



2023 College Conference on Cooperatives

February 16 – 19, 2023 | Minneapolis, MN

Thursday, February 16

4:00 pm Registration Opens

6:00 pm Pizza Social

Friday, February 17

8:00 am Farmers Union Welcome and Overview

8:30 am Meet your fellow participants

9:00 am Co-ops 101

Kelly Maynard, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives

10:00 am Break

10:15 am Panel Discussion: Co-operation in Agriculture and Beyond

How have cooperative business structures helped the agricultural sector? Hear from representatives from CHS, Farm Credit, and Organic Valley

- Char Vrieze – Co-op Development Specialist, Cooperative Development Services
- Justin Freisz – Senior Director, Global Trade Team Lead, Soybeans, CHS Inc.
- Sai Thao – Senior Lending Officer, Compeer Financial
- Josh Fairfield, Mission & PR Manager, Organic Valley

11:15 am Break

11:20 am Panel Discussion: Farmer Perspectives

Hear from farmers themselves about how their local cooperatives have helped their businesses and their communities thrive

- Anne Schwagerl – Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative
- Tim Velde – Minnesota Grain Farmer
- Cindy & Josh VanDerPol – Pastures a Plenty pork producers
- Angela Dawson – 40 Acre Coop

12:20 pm Break

- 12:30 pm Keynote Luncheon
In partnership with CoMinnesota and hosted by the Ralph K. Morris Foundation
- 1:15 pm Keynote address by Megan Rock – Chief Sustainability Officer and Vice President of Sustainability and Innovation, CHS Inc.
- 2:00 pm Break
- 2:15 pm Decision-making in Cooperatives: How would you Act?
Consider a cooperative director’s perspective. Presented by Dr. Todd Schmit, Cornell University
- 3:15 pm Break
- 3:30 pm Panel Discussion: What is unique about working at a co-op?
What kinds of career opportunities are there in the cooperative space? More than you might realize.
- Margaret Bau – USDA Rural Development
 - Evan Carlson – VP of Marketing, Bongards Creameries
 - Esther Cortez Reyes – Business Analytics Manager, Global Dairy Ingredients, Land O’ Lakes
 - Scott Jax – Director of Strategic Management, SPIRE Federal Credit Union
- 4:30 pm Break
- 5:00 pm Twin Cities Night Out
Dinner on your own – bus will take interested participants to the Mall of America

Saturday, February 18

- 8:00am Load buses for Twin Cities Co-op Tours
- Tours TBD*
- 3:00 pm Return to hotel, break
- 5:00 pm Dinner at Midtown Global Market
- 8:00 pm Showing of To Kill a Mockingbird at Orpheum Theater

Sunday, February 19

- 8:30am Leadership Training TBD
- 10:45am Co-opportunities and Next Steps: What’s out there for Me?
Hear from National Farmers Union staff about what Farmers Union has to offer.
- 11:15 am Conference Wrap Up

So, how did that turn out? Presented by William Nelson, Co-op Hall of Fame Inductee and Chair of the Ralph K. Morris Foundation

12:00 pm Boxed lunch provided; depart for home