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Journal of Cooperatives

Volume 18

2004

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The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives

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The *Journal of Cooperatives* is a refereed journal published by NCR-194 with support from The Cooperative Foundation and various University Cooperative Centers. Its purpose is to encourage research on issues of importance to U.S. cooperatives and to provide a forum for the review and exchange of research results among individuals in universities, cooperatives, and government.

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The Editorial Board offers its sincere thanks to the following individuals who reviewed manuscripts considered for this issue.

Alan D. Borst	Roger G. Ginder
Anthony Crooks	Thomas W. Gray
Robert Cropp	David Hahn
Joan R. Fulton	L. Charles Ling

The *Journal* invites manuscripts of practical interest to U.S. cooperatives for its nineteenth annual issue. Papers should report results of applied or basic research on economic, legal, or sociological aspects of cooperation. Format of submission is found on the inside back cover of any recent issue.

Manuscripts are accepted any time. Four copies should be submitted to John R. Dunn, Editor, Journal of Cooperatives, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 3253, Washington, D.C. 20250-3253. Phone: 202/690-1374. E-mail: john.dunn@usda.gov. Early submission is encouraged to ensure consideration for the issue.

Reviews will be conducted anonymously by members of the respective professions. Articles will be selected on the basis of interest to cooperatives and researchers, originality, and effectiveness of presentation. Articles published will be subject to a page charge of \$50 per printed page. Authors without financial support from an employer may petition for an exemption.

A Message from the Publisher

This eighteenth annual issue of the *Journal of Cooperatives* presents material that will advance the study and practice of cooperative organization and behavior. It has been a collaborative effort of numerous organizations, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, American Agricultural Economics Association, Iowa State University, the University of California Rural Cooperative Development Center, Iowa Alliance for Cooperative Business Development, Purdue University, and CHS Foundation. This year's publication contains articles covering a wide range of economic issues important to farming cooperatives that will engage academic, business, and government professionals.

In this issue, Michael E. Gertler proposes that cooperatives can be used as vehicles for sustainable economic and social development in today's rapidly changing world. His article examines how their unique characteristics and capacities can help them distinguish themselves and establish stronger ties with various constituencies and stakeholders.

Cooperatives facing size-related economies have sought to improve efficiency and competitiveness through consolidation. Michael R. Thomsen and Vernon R. Eidman study whether local cooperatives are actually achieving an efficient scale of operation. Anna Hedberg provides an international perspective in her investigation of whether cost structure can be used as an efficiency argument for the cooperative dairy industry in Sweden.

Today's U.S. farmers are examining group-farming arrangements permitting them to share machinery and labor—arrangements presently more common in other countries. Curtis Stofferahn looks at which social, cultural, economic, and farm structural characteristics influence farmers to support sharing machinery or labor. Finally, Thomas W. Gray contributes an extended review of Jon Lauck's book, "American Agriculture and the Problem of Monopoly: The Political Economy of Grain Belt Farming," about political-economic power related to production agriculture, agri-food firms, and agricultural policy.

We are very grateful to our editorial board and reviewers who have ensured that this issue offers the most relevant, current thinking on cooperative issues.



John R. Dunn, Editor
Director, Cooperative Resources Management Division
Rural Business-Cooperative Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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