



2023 College Conference on Cooperatives

February 16 – 19, 2023 | Minneapolis, MN

Thursday, February 16

4:00 pm Registration Opens

6:30 pm Pizza Social

Friday, February 17

7:00 am Breakfast

8:00 am Farmers Union Welcome and Overview Meet your fellow participants

9:00 am Co-ops 101

Kelly Maynard – Cooperative Development Specialist, UW Center for Cooperatives

10:00 am Break

10:15 am Panel Discussion: Cooperation in Agriculture and Beyond

How have cooperative business structures helped the agricultural sector?

- 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 (Farm Credit)
- Josh Fairfield – Cooperative Public Relations Manager, CROPP Cooperative | 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 – Grain farmer and Rural Electric Cooperative leader
- 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
Introduction by Megan Wolle – President, CHS Foundation
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?
Dr. Todd Schmit – Professor in the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, 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? Professionals discuss the co-op difference.

- Scott Jax – Net Promoter Program Director, SPIRE Credit Union
- Margaret Bau – Cooperative Development Specialist, USDA Rural Development
- Evan Carlson – Vice President of Marketing, Bongards Creameries
- Esther Cortez Reyes – Business Analytics Manager, Global Dairy Ingredients, Land O’ Lakes

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

7:00 am Breakfast

8:30 am Load buses for Twin Cities Co-op Tours: Seward Co-op and Riverton Community Housing

1:00 pm Lunch at Farmers Kitchen + Bar

2:30 pm Panel Discussion at REI Co-op: Power and Access for All through Consumer Co-ops

- Nate Moore – Retail Sales Manager, REI Co-op
- Barbara Murphy – Director of Marketing, 7500 York Senior Housing Co-op
- George Svedrup – President, 7500 York Senior Housing Co-op
- Evan Sallee – Co-Founder and CEO, Fair State Brewing Co-op

3:45 pm Return to hotel; break

5:00 pm Load busses and depart for Conference Night Out

5:15 pm Dinner at Midtown Global Market – gift cards provided

7:00 pm Load busses for Orpheum Theatre

8:00 pm Showing of *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Orpheum Theater

Sunday, February 19

8:00 am Breakfast

8:30 am Leadership Training: Developing the Future of Rural America, Co-ops, and You

Chuck Lariviere – Professor, Next Gen Ag, UMN Crookston

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

10:45 am 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?

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