



Welcome!

Cooperative Innovation

7th Annual Farmer Cooperatives Conference



Conference Objectives

- Provide timely and relevant information on agricultural co-op issues.
 - Presentations that are valuable to participants and encourage *critical* thinking.
- Provide an opportunity to learn from each other.
 - Co-op leaders and academics.
 - Discussion is key component of conference.



Planning Committee

- University of Wisconsin Center for Co-ops
 - Kim Zeull (Chair)
 - Ashwini Rao
 - Bob Cropp
 - Anne Reynolds
- Farm Foundation—Steve Halbrook
- CHS Foundation & Co-op Foundation
 - William Nelson



Planning Committee

- CHS Inc—Bob Bass
- Cornell University
 - Bruce Anderson
 - Brian Henehan
- Iowa State University—Roger Ginder
- Kansas State University
 - David Barton
 - Mike Boland



Planning Committee

- Michigan State University—Chris Peterson
- North Dakota State—Bill Nelson
- UC Davis—Shermain Hardesty
- UM-Columbia—Mike Cook



Financial Sponsors & Partners

- University of Wisconsin Extension
- Farm Foundation
- Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives
- Lindquist and Vennum
- Badgerland Farm Credit Services
- West Central
- Land O'Lakes
- CoBank
- Dorsey & Whitney
- CHS Foundation & The Co-op Foundation
- NCFE Education Foundation



2003 Conference Executing Vision & Strategy with Success

“The collapse of Farmland has some farm groups worried that co-ops are losing their ability to compete with big food companies.”

--*New York Times*
September 16, 2003



2003 Conference

- Focused on implementing competitive strategies.
- A Look to the Future
 - *Agricultural Co-ops in the 21st Century* (USDA)
- What to take home?
 - Final sessions offer key insights
 - This year we have a review of case studies
 - Post-conference summary in binder



This year...

- Co-ops are not just competitive, they are innovative!
- Business innovation refers broadly to all new activities related to firm structure, production, and output.



Innovation

“Innovation is rarely rocket science... in the past few decades most of the companies that have created truly extraordinary amounts of wealth have done so by inventing great processes, not great products.”

—*Economist*, April 24, 2004



Innovation

- You will hear about many co-op innovations...
 - New sectors: ethanol and bio-mass
 - New business structures: the Patronage Investment (Wyoming) Co-op model
 - Innovative partnerships and marketing
 - New strategies: cheaper insurance
- What are opportunities for your co-op?



Innovation

- What does co-op innovation require?
 - An *entrepreneurial* board and management team.
 - Leadership trained to identify market opportunities.
 - A culture that provides all stakeholders the chance to be creative and innovate.
 - What else?



Innovation

- What are the challenges *co-ops* face in their pursuit of innovation?
 - What are some particular constraints of this business model?
 - What are some ideas for overcoming these obstacles?
 - How have other *co-ops* succeeded?
 - What can be learned from the failures?



Thank you!

We appreciate your participation!