

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

*Office of the Secretary*  
Washington, D.C. 20250



NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH  
*October 2016*

*By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America*

**A PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS** “Cooperatives Build” is the theme for National Cooperative Month 2016, recognizing the many ways that cooperatives help to bring about a stronger rural America as they work to build the rural economy, rural communities, and rural jobs; and

**WHEREAS** cooperatives are user-owned, user-controlled businesses that are governed democratically for the benefit of users; and

**WHEREAS** the United States has approximately 29,000 cooperatives with 350 million memberships, generating \$650 billion in annual revenue and 2.1 million jobs; and

**WHEREAS** profits generated by a cooperative are either returned to its members or reinvested in the cooperative, keeping more dollars from the operation “close to home;” and

**WHEREAS** cooperatives play a major role in many sectors of the economy, including agriculture, utilities, credit and financial services, groceries, food hubs, housing, and worker-owned businesses, among others;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in recognition of the vital role that cooperatives play in improving economic opportunity and the quality of life in rural America, I, Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, do hereby proclaim October 2016 as National Cooperative Month. I encourage all Americans to learn more about cooperatives and to celebrate cooperatives’ accomplishments with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of September 2016, the two-hundred forty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America.

THOMAS J. VILSACK  
*Secretary*