

**A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF LOCAL FOOD NETWORKS USING THE  
OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE MODEL:  
CHARACTERIZATION, DIAGNOSTICS AND MANGERIAL IMPLICATIONS  
FY 2010**

Individually, food co-ops are experiencing challenges, often confronting them on their own. Some are combining efforts with other co-ops to address issues such as software improvements, resulting in parallel, duplicate efforts to solve common problems without full understanding of systemic and lifecycle issues associated with this particular organizational format. The focus of this research was one particular version of web-based local food networks organized under a co-operative agreement among producer and consumer members. Most often referred to as the “Oklahoma” model, it was pioneered almost 13 years ago in Oklahoma by Robert Waldrop. This system provides online ordering capabilities and local distribution for producer and consumer members. Its unique system builds on the co-operative principles, emphasizes personalization/source identification, and preserves free-market conditions of producer independence and consumer choice. The Oklahoma model has been or is being adopted by other local foods co-ops throughout North America. Most came on line within the past four to five years, with several more possibly in the early stages of planning and organization. Given the success/continued operations of the Oklahoma Food Co-op and other early adopters of this model, and the increasing number of new organizations considering this operational model, this study provided a thorough analysis of the co-op structure to support development and growth of existing co-ops and facilitate further adoption.

**FINAL REPORT**

**Contact:**

Dr. Steven Pharr  
Independent Market Research Consultant  
402-972-7711  
[stevenpharr@gmail.com](mailto:stevenpharr@gmail.com)

**“A Systematic Analysis of Local Food Networks Using the Oklahoma Coop Model:  
Characterization, Diagnostics, and Managerial Implications”  
2010 FSMIP Grant # 12-25-G-1119**

**Final FSMIP Project Report: June 30, 2013**

## **The Oklahoma Co-op Model**

The Oklahoma co-op model has experienced a period of rapid expansion, with several co-ops adopting this operational format. Individually, co-ops are experiencing challenges, often confronting them on their own. Some are combining efforts with other co-ops to address issues such as software improvements (Food Co-op Software), resulting in parallel, duplicate efforts to solve common problems without full understanding of systemic and lifecycle issues associated with this particular organizational format. Previous research on other co-op models such as farmers' markets, CSA's, and traditional retail-based organizations have limited applicability to the Oklahoma model due to major differences in producer and consumer member behavior patterns.

Consumer research based on traditional retail models has limited applicability to the Oklahoma model due to the stark differences in consumer purchase patterns. It is business as usual for the consumer when local products are purchased at a traditional or co-op retail facility -- frequent purchase trips, wide product assortments, short travel times, daily and extended hours of operation, fast purchase decisions, small quantities. In the case of the Oklahoma model, purchases are infrequent, often larger quantities, limited pickup locations, single day and limited hours of operation. All of this increases consumer commitments to food storage capacity, knowledge of food storage practices to preserve quality and freshness, meal planning activity, co-op communications and decisions, and in many cases volunteer activities in co-op management and/or operations.

Producers operating under the Oklahoma model also exhibit important behavioral differences when compared to retail-based co-operatives and CSA's. Producers supplying retail-based co-operatives, wholesalers, and/or institutional buyers typically assemble bulk shipments for these intermediary customers who in turn, complete the sorting processes for individual consumers. Producers under the Oklahoma model assemble individual consumer orders that vary widely in terms of both variety of products and quantities of each product ordered. In the case of CSA operations, while these producers do assemble weekly deliveries for each individual customer (shareholder), all customers receive the same assortment of products that week, and the assortment and quantities are typically determined by the producer, not the customer. Therefore, the producer's job is much more complex and time intensive under the Oklahoma model.

Past research specific to the Oklahoma model has focused on consumer expectations or producer expectations in specific market areas, or case studies of one or two individual co-ops, thus limiting its applicability to other co-ops using the same operational format.

## **FOCUS AND APPROACH OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH**

### **Oklahoma Co-op Model Research Focus**

The focus of this research was one particular version of web-based local food networks organized under a co-operative agreement among producer and consumer members. Most often referred to as the "Oklahoma" model, it was pioneered almost 13 years ago in Oklahoma by Robert Waldrop (Oklahoma Food Co-op). This system provides online ordering capabilities and local distribution for producer and consumer

members. Its unique system builds on the co-operative principles, emphasizes personalization/source identification, and preserves free-market conditions of producer independence and consumer choice. The Oklahoma model has been or is being adopted by more than 15 other local foods co-ops throughout North America, most coming on line within the past four to five years, with several more possibly in the early stages of planning and organization. Given the success/continued operations of the Oklahoma Food Co-op and other early adopters of this model, and the increasing number of new organizations considering this operational model, a thorough analysis of this co-op structure was needed to accelerate development and growth of existing co-ops and facilitate further adoption.

### **A Multi-Method, System-Wide Approach**

This research fills a significant gap in information and understanding of the systemic and lifecycle issues associated with the Oklahoma model at a critical time of rapid expansion and adoption of this particular organizational format.

In contrast to previous research that has focused on individual member groups or individual co-op organizations, this research focused on a system-wide evaluation, including producer, consumer, and management member groups across multiple co-ops currently using the Oklahoma model. A thorough and systematic analysis of the Oklahoma model, and the organizations that use it, will access the collective experience and knowledge associated with this model. Inclusion of multiple co-ops will enable identification of common member expectations, benefits and challenges. Conjoint analysis was used to evaluate participants' relative value and tradeoff patterns across relationship characteristics in the context of alternative relationship/membership agreement configurations. The conjoint results will enable co-ops to increase member benefits and satisfaction levels through more effective management of member relationships.

Longitudinal analysis of membership size, product assortments, volunteer participation rates, service fee structures, delivery schedules, etc. across participating co-ops and years of operations will allow for generalizations regarding co-op lifecycle patterns, activity and financial benchmarks, as well as associated strategic/managerial recommendations. In addition to a more thorough understanding of the general Oklahoma co-op model, this approach will also allow for individual co-op assessments and comparisons with other co-ops using the same organizational structure. And finally, this project represents the next step in a logical progression of planning, implementation, and operational analysis and feedback, involving the systematic assessment of ongoing operations to identify systemic issues, standards, benchmarks, and management guidelines for new and existing organizations using the Oklahoma local foods model.

### **Project Objectives and Associated Research Activities**

#### **Objective 1**

Identify producer, consumer and management expectations and perceived benefits and barriers to co-op participation in the context of each member group's relationships with other member groups within their co-op organization across all local foods co-ops operating under the Oklahoma co-op model.

Developed protocols for, and conducted 50+ depth interviews with producers, consumers, and managers to identify member expectations, and perceived benefits and drawbacks of participation in their food co-op system, as well as possible strategies for improvement. These interviews, lasting 90 to 120 minutes each, included members from eight of the ten participant local foods co-ops throughout the US and Canada.

FPC staff members were responsible for planning, execution and analysis. Co-op technical staff delivered interview announcements and invitations via email to each member group.

### **Objective 2**

Assess the relative importance of, and preference patterns for individual relationship characteristics, and perceived participation outcomes, for each member group.

Separate producer, consumer and management online surveys were developed and executed to characterize the presence, incidence, and strength of member expectations, benefits, problems, and possible improvement strategies. Six of the eight co-ops participated in this round of surveys.

FPC staff members were responsible for planning, execution and analysis of these surveys. Co-op technical staff delivered survey announcements and invitations via email to each member group. All co-op members will be asked to complete the relevant producer, consumer, or management survey.

### **Objective 3**

Identify member group preference patterns for alternative combinations of relationship characteristics and acceptable tradeoff patterns across individual relationship characteristics.

Separate producer and consumer choice analysis surveys were developed and executed to quantify the relative importance of individual relationship attributes and tradeoff values in the context of alternative relationship configurations. Members involved in management roles completed the member group survey that best matches their non-management co-op status as a producer or consumer member. All six of the remaining co-ops participated in this survey.

FPC staff members were responsible for planning, execution and analysis of the surveys. Co-op technical staff delivered survey announcements and invitations via email to each member group. All co-op members were asked to complete the relevant producer or consumer survey.

### **Objective 4**

Evaluate co-op operations data including membership levels, proportions of producers and consumer members, width and depth of product offerings, order cycle volumes for number of orders placed with unit and dollar sales volumes, order/delivery frequencies, number and location of producer drop-off and consumer pickup sites, etc.

Longitudinal transaction data was received from five of the six remaining participating co-ops. Three of these co-ops also provided quarterly financial data for the same time periods. This data was analyzed to identify customer purchase patterns and categorize them as Best, Good, and Other customer types. Financial data is being combined with the transaction history data to identify possible lifecycle patterns, threshold financial and activity levels, and identification of benchmark values.

Co-op staff assembled and delivered electronic copies of transaction histories for all past order cycles and corresponding quarterly financial statements. FPC staff members were responsible for all data analysis and interpretation.

### **Objective 5**

Develop managerial guidelines for existing local food co-ops operating under the Oklahoma co-op model, and improved training materials and mentoring guidelines to facilitate the launch of new co-op organizations throughout the country.

Based upon the results Steps 3 and 4, managerial guidelines were developed for consumer and producer member recruitment and retention strategies. FPC staff members were responsible for data analysis and interpretation.

### **Objective 6**

Disseminate system-wide research findings to all participating local foods co-ops operating under the Oklahoma model, as well as co-op-specific results and recommendations to the individual participant co-operatives.

Preliminary project results were presented to co-op management in a webinar setting with emphasis on the results of the depth interviews, the co-op member expectations and the choice analysis surveys, and the transaction history data.

## **CONTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE AGENCY COOPERATORS**

No other public or private agency cooperators participated in the work performed under this FSMIP research project grant. Only University of Nebraska Food Processing Center staff and members of the participating co-ops were involved in this research effort.

## **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Member Perceptions and Expectations Overview (Survey #1)**

Overall, co-op members consider food quality & safety, environmental stewardship, and commitment to local community and economic development to be very important.

They also expect their co-ops to embrace these issues, and that through their operations, to make positive contributions as well.

In general, most co-op members are satisfied with their co-op experience as indicated in the tables below:

Member Satisfaction Levels Means <sup>1</sup> and % Satisfied/Very Satisfied						
Members	Products	Order Process	Pickup Process	Communication	Education	Co-op Overall
Consumer	5.57/60%	5.69/61%	5.48/59%	5.87/69%	4.11/12%	5.69/65%
Producer	4.26/30% <sup>2</sup>	5.69/63%	5.20/54%	5.84/72%	3.86/9%	5.23/48%
Manager	5.59/52%	4.18/30%	4.95/48%	4.40/28%	NA	4.68/25% <sup>3</sup> 3.77/19% <sup>4</sup>
<sup>1</sup> Seven point scales with 1=Very Dissatisfied and 7= Very Satisfied <sup>2</sup> Producer product assessment focused on satisfaction with their own product sales <sup>3</sup> Manager co-op assessment focused on the co-op's impact on its membership and the community <sup>4</sup> Manager assessment of co-op's ability to meet its operational challenges; 1=Very Ineffective to 6=Very Effective						

Member Perceptions of Participation Costs					
Members	Annual Fee – Value <sup>1</sup>	Annual Fee – High/Low <sup>2</sup>	Consumer Commissions <sup>2</sup>	Producer Commissions <sup>2</sup>	Commissions Fairness <sup>3</sup>
Consumer	5.57/60%	10/78/12	10/63/27	20/64/16	22/60/18
Producer	6.27/79%	15/79/6	6/74/20	9/72/19	30/63/7
<sup>1</sup> Seven point scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7= Strongly Agree; % Agree/Strongly Agree <sup>2</sup> % responding Low/About Right/High <sup>3</sup> % responding Producers Pay More/Same/Consumers Pay More					

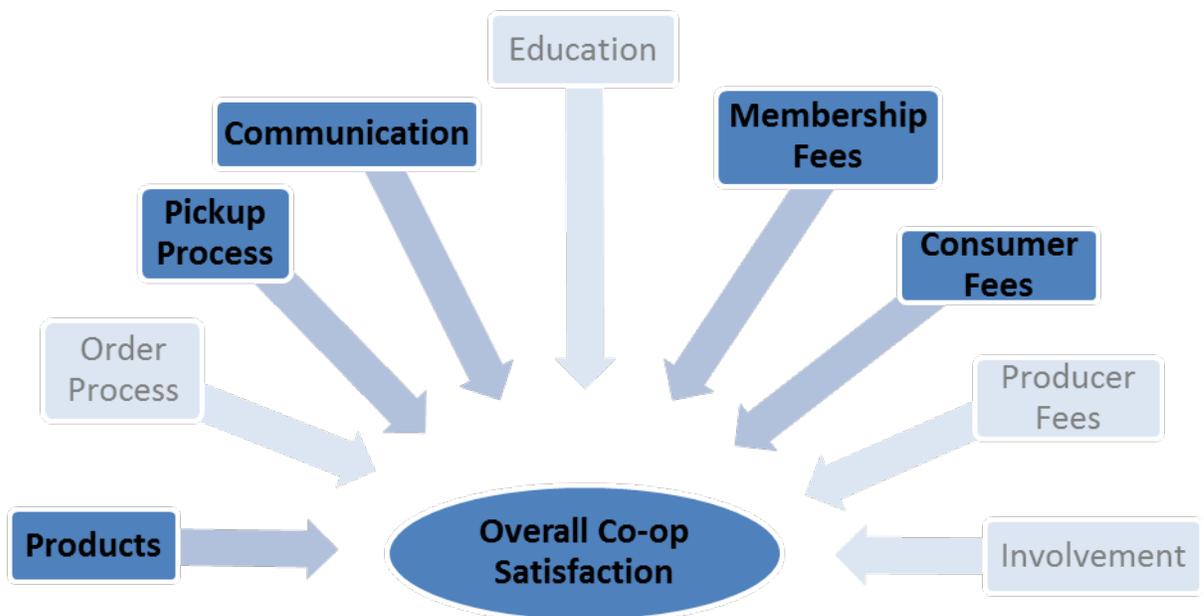
Although satisfaction levels are generally high, not all are highly satisfied and the resulting patterns are important to note:

- Compared to dissatisfied, satisfied Consumer members:
  - Are more likely to be active consumer members
  - Purchase more often (higher purchase frequencies)
  - Spend more of their HH food budget at the Co-op
- These are your Best customers!

- Less satisfied/dissatisfied customer are more likely to;
  - Make smaller dollar purchases
  - Purchase a smaller variety of products
  - Purchase less frequently
  - Become inactive members

In order to improve satisfaction levels, and increase participation rates, we need to understand what drives consumer and producer satisfaction levels. There are many facets of the consumer's and producer's co-op relationship but which ones have the greatest impact in satisfaction level?

- From the consumer perspective, the following figure identifies the various facets of the consumer-co-op relationship; those that significantly impact consumer satisfaction levels are highlighted
- The primary drivers of consumer satisfaction levels include
  - The product offerings
  - Convenience of the Pick-up process
  - Co-op communications
  - The costs of participation
    - Membership fees
    - Consumer commission rates



- From the producer perspective, the next figure identifies the various facets of the producer-co-op relationship; those that significantly impact producer satisfaction levels are highlighted
- The primary drivers of producer satisfaction levels include
  - The producer's sales levels
  - The speed and ease of listing products and taking orders
  - The speed and ease of the drop-off/distribution process
  - Producer commission rates



- If the co-op fails to meet consumer and producer expectations on these key aspects of the co-op relationship, it may likely lose them
- If the co-op can improve consumer or producer satisfaction levels by improving these conditions, they may likely increase their level of co-op participation

- To “fix” it, we must change the “right” things!

### Choice Analysis Overview (Survey #2)

Based on Survey 1 results, the following five attributes were included in the “Co-op Participation” package evaluated. In addition, multiple levels, or alternatives were included for each attribute as follows:

1. Co-op Membership Fees
  - Annual fees of \$150, \$125, \$100, \$75, or \$50
  - Single/one time lifetime fees of \$500, \$400, \$300, or \$200
2. Commission rates on customer purchases and producer sales
  - 17%, 15%, 12%, 10%, 8%, or 5% commission fees
3. Order Cycle Frequency per month in the peak growing season (late spring to early fall) and the off season (late fall to early spring)
  - 1 peak/1 off, 2 peak/1 off, 2 peak/2 off, 4 peak/1 off, 4 peak/2 off, or 4 peak/4 off
4. Volunteer Expectations for number of required volunteer hours, volunteer compensation/credits, and ability to buyout of one’s volunteer obligation
  - 0 HRS required/No Credits, 0 HRS required/Credits, 10 HRS required/No Credits, 10 HRS required/Credits, 20 HRS required/No Credits, 20 HRS required/Credits, \$40 Buy Out/Credits, or \$80 Buy Out/Credits
5. Order Drop-off for Producers and Pick-up for Consumers where options vary by the number of days allowed (1 or 2 day events), length of the pick-up/drop-off window (1, 2, 4 hours), and time of day (Morning, Afternoon or Evening)
  - Producer options
    - 1Day/1hour on Delivery Day Morning, 1Day/2hoursDDM, 2Days/1hour previous Evening and 1hourDDM, 2Day/2hoursE2hoursDDM, the co-op picks their products up at the FarmGate
  - Consumer options
    - 1Day/2hours, 1Day/4hours, 2Days/2&2hours, 2Days/4&2hours, 2Days/4hours&\$5 fee for second day appointment, \$10 fee for home delivery, or \$20 fee for home delivery

“Utility Scores” are calculated for each level of each attribute based on producer and consumer response patterns – see consumer and producer tables below:

Average Utility Values For Heavy, Medium and Light/Nonuser Consumers										
		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.25	0.60	0.84	1.18	1.89	0.46	0.71	1.02	1.61
	Heavy	0.16	0.65	0.89	1.19	1.84	0.61	0.85	1.14	1.78
	Medium	0.26	0.58	0.83	1.16	1.82	0.44	0.66	1.04	1.54
	Light/Non	0.29	0.61	0.83	1.18	2.01	0.43	0.70	0.97	1.61
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			

Commissions	All	0.19	0.51	0.70	1.01	0.96	1.18			
	Heavy	0.26	0.69	0.84	1.07	1.02	1.28			
	Medium	0.16	0.40	0.66	0.93	0.91	1.12			
	Light/Non	0.18	0.53	0.66	1.03	0.96	1.17			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.02	1.57	1.28	0.99	0.94	0.41			
	Heavy	1.13	1.32	1.11	0.82	0.66	0.28			
	Medium	1.30	1.80	1.43	1.00	0.92	0.37			
	Light/Non	0.69	1.46	1.20	1.10	1.12	0.52			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	1.55	1.91	0.81	0.96	0.36	0.69	1.03	0.59	
	Heavy	1.46	1.88	0.69	0.88	0.31	0.67	1.07	0.65	
	Medium	1.66	2.07	0.89	1.05	0.41	0.71	1.05	0.65	
	Light/Non	1.47	1.74	0.80	0.89	0.33	0.64	1.02	0.53	
		1DY/2HRS	1DY/4HRS	2DY/2&2	2DY/4&2	2DY/4&\$5APPT	\$10Deliver	\$20Deliver		
Pickup Options	All	0.85	1.14	0.89	0.78	0.62	0.88	0.60		
	Heavy	0.84	1.08	0.70	0.63	0.62	0.83	0.62		
	Medium	1.09	1.25	0.97	0.78	0.59	0.87	0.50		
	Light/Non	0.63	1.07	0.92	0.87	0.66	0.93	0.71		

Average Utility Values For Heavy, Medium and Light/Nonuser Producers										
		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.29	0.51	0.64	0.83	1.71	0.45	0.56	0.77	1.16
	Heavy	0.35	0.54	0.66	1.02	1.95	0.24	0.44	0.50	0.84
	Medium	0.34	0.53	0.68	0.84	1.59	0.38	0.48	0.73	1.13
	Light/Non	0.08	0.42	0.53	0.63	1.84	0.86	0.92	1.14	1.58
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			
Commissions	All	0.17	0.63	0.90	1.71	1.49	1.81			
	Heavy	0.20	0.67	0.82	2.30	2.12	1.57			
	Medium	0.18	0.66	1.10	1.76	1.50	2.03			
	Light/Non	0.11	0.51	0.34	0.99	0.84	1.39			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.06	1.48	1.31	0.60	0.62	0.37			
	Heavy	1.57	1.55	1.82	0.33	0.47	0.03			
	Medium	1.00	1.49	1.17	0.63	0.65	0.49			
	Light/Non	0.73	1.36	1.23	0.76	0.69	0.35			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	0.90	1.03	0.66	0.65	0.44	0.41	0.65	0.33	
	Heavy	0.84	0.61	0.54	0.33	0.38	0.23	0.38	0.22	
	Medium	0.88	0.95	0.69	0.74	0.40	0.44	0.61	0.36	
	Light/Non	1.02	1.69	0.68	0.68	0.64	0.49	1.03	0.33	
		1DY/1DDM	1DY/2DDM	2DY/1E1DDM	2DY/2E2DDM	FarmGate				
Drop-off Options	All	0.75	1.02	0.72	0.76	0.63				
	Heavy	0.66	0.87	0.88	1.06	0.32				
	Medium	0.79	0.96	0.72	0.61	0.73				

	Light/Non	0.74	1.33	0.54	0.93	0.64				
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- Green shaded cells highlight the most acceptable levels of each attribute for each subgroup (Heavy, Medium and Light/Non User categories)
- High degree of agreement across user categories and among producers and consumers
- More is not always better, i.e., order frequency and drop-off/pick-up options
- Our goal is to increase Total Utility of the “Participation Package”, i.e.:
  - Extending consumer pick-up windows from 2 to 4 hours
  - Extending producer drop-off windows from 1 to 2 hours
  - Having 2 order cycles per month during the peak season for both consumers and producers
- Regarding changes to the “Participation Package”, co-ops must determine:
  - What changes they can and cannot make
  - What changes they will and will not make
  - And then make adjustment to increase total utility

### Co-op Transaction Data Overview

For this analysis, the level of measurement is an individual transaction, specifically:

- The customer/producer product level, i.e.
  - Customer1 buys:
    - Ground beef from Producer20
    - T-bone from Producer20
    - Radishes from Producer10
    - For a total of three unique transactions
- We know WHO bought WHAT from WHO, but we don’t know “how much”:
  - It could have been:
    - 1 lb. or 20 lbs. of ground beef
    - 1 T-bone or 6 T-bones
    - 1 bunch or 5 bunches of radishes
- First 50 months of operations for all five co-ops combined
  - 250,000+ individual transactions

### Co-op Transaction Data Summary

- Steady growth in # of participating consumer and producer members over the first 4 years of operations – through period 50
  - Consumer/Producer ratio:
    - Slow growth periods 1 to 20 from 2 to 3 Consumers/Producer
    - Leveled off since period 20 at 3.0 to 3.3
- Producer sales increasing:
  - Number of transactions up from 15 to 30 per order cycle
  - Sales revenue up from \$125 to \$275 per order cycle
- Very stable customer purchase patterns:

- Assortment – 7 to 9 “things” per order cycle
- Average order value - \$70 to \$80 per order cycle
- Growth coming from increasing numbers, not penetration
- Approximately 35% to 40% of new customers are “Samplers”, since they:
  - Join the co-op
  - Make 1, 2, or 3 purchases
  - Leave and never return
  - Assumption is they decided that purchasing through the co-op is not for them, possibly due to;
    - Cost issues
    - Product assortment issues
    - Convenience issues

### **Overall Research Results & Implications**

Best customers are the most satisfied consumer members

- Compared to dissatisfied, satisfied Consumer members:
  - More likely to be active consumer members
  - Purchase more often (more order cycles)
  - Spend more of their HH food budget at the Co-op
- Most important drivers of consumer member satisfaction are;
  - Product offerings
  - Convenient pick-up process
  - Co-op communications
  - Costs of participating in the co-op
- Most important drivers of producer member satisfaction are;
  - Product sales levels
  - Convenient ordering process
  - Convenient drop-off process
  - Producer fees

Possible Growth Strategies

- Demand-side:
  - More consumer members
    - Increased density in current geographic market
    - Geographic market expansion
  - Bigger consumer market baskets
    - Purchase wider assortments
    - Spend more of their HH food budget at co-op
  - OR BOTH
- Supply-side:
  - Increase # of participating producers
  - Increase existing producer capacity
  - OR BOTH

- But what's a producer's or consumer's incentive to join the co-op or increase their level of participation?
- Beyond just the products, how do you make your consumers happy?
  - Pickup process – convenient pickup times and more frequent order cycles
  - Affordable Fees – annual and purchase commissions
  - Timely and effective communication – keep them in the know
- For producer members, the basic cost/return tradeoff:
  - Reduced time and effort
    - More efficient posting of product offerings
    - More efficient order preparation process
  - Reasonable commissions
    - Change numbers, perceptions, both?
  - Increased sales - mostly up to them?
- And for most everyone – more face time/community

## **Project Evaluation**

The stated goal of this project is to help accelerate the development and growth rates of emerging and existing Oklahoma model local food co-operatives, and in the long term, multiple quantifiable measures exist to evaluate the impact of this project including, but not limited to, changes in sales and membership rates, levels of member satisfaction, volunteer levels, volunteer work hours, number of suppliers (producers), product assortment and quantity, number of consumer complaints, etc.

In the short term, however, the desired outcomes include a better understanding of co-op relationships and the key drivers of member satisfaction and participation levels. Once co-ops are able to identify problem areas (not just symptoms), and the most effective strategies for alleviating these problems, they will be better able to take corrective action and minimize unintended consequences. For example, several co-ops believed that an effective way to increase consumer satisfaction and participation was to increase the number of order cycles per month. One co-op has moved to four order cycles per month year round. Others have gone to multiple order cycles year round. The results of the choice analysis, however, suggest that these order cycle frequencies to be counter-productive, and that a 2 peak and 1 off season sequence would be more acceptable for most consumer members.

Short term project evaluation, therefore, is focused on improved understanding of the main drivers of member satisfaction and participations, and identifying effective strategies for improvement, as has been demonstrated in the results section of this report.

## **Additional Observations**

Throughout this project, it has become abundantly clear the extent to which these co-op organizations depend upon volunteer labor. Volunteers are generally available when co-op operations begin, however, the burden often falls to a relatively small core of individuals and without new volunteers, burnout will set in. One of the original

participating co-ops and one or two prospective co-ops we were recruiting ceased operations, in large part due to the volunteer dilemma. Several others indicated that they “get by”, but they do fear for the day when their “regulars decide that they have had enough; it’s someone else’s turn”.

Only a few co-ops feel that they have ample volunteers, and only one has yet to issue a general plea to their membership to recruit additional volunteers. Volunteer compensation programs are being used by many of the co-ops, but they do vary in their generosity. Many co-ops have moved to paid employees in their key management and operations positions. Once again, these efforts vary from a single part-time manager position to full-time paid general manager, and full or part-time positions for treasure, IT, accountant, drivers, warehouse managers, etc.

The bottom line is that these organizations are pretty much consumed with day-to-day operations. Long-term planning is often limited to an annual or semiannual event, and anything that detracts from day-to-day operations requires the one resource that is often in the shortest supply – time. New initiatives and other major changes in operations place strains on an already overburdened workforce.

Participation in this project asked a lot of these co-ops and their staffs. While a few remained committed and involved, many had great difficulty finding time for project tasks. Most were unable to commit resource according to a specific timetable but did manage to fit them in when possible. A few co-ops were basically two or three person operations with virtually no time to spare. The burden of continued participation was evident, with fewer survey reminders sent by some co-ops on the first survey and even fewer on the second survey. Financial and transactions data required even more time and effort and several participating co-ops dropped out at this stage of the research process.

Overall, we asked a lot of these co-ops and each did their best to respond, and for this we are most appreciative of their efforts. We feel that a great deal of useful information has come out of this project, albeit less than perfect, and that more will be coming in the following months.

## **CURRENT AND FUTURE BENEFITS**

As stated in the **Project Evaluation** section above, the short term benefits include a better understanding of co-op relationships and the key drivers of member satisfaction and participation levels derived from a system-wide analysis of the Oklahoma co-op model. Once co-ops are able to identify problem areas (not just symptoms), and the most effective strategies for alleviating these problems, they will be better able to take corrective action, make proactive moves to ensure the sustainability of the co-op, and minimize unintended consequences.

The long term benefit will be realized when implementation of these strategies come to fruition. Expected long term outcomes include increased sales and membership rates, levels of member satisfaction, volunteer levels, volunteer work hours, number of suppliers (producers), product assortment and quantity, etc.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **Short Term Research Opportunities**

Additional analysis of the financial impact of:

- Increased numbers of active consumer members vs. the impact of increasing consumer order size/larger market baskets averaging 10, 12, or 15 transactions per consumer per order cycle
- The impact of greater geographic density of consumer members on co-op efficiency
- Increasing numbers of consumer and producer members – diseconomies of scale/limits to co-op scope and/or scale
- Alternative volunteer strategies involving mandatory volunteer requirements, volunteer buyout options, and volunteer compensation systems

### **Long Term Research Opportunities**

Two to three follow-up research on “Oklahoma” co-ops to assess the extent to which research findings and managerial guidelines have been implemented the associated impacts on co-op performance metrics.

## **PROJECT BENEFICIARIES**

The primary beneficiaries are the 6 to 8 participating local foods co-ops operating under the Oklahoma web-based co-op model, which include:

- Eight individual local foods co-ops
  - Order cycle/monthly sales ranging from \$5,000 up to \$80,000
- Approximately 1200+ currently active consumer members
  - Average order size of \$70 to \$80
  - 7 to 9 transactions/product types purchased per order
- Approximately 500+ currently active producer members
  - Average producer sales per order cycle of \$250 to \$275
  - 25 to 30 transactions per order cycle
  - Most are small to medium operators with non-farm sources of income
  - Primary/sole source of income for relatively few producers/processors

Secondary beneficiaries include 10+ additional local foods co-ops operating under the Oklahoma web-based co-op model which tend to be:

- Younger/recently launched local foods co-ops
  - Order cycle/monthly sales typically less than \$8,000

- Fewer currently active consumer members
- Fewer currently active producer members
- But with significant growth potential

Finally, the local communities where the co-op members reside:

- Smaller rural communities that benefit from farm operators able to stay on the land – both current and future generations
- Retaining local food sources to serve local consumers/co-op members
- Improved local food security through increasing local food supply and local market mechanisms

## **PROJECT CONTACTS**

Dr. Steven Pharr  
Independent Market Research Consultant  
402.972.7711  
[stevenpharr@gmail.com](mailto:stevenpharr@gmail.com)

Mark A. Hutchison, Senior Manager  
The Food Processing Center  
University of Nebraska - Lincoln  
402.472.0381  
[Mhutchison1@unl.edu](mailto:Mhutchison1@unl.edu)

# The Food Processing Center

## Food Innovation and Entrepreneurship



Preliminary Results from *A Systematic Analysis of Local Food Networks Using the Oklahoma Coop Model*



FOOD  
FROM  
THOUGHT

# This project was made possible by a grant from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

- 2010 FSMIP Grant # 12-25-G-1119: “A Systematic Analysis of Local Food Networks Using the Oklahoma Coop Model: Characterization, Diagnostics, and Managerial Implications”
- Matching funds and in-kind support from The UNL Food Processing Center
- The cooperation and in-kind matching support from you, our participating co-ops; Cross Timbers, High Plains, Idaho’s Bounty, Iowa, Nebraska, Niagara Local, Oklahoma and Ottawa Valley Food Cooperatives



# Webinar Overview

- Summary of Project Activities
- Perceptions & Expectations Survey Results
- Choice Analysis Survey Results
- Co-op Operations Analysis Results
- Implications for Co-op Management
- Q&A



# Summary of Project Activities

- **In-depth Interviews**
  - 60+ interviews; consumer, producer, manager; 75 – 120 minutes
- **Member Perceptions & Expectations Survey**
  - consumer, producer and manager versions; 1300+ responses
- **Choice Analysis Survey**
  - consumer and producer versions; 700+ responses
- **Co-op Operations Analysis**
  - 250,000+ co-op transactions and 100+ financial statements
- **End of Project Webinar**
  - presentation to Co-op management; preliminary findings, Q&A
- **Final Analysis and Reports**
  - in progress; due by June 30, 2013



# Member Perceptions & Expectations

## Member Satisfaction Levels Means<sup>1</sup> and % Satisfied/Very Satisfied

Members	Products	Order Process	Pickup Process	Communication	Education	Co-op Overall
Consumer	5.57/60%	5.69/61%	5.48/59%	5.87/69%	4.11/12%	5.69/65%
Producer	4.26/30% <sup>2</sup>	5.69/63%	5.20/54%	5.84/72%	3.86/9%	5.23/48%
Manager	5.59/52%	4.18/30%	4.95/48%	4.40/28%	NA	4.68/25% <sup>3</sup> 3.77/19% <sup>4</sup>

1 Seven point scales with 1=Very Dissatisfied and 7= Very Satisfied

2 Producer product assessment focused on satisfaction with their own product sales

3 Manager co-op assessment focused on the co-op's impact on its membership and the community

4 Manager assessment of co-op's ability to meet its operational challenges; 1=Very Ineffective to 6=Very Effective



**FOOD  
FROM  
THOUGHT**

# Member Perceptions & Expectations

## Member Perceptions of Participation Costs

Members	Annual Fee – Value <sup>1</sup>	Annual Fee – High/Low <sup>2</sup>	Consumer Commissions <sup>2</sup>	Producer Commissions <sup>2</sup>	Commissions Fairness <sup>3</sup>
Consumer	5.57/60%	10/78/12	10/63/27	20/64/16	22/60/18
Producer	6.27/79%	15/79/6	6/74/20	9/72/19	30/63/7

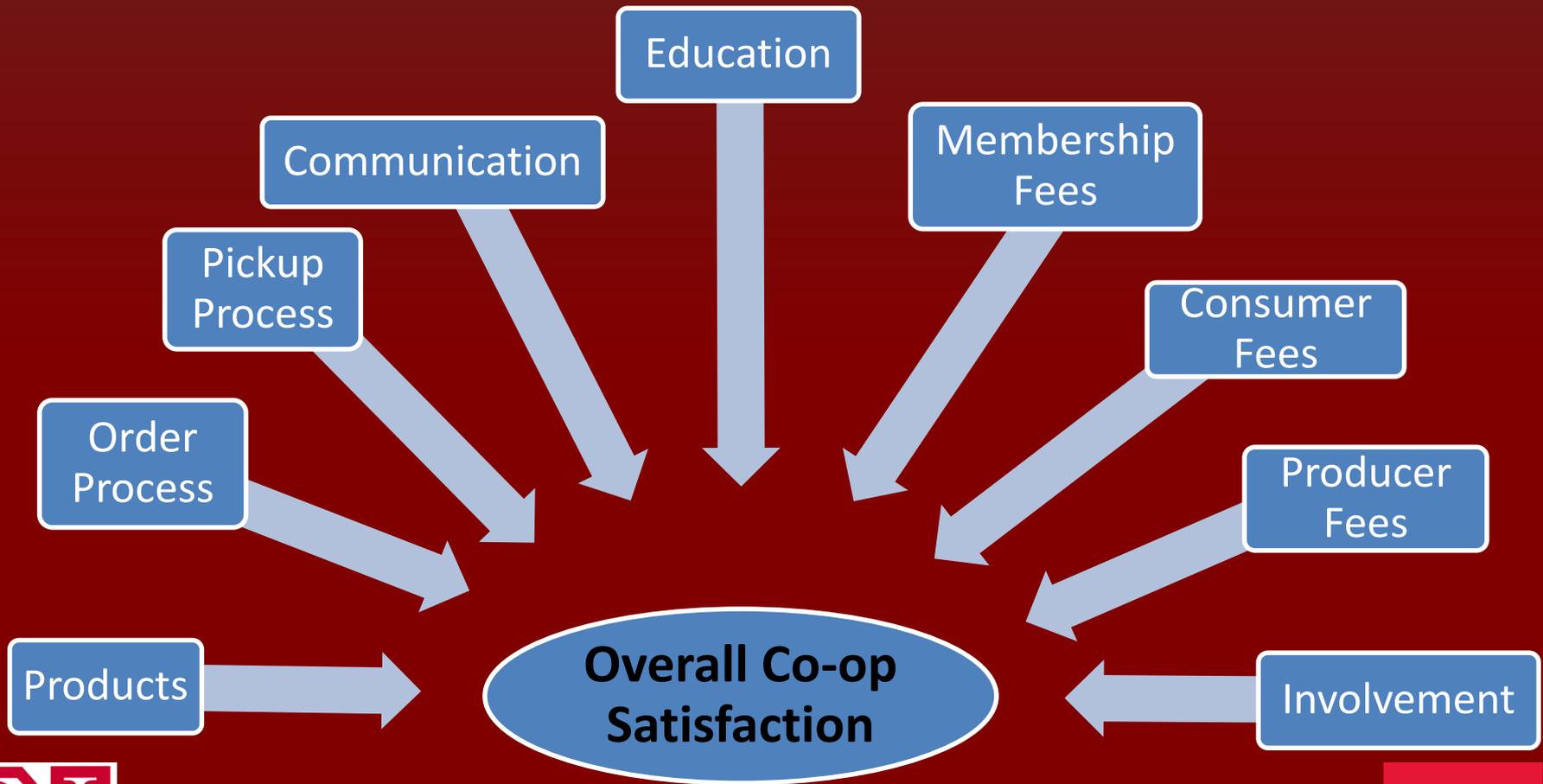
1 Seven point scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7= Strongly Agree; % Agree/Strongly Agree

2 % responding Low/About Right/High

3 % responding Producers Pay More/Same/Consumers Pay More

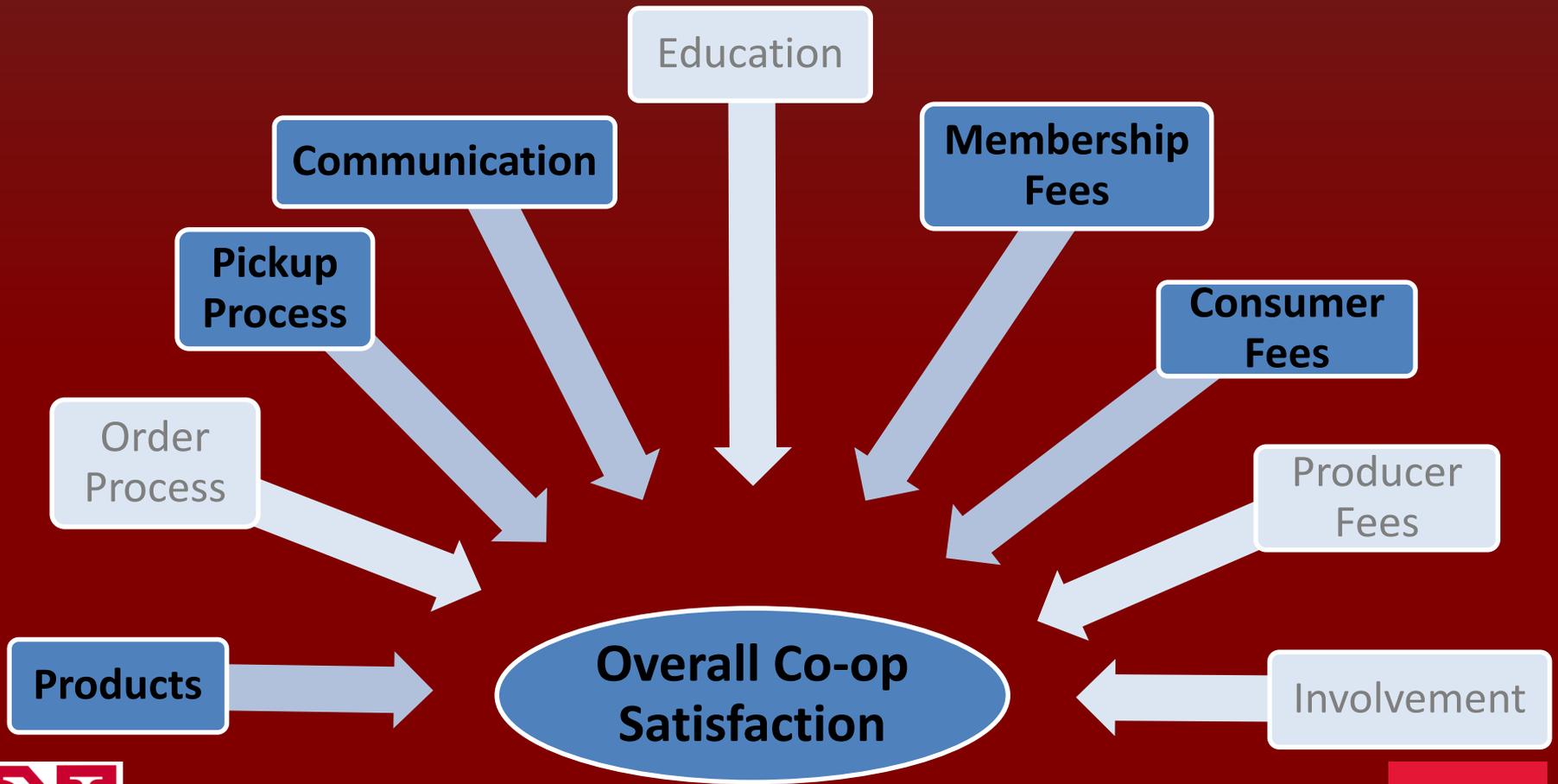
# Influences on Consumer Satisfaction

(Hypothesized/Conceptual Model)



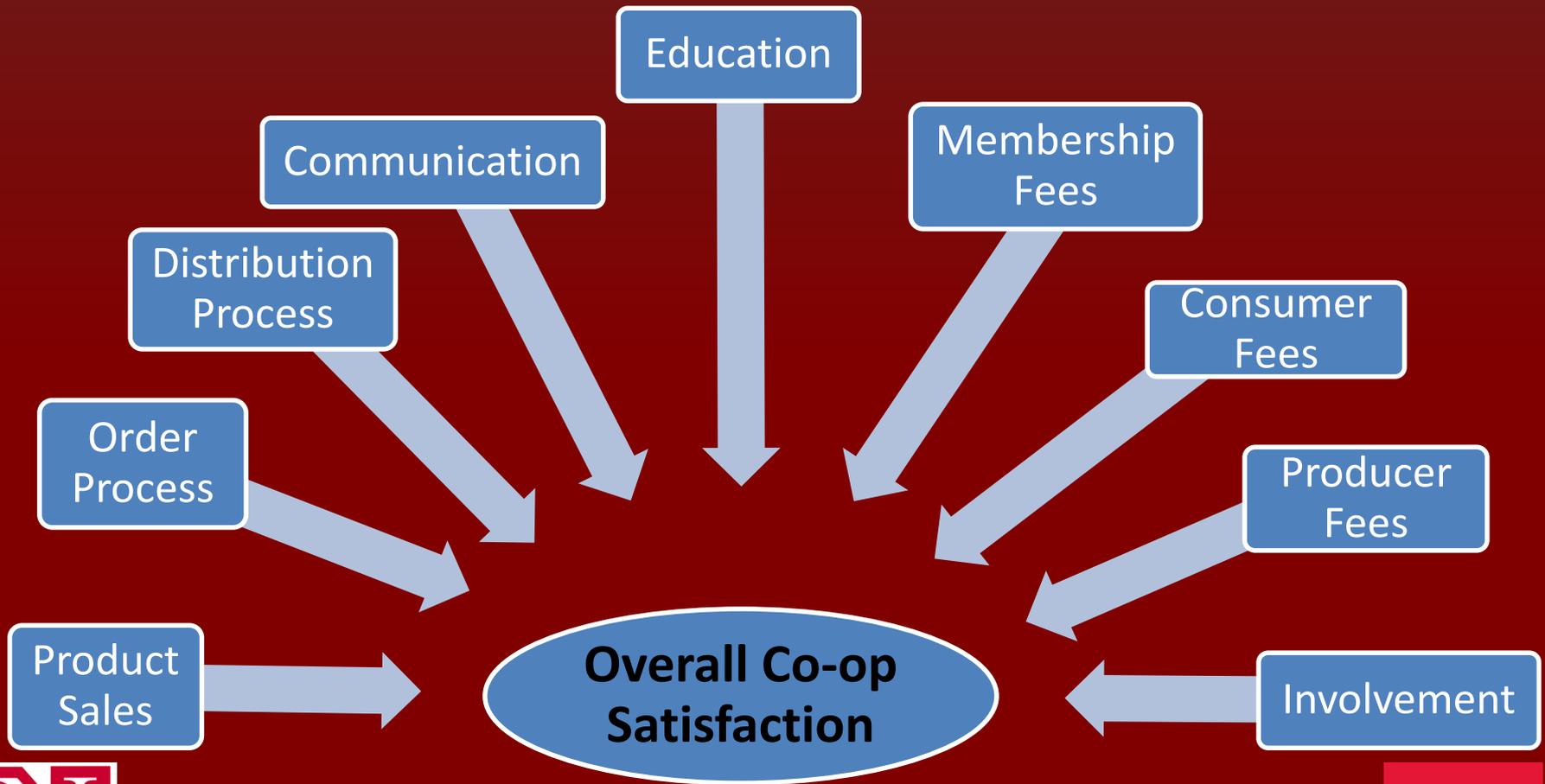
# Drivers of Consumer Satisfaction

(Significant Effects Based on Regression Analysis)



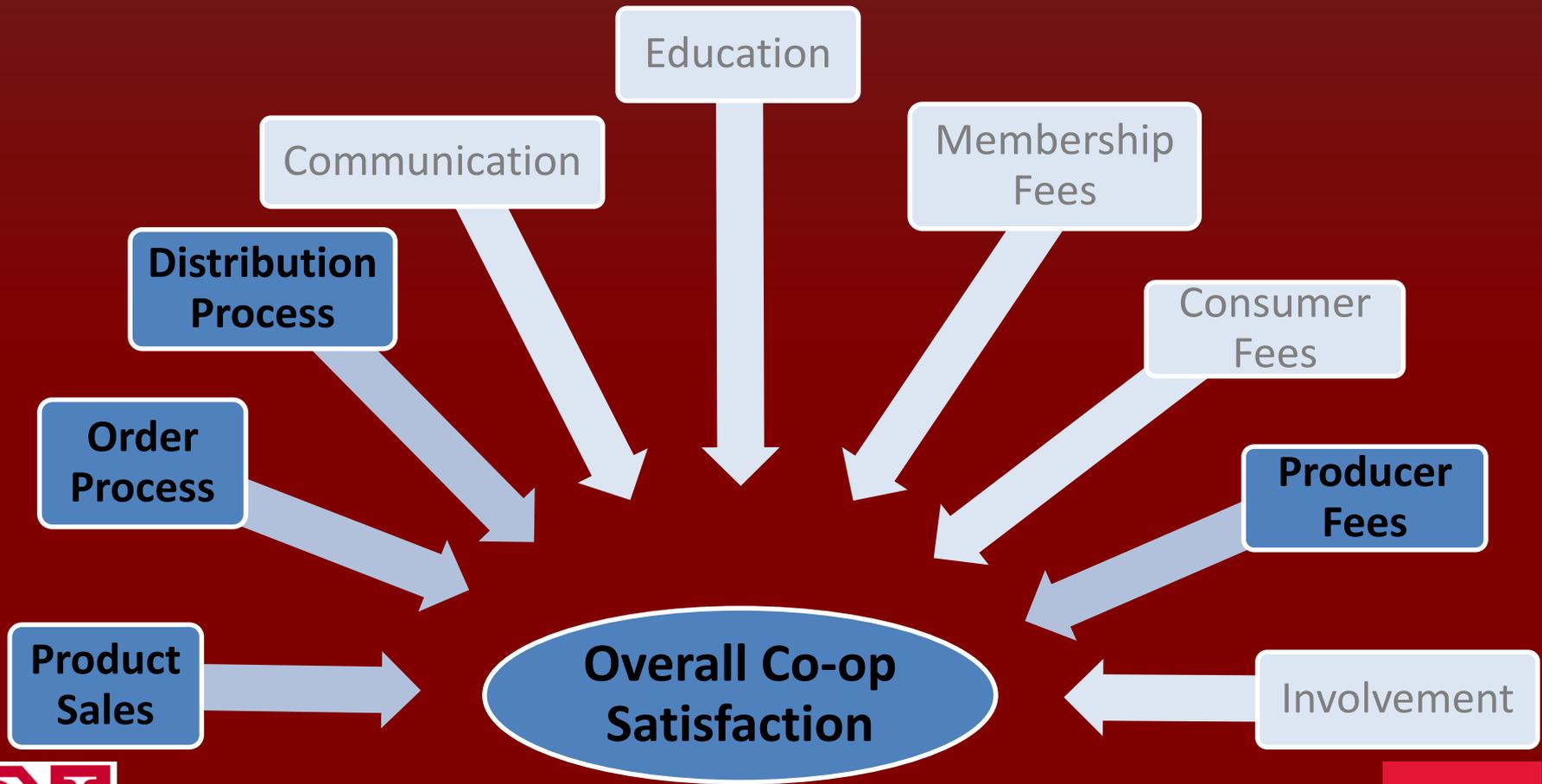
# Influences on Producer Satisfaction

(Hypothesized/Conceptual Model)



# Drivers of Producer Satisfaction

(Significant Effects Based on Regression Analysis)



# Choice Analysis Overview

## 5 Attributes of Co-op Participation Evaluated

- Co-op Membership Fees
- Commissions
- Order Cycle Frequency
- Volunteer Expectations
- Order Drop-off/Pick-up

Consumer and Producer surveys

Calculate “Utility Scores” for each level of each attribute



# Consumer Attribute Evaluations by Volunteer Status

Average Utility Values For Consumers Who Do and Do Not Volunteer

		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.25	0.60	0.84	1.18	1.89	0.46	0.71	1.02	1.61
	Yes	0.26	0.57	0.75	1.08	1.79	0.45	0.67	0.91	1.44
	No	0.24	0.63	0.87	1.20	1.91	0.49	0.73	1.07	1.69
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			
Commissions	All	0.19	0.51	0.70	1.01	0.96	1.18			
	Yes	0.27	0.69	0.85	1.17	0.93	1.05			
	No	0.17	0.46	0.65	0.94	0.99	1.25			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.02	1.57	1.28	0.99	0.94	0.41			
	Yes	1.11	1.42	1.27	0.80	0.81	0.41			
	No	1.01	1.59	1.23	1.03	0.93	0.38			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	1.54	1.91	0.81	0.96	0.36	0.69	1.03	0.59	
	Yes	0.94	1.65	1.08	1.15	0.59	0.90	1.03	0.75	
	No	1.74	2.02	0.74	0.91	0.29	0.62	1.05	0.57	
		1DY/2HRS	1DY/4HRS	2DY/2&2	2DY/4&2	2DY/4&\$5APPT	\$10Deliver	\$20Deliver		
Pickup Options	All	0.85	1.14	0.89	0.78	0.62	0.88	0.60		
	Yes	1.10	1.06	0.75	0.66	0.57	0.71	0.57		
	No	0.80	1.15	0.91	0.81	0.63	0.93	0.59		



# Consumer Attribute Evaluations by Volunteer Status

Average Utility Values For Consumers Who Do and Do Not Volunteer

		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.25	0.60	0.84	1.18	1.89	0.46	0.71	1.02	1.61
	Yes	0.26	0.57	0.75	1.08	1.79	0.45	0.67	0.91	1.44
	No	0.24	0.63	0.87	1.20	1.91	0.49	0.73	1.07	1.69
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			
Commissions	All	0.19	0.51	0.70	1.01	0.96	1.18			
	Yes	0.27	0.69	0.85	1.17	0.93	1.05			
	No	0.17	0.46	0.65	0.94	0.99	1.25			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.02	1.57	1.28	0.99	0.94	0.41			
	Yes	1.11	1.42	1.27	0.80	0.81	0.41			
	No	1.01	1.59	1.23	1.03	0.93	0.38			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	1.54	1.91	0.81	0.96	0.36	0.69	1.03	0.59	
	Yes	0.94	1.65	1.08	1.15	0.59	0.90	1.03	0.75	
	No	1.74	2.02	0.74	0.91	0.29	0.62	1.05	0.57	
		1DY/2HRS	1DY/4HRS	2DY/2&2	2DY/4&2	2DY/4&\$5APPT	\$10Deliver	\$20Deliver		
Pickup Options	All	0.85	1.14	0.89	0.78	0.62	0.88	0.60		
	Yes	1.10	1.06	0.75	0.66	0.57	0.71	0.57		
	No	0.80	1.15	0.91	0.81	0.63	0.93	0.59		



# Choice Analysis Utility Scores

Utility Score - amount of satisfaction received from a specific level of an attribute

- Membership Fee of \$75/year = 1.18
- Assume our “Participation Package” consists of:
  - Membership Fee of \$75/year
  - Consumer Commission of 15%
  - 1 Order Cycle per month
  - All members must Volunteer at least 10 hours per year
  - Pickup orders on delivery day during a specific 2 hour period



# Consumer Attribute Evaluations by Volunteer Status

Average Utility Values For Consumers Who Do and Do Not Volunteer

		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.25	0.60	0.84	1.18	1.89	0.46	0.71	1.02	1.61
	Yes	0.26	0.57	0.75	1.08	1.79	0.45	0.67	0.91	1.44
	No	0.24	0.63	0.87	1.20	1.91	0.49	0.73	1.07	1.69
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			
Commissions	All	0.19	0.51	0.70	1.01	0.96	1.18			
	Yes	0.27	0.69	0.85	1.17	0.93	1.05			
	No	0.17	0.46	0.65	0.94	0.99	1.25			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.02	1.57	1.28	0.99	0.94	0.41			
	Yes	1.11	1.42	1.27	0.80	0.81	0.41			
	No	1.01	1.59	1.23	1.03	0.93	0.38			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	1.54	1.91	0.81	0.96	0.36	0.69	1.03	0.59	
	Yes	0.94	1.65	1.08	1.15	0.59	0.90	1.03	0.75	
	No	1.74	2.02	0.74	0.91	0.29	0.62	1.05	0.57	
		1DY/2HRS	1DY/4HRS	2DY/2&2	2DY/4&2	2DY/4&\$5APPT	\$10Deliver	\$20Deliver		
Pickup Options	All	0.85	1.14	0.89	0.78	0.62	0.88	0.60		
	Yes	1.10	1.06	0.75	0.66	0.57	0.71	0.57		
	No	0.80	1.15	0.91	0.81	0.63	0.93	0.59		



# Choice Analysis Utility Scores

$$\text{Total Utility} = 1.18 + .51 + 1.02 + .81 + .85 = 4.37$$

If this is your current package:

- What you can and cannot do
- What you will and will not do
- Change attribute levels to increase Total Utility



# Consumer Attribute Evaluations by Volunteer Status

Average Utility Values For Consumers Who Do and Do Not Volunteer

		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.25	0.60	0.84	1.18	1.89	0.46	0.71	1.02	1.61
	Yes	0.26	0.57	0.75	1.08	1.79	0.45	0.67	0.91	1.44
	No	0.24	0.63	0.87	1.20	1.91	0.49	0.73	1.07	1.69
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			
Commissions	All	0.19	0.51	0.70	1.01	0.96	1.18			
	Yes	0.27	0.69	0.85	1.17	0.93	1.05			
	No	0.17	0.46	0.65	0.94	0.99	1.25			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.02	1.57	1.28	0.99	0.94	0.41			
	Yes	1.11	1.42	1.27	0.80	0.81	0.41			
	No	1.01	1.59	1.23	1.03	0.93	0.38			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	1.54	1.91	0.81	0.96	0.36	0.69	1.03	0.59	
	Yes	0.94	1.65	1.08	1.15	0.59	0.90	1.03	0.75	
	No	1.74	2.02	0.74	0.91	0.29	0.62	1.05	0.57	
		1DY/2HRS	1DY/4HRS	2DY/2&2	2DY/4&2	2DY/4&\$5APPT	\$10Deliver	\$20Deliver		
Pickup Options	All	0.85	1.14	0.89	0.78	0.62	0.88	0.60		
	Yes	1.10	1.06	0.75	0.66	0.57	0.71	0.57		
	No	0.80	1.15	0.91	0.81	0.63	0.93	0.59		



# Consumer Attribute Evaluations by Usage Rate

Average Utility Values For Heavy, Medium and Light/Nonuser Consumers										
		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.25	0.60	0.84	1.18	1.89	0.46	0.71	1.02	1.61
	Heavy	0.16	0.65	0.89	1.19	1.84	0.61	0.85	1.14	1.78
	Medium	0.26	0.58	0.83	1.16	1.82	0.44	0.66	1.04	1.54
	Light/Non	0.29	0.61	0.83	1.18	2.01	0.43	0.70	0.97	1.61
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			
Commissions	All	0.19	0.51	0.70	1.01	0.96	1.18			
	Heavy	0.26	0.69	0.84	1.07	1.02	1.28			
	Medium	0.16	0.40	0.66	0.93	0.91	1.12			
	Light/Non	0.18	0.53	0.66	1.03	0.96	1.17			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.02	1.57	1.28	0.99	0.94	0.41			
	Heavy	1.13	1.32	1.11	0.82	0.66	0.28			
	Medium	1.30	1.80	1.43	1.00	0.92	0.37			
	Light/Non	0.69	1.46	1.20	1.10	1.12	0.52			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	1.55	1.91	0.81	0.96	0.36	0.69	1.03	0.59	
	Heavy	1.46	1.88	0.69	0.88	0.31	0.67	1.07	0.65	
	Medium	1.66	2.07	0.89	1.05	0.41	0.71	1.05	0.65	
	Light/Non	1.47	1.74	0.80	0.89	0.33	0.64	1.02	0.53	
		1DY/2HRS	1DY/4HRS	2DY/2&2	2DY/4&2	2DY/4&\$5APPT	\$10Deliver	\$20Deliver		
Pickup Options	All	0.85	1.14	0.89	0.78	0.62	0.88	0.60		
	Heavy	0.84	1.08	0.70	0.63	0.62	0.83	0.62		
	Medium	1.09	1.25	0.97	0.78	0.59	0.87	0.50		
	Light/Non	0.63	1.07	0.92	0.87	0.66	0.93	0.71		

# Producer Attribute Evaluations by Volunteer Status

Average Utility Values For Producers Who Do and Do Not Volunteer

		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.29	0.51	0.64	0.83	1.71	0.45	0.56	0.77	1.16
	Yes	0.35	0.52	0.64	0.82	1.58	0.43	0.58	0.87	1.28
	No	0.21	0.51	0.65	0.85	1.90	0.47	0.52	0.62	0.99
		17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%			
Commissions	All	0.17	0.63	0.90	1.71	1.49	1.81			
	Yes	0.26	0.72	1.06	1.62	1.28	1.49			
	No	0.05	0.50	0.67	1.85	1.79	2.29			
		1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4			
Order Frequency	All	1.06	1.48	1.31	0.60	0.62	0.37			
	Yes	1.27	1.77	1.50	0.60	0.53	0.28			
	No	0.76	1.05	1.03	0.59	0.75	0.49			
		0HRS/NCr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/NCr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/NCr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr	
Volunteer	All	0.90	1.03	0.66	0.65	0.44	0.41	0.65	0.33	
	Yes	0.67	0.88	0.70	0.73	0.52	0.45	0.70	0.33	
	No	1.22	1.25	0.60	0.53	0.33	0.35	0.58	0.33	
		1DY/1DDM	1DY/2DDM	2DY/1E1DDM	2DY/2E2DDM	FarmGate				
Drop-off Options	All	0.75	1.02	0.72	0.76	0.63				
	Yes	0.85	0.98	0.55	0.71	0.46				
	No	0.61	1.07	0.95	0.83	0.86				



# Producer Attribute Evaluations by Usage Rate

Average Utility Values For Heavy, Medium and Light/Nonuser Producers										
		\$150/year	\$125/year	\$100/year	\$75/year	\$50/year	\$500life	\$400life	\$300life	\$200life
Membership Fee	All	0.29	0.51	0.64	0.83	1.71	0.45	0.56	0.77	1.16
	Heavy	0.35	0.54	0.66	1.02	1.95	0.24	0.44	0.50	0.84
	Medium	0.34	0.53	0.68	0.84	1.59	0.38	0.48	0.73	1.13
	Light/Non	0.08	0.42	0.53	0.63	1.84	0.86	0.92	1.14	1.58
			17%	15%	12%	10%	8%	5%		
Commissions	All	0.17	0.63	0.90	1.71	1.49	1.81			
	Heavy	0.20	0.67	0.82	2.30	2.12	1.57			
	Medium	0.18	0.66	1.10	1.76	1.50	2.03			
	Light/Non	0.11	0.51	0.34	0.99	0.84	1.39			
			1 & 1	2 & 1	2 & 2	4 & 1	4 & 2	4 & 4		
Order Frequency	All	1.06	1.48	1.31	0.60	0.62	0.37			
	Heavy	1.57	1.55	1.82	0.33	0.47	0.03			
	Medium	1.00	1.49	1.17	0.63	0.65	0.49			
	Light/Non	0.73	1.36	1.23	0.76	0.69	0.35			
			0HRS/Ncr	0HRS/Cr	10HRS/Ncr	10HRS/Cr	20HRS/Ncr	20HRS/Cr	\$40BO/Cr	\$80BO/Cr
Volunteer	All	0.90	1.03	0.66	0.65	0.44	0.41	0.65	0.33	
	Heavy	0.84	0.61	0.54	0.33	0.38	0.23	0.38	0.22	
	Medium	0.88	0.95	0.69	0.74	0.40	0.44	0.61	0.36	
	Light/Non	1.02	1.69	0.68	0.68	0.64	0.49	1.03	0.33	
			1DY/1DDM	1DY/2DDM	2DY/1E1DDM	2DY/2E2DDM	FarmGate			
Drop-off Options	All	0.75	1.02	0.72	0.76	0.63				
	Heavy	0.66	0.87	0.88	1.06	0.32				
	Medium	0.79	0.96	0.72	0.61	0.73				
	Light/Non	0.74	1.33	0.54	0.93	0.64				

# Co-op Transaction Data

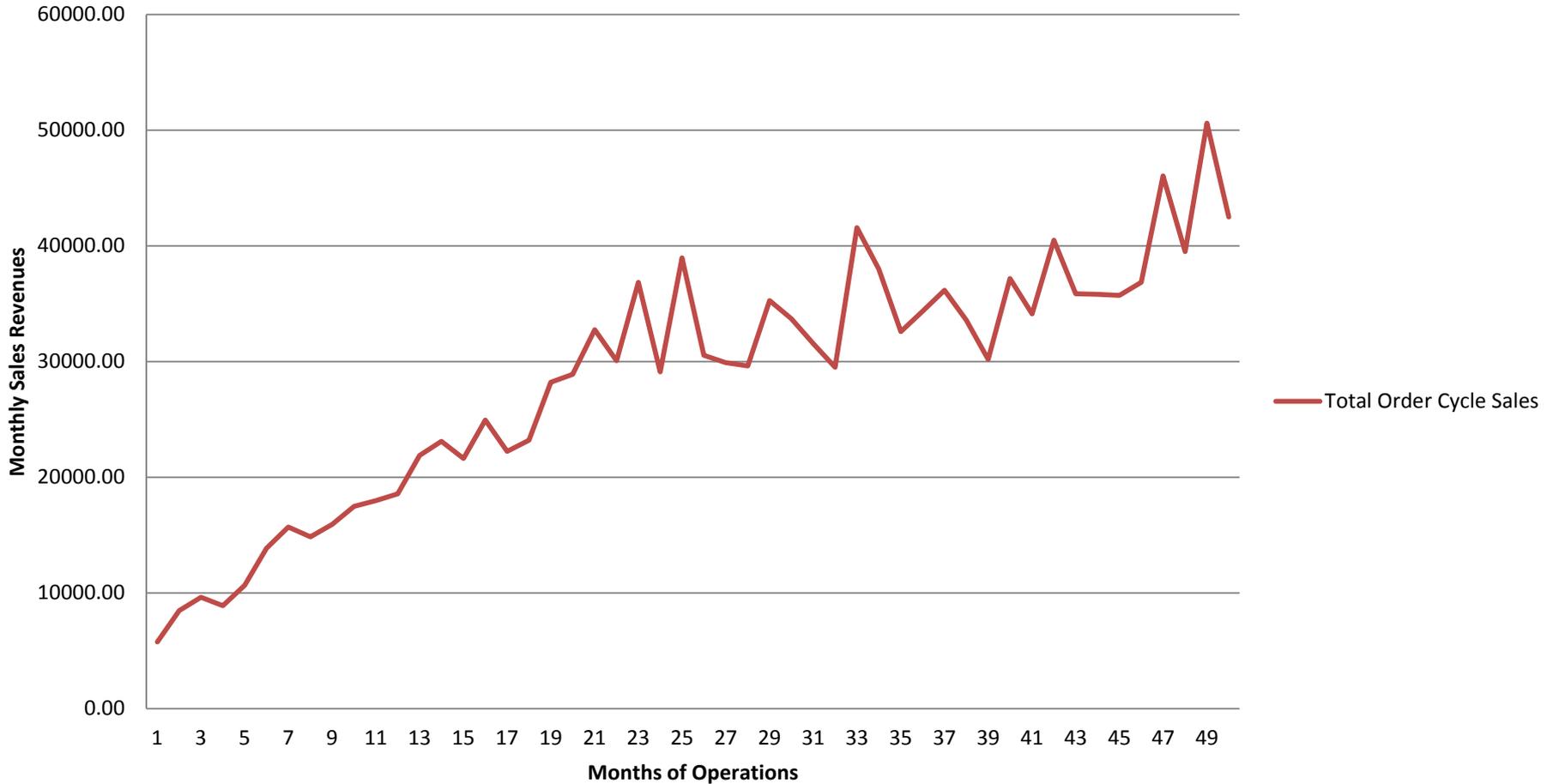
## Individual customer/producer product level

- Customer1 buys:
  - ground beef from Producer20
  - T-bone from Producer20
  - radishes from Producer10, etc.
- BUT not “how many of each – could have been:
  - 1 lb. or 20 lbs. of ground beef
  - 1 T-bone or 6 T-bones
  - 1 bunch or 5 bunches of radishes
- First 50 months of operations for all co-ops combined



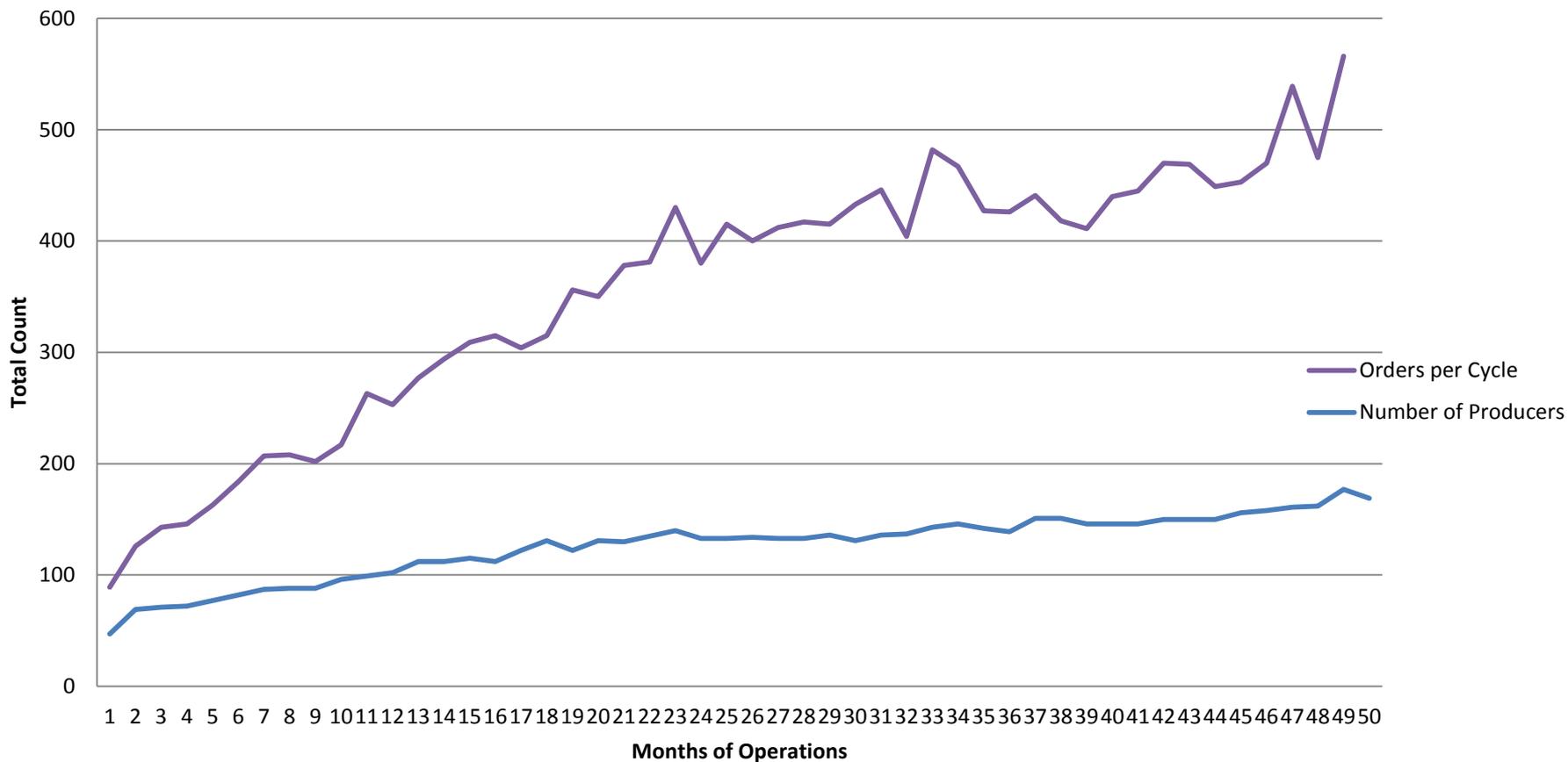
# Transaction Data

**Total Monthly Sales: The First 50 Months**  
All Coops Combined



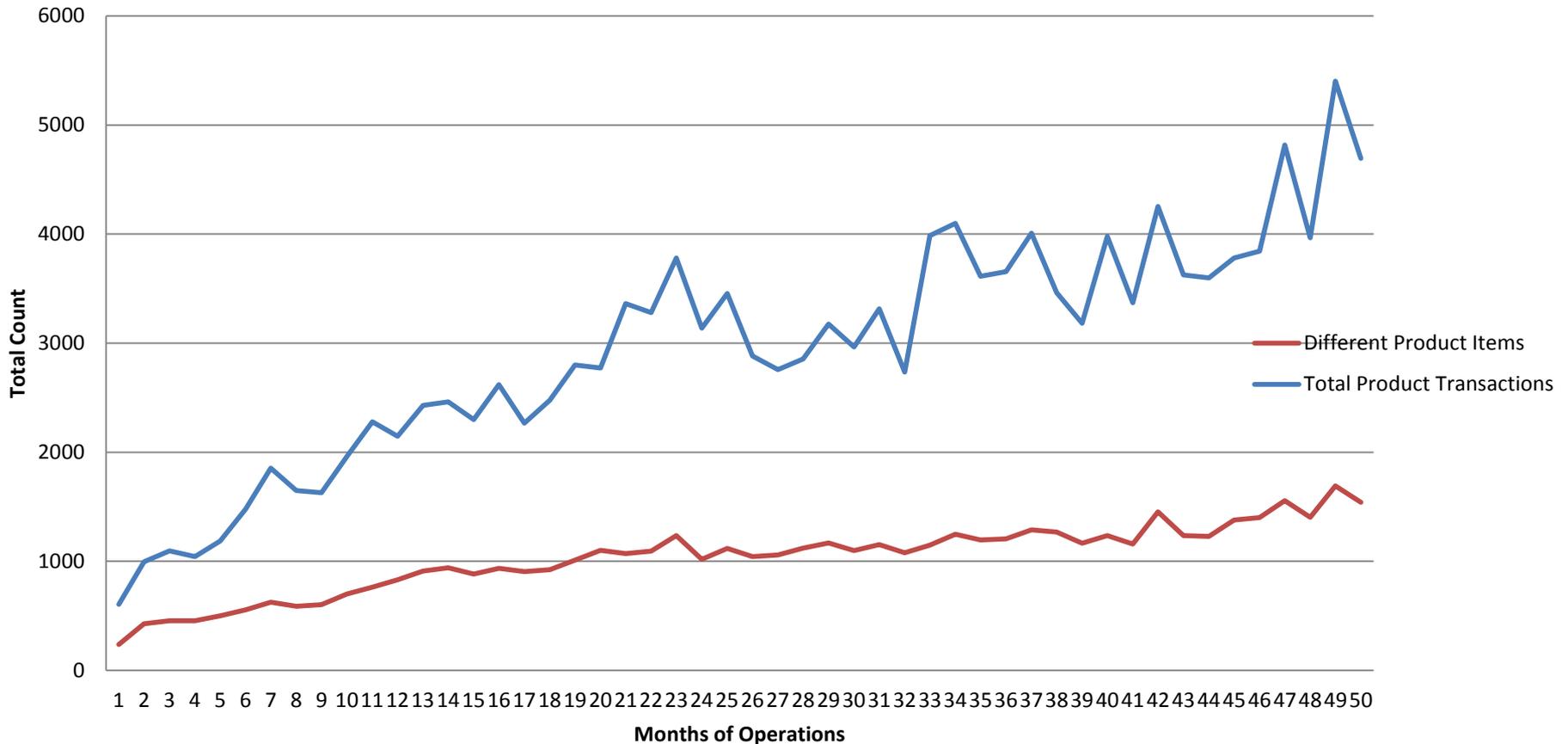
# Transaction Data

**Number of Producers and Orders Per Cycle: The First 50 Months**  
All Coops Combined



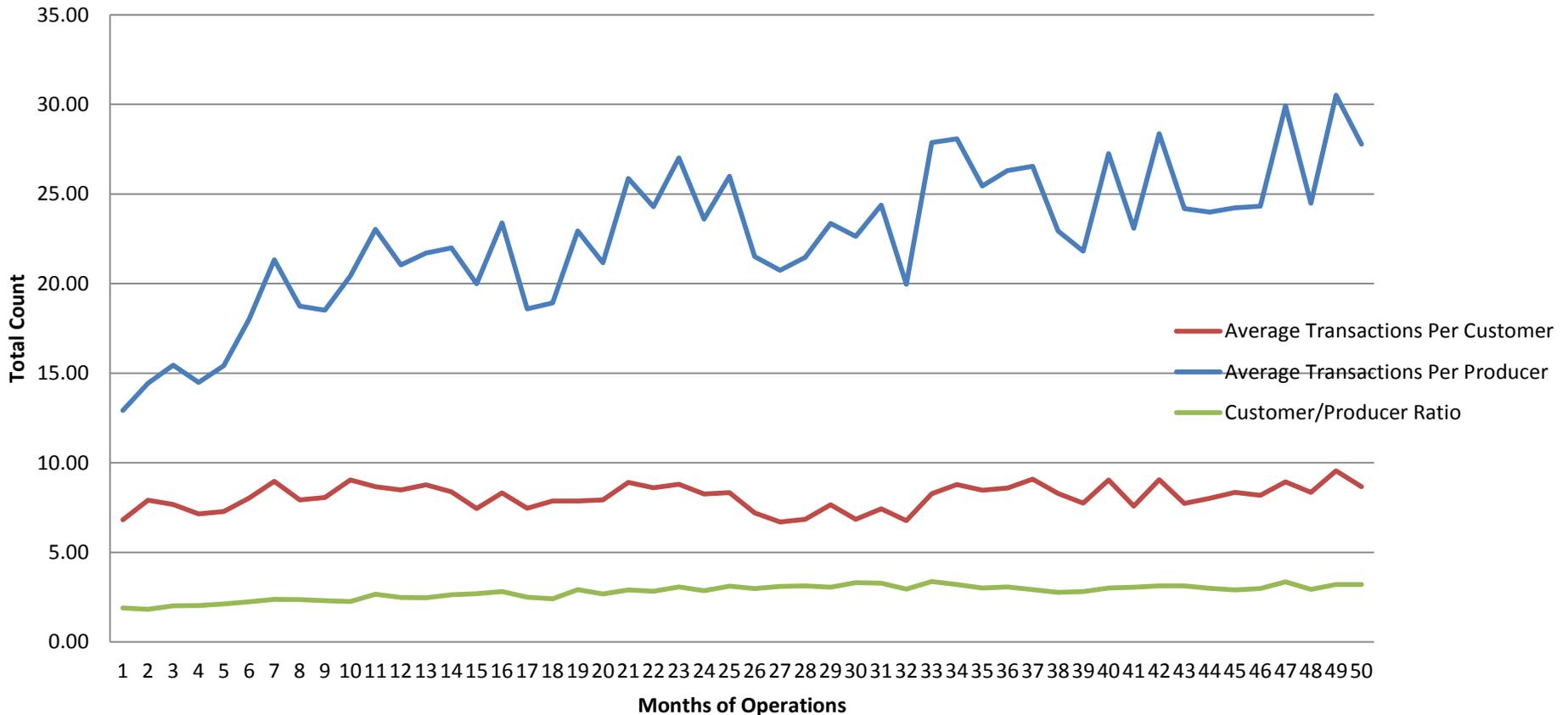
# Transaction Data

**Products and Product Types Ordered: The First 50 Months**  
All Coops Combined



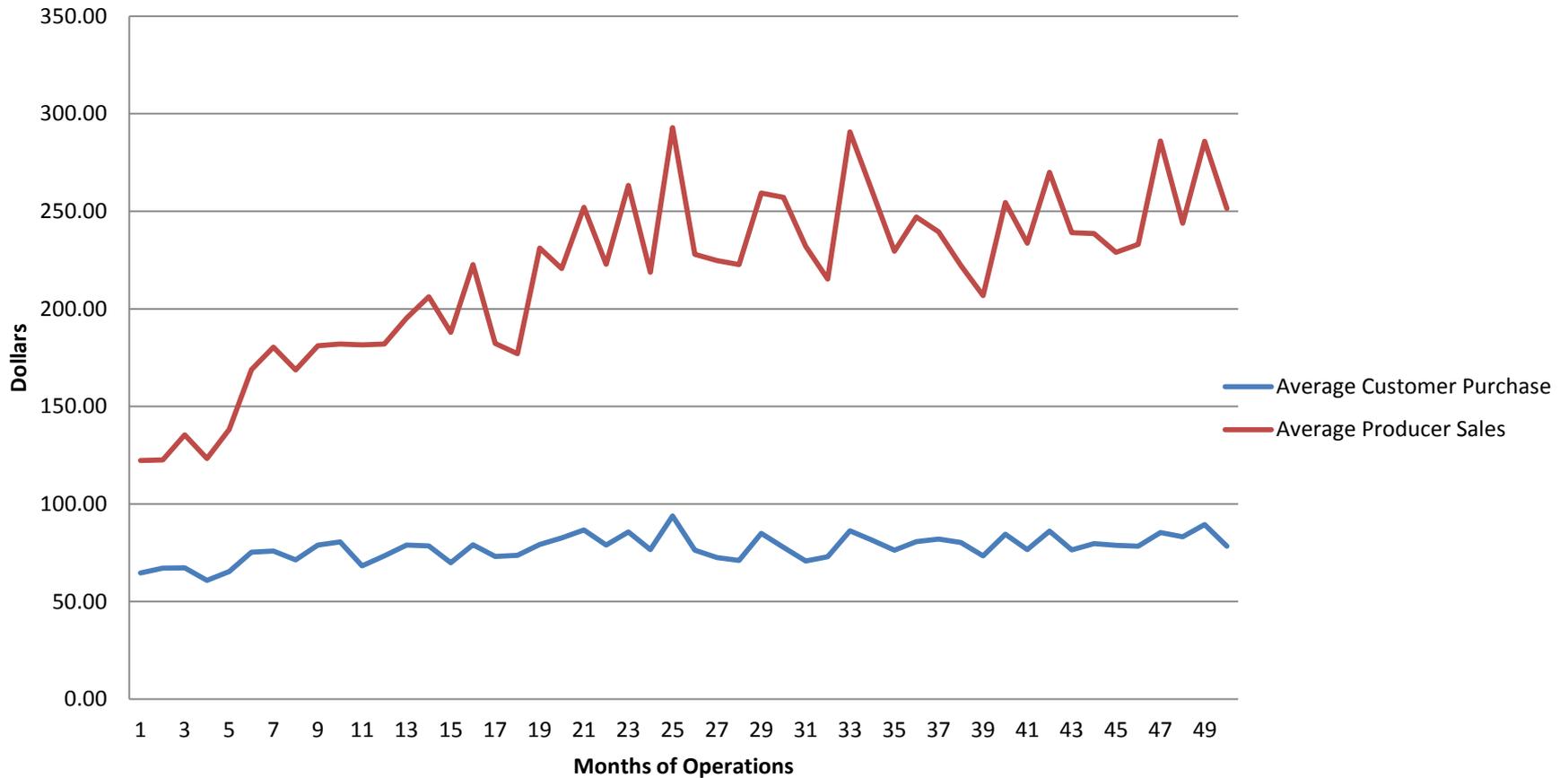
# Transaction Data

**Average # of Transactions Per Customer and Producer: The First 50 Months**  
**All Coops Combined**



# Transaction Data

**Average Customer Purchases and Producer Sales: The First 50 Months**  
All Coops Combined



# Co-op Transaction Data Summary

- Steady growth in # of participating consumer and producer members over the first 4 years of operations
  - Consumer/Producer ratio:
    - Slow growth periods 1 to 20 from 2 to 3 Consumers/Producer
    - Leveled off since period 20 at 3.0 to 3.3
- **Producer sales increasing:**
  - Number of transactions up from 15 to 30 per order cycle
  - Sales revenue up from \$125 to \$275 per order cycle
- **Very stable customer purchase patterns:**
  - Assortment – 7 to 9 “things” per order cycle
  - Average order value - \$70 to \$80 per order cycle
- **Growth coming from ↑ numbers, not penetration**



# Overall Results & Implications

## Possible Growth Strategies

- Demand-side:
  - More consumer members
    - Increased density in current geographic market
    - Geographic market expansion
  - Bigger consumer market baskets
    - Purchase wider assortments
    - Spend more of their HH food budget at co-op
  - OR BOTH
- Supply-side:
  - Increase # of participating producers
  - Increase existing producer capacity
  - OR BOTH
- But what's their incentive to join or step it up?



# Overall Results & Implications

## Meeting Member Expectations

- Compared to dissatisfied, satisfied Consumer members:
  - More likely to be active consumer members
  - Purchase more often (more order cycles)
  - Spend more of their HH food budget at the Co-op
- **Beyond just the products, how do you make them happy?**
  - Pickup process – convenient pickup times and more frequent order cycles
  - Affordable Fees – annual and purchase commissions
  - Timely and effective communication – keep them in the know



# Overall Results & Implications

## Meeting Member Expectations

- For producer members, the basic cost/return tradeoff:
  - Reduced time and effort
    - More efficient posting of product offerings
    - More efficient order preparation process
  - Reasonable commissions
    - Change numbers, perceptions, both?
  - Increased sales - mostly up to them?
- And for most everyone – more face time/community



# Questions?



FOOD  
FROM  
THOUGHT

# What's Next?

- Tie financial performance to the transaction data
  - What's efficient, what's effective
- Prepare in depth, system-wide co-op report
- Compare individual co-op data to the system-wide data
  - Identify gaps between individual and system measures
  - Identify strategic alternatives for improvement
- Each co-op will receive their own individual/system report



Thank you all for your support and  
cooperation!

None of this would have been possible  
without you!



FOOD  
FROM  
THOUGHT

FSMIPConjointSurvey - Consumer

Q1.1 Thank you for agreeing to participate in our final consumer survey! Since these surveys are anonymous, we will have to ask a few questions again so we can compare these results to the previous surveys. We will start with your involvement in the co-op, your preferences for membership conditions and co-op operations, and finish with some demographic questions.

Q1.2 Do you currently volunteer with your co-op?

- Yes
- No

Q1.3 What is your total average monthly household food bill for ALL food expenditures?

- Less than \$200
- \$200 to \$399
- \$400 to \$600
- More than \$600

Q1.4 Have you placed any orders through the co-op within the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No

Q1.5 How often do you normally place orders through the co-op?

- Just about every order cycle
- About 4 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 3 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 2 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 1 out of every 5 order cycles
- Less than 1 out of every 5 order cycles

Q1.6 About how much of your average monthly household food bill is spent at the co-op? (Please select the percentage from the drop down menu)

- Less than 10%
- 10% to 24%
- 25% to 49%
- 50% to 75%
- More than 75%

Please select your most preferred and least preferred option for each aspect of co-op membership and operations shown below. For example, what are your most and least preferred options for Membership Fees, most and least preferred options for Frequency of Order Cycles, etc.?

Membership Fee      Least Preferred      Most Preferred

\$150 per year	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
\$125 per year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100 per year	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
\$75 per year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$50 per year	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
\$500 lifetime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$400 lifetime	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
\$300 lifetime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$200 lifetime	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	

Commissions      Least Preferred      Most Preferred

17%	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
15%	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12%	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
10%	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8%	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
5%	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Frequency of Order Cycles

Least Preferred      Most Preferred

1 per month, year round	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
2 per month - peak season, 1 per month - off season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 per month, year round	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
4 per month - peak season, 1 per month - off season	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 per month - peak season, 2 per month - off season	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
4 per month, year round	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





All members must volunteer but you can buy out of your obligation for \$80 each year; volunteers receive credits for hours worked



Pickup Process	Least Preferred					Most Preferred					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
One day, 2 hour pickup window	<input checked="" type="radio"/>										
One day, 4 hour pickup window		<input type="radio"/>									
Two days, 2 hour pickup window day 1 and 2 hour window the next day		<input type="radio"/>									
Two days, 4 hour pickup window day 1 and 2 hour window the next day		<input type="radio"/>									
Two days, 4 hour pickup window day 1 and pickup by appointment with a \$5 fee the next day		<input type="radio"/>									
Home/office delivery for \$10 fee		<input type="radio"/>									
Home/office delivery for \$20 fee											<input checked="" type="radio"/>

In the previous questions, you rated the following as your most preferred. Please allocate 100 percentage points showing the relative importance of each:

Feature	Level	Importance
Membership Fee	\$200 lifetime	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Commissions	5%	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Frequency of Order Cycles	4 per month, year round	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Volunteer Program	All members must volunteer but you can buy out of your obligation for \$80 each year; volunteers receive credits for hours worked	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Pickup Process	Home/office delivery for \$20 fee	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Total:		<input type="text" value="0"/>

Q2.1 Now for the demographic questions. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q2.2 In what year were you born? (YYYY)

Q2.3 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School / GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Q2.4 Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- Single
- Separated/Divorced
- Married
- Not married, but in a committed relationship
- Widowed/Widower

Q2.5 How many children (under the age of 18) are currently living in your home?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 +

Q2.6 What is your current occupation?

- Professional/Technical
- Upper Management/Executive
- Middle Management
- Sales/Marketing
- Clerical or Service Worker
- Tradesman/Machine Oper/ Laborer
- Self Employed/ Business Owner
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Student
- Education
- Currently unemployed
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q2.7 Which category best describes your total yearly household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20-\$39,999
- \$40-\$59,999
- \$60-\$79,999
- \$80-\$99,999
- \$100-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

FSMIPSurvey - Producer Version Final IRB

Q1 {Co-op Name} Thank you for agreeing to participate in our producer survey! Your responses are very valuable to us so please carefully consider every question. Now, let's get started!

Q2 Have you been involved with CO-OP NAME since it first started operating?

- Yes
- No

Q3 What was the nature of your involvement with CO-OP NAME at the beginning? (Please check ALL that apply)

- I was one of the original/charter members of the co-op
- I was involved in planning and organizing of the co-op
- I helped research alternative co-op organizational models
- I helped write the co-op bylaws
- I helped prepare the paperwork for registering as a nonprofit organization
- I helped submit grants to fund develop and launch the co-op
- I helped recruit producer members
- I helped recruit consumer members
- Other forms of involvement; please specify below \_\_\_\_\_

Q4 How long have you been a member of CO-OP NAME?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10 years
- More than 10 years

Q5 How did you first learn about CO-OP NAME? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Internet search for local foods/local foods co-ops
- Word-of-mouth from a friend, relative, or coworker
- Word-of-mouth from a member of the co-op
- At a co-op information table/booth at a community event (fairs, local celebrations, etc.)
- From press coverage/report in your local media









Q8 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how well your co-op has met your expectations?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very satisfied

Q9 What type of products do you sell through your co-op? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Beef
- Pork
- Lamb
- Poultry
- Fish
- Dairy products
- Grain/cereals
- Eggs
- Baked goods
- Health and beauty supplies
- Household products
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q10 Did you sell your products to consumers prior to joining your co-op?

- Yes
- No

Q11 How often do you normally receive orders through the co-op during the main growing season (late Spring through early Fall)?

- Just about every order cycle
- About 4 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 3 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 2 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 1 out of every 5 order cycles
- I don't sell during this time of the year

Q12 What is your average sales total through the co-op per order cycle during the main growing season?

- Less than \$100
- \$100 to \$199
- \$200 to \$299
- \$300 to \$399
- \$400 to \$499
- \$500 to \$600
- More than \$600

Q13 About what percentage of your total sales, including all sales that take place outside your co-op, during the main growing season are through your co-op?

- Less than 10%
- 11% to 20%
- 21% to 30%
- 31% to 40%
- 41% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- More than 75%

Q14 How often do you normally receive orders through the co-op during the off season (late Fall through early Spring)?

- Just about every order cycle
- About 4 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 3 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 2 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 1 out of every 5 order cycles
- I don't sell during this time of the year

Q15 What is your average sales total through the co-op per order cycle during the off season?

- Less than \$100
- \$100 to \$199
- \$200 to \$299
- \$300 to \$399
- \$400 to \$499
- \$500 to \$600
- More than \$600

Q16 About what percentage of your total sales, including all sales that take place outside your co-op, during the off season are through your co-op?

- Less than 10%
- 11% to 20%



























about producers and their farming methods							
Information about co-op events	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about the benefits of local foods	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about co-op operations	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about your sales	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about your payments	<input type="radio"/>						
Other (Please specify)	<input type="radio"/>						

Q42 How often do you receive email communications from your co-op?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Every other week
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

Q43 If you have an issue, such as a problem with payments or customer complaints, do you know how to contact the following groups at your co-op?

	Yes	No
Consumers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coop Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>







Q51 What other barriers, if any, factor into your decision not to volunteer?

Q52 In what capacity do you volunteer for your co-op? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Co-op Board member
- Co-op officer (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.)
- General manager
- Co-op committee member (membership, promotions/communications, education, etc.)
- Accounting/record keeping
- Promoting/marketing the co-op
- Manage/coordinate co-op volunteers
- Maintain the co-op website and software
- Manage/coordinate our pickup sites
- Manage/coordinate our distribution center
- Pickup route/delivery driver
- Volunteer worker at a pickup site or the distribution center
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q53 How often do you volunteer in the co-op management/administration activities?

- Every week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year

Q54 How often do you volunteer in the co-op delivery day activities?

- Every order cycle period
- Every other order cycle period
- When it fits my schedule
- I'll fill in if they are short on volunteers

Q55 Are you able to volunteer as much as you would like?

- Yes
- No

Q56 In general how big of a factor is time in not being able to volunteer as much as you would like?

- Not a factor at all
- 
- 
- 
-



Q59 What other barriers, if any, keep you from volunteering as much as you would like?

Q60 Does your co-op offer credits as an incentive for volunteering?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q61 If co-op credits, which could be used to purchase food and other co-op items or pay co-op membership fees, were given for volunteering how likely would you be to volunteer, if you are not currently volunteering, or volunteer more, if you are already volunteering?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q62 How important are credits in your decision to volunteer?

- Not at all important
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- Very important

Q63 In the past twelve months what events has your co-op put on? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Dinner at restaurants featuring co-op food
- Food tastings
- Farm visits
- Educational workshops (i.e. marketing education, etc.)
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q64 In the past twelve months what co-op events have you attended? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Dinner at restaurants featuring co-op food
- Food tastings
- Farm visits

- Educational workshops (i.e. marketing education, etc.)
- Other -  $\{q://QID207/ChoiceTextEntryValue/6\}$

Q65 Have you personally hosted any of the following types of events at your farm? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Food tastings
- Farm visits
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q66 In the future how likely or unlikely would you be to host events such as farm visits or tastings?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q67 Did you attend the most recent annual meeting?

- Yes
- No

Q68 Which events not currently being offered would you like to see your co-op put on? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Dinner at restaurants featuring coop food
- Food tastings
- Farm visits
- Educational workshops (i.e. food storage, food prep, healthy eating etc.)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q69 If your co-op were to offer these additional events, how likely or unlikely would you be to attend?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
-









Q76 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the educational efforts made by your co-op?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very satisfied

Q77 The last section is about you. In no way will these questions be used to identify you. They will be used for analysis purposes only.

Q78 How many years have you been in business/farming?

Q79 How many people work on your business/farm?

Q80 Is your business/farm your primary source of income?

- Yes
- No

Q81 Do you have another job in addition to your business/farming activities?

- Yes
- No

Q82 If you have another job in addition to your business/farming activities, what is your other occupation?

- I do not have another job
- Professional/Technical
- Upper Management/Executive
- Middle Management
- Sales/Marketing
- Clerical or Service Worker
- Tradesman/Machine Oper/ Laborer
- Self Employed/ Business Owner
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Student
- Education
- Unemployed
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q83 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q84 In what year were you born? (YYYY)

Q85 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School / GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Q86 Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- Single
- Separated/Divorced
- Married
- Not married, but in a committed relationship
- Widowed/Widower

Q87 How many children (under the age of 18) are currently living in your home?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 +

Q88 Which category best describes your total yearly household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20-\$39,999
- \$40-\$59,999
- \$60-\$79,999
- \$80-\$99,999
- \$100-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

Q89 Thank you for your time; we greatly appreciate your responses. If you have any comments you would like to share about local food or your co-op please include them here:

FSMIP Survey - Manager Version IRB Final

Q1 {CO-OP NAME} Thank you for agreeing to participate in our Manager's survey! Your responses are very valuable to us so please carefully consider every question and answer each one the best you can. Now, let's get started!

Q2 Have you been involved with the CO-OP NAME since it first started operating?

- Yes
- No

Q3 What was the nature of your involvement with CO-OP NAME at the beginning? (Please check ALL that apply)

- I was one of the original/charter members of the co-op
- I was involved in planning and organizing of the co-op
- I helped research alternative co-op organizational models
- I helped write the co-op bylaws
- I helped prepare the paperwork for registering as a nonprofit organization
- I helped submit grants to fund develop and launch the co-op
- I helped recruit producer members
- I helped recruit consumer members
- Other forms of involvement; please specify below \_\_\_\_\_

Q4 How long have you been a member of CO-OP NAME ?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10 years
- More than 10 years

Q5 How did you first learn about CO-OP NAME? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Internet search for local foods/local foods co-ops
- Word-of-mouth from a friend, relative, or coworker
- Word-of-mouth from a member of the co-op
- At a co-op information table/booth at a community event (fairs, local celebrations, etc.)
- From press coverage/report in your local media

- Co-op flyers/brochures available around the community (chamber of commerce, stores, civic center, etc.)
- Co-op presentation to a community group (chamber of commerce, city council, Kiwanis group, etc.)
- Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q6 How long have you been involved in the management and/or operations of CO-OP NAME?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 or more years

Q7 How are you currently involved in the management and/or operations of CO-OP NAME? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Co-op Board member
- Co-op officer (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.)
- General manager
- Co-op committee member (membership, promotions/communications, education, etc.)
- Accounting/record keeping
- Promoting/marketing the co-op
- Manage/coordinate co-op volunteers
- Maintain the co-op website and software
- Manage/coordinate our pickup sites
- Manage/coordinate our distribution center
- Pickup route/delivery driver
- Volunteer worker at a pickup site or the distribution center
- Volunteer office or maintenance support
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q8 In addition to the current categories checked above, what other management and/or operational roles have you performed in the past? (Please select ALL that apply)

- Co-op Board member
- Co-op officer (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.)
- General manager
- Co-op committee member (membership, promotions/communications, education, etc.)
- Accounting/record keeping
- Promoting/marketing the co-op
- Manage/coordinate co-op volunteers
- Maintain the co-op website and software
- Manage/coordinate our pickup sites







Loosing our active/involved members due to burnout	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---













Q20 How would you describe the variety of products offered by your co-op in each of the following areas?

	No variety at all			Some variety			A lot of variety
Fruits	<input type="radio"/>						
Vegetables	<input type="radio"/>						
Beef	<input type="radio"/>						
Pork	<input type="radio"/>						
Lamb	<input type="radio"/>						
Poultry	<input type="radio"/>						
Fish	<input type="radio"/>						
Diary products	<input type="radio"/>						
Eggs	<input type="radio"/>						
Grains/cereals	<input type="radio"/>						
Baked goods	<input type="radio"/>						
Health and beauty products	<input type="radio"/>						
Household products	<input type="radio"/>						

Q21 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the products your co-op offers?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very satisfied

Q22 Are there products you think your co-op should add that it does not currently offer?

- Yes
- No

Q23 Which products do you think your co-op should add?

Q24 Thinking about your co-op's customers (your consumer members), how similar are they to the customers served by each of the following types of operations in terms of why and how they decide









updating producer profiles							
----------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

















Q45 Do your co-op currently offer incentives, such as co-op credits, to increase volunteer involvement in your co-op?

- Yes
- No

Q46 How likely do you think that some of the members who do not volunteer would start, and/or some of those who already volunteer would volunteer more if your co-op offered credits (that could be used to make purchases through the co-op or pay co-op membership fees) to its volunteers?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q47 How important are these credits to members who do volunteer?

- Not at all important
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- Very important

Q48 What other other barriers, if any, do you believe keep co-op members from volunteering?

Q49 In the past twelve months, what kinds of events has your co-op sponsored? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Harvest festivals or fall celebrations
- Special dinners at restaurants featuring local foods
- Food tasting events
- Farm visits
- Educational workshops for consumers (i.e. food storage, food prep, healthy eating etc.)
- Educational workshops for producers (i.e. production, marketing, etc.)
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q50 How likely or unlikely is your co-op to offer any of these events more frequently in the coming year?

- Very unlikely

- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q51 How likely or unlikely is your co-op to offer any new types of events in the coming year?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q52 Not including your co-op's annual meeting, approximately what percentage of your co-op members would you say have attended at least one event in the past twelve months?

Q53 Approximately what percentage of members do you think attended the most recent annual meeting?

Q54 What types of educational activities has your co-op offered in the past 12 months? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Food preparation
- Sustainable living
- The benefits of local foods
- Food safety
- Nutrition
- Sustainable production methods
- Marketing products to consumers
- Using the co-op website
- Certification requirements and procedures
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q55 How does your co-op usually provide each of the following types of educational information and/or programs to your members?

	Fliers/Newsletters	Website	Emails	Webinars	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	In person/workshops



Q57 The last section is about you. In no way will these questions be used to identify you. They will be used for analysis purposes only.

Q58 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q59 In what year were you born? (YYYY)

Q60 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some/No High School
- High School Degree/GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Q61 Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- Single
- Separated/Divorced
- Married
- Not married, but in a committed relationship
- Widowed/Widower

Q62 How many children (under the age of 18) are currently living in your home?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 +

Q63 What is your current occupation?

- Professional/Technical
- Management/Executive
- Education
- Sales/Marketing
- Clerical or Service Worker

- Tradesman/Machine Oper/ Laborer
- Self Employed/ Business Owner
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Student
- Currently Unemployed
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q64 Which category best describes your total yearly household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20-\$39,999
- \$40-\$59,999
- \$60-\$79,999
- \$80-\$99,999
- \$100-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

Q65 Thank you for your time; we greatly appreciate your responses. If you have any comments you would like to share about local food or your coop please include them here:

Q66 In addition to your involvement in co-op management and/or operations, are you a producer or consumer member of the coop?

- Producer
- Consumer

Q67 Thank you for taking the time to complete the management survey. Your responses are very helpful. If you would also like to provide your input from a producer's point of view, you may complete the producer version of the survey now by clicking here. (Insert Link) If you would like to complete the producer survey at a later time, the link above is also included in the manager survey recruitment and reminder emails. Thank you again for your cooperation!

Q68 Thank you for taking the time to complete the management survey. Your responses are very helpful. If you would also like to provide your input from a consumer's point of view, you may complete the consumer version of the survey now by clicking here. (Insert Link) If you would like to complete the consumer survey at a later time, the link above is also included in the manager survey recruitment and reminder emails. Thank you again for your cooperation!

FSMIPSurvey - Producer Version Final IRB

Q1 {Co-op Name} Thank you for agreeing to participate in our producer survey! Your responses are very valuable to us so please carefully consider every question. Now, let's get started!

Q2 Have you been involved with CO-OP NAME since it first started operating?

- Yes
- No

Q3 What was the nature of your involvement with CO-OP NAME at the beginning? (Please check ALL that apply)

- I was one of the original/charter members of the co-op
- I was involved in planning and organizing of the co-op
- I helped research alternative co-op organizational models
- I helped write the co-op bylaws
- I helped prepare the paperwork for registering as a nonprofit organization
- I helped submit grants to fund develop and launch the co-op
- I helped recruit producer members
- I helped recruit consumer members
- Other forms of involvement; please specify below \_\_\_\_\_

Q4 How long have you been a member of CO-OP NAME?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10 years
- More than 10 years

Q5 How did you first learn about CO-OP NAME? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Internet search for local foods/local foods co-ops
- Word-of-mouth from a friend, relative, or coworker
- Word-of-mouth from a member of the co-op
- At a co-op information table/booth at a community event (fairs, local celebrations, etc.)
- From press coverage/report in your local media









Q8 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how well your co-op has met your expectations?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very satisfied

Q9 What type of products do you sell through your co-op? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Beef
- Pork
- Lamb
- Poultry
- Fish
- Dairy products
- Grain/cereals
- Eggs
- Baked goods
- Health and beauty supplies
- Household products
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q10 Did you sell your products to consumers prior to joining your co-op?

- Yes
- No

Q11 How often do you normally receive orders through the co-op during the main growing season (late Spring through early Fall)?

- Just about every order cycle
- About 4 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 3 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 2 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 1 out of every 5 order cycles
- I don't sell during this time of the year

Q12 What is your average sales total through the co-op per order cycle during the main growing season?

- Less than \$100
- \$100 to \$199
- \$200 to \$299
- \$300 to \$399
- \$400 to \$499
- \$500 to \$600
- More than \$600

Q13 About what percentage of your total sales, including all sales that take place outside your co-op, during the main growing season are through your co-op?

- Less than 10%
- 11% to 20%
- 21% to 30%
- 31% to 40%
- 41% to 50%
- 51% to 75%
- More than 75%

Q14 How often do you normally receive orders through the co-op during the off season (late Fall through early Spring)?

- Just about every order cycle
- About 4 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 3 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 2 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 1 out of every 5 order cycles
- I don't sell during this time of the year

Q15 What is your average sales total through the co-op per order cycle during the off season?

- Less than \$100
- \$100 to \$199
- \$200 to \$299
- \$300 to \$399
- \$400 to \$499
- \$500 to \$600
- More than \$600

Q16 About what percentage of your total sales, including all sales that take place outside your co-op, during the off season are through your co-op?

- Less than 10%
- 11% to 20%



























about producers and their farming methods							
Information about co-op events	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about the benefits of local foods	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about co-op operations	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about your sales	<input type="radio"/>						
Information about your payments	<input type="radio"/>						
Other (Please specify)	<input type="radio"/>						

Q42 How often do you receive email communications from your co-op?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Every other week
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

Q43 If you have an issue, such as a problem with payments or customer complaints, do you know how to contact the following groups at your co-op?

	Yes	No
Consumers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coop Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>







Q51 What other barriers, if any, factor into your decision not to volunteer?

Q52 In what capacity do you volunteer for your co-op? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Co-op Board member
- Co-op officer (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.)
- General manager
- Co-op committee member (membership, promotions/communications, education, etc.)
- Accounting/record keeping
- Promoting/marketing the co-op
- Manage/coordinate co-op volunteers
- Maintain the co-op website and software
- Manage/coordinate our pickup sites
- Manage/coordinate our distribution center
- Pickup route/delivery driver
- Volunteer worker at a pickup site or the distribution center
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q53 How often do you volunteer in the co-op management/administration activities?

- Every week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year

Q54 How often do you volunteer in the co-op delivery day activities?

- Every order cycle period
- Every other order cycle period
- When it fits my schedule
- I'll fill in if they are short on volunteers

Q55 Are you able to volunteer as much as you would like?

- Yes
- No

Q56 In general how big of a factor is time in not being able to volunteer as much as you would like?

- Not a factor at all
- 
- 
- 
-



Q59 What other barriers, if any, keep you from volunteering as much as you would like?

Q60 Does your co-op offer credits as an incentive for volunteering?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q61 If co-op credits, which could be used to purchase food and other co-op items or pay co-op membership fees, were given for volunteering how likely would you be to volunteer, if you are not currently volunteering, or volunteer more, if you are already volunteering?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q62 How important are credits in your decision to volunteer?

- Not at all important
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- Very important

Q63 In the past twelve months what events has your co-op put on? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Dinner at restaurants featuring co-op food
- Food tastings
- Farm visits
- Educational workshops (i.e. marketing education, etc.)
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q64 In the past twelve months what co-op events have you attended? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Dinner at restaurants featuring co-op food
- Food tastings
- Farm visits

- Educational workshops (i.e. marketing education, etc.)
- Other -  $\{q://QID207/ChoiceTextEntryValue/6\}$

Q65 Have you personally hosted any of the following types of events at your farm? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Food tastings
- Farm visits
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q66 In the future how likely or unlikely would you be to host events such as farm visits or tastings?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q67 Did you attend the most recent annual meeting?

- Yes
- No

Q68 Which events not currently being offered would you like to see your co-op put on? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Dinner at restaurants featuring coop food
- Food tastings
- Farm visits
- Educational workshops (i.e. food storage, food prep, healthy eating etc.)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q69 If your co-op were to offer these additional events, how likely or unlikely would you be to attend?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
-









Q76 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the educational efforts made by your co-op?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very satisfied

Q77 The last section is about you. In no way will these questions be used to identify you. They will be used for analysis purposes only.

Q78 How many years have you been in business/farming?

Q79 How many people work on your business/farm?

Q80 Is your business/farm your primary source of income?

- Yes
- No

Q81 Do you have another job in addition to your business/farming activities?

- Yes
- No

Q82 If you have another job in addition to your business/farming activities, what is your other occupation?

- I do not have another job
- Professional/Technical
- Upper Management/Executive
- Middle Management
- Sales/Marketing
- Clerical or Service Worker
- Tradesman/Machine Oper/ Laborer
- Self Employed/ Business Owner
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Student
- Education
- Unemployed
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q83 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q84 In what year were you born? (YYYY)

Q85 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School / GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Q86 Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- Single
- Separated/Divorced
- Married
- Not married, but in a committed relationship
- Widowed/Widower

Q87 How many children (under the age of 18) are currently living in your home?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 +

Q88 Which category best describes your total yearly household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20-\$39,999
- \$40-\$59,999
- \$60-\$79,999
- \$80-\$99,999
- \$100-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

Q89 Thank you for your time; we greatly appreciate your responses. If you have any comments you would like to share about local food or your co-op please include them here:



Q1 {Co-op Name} Thank you for agreeing to participate in our consumer survey! Your responses are very valuable to us so please carefully consider every question. Now, let's get started!

Q2 Have you been involved with CO-OP NAME since it first started operating?

- Yes
- No

Q3 What was the nature of your involvement with CO-OP NAME at the beginning? (Please check ALL that apply)

- I was one of the original/charter members of the co-op
- I was involved in planning and organizing of the co-op
- I helped research alternative co-op organizational models
- I helped write the co-op bylaws
- I helped prepare the paperwork for registering as a nonprofit organization
- I helped submit grants to fund develop and launch the co-op
- I helped recruit producer members
- I helped recruit consumer members
- Other forms of involvement; please specify below \_\_\_\_\_

Q4 How long have you been a member of CO-OP NAME?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years
- 7 years
- 8 years
- 9 years
- 10 years
- More than 10 years

Q5 How did you first learn about CO-OP NAME? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Internet search for local foods/local foods co-ops
- Word-of-mouth from a friend, relative, or coworker
- Word-of-mouth from a member of the co-op
- At a co-op information table/booth at a community event (fairs, local celebrations, etc.)
- From press coverage/report in your local media





Q8 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how well your co-op has met your expectations?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very Satisfied

Q9 Have you placed any orders or made any purchases through your co-op within the past 12 months?

- Yes
- No

Q10 How often do you normally place orders during the main growing season (late Spring through early Fall)?

- Just about every order cycle
- About 4 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 3 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 2 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 1 out of every 5 order cycles
- I don't order during this time of the year

Q11 What is your total average monthly household food bill, for all food expenditures, during the main growing season?

- Less than \$100
- \$100 to \$199
- \$200 to \$299
- \$300 to \$399
- \$400 to \$499
- \$500 to \$600
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Q12 About how much of your average monthly household food bill is spent at the co-op during the main growing season? (Please select the percentage from the drop down menu)

- Less than 10%
- 11% to 20%
- 21% to 30%
- 31% to 40%
- 41% to 50%
- %51 to 75%

- More than 75%

Q13 How often do you normally place orders during the off season (late Fall through early Spring)?

- Just about every order cycle
- About 4 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 3 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 2 out of every 5 order cycles
- About 1 out of every 5 order cycles
- I don't order during this time of the year

Q14 What is your total average monthly household food bill, for all food expenditures, during the off season?

- Less than \$100
- \$100 to \$199
- \$200 to \$299
- \$300 to \$399
- \$400 to \$499
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- More than \$600

Q15 About how much of your average monthly household food bill is spent at the co-op during the off season? (Please select the percentage from the drop down menu)

- Less than 10%
- 11% to 20%
- 21% to 30%
- 31% to 40%
- 41% to 50%
- %51 to 75%
- More than 75%

Q16 About how long has it been since you last placed an order through your co-op?

- Just over one year
- One and a half years
- Two years
- More than two years

Q17 In the future, what would make it more likely for you to make purchases through your co-op?

Q18 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The value of a co-op membership is worth the cost of the annual membership fee.

































Q54 What are some other barriers, if any, that factor into your decision not to volunteer?

Q55 In what capacity do you volunteer for your co-op? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Co-op Board member
- Co-op officer (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.)
- General manager
- Co-op committee member (membership, promotions/communications, education, etc.)
- Accounting/record keeping
- Promoting/marketing the co-op
- Manage/coordinate co-op volunteers
- Maintain the co-op website and software
- Manage/coordinate our pickup sites
- Manage/coordinate our distribution center
- Pickup route/delivery driver
- Volunteer worker at a pickup site or the distribution center
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q56 How often do you volunteer in the co-op management/administration activities?

- Every week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year

Q57 How often do you volunteer for the co-op delivery day activities?

- Every cycle period
- Every other cycle period
- When it fits my schedule
- I'll fill in if they are short on volunteers

Q58 Are you able to volunteer as much as you would like?

- Yes
- No

Q59 How big of a factor is time in general in not being able to volunteer as much as you would like?

- Not a factor at all
- 
- 
- 
-



Q62 What are some other barriers, if any, that keep you from volunteering as much as you would like?

Q63 Does your co-op offer credits as an incentive for volunteering?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q64 If co-op credits, which could be used to purchase food and other co-op items or pay co-op membership fees, were given for volunteering how likely would you be to volunteer, if you are not currently volunteering, or volunteer more, if you are already volunteering?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q65 How important are credits in your decision to volunteer?

- Not at all important
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- Very important

Q66 In the past twelve months what events has your co-op put on? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
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- Educational workshops (i.e. food storage, food prep, healthy eating etc.)
- Other -

Q68 Did you attend the most recent annual meeting?

- Yes
- No

Q69 Which events not currently being offered would you like to see your co-op put on? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Potluck dinners
- Dinner at restaurants featuring coop food
- Food tastings
- Farm visits
- Educational workshops (i.e. food storage, food prep, healthy eating etc.)
- Other
- Other

Q70 If your co-op were to offer these additional events, how likely or unlikely would you be to attend?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q71 If your co-op were to offer their regular events more often, how likely or unlikely would you be to attend?

- Very unlikely
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very likely

Q72 What types of educational activities has your co-op offered in the past 12 months? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Food preparation
- Sustainable living









Q77 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the educational efforts made by your co-op?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
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- Yes
- No

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- 
- Very likely

Q72 What types of educational activities has your co-op offered in the past 12 months? (Please check ALL that apply)

- Food preparation
- Sustainable living









Q77 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the educational efforts made by your co-op?

- Very dissatisfied
- 
- 
- Neutral
- 
- 
- Very satisfied

Q78 The last section is about you. In no way will these questions be used to identify you. They will be used for analysis purposes only.

Q79 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q80 In what year were you born? (YYYY)

Q81 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School / GED
- Some College
- 2-year College Degree
- 4-year College Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Q82 Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- Single
- Separated/Divorced
- Married
- Not married, but in a committed relationship
- Widowed/Widower

Q83 How many children (under the age of 18) are currently living in your home?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3

- 4
- 5 +

Q84 What is your current occupation?

- Professional/Technical
- Upper Management/Executive
- Middle Management
- Sales/Marketing
- Clerical or Service Worker
- Tradesman/Machine Oper/ Laborer
- Self Employed/ Business Owner
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Student
- Education
- Unemployed
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q85 Which category best describes your total yearly household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20-\$39,999
- \$40-\$59,999
- \$60-\$79,999
- \$80-\$99,999
- \$100-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

Q86 Thank you for your time; we greatly appreciate your responses. If you have any comments you would like to share about local food or your co-op please include them here:

**Oklahoma Coop Project**  
**Depth Interview Guide: Consumers, Producers, and Management & Staff**

**Sequence of General Questions for the Depth Interviews:**

- What are your expectations of the coop and its members? What should the coop do, or be?
- What do you actually receive/experience?
  - What are your greatest benefits?
  - What are your greatest challenges?
- How satisfied are you?
- What would make you happier/more satisfied?
  - What's missing that should be there?
    - Why is this?
    - Who could make that happen? How?
    - For other member groups, for society/community, etc.?
  - What's there that shouldn't be?
    - Why is this?
    - Who could make that happen? How?
    - For other member groups, for society/community, etc.?
- What would it take to really meet your expectations? Is this possible?

**Anticipated Responses for Member Expectations:**

(from the perspective of consumers, producers, and management/staff)

**A source of information/education/support regarding:**

- Food production
- Harvest
- Processing
- Distribution
- Selection
- Storage
- Preparation
- Consumption
  
- As it relates to
  - Food quality
    - Freshness, taste, nutrient content, appearance, etc.
  - Food variety
    - Processed or fresh, seasonality, length of season, heirlooms, exotic varieties, etc.
  - Food safety
    - Additives, herbicide and pesticide residues, bacterial contamination, etc.
  - Food costs
  - Convenience

- Knowing who produces your food
  - Put a face on your food, traceability, confidence, trust, loyalty
- Social interactions among coop members
- Individual and coop social contribution
  - Sustainable production, sustainable consumption, land stewardship, carbon footprint, stronger economic and social community structure/systems
- Other Responses provided by the respondent

**How the coop is organized:**

- Types of memberships
- Membership agreements
  - Membership costs
  - Operating procedures
  - Member obligations
- Decision making processes
- Directors, managers, staff
- Paid vs. volunteers
- Committees
- Work teams

**Communications and/or events that take place within the coop system:**

- Regular coop communications
  - Newsletters
  - Online market buying & selling
  - Meetings
  - Farm visits
  - Social events
- Message content
  - Operations
    - Activities
    - Financial
  - Product updates
    - Availability, prices, schedules, etc.
  - Demand updates
    - Availability, prices, schedules, etc.
  - Volunteer opportunities/obligations
  - Membership renewal
- Interactions between consumers and coop management & staff
- Interactions between producers and coop management & staff
- Interactions between consumers and producers
- Interactions with the rest of your community

**Pricing arrangements:**

- Who pays what?
- Who receives what?

- Costs
- Fairness
- Value
- Etc.

**Ordering and delivery processes:**

- Ease of use
- Timing
- Convenience
- Accuracy
- Computer access
- System reliability
- Etc.

**Impacts of the Local Food Coop:**

- Better health and nutrition
  - Fresher products
  - Safer food supply
  - Nutrient content
- More profitable/sustainable local farms
  - Increased market access
  - Higher farm prices
  - Greater efficiency in production and distribution
- Stronger connection between growers and consumers
  - Know your farmer
  - Traceability of food supply
  - Greater trust
  - Stronger social bonds
- Social/economic impact
  - Stronger sense of connectedness/community
  - Job retention or expansion
  - Increased self/local reliance
  - Population retention
  - Resource conservation