations and practices; effective use of techniques, materials and methods of presentation in carrying out programs; improvement of professional capabilities and knowledge of those engaged in this effort.



Each year, ACE conducts an institute with highly practical and useful papers, displays, and other data beamed to its member needs.

It issues ACE News (to members only) as a supplemental source of data about the work of members and other information related to cooperative education and training.

## USDA Role

Federal Government cooperative educational assistance is delegated almost entirely to the Department of Agriculture. Within USDA, that function is handled by two agencies, one as a specific function within a larger assistance program and the other as a part of a general education effort.

*Agricultural Cooperative Service (ACS)*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is authorized by the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926 "to promote the knowledge of cooperative principles and practices and to cooperate, in promoting such knowledge, with educational and marketing agencies, cooperative associations, and others."

The educational mission of the agency is to ensure that germane cooperative educational material and programs are designed and implemented consistent with the new dimension of industrialized agriculture. The agency's goals sustaining this general mission are to:

- Foster farmer cooperative educational, programs, and instructional materials—consistent with new dimensions of industrialized agriculture—for use by leaders and educators in cooperatives, cooperative trade associations, public and private educational institutions, young farm couples, youth, farm, and other organizations.

- Help develop farmer cooperative business educational programs and materials for various audiences interested in cooperative organization such as the general public, including youth organizations, adults with limited educational opportunities, and minority groups.

ACS cooperative education program philosophy is that knowledge and understanding of distinctive cooperative characteristics and practices are a vital link in cooperative success and public support. Members as owner-users of their cooperative must comprehend the firm's operation and strategy for growth in size and complexity to be willing to make the financial commitment to generate sufficient equity capital.

ACS is in the cooperative education field at the wholesale level. Programs, literature, and materials are designed for use in cooperative and educational channels at national, regional, State, and local levels. Testing materials in actual educational situations help perfect programs to fill needs and provide adaptability to a wide range of situations.

Programs include institutes, conferences, workshops, and other meetings for members, officials, employees, and leaders working with existing and proposed cooperatives. In some cases, these programs are sponsored jointly by ACS and an organization such as one of the State cooperative trade organizations, a regional cooperative research and education committee, a school or university, or the American Institute of Cooperation. ACS staff members usually help develop the program as well as appear on it. In other instances, staff members act as resource people. As far as possible, educational activities are carried on with, through, or in support of, existing educational and cooperative agencies and programs.

ACS audiences or clientele for cooperative education programs are: General public, elementary education, secondary education, post-secondary education, higher education, young farmer couples, women, member users, nonmembers, directors, managers, key employees in specialized fields, and other employees.

Additionally, the agency publishes a monthly magazine, *Farmer Cooperatives*, that reports significant achievements by cooperatives, the most advanced thinking of cooperative leaders, and the highlights of agency activities.

*The Extension Service* is the primary educational arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Its three segments—county extension staffs, State extension staffs, and Federal staff—conduct educational programs for cooperatives' managers, directors, employees, and members. Extension also conducts educational programs for other farmers and the public to provide a better understanding of cooperatives as an extension of the farm business. These programs aim to strengthen the family farm.

County staffs are usually the first contact point for people wishing to form cooperatives. They can provide necessary educational materials and suggestions.

Many cooperative educational programs are conducted by State extension services jointly or in cooperation with State cooperative councils, district Banks for Cooperatives, and regional cooperatives.

At the national level, Extension closely cooperates with other national, public, and private agencies that work with cooperatives.

*Rural Electrification Administration (REA)*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, originally prepared educational materials and conducted member services programs. In more recent years, its function has been to make loans to finance electric and telephone service in rural areas, to ensure the repayment of this money, and to provide management and technical assistance to achieve program objectives.

## **Programs for Special Audiences**

Cooperatives have many educational and training programs for special audiences. They usually involve the cooperation of the cooperatives, State councils, and State and county extension staff members.

### **Young Farmers and Farmer Couples**

Young farmers and husband and wife teams want to know more about the actual business and problems cooperatives encounter. Before joining, they want to know the risks involved and the direction the cooperative is going. They desire continuing and progressive education about cooperative philosophy and operating principles and practices. They want to be involved in the future of the cooperative.

Agricultural cooperatives realize these young farm couples are their developing leadership. Cooperative management is attempting to attain a better understanding of the couples' wants and needs in preparation for involving them in leadership roles.

AIC early developed educational programs for young farmers at the National Institute on Cooperative Education. Its programs continue to be based on young couple evaluations from previous years and a national consulting committees' recommendations.

Several State associations—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Washington, and others—have established their own 2- and 3-day programs at State parks, motels, or other locations. AIC and State programs include sessions on communicating with members, finance, leadership, cooperative directors, and others. Their success lies in enabling small groups of young people to discuss key issues with the State and regional cooperative decisionmakers.

Numerous regional cooperatives are involved in young farm couple programs. Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Indianapolis, was a leader in sponsoring young farm couple dinner programs with local associations to discuss cooperative philosophy. No product information is offered. The cooperative encourages young farmer couples to suggest ways to improve services. This program, designed to involve the regional cooperative personnel and local cooperative management, is followed by a personal visit from local cooperative personnel. These programs get new and informed young farmers as members, stimulate young farmer interest in becoming directors, train future directors, and increase business. While continuing this program, the association works closely with

other cooperatives in the State in coordinating youth and young farmer programs.

Another leader in involving young farmers in cooperative activities is Southern States Cooperative, Richmond, Va., which first invited them to annual meetings. The cooperative now invites several young farmer members to attend mid-year regional board meetings and a special summer seminar. Some young farmers serve on cooperative management advisory boards. The objective is to acquaint and involve these young farmers with the cooperative to develop their leadership potential. Meanwhile, the program helps management assess young farmer needs and improved methods of serving them.

Land O'Lakes, Minneapolis, Minn., follows the motto: "where membership is, develop young leadership." Through a "share the costs with local associations" program, young couples are selected on a district basis for "Young Farmer Away-for-a-Day" at first-class motels. The two half-day programs provide understandable cooperative messages and opportunity for questions concerning control, operations, things not done, and suggestions for services needed. At its annual meeting, Land O' Lakes provides a young farmer program that includes a tour of the general offices. A section of its monthly publication is devoted to "Young Farmers Belong."

Inter-State Milk Producers' Cooperative, Southampton, Pa., annually selects five young producers to work for 3 years with the directors, serve on programs and on committees, and receive special training and information. They perform all functions of directors except voting. Some young participants are serving on the current board of directors. From the beginning of their term, they are capable of assuming full responsibility and duties.

Many other dairy marketing and regional cooperatives have long tried to attract young farmers to local, district, and annual meetings or to work through their State cooperative councils. This involvement may include recognition, question and answer sessions with cooperative management, special tours of facilities, and other programs to improve participation.

The challenge in working with young couples is to create in them sufficient cooperative understanding, patience, and self-discipline so they will exert the necessary leadership to improve their cooperative's effectiveness as an economic organization.

## **Youth in Cooperatives**

Many cooperative leaders have developed broad economic educa-



tional programs for youth that include ways of doing business in our democracy, with emphasis on understanding characteristics and practices of cooperatives.

Often these programs originate at the school, community, and county level, based on State program leadership. They are conducted through cooperatives, existing channels of public education such as extension service's 4H and vo-ag's FFA programs, and other youth organizations. State programs vary—they include institutes, camps, speaking contests, visual presentations, essays, business tours or visitations, or combinations of these and other programs. Wisconsin is the only State that requires a course on cooperatives to be taught in public schools.

Arkansas State Committee on Cooperatives has one of the longer continuous programs on cooperatives. Each year, county extension agents and agricultural and home economics instructors select young people to participate in an intensive Youth Conference on Cooperatives and work with local sponsoring cooperatives to finance this 5-day camp. There, through participation, these youth learn about cooperatives and other businesses. One of the primary activities is the Couchdale Cooperative Canteen operated by the youth. They learn how to organize and operate the cooperative by doing it. They elect directors and officers, receive a charter from the Arkansas Secretary of State, borrow money from the St. Louis Bank for Cooperatives, make presentations to members about the canteen, and at the end of the camp, share the net margins, if any, as patronage refunds.

Pennsylvania Association of Farmer Cooperatives (PAFC) annually sponsors a youth program on cooperatives at Shippensburg State College. It offers a first- and second-year 5-day institute with the practical cooperative organization, operation, and involvement coming the second year in a Mini-Service Co-op. PAFC divides the State into districts or councils where program activities and selection start and follow-up programs are held. New Jersey, New York, and Delaware participate in the PAFC program.

The Georgia Business Explorer Project for 4-H and the Cooperative Activities Awards Programs for FFA are sponsored by Goldkist of Atlanta. For 4-H members to qualify, a county group of four or more must complete a project and submit records. Activities involve a maximum of three trips to cooperatives and other businesses of matched types, and speeches, demonstrations, news articles, educational exhibits, study topics, and others, concluding with a written project story. The FFA chapter competition is based on eight sections that include instruction, participation, and activities.

Indiana Co-op Committee conducts a school with 8 hours of planned classroom instruction. Objectives are to develop an understanding of the American private competitive enterprise system, including cooperative enterprise. The school emphasizes the various cooperatives operating in Indiana and cooperative employment and membership opportunities.

Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives (WFC) annually holds several conferences to teach youth about cooperatives. In addition to the 2-day conference at WFC annual meetings, others are planned to meet special needs of social studies and vocational agriculture students. WFC also cooperates with Illinois and Iowa in a Tri-State Cooperative Education Institute.

Minnesota Association of Cooperatives (MAC), another continuous program, attracts high school juniors and seniors to its 2-day cooperative conference. The students, sponsored by local cooperatives, study various cooperative types and operations, engage in small discussion groups, visit regional cooperatives near Minneapolis-St. Paul, and attend MAC's annual meetings.

Virginia Council of Farmer Cooperatives education committee and a staff from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University provide a 2-day cooperative seminar in conjunction with the State 4-H conference and FFA conventions, respectively.

Alabama, Louisiana, and Oklahoma find public speaking contests effective, while Florida uses a questionnaire. Illinois works through the university and vocational agriculture programs. North Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, and Maryland conduct a camp similar to that in Arkansas, but North Carolina adds a plus with an illustrated demonstration or lecture called the "American Business System." South Carolina uses the illustrated demonstration and a series of field days. In about 40 States each year, programs usually conclude with a selection process to send delegates to AIC's National Institute on Cooperative Education.

At this institute, young people take an intensive course in economic education. They learn the why of cooperatives, the way they operate nationally, and how these user-owned businesses fit in the American private competitive enterprise system. Unique programs offer on-the-spot training through learning to solve problems from case studies, discussing them in rap sessions with cooperative leaders, and preparing and participating in programs including leadership roles in meetings.

Educational materials strengthen programs on cooperatives for youth. Often teachers lack background, or the high school text omits cooperatives. However, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and others have prepared texts, and

teachers' guides or kits. Copies of these usually are available through the State extension specialist working with cooperatives, the vo-ag section of the State department of education, or the State cooperative council.

Many States rely on leaflets, booklets, and other materials provided by National trade associations, Farm Credit, or ACS. Widely used educational publications available through ACS are "Understanding Your Cooperatives," "Cooperatives in Agribusiness," and the basic, illustrated cooperative information report series. AIC publications include "How We Organize to Do Business in America", "Business in Our Community" and "Business in My Town: Everybody's Business."

Educating youth about cooperatives is a never-ending responsibility. The challenge is to provide cooperative understanding to both rural and urban youth and to prepare them for one of three potential roles: loyal, involved members; employees with a desire to learn more and to serve members; and nonmembers with a favorable cooperative attitude.

## **Women—A Resource**

Women's involvement and contribution to cooperatives is becoming more visible. Women want to be involved, particularly the younger women. Their theme might well be—"Women aren't trying to run things, rather, they are trying to help make things run "better".

Cooperative boards and management increasingly realize women must be involved in the mainstream of cooperative operations just as they are in running the farm. They are skilled bookkeepers, buyers, drivers, relief or full-time milkers, machinery operators, and the like. Many take part in management decisions—often as full partners and sometimes as operators.

These women have earned a role in cooperatives. Yet their ability remains largely untapped. Many women in every cooperative operating area are qualified to make a solid contribution to organization growth. All they need is the opportunity to be involved in the ongoing organization. Women need the same information at the same time as men to be knowledgeable about the business. They must know the general cooperative principles and practices and how they apply to their cooperative. Specific activities women can perform in cooperatives are: serve as counselors and leaders for youth groups; plan and conduct educational meetings; serve on advisory, planning, and director boards; conduct surveys on possibilities for new services and evaluate existing services; participate in community development programs as cooperative representatives; be active in public and legislative relations work to improve the image of cooperatives and agriculture; involve young farmer couples in



the mainstream of cooperative activities; and obtain employment in cooperatives in key positions such as accountants, directors of public, member, or family relations, editors of publications, training officers, personnel directors, managers, and many more.

Because involvement of women leaders in cooperative programs is receiving more attention and interest from management, a closer look at some examples is warranted.

Southern States Cooperative, Richmond, Va., early employed a woman to direct the educational programs of its farm home advisory committees. The cooperative believes it can get more effective support from women by giving them a meaningful job. Southern States programs involve women in meetings, make them understand they are a part of the cooperative, and provide educational training and materials to develop and motivate them as enthusiastic leaders and educators. The cooperative encourages local and regional managers and directors to involve women in educational open-house events.

Dairylea, Syracuse, N.Y., employed a woman full time to be responsible for women's programs. She has the full support of management to enlarge the program to include family and member development.

Women's activities are discussed with management, who may be prodded by the observation that women can do and are engaged in member development. Dairylea management realizes money is required for programs to develop the talents and leadership of capable women. Women are trained in public speaking, conducting meetings, and in writing and speaking to legislators.

Indiana Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Indianapolis, has proof from Mr. and Mrs. young farmer meetings that young farmer member volume substantially increased at the local sponsoring cooperative for 1, 2, and 3 years after educational meetings involving women.

Farmland Industries found being informed about cooperatives is an important early step in attaining women's participation. This led to meetings involving them at the local service centers. Informed women then wanted a part in committee activities and made suggestions for improving service.

CENEX, St. Paul, Minn., has encouraged the issuance of jointly owned common stock so women can become members. Agway, Syracuse, N.Y., issues common stock certificates to both spouses on payment of the additional membership fee.

The theme of a Georgia Council of Farmer Cooperatives recent annual meeting was "A New Resource for Cooperatives." This theme emphasized women's role in cooperatives, as well as their role in agribusiness.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Washington, D.C., has established a Rural Electric Women's Task Force. It looks for means to motivate women to become involved in cooperative activities. The most important factor is helping women relate mute factors like generators, wires, and poles to the most important factors in their lives—jobs for husbands, better school facilities for children, better living for the family, and a variety of community concerns.

## **Director Training**

Director training workshops and institutes are not a new concept. Many extension specialists, State councils, and regional cooperatives have conducted these for years. However, director responsibilities have increased dramatically as cooperative assets, volume, and indebtedness have soared. Today's new awareness of ethical and legal responsibilities has intensified the desire of directors to understand basic cooperative issues and the specific operation of their own organizations.

Wisconsin had the first director certification program aimed at what has long been a cooperative problem—making directors aware of their responsibilities and motivating them to exercise leadership. Three strategic groups, with the University Center for Cooperatives at Madison as coordinator, co-sponsor the program—the Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives, the University of Wisconsin Extension Service, and the St. Paul Bank for Cooperatives.

Each of three 2-day workshops is a totally independent unit that can be taken in any sequence. However, a participant must attend all three—for a total of 6 days—to be certified. The sessions involve directors and the manager of a single cooperative or group of cooperatives. A director will normally take one workshop in each of 3 successive years. The most successful workshops are limited to 20 to 30 participants. Sections offered include:

Section I—Making Use of Financial Information; Improving Annual and Board Meetings; Cooperative Taxation; Director Selection, Responsibility and Training; Legal Responsibilities in a Cooperative; Objectives, Goals, and Policies of Cooperatives; Key Control Areas; Board-Management Decision Areas and Cooperation; Board-Management Relations.

Section II—Selecting and Training Employees; Role of the Board in Credit Policy; Cooperatives and the Community; Role of the Board in Planning.

Section III—Introduction of Cooperative Communications; Cooperative Education; Financing and Member Equity; Legislative Affairs; Current Legal Problems; Ideas that Work and Organizing for Action.

The Iowa and Nebraska director certification programs, also offered in three workshop sections, build on the previous workshop and added responsibility of directors. Sponsors are the Iowa Institute of Cooperation, Nebraska Cooperative Council, Omaha Bank for Cooperatives, Iowa State University, and the University of Nebraska. The certification program is composed of the following sections:

Part I—Traditional Responsibility; Director Liability: the Director's Role in Member Relations; Understanding Financial Statements.

Part II—The Director's Role in Planning Facility Growth, Services, and Equity Redemption; The Development of Proper Director Controls; Policies; Board Management Communication; Auditor Selection and Instruction.

Part III—Board Officer Responsibility and Leadership; Corporate Records; Member Relations; Management Selection and Compensation; Management Performance Evaluation.

Three other States—South Dakota, Louisiana, and Mississippi—have similar director certification programs.

Minnesota Association of Cooperatives (MAC), with help from the University of Minnesota, holds county workshops for directors and managers of local cooperatives. These all-day workshops deal with asset management, the Banks for Cooperatives member assistance program, and the role of special interest groups. MAC also holds an annual workshop for directors of regional cooperatives. Workshop programs include antitrust actions, using financial leverage and using human resources.

Ohio Council of Farmer Cooperatives and Ohio State University have long been recognized as leaders in innovative director programs held in various locations in the State.

Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington hold a 3-day program for directors and managers with cooperation from the Spokane Farm Credit Banks. Cooperatives in these States have formed the Executive Institute for Northwest Cooperatives to: Examine the changing business environment in which cooperatives operate; define the decisionmaking responsibilities of a cooperative board of directors and management; and increase the participants' understanding of financial analysis and control.

The Five-State Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia Cooperative Research and Education Committee formed in the Baltimore Farm Credit District conducts director programs unattainable at the State level.

The Four-State Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina Cooperative Research and Education Committee of the Columbia Farm Credit District relies heavily on its members and the Banks for Cooperatives in conducting director training in several locations in the four States.

The Tri-State Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi Research and Education Committee in the New Orleans Farm Credit District complements State programs through publications used in director training. While some of the original programs dealt with understanding financial statements and Federal and State laws affecting cooperatives, more recent programs covered basic cooperative principles and practices, parliamentary procedure, and equity retirement.

Purdue University Agricultural Economics Department has taken innovative approaches in developing educational programs for boards of directors, including a partial self-study program.

The training manual for cooperative boards of directors, developed as a pilot project at Oregon State University and revised at the University of California at Davis, stimulated interest among State extension services in establishing more agricultural cooperative director training programs.

Many regional cooperatives like to conduct their own director training. Consequently, they have used a wide range of materials from within and outside the cooperative sector to develop their own director training manual. These manuals usually contain considerable information applicable to the cooperative preparing it and are used extensively in director training meetings within the organization.

*National Directors Workshop* is sponsored by American Institute of Cooperation and National Council of Farmer Cooperatives in cooperation with Agricultural Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. This program is designed to develop more knowledgeable, capable, articulate cooperative spokesmen in agriculture. The workshop includes a visit to Capitol Hill for an insight into the legislative procedures.

*International Conference of Cooperative Board Chairmen* is coordinated annually by Extension Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University Center for Cooperatives, Madison, Wis., in conjunction with the Cooperative League of the United States of America and the Cooperative Union of Canada.

This program provides a forum for cooperative board chairmen to share ideas, and offers "mind stretching" sessions to identify and



prepare for their special leadership responsibilities. In addition, the conferences provide chairmen an outlet to reduce the "lonely at the top stress," as well as refocus on the importance of the board in setting cooperative direction. Active spouse participation is encouraged to help them develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the unique leadership role of the cooperative board chairmen.

## **Employee Training**

Cooperative employees are the primary contact, not only with members in providing service, but with nonmembers—family, friends, teachers, clergy, and others. Too few cooperatives prepare their employees to answer questions of members and others in the community. Many employees gain expertise to perform their job, but need the background in cooperative principles and practices to attain a sense of pride in working in the cooperative system.

Cooperatives find training their employees pays substantial dividends in member service and relations and acceptance of the cooperative as a business in the community. A few dollars, some personnel time, and some carefully prepared material on cooperative principles and practices can make much difference in cooperative understanding.

Many federated regional cooperatives train managers and other employees of their member local cooperatives, both on cooperatives as institutions and in supplies they handle.

Farmland Industries, Kansas City, Mo., has an elaborate training center with a year-round program for employees. Students can be housed at the center during shortcourses, or a variety of seminars and workshops are taken to various locations in the territory where Farmland operates. Correspondence courses offered through the center include cooperative principles and practices, The Farmland organization, and products, supplies, and servicing.

*Farmland Industries Arrangement with Park College* has added an extra ingredient to Farmland's management-employee education. Farmland training specialists asked Park College School for Community Education to develop a program around the college equivalency experiences of their employees that would result in a management degree in agribusiness. Park College designed programs for both associate and bachelor degrees in agribusiness management. The ingredient for management is specialized training at a college level; for employees, an associate of arts (2 year) or bachelor of arts degree upon completion to upgrade credentials and career opportunities.

Farmland also has a home study series and self-study library with



visuals for new employees to enhance cooperative understanding.

*Agway Management Development Program* (AMDP) is a formal program for retail store manager trainees. A model was devised and followed throughout all design and implementation stages.

Phase I recognized the need to provide retail trainees systematic skill training and job exposure to enable them to grow effectively in a year's time. During Phase II objectives were established. Phase III included research, data collection, and diagnosis based on the belief people best support programs they help create. Phase IV, program design, resulted in two components: 2-day train-the-trainers workshops for store manager trainees selected according to definite criteria, and the actual retail store on-the-job training that included area field trips and assignments, training conferences with Agway business management specialist, and continuous feedback on progress of both trainee and the program itself.

Candidates who successfully complete the program advance to management positions. The program success is measured by reduced trainee turnover, less total training time, and maximum return on training dollar investment. Perhaps of more importance is the diagnosis and planning that leads to evaluation and support of the program.

*Goldkist/Cotton State Career Development Program* offers employees an opportunity to develop and improve their skills and talents. Believing that each employee has different career needs and situations, the program attempts to meet as many of these as possible. Courses are offered to refresh or acquire a skill or set of skills. These short courses are taught at numerous locations in the operating area to make them accessible to employees.

Much time and effort has gone into the Goldkist Training and Career Development programs. Goldkist facilities are open to certain other cooperative firms. They believe this exchange of experience and exposure to everyday business management can be a mutual benefit.

*Goldkist's Educational Assistance Program*, designed to enhance student understanding of the business world, provides financial assistance for tuition, books, and activity fees at institutions of higher education. All full-time salaried employees with a minimum of 3-months' employment are eligible. The program also provides several major universities with information about opportunities in agribusiness, for use in career advancement.

Goldkist has self-study programs to provide employees with growth and development opportunities. A self-study library of books, cassettes, and tapes is available for use at home.

*Growmark Staff Development Program* offers six series—new employee orientation, specialists, supervisors/managers, an annual update

for those with previous training, division managers/directors, and executive managers.

This program offers practical management skills training, and opportunities for personal development and job performance improvement. Enrollment is solicited through an immediate supervisor. Employees enroll in a series at their level rather than for an individual unit of a series.

Cooperative philosophy and principles are included in the first series for new employees and in the basics for supervisors. This offers all employees and those chosen for supervisory positions opportunity to gain an understanding of cooperative organization and operation.

## **Training Programs of Special Interest**

*Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association (GTA)* and *Farmers Union Central Exchange (CENEX)* provide educational funds to Southwest State University, Marshall, Minn., to train young men and women for future employment in leadership positions in local and regional cooperatives. These funds enable this liberal arts university to be an innovator in developing major course offerings in cooperatives.

Students enrolling in the cooperatives major course take basic courses in business administration, accounting, and agriculture, including the rural studies program. Internships provide practical experience for students majoring in cooperatives.

Faculty members teach principles, practices, and history of cooperatives, and how cooperatives work in marketing farm products, obtaining supplies, and providing services. Cooperative finance, credit, tax, and decisionmaking also are included.

*Management Development Program* is sponsored annually by the Tri-State Research and Education Committee (Ala., La., and Miss.) at three class levels at Mississippi State University. This educational program is based on experience and knowledge of cooperative business management principles. Each level builds on the previous year's participation. It is designed with cooperative managers in mind, and involvement is the key word. Scheduled for 5 days of concentrated study, the program requires each participant to leave business only 1 workweek. The case study approach to a problem is used in a practical manner to illustrate the fundamentals of the management process.

*Northwest Cooperative Leadership Institute* is sponsored by Executive Institute for Northwest Cooperatives (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington Cooperative Councils and Spokane Farm Credit Banks) in cooperation with the department of agricultural education and the exten-

sion services in these States. Participants from Alaska are invited. The institute is designed for vo-ag teachers, 4-H leaders, county agents, post-secondary instructors in agribusiness, key cooperative supervisory personnel, and university economics faculty. Spouses are invited as full participants.

*Tax Seminar* is conducted annually by the National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives. This seminar provides current information on principles and development of cooperative taxation. Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives, and there may be others, follow this program with a 1-day seminar for cooperative accountants.

*Graduate Institute of Cooperative Leadership (GICL)* is held annually at the University of Missouri. Early in its history, GICL planners considered how this educational forum might best define the role of cooperatives in modern society. This resulted in a format of four major segments for GICL I: Present and future social, political, economic, and international environment; analysis of the agricultural economy in terms of market structure and economic organization; analysis and evaluation of the economic and social philosophies of cooperation; and general concepts of leadership and current issues facing cooperatives.

The Graduate Institute is designed primarily for cooperative employees who are moving into major cooperative managerial positions in the next 3 to 5 years, however, directors of cooperatives and professors who teach cooperative philosophies have also found it worthwhile.

Success of the Institute has warranted planning GICL II and GICL III for those desiring additional training.

*Employee and Collegiate Seminar* is a special program of the National Institute in Cooperative Education. It teaches college students, new cooperative employees, and others about cooperative principles and operating techniques. The seminar trains participants for leadership positions in agricultural cooperatives by providing a sound foundation in cooperative business practices. It also explores some complex issues that face cooperatives today as well as the problems unique to cooperative business. The seminar is led by a team of cooperative experts drawn from Government, universities, and cooperative organizations. Only AIC member cooperatives may nominate and sponsor participants to this seminar. An extension of this program is a workshop for vo-ag teachers and county extension agents.

*University Center for Cooperatives (UCC)* faculty at Madison, Wis., develops educational programs for participants from local, State, regional, and international organizations. These programs emphasize applied cooperation.

UCC was established in 1971 as an administrative unit of University of Wisconsin Extension Service. The full-time staff coordinates cooperative education programs through the Extension Service. The Center offers teaching and research to fill the needs of domestic and international cooperatives. Examples of the Center programs are: *Leadership and Management Workshop* is a special three-phase program that certifies local cooperative directors and managers (discussed under director training.) Each 2-day phase is usually given annually over a 3-year period.

*Contact Skills Workshops* train cooperative employees who contact members and customers in handling people problems. Through case studies and practical application, participants look at themselves and their own development, their jobs, ways to communicate, and how to get along with people. Employees participate in the 6-hour instruction during a normal workday.

*National Symposium on Cooperatives and the Law* are cosponsored by national and State cooperative trade associations, Farm Credit Banks, and governmental agencies working with cooperatives. These symposia are held annually. Begun in 1974, each symposium emphasizes a different aspect of how the law relates to cooperatives. They provide a forum for cooperative policymakers and others concerned with current cooperative legal questions. Proceedings are published by WCC.

*International Programs* at the Center offer a 16-week seminar annually on Cooperative Education and Management for internationals. Custom-tailored courses varying in length and subject matter are designed to fit the needs of a wide range of international students.

*Emerging Cooperatives* workshops and programs are tailored to emerging cooperatives including those in Third World countries. Many of these include consumer-oriented training.

*Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives* and the Center personnel work closely in developing young couples leadership conferences, youth programs, and the director certification program, discussed under these headings.

Cooperatives face a new dimension in education and training: dealing with the speed of an electronic era; working with a new generation of members who have always had cooperative services; and explaining complex and multicooperative structures. Only through intensified



cooperation and coordination at local, State, national, and international levels can needed future cooperative education be attained.

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## **U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Cooperative Service**

Agricultural Cooperative Service provides research, management, and educational assistance to cooperatives to strengthen the economic position of farmers and other rural residents. It works directly with cooperative leaders and Federal and State agencies to improve organization, leadership, and operation of cooperatives and to give guidance to further development.

The agency (1) helps farmers and other rural residents obtain supplies and services at lower costs and to get better prices for products they sell; (2) advises rural residents on developing existing resources through cooperative action to enhance rural living; (3) helps cooperatives improve services and operating efficiency; (4) informs members, directors, employees, and the public on how cooperatives work and benefit their members and their communities; and (5) encourages international cooperative programs.

The agency publishes research and educational materials, and issues *Farmer Cooperatives*. All programs and activities are conducted on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.