



Iowa Institute for  
Cooperatives

# CO-OPVIEWS

News and information for the benefit of Iowa cooperatives.

Sept. 2024 Vol. 54, No. 3

## 5 WAYS TO CELEBRATE CO-OP MONTH

### 1. MEMBER APPRECIATION

Put on events like an open house, community fair, or online get-together to thank members for their continued support of the co-op. You can bring in guest speakers, have workshops, or show off what the co-op's been doing and where it's headed.

### 2. COMMUNITY PROJECT

Kick off a new project that aligns with what the co-op stands for, like a local sustainability project, a community garden, or a scholarship fund. Getting members involved in these projects shows the co-op's commitment to building up the community.

### 3. EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Use Co-op Month to spread the word about how co-ops work. This could mean publishing articles, hosting webinars, or running social media campaigns that highlight why being part of a co-op is a smart choice.

### 4. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Team up with schools, colleges, or local groups to teach the next generation about the cooperative model. This could include guest talks, workshops, or joint projects that get students and community members involved in cooperative principles.

### 5. SPECIAL PROMOTIONS

Offer special deals, discounts, or incentives to members during Co-op Month. This is a great way to reward loyal members and encourage more people to join the co-op and see what it's all about.

## CO-OP MONTH

### Recognizing Accomplishments Looking to The Future

Every October, we get to look back at what our cooperatives have done and think about where they're headed. Cooperatives, whether in farming, finance, energy or retail, have always been about helping people and building stronger communities. The theme "*The Future is Cooperative*" hits home today, as co-ops continue to stand out as a smarter, more sustainable way of doing business in a world that's always changing.

### THE COOPERATIVE ADVANTAGE

Co-ops are unique because they are member-owned and operate for the benefit of their members. By focusing on long-term success instead of short-term profits, co-ops weather economic challenges, support local economies, and create lasting jobs. They also lead in innovation and sustainability, especially in farming and energy, promoting renewable energy, local food networks, and sustainable practices.

### EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Cooperatives empower communities by giving everyone a voice and a stake in the businesses that affect their lives. This isn't just about making money; it's about building trust, strengthening community ties, and working together for the common good.

In rural areas where access to services can be tough, co-ops step up to provide everything from banking and healthcare to education and housing. By focusing on their community's needs, co-ops create a safety net that helps everyone thrive.



THE FUTURE IS  
COOPERATIVE  
CO-OP MONTH 2024

### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As we look ahead, the cooperative model paints a vision of a more sustainable and resilient world. In uncertain economic times, the cooperative principles of helping one another, working together, and sharing power offer a way forward. The future is cooperative because it prioritizes people, values community, and focuses on long-term benefits over short-term gains.

### CO-OP MONTH IN IOWA

This year, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives is teaming up with the Iowa Credit Union League and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives to highlight the contributions of co-ops to their communities. Be on the lookout for social media posts, news articles, and a proclamation from Governor Kim Reynolds declaring October as Co-op Month in Iowa. For more information, visit our joint website: [www.iowacooperatives.com](http://www.iowacooperatives.com)

# WAYS & MEANS

## Lawmakers Discuss Extending Key Tax Provisions to Support Rural Communities

Leaders of 15 Nebraska and Iowa local cooperatives met with the House Ways and Means staff to discuss Section 199A. This meeting was held at the AGP headquarters and the leadership team of AGP also joined in the conversation.

Section 199A was passed by Congress in 2017 as part of the Tax Cut and Jobs Act and is set to expire in 2025 unless Congress renews this critical tax provision. Many of our members recognize this tax legislation as DPAD (Domestic Production Activity Deduction).

Individual cooperative leaders went around the room and shared what Section 199A has enabled them to provide for their members. One of the most frequently mentioned benefits

was the significant investments in assets and infrastructure that have benefited individual members. Leaders also noted how it has strengthened their cooperatives' balance sheets, making them more resilient in the face of agricultural market volatility. Several highlighted the value of DPAD distributions to individual farmers, which they wouldn't have been able to access without this provision.

Legislators from the Midwest mentioned that they had heard this multiple times as they interacted with their constituents. Legislators from other areas of the US not as familiar, found the discussion insightful, gaining a deeper understanding of how this tool has greatly benefited rural communities.



Evan Wielenga from Hull Co-op Association and Carl Dickinson from CVA joined cooperative leaders and Iowa Representative Randy Feenstra in a discussion at the House Ways and Means Committee meeting in August.



As part of the tour with the Rural American Tax Team, 15 local cooperatives from Iowa and Nebraska met in Omaha with the House Ways and Means staff to discuss Section 199A.

## Creating Environments for Learning

The Iowa Institute for Cooperatives emphasizes the importance of educating our members to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving industry. This summer, we hosted workshops to broaden knowledge and offer hands-on learning.

In June, co-op managers and board of directors learned about key industry topics, including the H2A program, loan agreements, and biologicals. In August, members explored Microsoft's new AI software, Copilot. As Nick Willwerth of United Cooperative remarked about the learning opportunity, "AI and large language models are only going to become more powerful and prevalent, not just in business, but in society as a whole. The Copilot session hosted by IIC was a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of this powerful tool and explore how we can integrate it into our organization."

Other summer events include our annual Intern Day giving students a more in-depth look at cooperatives. We look forward to continuing to offer resources and educational opportunities that help members stay competitive and knowledgeable in an increasingly complex environment.



IIC members participating in hands-on learning with Microsoft's Copilot software.



**EMILY BRAY**

Five Star Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural & Rural Policy  
Studies/Public Relations*



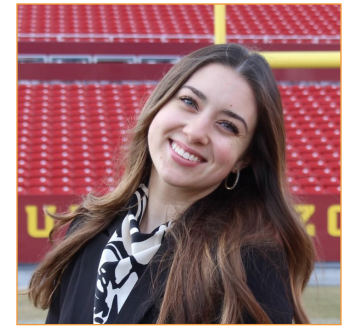
**GRACE CURTIS**

NEW Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural Business*



**KIERRA DODD**

Servitech  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural Business/  
Accounting*



**CHELSEA HOLLAND**

Innovative Ag Services  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural Business*

# CULTIVATING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

## 2024 Iowa Institute for Cooperatives Scholarships Awarded

This year, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives Scholarship Program awarded \$2,500 scholarships to 12 college students. In addition to their cooperative work experience, recipients were selected based on demonstrated leadership skills and recommendations from their academic institutions and cooperative supervisors.

As part of the application process, students submitted an essay explaining the importance of cooperatives to their communities. This annual scholarship program is one of the many ways the IIC supports the growth of future cooperative leaders. Congratulations to the 2024 IIC Scholarship recipients, and best wishes for their future careers!



**LAUREN HUIZENGA**

Key Cooperative  
Dordt University  
*General Agriculture*



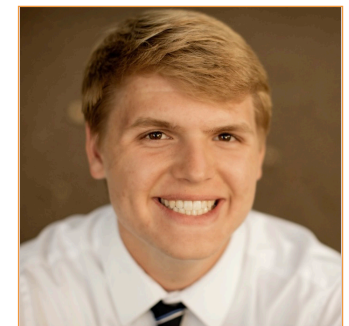
**MEGAN KNUDTSON**

Farmers Cooperative Society  
Texas Tech University  
*Human Resources Development*



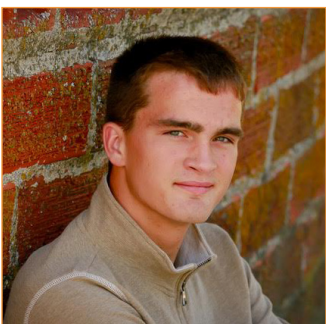
**JUSTIN LOSEKE**

NEW Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural Studies*



**MASON MOORE**

Ag Processing Inc.  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
*Chemical Engineering*



**RYAN PANBECKER**

Pro Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural Systems Technology*



**ELIZABETH RINIKER**

Heartland Co-op  
Iowa State University  
*Animal Science*



**RILEY WALKER**

NEW Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural Business*



**BRENNA WILKINS**

River Valley Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
*Agricultural Communication/  
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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



# Iowa Institute for Cooperatives' Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, November 26 | 9 AM - 4 PM**

Iowa State Center - Scheman Building, Ames

Join us in November for Iowa Institute for Cooperatives' 73rd Annual Meeting. Michael Lombardi, former NFL general manager and three-time Super Bowl winner, will be the keynote speaker at this year's cooperative annual meeting. We will also:

- Induct two individuals into the Iowa Cooperative Hall of Fame; J. Keith Spackler of Ag Processing Inc., Omaha, NE and Donald Feldman Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative, Allison, IA
- Discuss and vote on legislative resolutions for the 2025 legislative session
- Network and reconnect with industry leaders and peers
- Hear from industry experts in breakout sessions



Scan the QR code or visit our website, [iowainstitute.coop](http://iowainstitute.coop), and register under the "Events" tab. For more information, please contact our office at 515-292-2667.

### Keynote Speaker Michael Lombardi

With over 30 years of leadership experience in top NFL organizations like the San Francisco 49ers, Oakland Raiders, and New England Patriots, Lombardi will provide leaders with valuable insights into shaping a strong, results-driven culture. His philosophy, rooted in Stoicism, emphasizes resilience, discipline, and purposeful leadership—traits essential for building successful teams and organizations.

Drawing from his experiences working with legendary coaches like Bill Walsh, Al Davis, and Bill Belichick, Lombardi will share strategies for fostering leadership that promotes collaboration, innovation, and long-term growth to ensure lasting success for cooperative members.

