

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH
October 2022

By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognizes “**Co-ops Build Economic Power**” as the theme for National Cooperative Month 2022, in that cooperatives are a trusted, democratic, time-tested business model that builds economic power for members and communities; and

WHEREAS more than 30,000 cooperatives—including agricultural, utility, financial services, purchasing, food/grocery, housing, and retail co-ops—operate at 73,000 places of business throughout the U.S., account for more than 2 million jobs, boast about 350 million memberships, and generate more than \$660 billion in annual revenue; and

WHEREAS more than 1,700 agricultural cooperatives operate at 9,500 locations in 50 States, employ 200,000 people, generate more than \$230 billion in revenue from farmer-owned assets of \$111 billion, and earn more than \$9 billion, much of which is returned to producer- member-owners in the form of patronage refunds; and

WHEREAS the cooperative model is sustainable and resilient as evidenced by the facts that 18 percent of ag co-ops are more than 100 years old, and 51 percent are more than 75 years old; and

WHEREAS rural electrical co-ops provide power to three-quarters of the Nation’s landmass and, along with rural telecommunications co-ops, are helping to expand access to high-speed Internet service, thus unlocking new and better markets for rural America and promoting job creation and improved education and healthcare services; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the 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 2022 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 21st day of September 2022, the two-hundred forty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America.

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary