

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20250

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH
October 2024

By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS the United States Department of Agriculture recognizes “The Future is Cooperative” as the theme for National Cooperative Month 2024 as an acknowledgement of the cooperative business model’s distinctive ability to promote economic growth in an equitable, inclusive, local, and democratic manner;

WHEREAS more than 30,000 cooperatives—including food, grocery, worker, retail, purchasing, utility, and financial cooperatives—account for more than 2 million jobs and generate more than \$700 billion in annual revenue;

WHEREAS 1,650 agricultural co-ops generate nearly \$300 billion in revenue for America’s farmers from 10,000 business locations in all 50 States;

WHEREAS the cooperative model is sustainable and resilient as evidenced by the fact that 24 percent of agricultural co-ops are more than 100 years old, and 77 percent are more than 50 years old;

WHEREAS rural electrical co-ops who provide affordable power to more than half of the Nation’s landmass and serve 42 million people, including 92 percent of persistent poverty counties, are leading the way as innovators of the country’s clean energy economy;

WHEREAS rural telecommunications co-ops help unlock new markets for rural businesses and improve education and health care services via the expansion of high-speed Internet; and

WHEREAS employee-owned worker cooperatives are the fastest growing sector and present a viable solution to preserving small businesses, especially as owners retire, while providing new economic opportunity to workers;

WHEREAS the cooperative model can address the nation’s housing crisis by providing affordable housing through resident-owned communities, limited equity cooperatives, and other co-op models;

WHEREAS the cooperative model can be central to building local food systems that enables small and mid-sized farmers, business owners, and rural communities to flourish;

WHEREAS the United Nations in its recognition that cooperatives promote the fullest participation in the economic and social development of local communities and all people have invited member states to observe and prepare for 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives;

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the unique and vital role that cooperatives play in improving economic opportunity and advancing equity in America, I, Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture, do hereby proclaim October 2024 as National Cooperative Month. I encourage all Americans to learn more about cooperatives and celebrate cooperatives' economic power with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 27th day of September, the two-hundred forty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America.

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary