

Co-ops Support Local Communities



Cooperative businesses generate hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions in income for their communities while also supporting local causes, according to a series of case studies compiled to help mark October as National Co-op Month.

The 20-plus pages of case studies, put together by the National Co-op Month Planning Committee, show that co-ops take a back seat to no other sector when it comes to making economic and charitable contributions to their communities.

Nearly 3,000 farmer cooperatives account for as many as 300,000 jobs nationwide and a total payroll of more than \$8 billion. Some 270 local, consumer-owned telecommunications cooperatives employ an average of 47 people

each and generate more than \$2 billion in revenues annually.

But that's not all co-ops do. They also have a strong commitment to the communities in which their members live and work. Every day, in every sector, through cash contributions and volunteerism, co-ops support local causes. MMPA and its employees support local causes on a regular basis at all of the cooperative's locations.

At MMPA's Novi Headquarters, employees contribute yearly to the United Way. They have earned the United Way's "Gold Award" level of giving and participation for the past ten years running. The Novi headquarters also coordinates seasonal events and donation opportunities for its employees and nearby businesses to participate in, like blood drives,

health fairs, Toys for Tots donations, adopting families during the holidays and many more.

MMPA's Ovid plant gives back to the community by providing a location and

equipment for the local EMS and fire department to conduct training exercises. The plant also works in cooperation with the village, lending and borrowing equipment. They contribute financially to local agencies in addition to providing financial support and participating in the Ovid Carriage Days Festival.

The MMPA Constantine plant is active in the local community, participating in community festivals and events, as well as purchasing the winning gallon of milk at the local 4-H fair. The plant regularly donates funds to local sports and academic programs, contributes to D.A.R.E. and helped the fire department purchase a defibrillator. To help celebrate the village of Constantine's 175th anniversary, the plant hosted an open house and ice cream social so the community could learn more about MMPA and what happens at the plant.

Cooperatives around the country have demonstrated similar community commitment. Some have even invested in new community businesses. For example:

- A rural electric co-op in South Dakota helped fund an ethanol plant that today adds \$50 million to the area's economy.
- Four credit unions combined to assist low-income New Yorkers with their tax forms, triggering \$2.5 million in tax refunds that otherwise would have gone unclaimed.
- An Arizona food co-op formed a recycling program that now includes approximately 100 businesses and was cited as the best in the state.

MMPA Ranks Among Top 100 Co-ops

Michigan Milk Producers Association ranks 81 on National Cooperative Bank's (NCB) 2003 Co-op 100 list. NCB releases the list every October to coincide with National Cooperative Month as a way to promote the vital role cooperatives play in the U.S. economy.

The list ranks the top 100 U.S. cooperatives by revenue. It includes cooperatives from all industry sectors, including agriculture, energy and communications, lumber and hardware, finance and grocery. Today, nearly 50 percent of the U.S. population is an owner-member of at least one of nearly 50,000 cooperatives. Combined, America's cooperatives generate billions of dollars of revenue every year.



- A co-op printer in Massachusetts donates 10 percent of its profits to the community in support of causes including labor and human rights, the environment, child development and the homeless.

It is no coincidence that co-ops show a special loyalty to their communities. As member-controlled enterprises, co-ops are run largely by the people who live and work in the communities they serve. That gives them a different perspective from businesses owned by distant investors.

Cooperatives serve 120 million members, or four in 10 Americans. They operate in virtually every industry and range in size from small storefronts to Fortune 500 companies.

Despite this diversity, all co-ops have some things in common. They are owned and democratically controlled by the people who use their services or buy their goods. They are motivated by service to their members, not by profit. These characteristics give co-ops an uncommon loyalty and commitment to the communities in which they are located.

“At a time of increasing concern about the national economy, co-ops are creating jobs, income and opportunity in their communities every day,” MMPA President Elwood Kirkpatrick says. “Investor-owned businesses do generate jobs and make charitable contributions. But for co-ops it’s more personal. It’s a critical part of where we work, what we do and why we do it.”

The co-op case studies are available on the National Cooperative Month website at www.coopmonth.coop.

Agriculture Co-ops

More than 3,000 farmer co-ops include a majority of the nation’s 2 million farmers and ranchers. These cooperatives market products, bargain for higher crop prices, manufacture and sell farm equipment and provide credit.

Democratically owned and

run farmer cooperatives also contribute significantly to rural communities. They account for as many as 300,000 jobs and a total payroll of over \$8 billion. They also foster interest in farming as a profession and contribute to many local charities.

KNOCKOUT

TOXIN CHALLENGES EARLY

Bio Cycle Plus enhances the immune system to overcome the negative effects of mycotoxin in feeds.

- Specifically formulated to target gram-negative bacteria (E. coli, salmonella)
- Improves digestion, metabolism and nutrient absorption
- Unique L-form *Lactobacillus* bacteria counters effects of mold related toxins, rendering them harmless

PRODUCER EXPERIENCE REVEALS:

- Drier manure in 24-48 hours
- Stabilized feed consumption
- Stronger estrus after 30 days
- Increased milk production

This spring's wet, cool weather has set the stage for increased mycotoxin levels! Fight those challenges with Bio Cycle Plus.

NorthStar Cooperative
INC.

1.800.631.3510
www.northstarcooperative.com

Select Bio Cycle Plus™ is manufactured by Agrarian Marketing Corporation, Middlebury, IN. Products listed are merely distributed by NorthStar Cooperative and manufactured or processed by the company indicated. All claims, representations, and warranties, expressed or implied, are made by the manufacturer. No representations or warranties, expressed or implied, are made by NorthStar Cooperative, Inc.