

Cooperation among cooperatives

Phil Wells
Anne Reynolds
James Kvallheim
Jim Wadsworth
Frank Blackburn, Ken Astrup
Bob Cohen

Why is it so difficult to get cooperatives to cooperate?

Spain, for example, Mondragon region, cooperatives work together, across sectors.
Similar situations in Italy and other countries.

Here, when there's cooperation, it's seems to be more sector based, not geographically based.

Challenges and Strategies

Cooperatives don't want to lose their identity

How do you define the benefits of cooperation among cooperatives? That it's in their self interest.

Any strategy to increase cooperation would have to show benefits, pay back to participating cooperatives.

Stakeholders and timelines would have to be identified and established to increase cooperation?

Would have to have a goal in mind. A project in mind. Identify opportunities.

Participants would have to have a vested interest in being involved.

Build on existing networks of cooperation such as CCA...how can such relationships, cooperation be extended to other things.

Remove the threat of cooperating., build trust.

Identify the roadblocks, fears, losses, perceptions of cooperating...survey?

Twin Cities food group share education/training programs, newsletter, coordination on job searches, etc.

Networks of business – instead of expanding, a successful business uses its success to grow new businesses, cooperate within the community, rather than go outside the community. Ask themselves what the community needs.

Producer alliances – are identifying opportunities and needs in agriculture; looking for opportunities for investment in agribusiness.

Go to people who are already successful, who don't want to lose what they have, and try to establish cooperation within the community. Be proactive, not only reactive.

Market analysis of the town/community could be a strategy...and then existing businesses might buy in.

Cooperatives themselves, may need to take a lead in promoting cooperation among agribusiness to improve communities, provide benefits.

Role of educator in promoting greater cooperation among cooperatives

Understand the models, to be able to teach them, discuss them

Bring people together, identify consultants, spark the model ideas

Educate boards, members, on the benefits of greater cooperation

Reports/case studies on successful cooperation models, European model, etc., to promote/provide ideas on cooperation.

Go into communities, round table opportunities and facilitate the idea of working together. Have it ongoing (meet regularly). Involve people. Develop goals. Bring in speakers.

Encourage boards to line up speakers from the outside for each board meeting for a year. Force the exposure, have boards to commit to learning more.

Cooperative holding company, CRI, for example, is a model of cooperatives working together, but it hasn't been replicated.