



Co-op Kudos

Congratulations to [Organic Valley](#) on the debut of their new "[Eggs-cellent Snack](#)".

Cooperative Network Calendar

Aug. 8: Electric Sector meeting, St. Cloud, Minn.

Aug. 23: Dairy Plant & Field Reps Conference, Eau Claire, Wis.
[Learn More...](#)

Sept. 6: Farm Supply, Grain and Fuel Committee meeting, Brainerd, Minn.

Sept. 20: Employment Law Update, Eau Claire, Wis.
[Learn More...](#)

Sept. 21: Minnesota Agricultural Credit Issues Conference, St. Cloud, Minn.



Cooperative Network News

Regional & Federal



Lunch with USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue

Cooperative Network was invited to a private luncheon with USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue, U.S Senator Ron Johnson (R – WI) and Congressman Sean Duffy (R – WI), at the farm of Wisconsin Farm Bureau President Jim Holte in Elk Mound, Wis. Perdue, who is the 31st Ag Secretary, was making his first trip to Wisconsin to meet with farmers as well as others with interest in agriculture and rural Wisconsin.

Cooperative Network thanked Perdue on his efforts to restore low-fat, flavored milk back into the school lunch program and addressed the trade situation with Canada and Mexico. Senator Johnson visited with the crowd after lunch and spoke about his efforts in immigration reform, trade and gray wolves.

Ag Groups meet with Treasury Secretary on tax reform

According to the National Council on Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC), they and the other members of the Agriculture Tax Coalition met last Tuesday with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and other White House staff to discuss tax reform and its potential impacts on the agriculture sector.

During the meeting, NCFC emphasized the importance of maintaining Subchapter T (the framework for the taxation of farmer cooperatives) and also stressed the importance of the Section 199 deduction to cooperatives, farmers and rural communities.

Oct. 18: Wisconsin Co-op Day at the Capitol, Madison, Wis.
[Learn More...](#)

Nov. 14-15: Cooperative Network Annual General Meeting, St. Paul, Minn.

April 30 - May 1, 2018: SCH Conference, Minneapolis, Minn.

Link of the Week



The [University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives](#) seeks to increase understanding and encourage critical thinking about cooperatives by fostering scholarship and mutual learning among academics, the cooperative community, policy makers and the public. Check out this publication: [A Study of Co-op Business Development in Wisconsin and Minnesota: Fourteen Recent Start-ups in the Food and Agricultural Sectors](#)

At Cooperative Network's Resolutions Committee meeting in June, members proposed a new resolution calling for the continuation of the Domestic Production Activity Deduction which is part of Section 199. Cooperative Network members will vote on this and other resolutions at its annual meeting Nov. 14-15 in St. Paul, Minn.



Farm Bill listening session

The House Agriculture traveled to Morgan, Minn. to listen to farmers on what they would like to see in the 2018 Farm Bill. Chairman Mike Conaway (R – Texas) and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (DFL – Minn.) told attendees at Minnesota's Farm Fest that listening sessions like these are less formal than official hearings and more people get to address the committee.

Citizens who spoke brought up numerous issues including keeping nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Farm Bill. Safety net programs like Crop Insurance got a lot of attention from the farmers who spoke. Organic farmers asked committee members to uphold organic standards and to enforce the standards on organic imports. Rural Development – especially support for Rural Broadband – was mentioned by those who spoke.

Cooperative Network Dairy Committee member David Scheevel, who is Chairman of the Board at Foremost Farms USA, addressed changes to the Margin Protection Program (MPP), especially how feed cost are figured. Scheevel also mentioned the problems dairy producers have with finding people to work on dairy farms. Sadie Frericks of Land O'Lakes also said the MPP is not working and costs too much.

Conaway and Peterson want to finish the House Committee on Agriculture's work on the 2018 Farm Bill by the end of 2017.

Wisconsin

Governor Walker signs credit card skimmer and potato bills into law

On Aug. 2, Governor Walker signed 20 bills into law, including three pieces of legislation supported by Cooperative Network.

[Act 54](#), which originated as Senate Bill 133, and its companion Assembly Bill 196 relate to the possession of or use of a credit card scanner installed illegally on fuel pumps. The legislation provides civil immunity for sellers or distributors of fuel that have been targeted by an illegal

credit card scanner. Furthermore, it makes installing or possessing an illegal credit card scanner a felony. Cooperative Network registered in support of and lobbied on this legislation on behalf of member cooperatives involved in fuel distribution. The Wisconsin Farm Supply Committee unanimously endorsed the legislation at their regular quarterly meeting in April.

Act 45 on Late Potato Blight Abatement provides guidelines for the treatment or destruction of potatoes with late blight.

Act 46 regarding Seed Potato Certification, requires a person who plants five or more acres of potatoes in a year to use only seed potatoes that are certified by the University of Wisconsin College of Agricultural and Life Sciences under existing Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) guidelines. The bill allows DATCP to waive the certification requirement if there are not enough certified seed potatoes reasonably available to growers. The bill also requires a person who grows five or more acres of potatoes in a year to keep certain records of each field of seed potatoes planted.

Both pieces of legislation related to potatoes will benefit potato growers and their supporting industries because it will allow Wisconsin grown potatoes to meet generally accepted industry standards established by the majority of potato processors. Potatoes grown in states without the seed certification or late blight abatement standards are valued lower than states with higher standards.

Assembly hearing held on Foxconn special session legislation

The Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy held a hearing on Special Session Assembly Bill 1 on Thursday. The legislation reflects the agreement reached between Governor Walker and Foxconn concerning plans to construct and operate a facility in Wisconsin to construct electronics components. On July 27, Governor Walker and Mark Hogen, Secretary and CEO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Terry Gou, Chairman and CEO of Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd (Foxconn). Under the MOU, Foxconn agreed to invest \$10 billion to construct over six years, a facility in Wisconsin and create up to 13,000 jobs. The state's agreement under the MOU is to provide up to \$3 billion in an economic package which includes refundable tax credits and a construction sales tax exemption for Foxconn. SSAB1 contains numerous provisions reflecting and implementing the agreement, including authorization for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to create one electronics and information technology manufacturing zone. The legislation includes creation of a sales and use tax exemption for the sale of building materials, supplies, and equipment used to construct facilities located in such a zone if the capital expenditures for constructing the facilities may be claimed as income and franchise tax credits as certified by WEDC. The legislation also makes several exceptions for the Foxconn project from environmental and wetland protection requirements. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos has expressed support for moving the legislation ahead as the current legislative priority. Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald has favored moving the special session bill through the Joint Finance Committee instead of other standing committees, and has stated his priority of getting the state budget finished first.

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant." - Robert Louis Stevenson

Minnesota

Electric Sector meeting tomorrow in St. Cloud

Cooperative Network's Electric Sector meeting is set for tomorrow from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in St. Cloud, Minn. Rep. Jim Newberger (R – Becker), Vice-Chair of the Job Growth and Energy Affordability Policy and Finance Committee, and Sen. Andrew Mathews (R – Milaca), Vice-Chair of the Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy Committee, will both provide their perspectives on the 2017 legislative session. As usual, there will be no cost for Cooperative Network members. The cost for non-member cooperatives is \$50 per person. Checks should be made payable to "Cooperative Network" and mailed to 145 University Avenue West, Suite 450, St. Paul, MN 55103-2044. To RSVP, please [click here](#) or call (651) 280-4901.

MDA to address Farm Supply, Grain and Fuel Committee on Sept. 6

Cooperative Network's Farm Supply, Grain and Fuel Committee will meet on Sept. 6 from 3 to 5 p.m. at Madden's Resort in Brainerd. Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will be on hand to discuss their proposed [Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule](#). Several local legislators have also been invited to join us. The meeting is being held in conjunction with Minnesota Statewide Managers' Meeting and more details will become available as we get closer to the date. Please RSVP [here](#) or by phone at (651) 280-4901.

Reminder: MDA pushes back comment deadline on Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule

Please remember that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced that they were pushing back the deadline for comments on their proposed [Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule](#) from Friday, Aug. 11 to Friday, Aug. 25. MDA recently hosted Cooperative Network and several other agriculture groups to explain that the purpose of the Rule is to minimize potential sources of nitrate pollution in the state's groundwater and to protect Minnesota's drinking water. MDA is expected to publish the final draft of the rule in the fall of 2017, with adoption scheduled to take place in the fall of 2018. Cooperative Network plans to submit comments and did so during the Rule's [first comment period](#) in the winter of 2016. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on comments, please let [Cooperative Network](#) know by Monday, Aug. 21 so that they can be considered by the Friday, Aug. 25 deadline.

Reminder: MPCA plans amendments to water quality fee rules

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) recently announced that they are planning [amendments](#) to water quality fees that may increase permit application, annual and additional fees. MPCA contends the

amendments will adjust fees to reflect fairer and more equitable distribution of permit costs among permittees. The MPCA will consider changes to include an inflation factor to enable fees to reflect increasing costs as well as a schedule for phasing in fee changes. Fees affected by the proposed amendments include feedlot permits, environmental review, municipal and industrial wastewater permits, non-contract cooling water permits, stormwater permits, septic systems, variances and laboratory certification. The deadline for comments is Aug. 14, 2017 to the Office of Administration hearings Rulemaking e-Comments [webpage](#).

Featured Event



Cooperative Network's Dairy Plant and Field Reps Conference set for Aug. 23.

Hear from experts on a wide range of issues impacting dairy processors and farmers. Attendees will take away valuable information that can be used by dairy plant and field staff who work directly with farmers. Topics of discussion include changes in regulations, macro-economic trends, new health care options and farm safety.

For more information, or to register, [click here](#).

Cooperative Builder Awards



Applications due Sept. 1 for Cooperative Network's highest honor

Nominations are due Sept. 1 for Cooperative Network's [Cooperative Builder Award](#), our region's highest honor for individuals who have made outstanding contributions at the local, state, or national level to advance the cooperative philosophy and ideals. Honorees will be celebrated at our annual general meeting banquet, Nov. 14, at the InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront, St. Paul, Minn.

Nominees may be co-op members, employees, or supporters. [Previous winners](#) and current [Cooperative Network board members](#) are ineligible. Applications are kept in the selection pool for three years and may be updated with additional information.

Submit your nomination no later than Sept. 1, 2017. Please [contact us](#)

| with any questions.

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