



Cooperatives and Alternative Food Systems Initiatives

Manuscript Deadline: August 1, 2013, for consideration for peer review.

Papers will be published in the winter 2014 issue (Jan.–Mar. 2014)

Guest editors: Colin Anderson (Canada), Henk Renting (Europe), Jim Barham (USA), Lynda Brushett (USA), and Tom Gray (USA)

Cooperatives have historically been, and still are, important institutions in the global economic landscape, and have strong roots in food and agriculture. Conventional agriculture cooperatives work to increase the marketing power of farmers by pooling their products to achieve economies of scale. Traditional consumer cooperatives focus on increasing buying power to meet member needs. Recently there has been a surge in cooperative alternative food systems initiatives in the form of cooperative food hubs, cooperative local food networks, cooperative farmers' markets and box schemes, worker-owned food cooperatives, cooperative value chains, and cooperative food buying clubs. These initiatives represent new forms of collective engagement of consumers, producers and other actors as "food citizens" within "civic food networks," the social/solidarity economy, and a "civic agriculture." Cooperative food systems initiatives are differentiated from conventional cooperatives in that they:

- 1) reconnect farmers and consumers in more direct and meaningful ways;
- 2) sell to local and regional markets and through alternative networks such as CSAs, farm-to-school programs, farmers' markets; or
- 3) promote food production, distribution, and consumption processes that are environmentally sound or socially just.

They are organized by farmers (such as producer co-ops or farmer groups), by consumers (such as buying clubs or consumer cooperatives), by both (multistakeholder co-ops), or by workers and through cooperation to pursue social, economic, and political ends that are challenging to realize as individuals.

[JAFSCD](#) welcomes submissions on a wide range of topics (and geographic areas) that explore the intersection of cooperatives with alternative food systems initiatives. We promote research and [accessible scholarship](#) that inform thinking and practice and that draw on diverse interdisciplinary and community-practitioner perspectives. We seek reports of qualitative and quantitative studies, case studies, review articles, reflective essays, and commentaries. We also encourage explorations of collaborative initiatives that may not be formally incorporated using a cooperative structure, but that embody the cooperative values and principles.

Papers could include topics related to:

- Consumer cooperatives, farmer co-ops, worker co-ops, cooperative food hubs, fair-trade co-ops, multi-stakeholder co-ops, cooperative farms
- Challenges, barriers, best practices, key tools, strategies
- How these initiatives embody new forms of "food citizenship" and alternative governance structures that bridge the production-consumption divide
- The role of technology (e.g. websites, new media, video, RFID tags, matchmaking/logistics software platforms)
- Innovative organizational structures and governance
- Policy, advocacy, or regulatory issues
- Economic, social, and/or environmental impact assessments
- Economic viability or new institutional economics
- How these initiatives are incubators of social innovation and inform changes in wider society
- Cooperation among cooperatives and cooperatives' support organizations
- Transformative learning in cooperatives
- Organizational design to protect social justice goals
- Concerns about gender, race, culture, class, and justice
- The relationships between farmers, consumers and workers in and across cooperatives
- The relationship between cooperatives and food democracy, food justice, and food sovereignty
- Social capital or social embeddedness

Authors interested in responding to this call will need to **send a query form and draft manuscript** to editor in chief Duncan Hilchey (duncan@newleafnet.com) prior to submission for peer review. Submission guidelines and the query form may be found at <http://www.AgDevJournal.com/submissions.html>.

