

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

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH
October 2023

By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of
America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS the United States Department of Agriculture recognizes “Owning Our Identity” as the theme for National Cooperative Month 2023 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 more than 1,670 agricultural co-ops generate \$300 billion in revenue for America’s farmers from nearly 10,000 locations of business;

WHEREAS the cooperative model is sustainable and resilient as evidenced by the fact that 23 percent of agricultural co-ops are more than 100 years old, and 54 percent are more than 75 years old;

WHEREAS rural electrical co-ops provide power to more than half of the Nation’s landmass and serve 42 million people, including 92 percent of persistent poverty counties;

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 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 a food system that benefits the many and the most and enables small and mid-sized farmers, business owners, and rural communities to flourish;

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 2023 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 3rd day of October 2023, the two-hundred forty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America.

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary