



## Co-op Kudos

Congratulations to **CFS** for hosting a [Coloring Contest](#) in celebration of Co-op Month!

## Cooperative Network Calendar

**Oct. 25: Federal Dairy Issues Forum**, Rochester, Minn.  
[Learn More...](#)

**Nov. 1-3: 20th Annual Farmer Cooperatives Conference**, St. Paul, Minn.  
[Learn More...](#)

**Nov. 14-15: Cooperative Network Annual Meeting**, St. Paul, Minn.  
[Learn More...](#)

**Dec. 5: Co-op Directors Forum**, Baraboo, Wis.  
[Learn More...](#)

**Jan. 11-12: Minnesota Director's Workshop**, Morton, Minn.



## Cooperative Network News

### Happy National Co-op Month!

#### Regional & Federal



[Register today!](#)

#### **Federal Dairy Issues Forum - Oct. 25**

Learn how federal legislation and issues may affect your cooperative and members at Cooperative Network's Federal Dairy Issues Forum. Top industry leaders will provide insight on these issues and answer your questions.

**Who should attend:** Managers, key staff, and directors from dairy cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as others with an interest in the dairy industry and policy.

More information and registration is available [here](#).

#### **The Changing Landscape of Dairy: A Regional Report**

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection hosted The Changing Landscape of Dairy symposium during the recent World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis. The event featured three prominent Land Grant University researchers who provided detailed analysis of current issues facing the dairy industry and how dairy farmers and processors are impacted.

Dr. Mark Stephenson, director of dairy policy at UW-Madison shared data points on how regional production, consumption and processing capacity

[Learn More...](#)

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

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## Link of the Week



October is also National Cyber Security Awareness Month. In recognition of this, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection will highlight a cyber safety tip each day. Visit their [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) accounts to learn more!

have changed in recent times. He used data to demonstrate how improvements to factors such as genetics and management practices have increased milk production per cow drastically. Dr. Andrew Novakovic, professor of agricultural economics at Cornell University reviewed the importance of trade to U.S dairy producers and further discussed changing consumer attitudes and preferences of dairy products and how processors and dairy farmers will need to continue to adapt to meet those demands and change the way they communicate with consumers. Dr. Christopher Wolf, professor of agriculture, food and resource economics at Michigan State University gave farm-level financial data trends and comparisons. Wolf has regularly gathered information on farm-level finance for different size operations in several areas of the country. His trends reveal consistent patterns in the profitability levels of small, mid-size and large dairy farms.

## Wisconsin

### **Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant applications now available**

Groups of Wisconsin farmers can now apply for the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants for 2018. Applications will be accepted through Friday, Nov. 3. The grants are intended to help farmers find solutions best suited for their particular watersheds, based on topography, soil type, types of operations and other factors that differ among regions of the state and work to increase farmer participation in these voluntary efforts.

Applicants must be groups of at least five farmers whose farms are in the same watershed. Each farm must have produced at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenue last year, or \$18,000 over the past three years. Each group must partner with DATCP, the Department of Natural Resources, a county land conservation committee, UW-Extension, or a nonprofit conservation organization, and work with other producers in the watershed to voluntarily reduce runoff pollution from farm operations.

The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will award grants to producer-led groups that focus on ways to prevent and reduce runoff from farm fields and farmsteads. Each group is eligible for up to \$40,000 a year, with a total of \$250,000 available in this round of funding. Applicants must find or contribute matching funds at least equal to the grant request.

Application materials are available [here](#). Applications will be accepted only via email. Farmers with questions should contact Sara Walling at (608) 224-4501 or [sara.walling@wi.gov](mailto:sara.walling@wi.gov).

### **WSTCA Fall Conference**

The Wisconsin Statewide Telephone Cooperative Association held its fall conference in Eau Claire, last week. Board governance and the importance of advocacy were discussed by the directors and managers at the conference. Cooperative Network presented a Wisconsin legislative update which focused on the recently passed state budget.

Scott Behn and Megan Bachman of Mosaic Telecom along with Barron County Sheriff Chris Fitzgerald gave a presentation entitled: "A Cooperative Community: Partnering During a Disaster" which told how Mosaic Telecom and officials from Chetek and Barron County worked together to deal with the tornado that hit the area last May. Included in

the presentation were a number of quotes including:

*"It was unbelievable what Mosaic did for us." – Chris Fitzgerald, Barron County Sheriff*

*"We did it because we are a coop and it was the right thing to do for our community and our members." – Kelly Hoff, Mosaic Telecom board member*

### **Comments submitted on rule limiting manure application in Silurian bedrock area of Wisconsin**

Cooperative Network submitted comments Wednesday to the WDNR on proposed rule changes to NR 151, which deal with agricultural performance standards and prohibitions. Performance standards in the proposed rule are designed to minimize the risk for pathogen delivery to groundwater in the area of "Silurian bedrock" where rock formations are overlain by soils of 20 feet or less. The area impacted is the eastern "spine" of Wisconsin along Lake Michigan. The rule requires various procedures when solid or liquid manure is applied to soils, depending on the amount of soil overlaying the bedrock. Our comments supported the focus of the rule to the Silurian bedrock areas and particularly those areas where the top soil is less than five feet. We did note "some concerns as to how and who will determine depth to bedrock." We also asked for clarification on the ability to winter graze in the targeted area. We noted member concerns regarding the timeframe in which manure must be incorporated. Our comment noted, "The rule's 24-hour timeframe is inconsistent with current standards, which allow 48 or 72 hours for incorporation."

### **Rep. Bob Gannon, Republican of Slinger passes**

State Representative Bob Gannon, Republican of Slinger, representing the 58th State Assembly district, has died of natural causes at the age of 58. He was first elected to the State Assembly in 2014 and was chair of the Committee on Urban Revitalization and vice-chair of the Committee on Children and Families in the State Assembly. Gannon was unopposed in the November 2016 general election. Vacancies in the legislature that occur are filled through special election, so an announcement will be anticipated on the timing for circulation of nomination papers, primary election and the special election to fill the seat for the balance of the 2017-18 term of office.



**CO-OP MONTH | OCTOBER 2017**

### CO-OP STATS

- ▶ Educational cooperatives generate \$1 billion in revenue and \$700 million in value-added income.
- ▶ Educational cooperatives provide 15,000 jobs and pay \$500 million in wages.
- ▶ Daycare cooperatives can save parents up to 85 percent in costs.
- ▶ **Co-op Principle #5:** Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative.

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## Minnesota

### **40 Square Cooperative Solutions to host informational meetings to discuss healthcare options for 2018**

In 2009, [40 Square Cooperative Solutions](#) was founded by Cooperative Network and United Farmers Cooperative to advocate for new health coverage options for farmers and their families. With the departure of multiple insurance carriers in rural Minnesota counties in 2016, the state legislature recognized the need for new health plan solutions. One of Cooperative Network's top priorities during the 2017 legislative session was to advance legislation allowing for the establishment of an agriculture cooperative health coverage option. With the legislative goal having been realized in January, 40 Square Cooperative Solutions has begun the process of holding informational meetings for individuals to learn more about health plan options that will take effect beginning Jan. 1, 2018. Successful meetings were held in Winthrop, Morgan, Le Sueur, and Lake Crystal last month, and the following meetings have been scheduled in the upcoming weeks:

- Oct. 12, 8 a.m. – Rosemount Community Center Auditorium, 13885 South Robert Trail, Rosemount
- Oct. 16, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. – Cabela's (upstairs meeting room), 3900 Cabela Drive NW, Owatonna
- Oct. 18, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. – Holiday Inn (junction of I-90 and U.S. Hwy. 15), 1201 Torgerson Drive, Fairmont

Additional meetings throughout the state are currently being scheduled for the remainder of October and November. If you have any questions about options or upcoming meetings, please contact 40 Square Project Manager Char Vrieze at (507) 479-3724 or [cvrieze@40square.coop](mailto:cvrieze@40square.coop).

### **Supreme Court orders Legislature to provide documentation on available funding**

The legal dispute continues over Governor Mark Dayton's line-item veto of funding for the legislative branch at the end of the 2017 session. After mediation efforts between Dayton and legislative leaders failed several weeks ago, the Minnesota Supreme Court ordered the Legislature to provide an update of how much available money it has left to continue operating. Previous reports showed that the Senate reserve funds would only allow them to continue operating through the end of November, while the House of Representatives indicated they could make it through January of 2018. However, during mediation meetings, the Legislature indicated funding could be drawn from the Legislative Coordinating Commissions budget which could allow them to operate until the Legislature goes back into session on Feb. 20, 2018. It was reported that Dayton exited the last mediation session upon learning that the legislative branch may not have to shutter their operations in advance of the 2018 session after all. These actions led the Supreme Court to order that the Legislature provide a precise report how much money it currently has to operate, which includes paying the salaries and benefits for all 201 legislators, as well as partisan and non-partisan staff. House Speaker Kurt Daudt (R – Crown) and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka (R – Nisswa) have stated throughout the course of the legal battle that their goal is to restore funding for the legislative branch and to not renegotiate budget bills that the governor has previously signed into law. The governor contends his line-item veto was done to bring legislators back to the bargaining table to discuss fiscal and policy differences that he feels could

jeopardize Minnesota's future.

### **Oct. 15 signals start of "Cold Weather Rule"**

Minnesota's "[Cold-Weather Rule](#)" is set to go into effect on Oct. 15 and run through April 15, 2018. The Cold Weather Rule was put into place to ensure homes are heated by their utilities all winter long and to avoid disconnection. To prevent disconnection, customers must contact their utility to establish and maintain a monthly payment plan. The Cold Weather Rule does not cover consumers who use propane, fuel oil, or wood to heat their homes. A provision was included in the Omnibus Energy Policy bill during the 2014 legislative session that included the "Propane Service Standards" language, which requires propane distributors to offer all customers a budget payment plan. For additional information on the Cold Weather Rule, please contact the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission at (651) 296-0406 or (800) 657-3782.

### **Donated items still needed for Co-op PAC auction at Annual Meeting**

Cooperative Network's Annual Meeting will once again feature activities to raise funds for the organization's Minnesota political action committee (Co-op PAC). This year's live auction will take place from 7:30-8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 14, at the InterContinental Hotel in St. Paul, Minn. A silent auction will run through most of the meeting scheduled for Nov. 14-15. Items of all values are welcome and appreciated. Funds raised by the auction are distributed to the legislative campaigns of those who have taken consistent positive legislative actions on behalf of issues of priority for cooperatives. If you prefer to make a cash donation, staff will purchase an auction item on your behalf. Please note that all items and cash contributions must come from individuals, as cooperatives and corporations are prohibited by law from donating to political action committees. Please contact Vicky at (651) 280-4900 or [vicky.chaput@cooperativenetwork.coop](mailto:vicky.chaput@cooperativenetwork.coop) or Patrick at (651) 280-4901 or [Patrick.murray@cooperativenetwork.coop](mailto:Patrick.murray@cooperativenetwork.coop) if you have items to donate or questions about the auction at your earliest convenience.

## Featured Events



[Register today!](#)

### **Cooperative Network Annual Meeting - Nov. 14-15**

The Cooperative Network annual meeting features co-op and industry speakers, networking opportunities, the Cooperative Builder Award banquet, silent and live auctions to support the association's political action committees, action on resolutions, as well as sector and at-large board elections for open seats. It is held in November each year for member cooperative managers, employees, and directors. Partner organizations are also invited to attend portions of the event.

More information and registration is available [here](#).

1 South Pinckney Street, Suite 810 | Madison, WI 53703  
145 University Avenue West, Suite 450 | St. Paul, MN 55103

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145 University Avenue West, Suite 450 | St. Paul, MN 55103