



2023 College Conference on Cooperatives

Draft Agenda

Thursday, February 16th - Sunday, February 19th

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-operatives in Agriculture and Beyond

How have cooperative business structures strengthened the agricultural sector?

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

11:15 am Break

11:20 am Panel Discussion: Producer Perspectives

Hear from producers themselves about how their local cooperatives have helped their operations and their communities thrive.

- Anne Schwagerl - Perennial Promise Growers Cooperative
- Tim Velde – Minnesota grain farmer
- Cindy & Josh VanDerPol – Pastures a Plenty
- Angela Dawson – 40 Acre Co-op

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 of Cornell University

3:15 pm

Break

3:30 pm

What is unique about working at a co-op?

What kinds of career opportunities are there in the cooperative space? There are more than you might realize.

- Evan Carlson – VP of Marketing, Bongards Creameries
- Margaret Bau – USDA Rural Development
- Esther Reyes – Land O'Lakes

4:30 pm Break

5:00 pm Twin Cities Night Out

Saturday, February 18

Full day of Twin Cities Co-op tours

Sunday, February 19

9:00 am Leadership Training TBD

10:15 am Break – hotel check out and load vehicles

10:45 am Co-opportunities: What's next?

Hear from National Farmers Union staff about what opportunities Farmers Union and cooperatives have 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