

Cooperative Director

The Farmers Union division's Cooperative Director is vital to the growth of the organization. The Cooperative Director serves in a high-profile role as the division's official liaison in the local community between the Farmers Union division and its members and the cooperative businesses in the area. In that role, the Cooperative Director should do everything possible to foster and nurture the relationships between local cooperatives and the Farmers Union. It would be beneficial if the Cooperative Director was a cooperative board member. Also, the Cooperative Director and the Legislative Director could be easily combined into one office if you are short on participating members.

The division's Cooperative Director is responsible for:

- Recruiting Farmers Union members to run for local cooperative boards.
- Being a good patron of all area cooperatives, especially those with traditional ties to the Farmers Union promoting patronage to other Farmers Union members.
- Encourage cooperative managers, field representatives and members of their boards of directors to attend local Farmers Union meetings.
- Maintaining close contacts with the cooperatives in the community by being sure to:
 - Invite cooperative managers, employees, and directors to attend Farmers Union meetings.
 - Advertise the cooperatives' shareholder meetings and urge Farmers Union members to attend.
 - Report on the cooperatives' shareholder meetings to the Farmers Union division and advise members on the cooperatives' financial statements.
 - Keep the cooperatives advised on the Farmers Union's use of any cooperative check-off funds or education funds.
- Being informed and working on the legislative problems of cooperatives
 - Work with the Farmers Union Legislative Director to explain bills affecting cooperatives. Get the division to act on them.
 - Keep the local cooperatives informed on the work Farmers Union is doing on the cooperatives' behalf in the legislative arena at the state and national levels.
 - Keep the local cooperatives informed on the activities of local Farmers Union members on behalf of cooperatives.
- Observing October as cooperative month and working with the Farmers Union division and the local cooperatives to arrange a proper observance. Contact the National office for ideas.
- Meeting with the boards of directors of your area's cooperatives to discuss common concerns and to explore policies beneficial to Farmers Union members and the cooperative.
- Working with the Education Director to teach members about the cooperative business model.

Helpful Hints for the Cooperative Director

- Be able to explain what cooperative education funds are and show how they are used to

benefit and strengthen both the cooperative and the Farmers Union.

- Be alert for ways the Farmers Union can be of assistance to local cooperatives.
- Make sure that your reports on cooperative activities to your fellow Farmers Union members are complete and accurate but keep them concise as well.
- Have a list of helpful contacts who can assist you and other members with cooperative development questions and ideas.
- Keep a few Farmers Union membership forms and a couple of ballpoint pens in your car and farm trucks. You never know when you will meet a potential new member.