Agricultural Co-operative Networks in Canada

Research and Consultation

Final Report ©
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1. **Executive Summary**

This report provides the observations and recommendations of a research and consultation project commissioned by the Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative (Ag-CDI), which is financially supported by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and is co-managed by the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and le Conseil canadien de coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM).

The research and consultation study sought to answer three questions:

1. **What types of networks exist in Canada, the US and relevant European countries to serve agricultural co-ops?**

2. **Have agricultural co-op networks or federations existed (or attempted to exist) in Canada in the past and what lessons can be learned from their experience?**

3. **What are the common needs or opportunities amongst Canada’s existing and emerging agricultural co-ops that could be addressed through some type of national network or common forum? Are the co-ops interested in pursuing such a network or forum?**

Through the completion of literature reviews and one-on-one interviews with agricultural networks based in Canada, U.S. and Europe, as well as a face-to-face consultation with a focus group of Canadian agricultural co-operatives and stakeholders, an on-line survey to the wide collective of agricultural co-operatives across Canada as well as one-on-one interviews with Board members and management of agricultural co-operatives in Canada, the research findings have indicated the following:
Types of networks

There are national agricultural co-operative networks spread throughout Europe as well as in the U.S. Canada’s only version of an agricultural co-operative network was based in Quebec and serviced francophone agricultural co-operatives mainly in Quebec but also in Ontario and the Maritime provinces.

The networks included in our research were all separate and distinct organizations that served the needs of the collective of agricultural co-operatives, adhering to co-operative principles and values, and offering a common array of core services, although in varying degrees of focus. These core services were: Advisory Services, Co-operative Promotion & Support, Co-operative Research, Government Affairs & Representation, Information Sharing & Networking, Training & Education, and Research & Development.

Membership structures ranged from having agricultural co-operatives as direct members to having agricultural co-operative federations as members, which represented the common needs and interests of their member co-operatives.

Four main revenue streams were identified as being common among the networks included in the research: Government funding, Fee for service, Dues from members and Operational income. Most European-based networks had all four revenue streams. In France, for example, membership in a federation was legislated as well as membership in the network, thereby guaranteeing a revenue stream from dues.

Canada’s only version of a network was seen as operating first and foremost as an agricultural co-operative business, involved in guaranteeing volume pricing and sales to its members, alongside a larger mandate to also be the representative body for its member co-operatives. Therefore, its revenue streams were seen to come from fee-for-service and operational Income. In the U.S., the national network operated solely on dues-based income.

All networks studied had working relationships with the national co-operative apex body either as a direct member or an indirect member.
Lessons learned

The driving factor behind the undertaking of this research and consultation project is the fact that, in Canada, there are over 1300 agricultural co-operatives operating across a wide variety of sectors spread across the country without a national network or body to address their specific needs on a collective basis.

Through a historical review of co-operatives and the establishment of the agricultural co-operative networks included in our research, it was seen that in countries other than Canada, once the agricultural co-operatives reached a critical mass, there was a tendency to regroup and form bonds across the country.

There were also critical incidents that propelled the co-operatives to seek to join forces against common threats such as BSE and foot-and-mouth disease in Europe.

In Canada, this regrouping did occur but never at a national level possibly due to factors such as sheer differences in geographical mass in Canada versus smaller, more condensed countries in Europe. A number of other factors seemed to hinder the establishment of a national organization for agricultural co-operatives, including uncertainties about co-operative principles, the competing needs of large regional co-operatives, underlying philosophical disagreements, and to some extent the career interests of leaders from a number of organizations. It is sufficient to say that each were in turn considerable barriers for closer collaboration on a national level.

The research did identify key characteristics among the existing national agricultural co-operative networks in other countries that would be important to retain when evaluating the establishment of a similar pan-Canadian network. These key success factors were:

- Leadership from agricultural co-operatives in the establishment and the operations of the network
- Focus on core co-operative mandate, values and structure
- Government support in terms of policy focus and initial core funding, but not dependence on government funding
- Self-generated streams of revenue to cover operating costs
- Clearly identified and communicated services specific to agricultural co-operatives
- Credibility through agricultural and co-operative expertise
Engaging members through working groups, committees and common projects that benefit the whole

Continuous communication and interaction with the co-operative members in order to ensure that they are well represented, heard and understood, and actions on the part of the network that reflect this common understanding

Concrete benefits of increased efficiency / profitability that benefits all members

**Common needs, opportunities and interest**

The participants indicated a clear need for specific services aimed at agricultural co-operatives and a lack of availability of these services through the existing co-operative associations and agricultural organizations, at the regional, provincial or national levels.

Information Sharing & Networking and Training & Education were the two services that were included among the priorities of all the Canadian agricultural co-operatives that participated in the research. These two services were also seen as a strong focus among all the networks included in our research.

Government representation was said to a key benefit that the agricultural co-operatives would seek to gain by establishing closer ties across Canada, having a single voice to represent their common interests.

Co-operative Research and Research and Development were included as priority by the agricultural co-operatives interviewed one-on-one, however these co-operatives had been exposed to these services as part of their existing agricultural network whereas the majority of the respondents to the research had not. Research services were seen to be offered in varying degrees by the networks included in our research.

Specific services such as Information Sharing & Networking, Government Representation, Research and Training & Education were also seen to be suitable at the national level. However, the majority of respondents indicated a clear preference to have the specific services available at a provincial level.
When asked to evaluate possible options for establishing a network among agricultural co-operatives across Canada, there was less of a desire to establish a separate, distinct organization than to capitalize on existing national and provincial co-operative and agricultural organizations through a more coordinated approach among these organizations in order to provide the agricultural co-operatives with the required services.

A synthesis of these responses would seem to indicate the opportunity to centralize the development and coordination of the identified priority services at a national level and to utilize existing infrastructures and relationships at the provincial association level for the delivery of these services.

And, in context of the Canadian environment and the dual official languages, it was specified that access to the network and service provision would need to be available in both French and English.

**Recommendations**

Based on our research findings, we recommend the following to start to satisfy the needs of agricultural co-operatives across Canada:

Concentrate first and foremost on the core services identified as a priority by the majority of the respondents to the research, which were, in order of priority: Information Sharing & Networking and Training & Education.

Establish a Working Group comprised of leading agricultural co-operatives and representatives from the national and provincial co-operative associations and conseils provinciaux. The purpose of the working group would be to initiate the following activities:

- Oversee the organization of a National Agricultural Co-operative Conference in February 2010.
- Initiate and explore ways to develop opportunities to share information such as a dedicated e-newsletter focused on agricultural co-operative issues.
- Explore ways and initiate opportunities in which agricultural co-operatives could establish links with existing networks and associations.
- Explore and initiate closer linkages with international agricultural co-operative networks and seek ways in which they can share information regularly.
In a second phase of activity and following the organization of the National Agricultural Co-operative Conference, the Working Group would seek to initiate and organize a nationally coordinated and provincially delivered training and education program, focused first on current and future farmer-directors and delegates of agricultural co-operatives in Canada.

It is further recommended to seek to build upon existing Training and Education programs currently offered by other agricultural co-operative networks and national and provincial associations.

Finally we recommend that the Working Group initiate the following:

- as a priority, request a refresh of the existing data and stats on Canadian agricultural co-operatives by the Co-operatives Secretariat, which was seen in our research to be quite dated;

- on an ongoing basis, identify possible working partnerships with the Co-operatives Secretariat, the academic centers for co-operative research as well as domestic and international agricultural networks to undertake or participate in research and development opportunities that would assist the Canadian agricultural co-operatives to better compete in an ever-changing global landscape.
2. Project Overview and Background Information

1. Overview of the Agricultural Co-operative Networks Research and Consultation Project

This report provides the observations and recommendations of a research and consultation project commissioned by the Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative (Ag-CDI), which is financially supported by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and is co-managed by the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and le Conseil canadien de coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM).

The research and consultation study sought to answer three questions:

1. What types of networks exist in Canada, the US and relevant European countries to serve agricultural co-ops?

2. Have agricultural co-op networks or federations existed (or attempted to exist) in Canada in the past and what lessons can be learned from their experience?

3. What are the common needs or opportunities amongst Canada’s existing and emerging agricultural co-ops that could be addressed through some type of national network or common forum? Are the co-ops interested in pursuing such a network or forum?
1.1 Project Team

The research project was completed by a team comprised of:

- Quintin Fox and Tanya Gracie of CCA’s Consultancy and Training Unit
  → The Consultancy and Training Unit of the Canadian Co-operative Association led the research project in tandem with CCCM
- Diane Bilodeau, an independent consultant who completed the francophone component of the research and assisted in the compilation and reporting of the results of the research project
- One World Inc., an independent consulting firm, which facilitated and documented the results of a face-to-face consultation session with agricultural co-operatives and organizations.

The project was commissioned in the summer of 2008 and the majority of the research and consultations took place during the fall and winter of 2008/09.

1.2 Project Methodology and Approach

Steps undertaken in the research and consultation project included:

1. The virtual research of websites and corresponding literature of three (3) Anglophone agricultural co-operative networks based in Europe, one (1) Francophone co-operative network based in Europe, one (1) Anglophone agricultural co-operative network based in the U.S. and (1) Francophone agricultural co-operative network based in Quebec.

- Europe: Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS), English Farming and Food Partnerships (EFFP), Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) and Coop de France
- U.S: National Council of Farmer Co-operatives (NCFC)
- Québec: La Coop fédérée
- La Coop fédérée is the only Canadian-based agricultural co-operative network
2. Further investigation of the agricultural co-operative networks through questionnaires and / or one-on-one telephone interviews with the following Board members or management of the respective agricultural networks, documenting their role, structure and value to their members.

- SAOS: Mr. Bob Yuill, Deputy CEO
- EFFP: Mr. Sion Roberts, Chief Executive, Mr. David Neal-Smith, Director Commercial Affairs; Mr. Duncan Rawson, Associate Director
- ICOS: Mr. John Tyrrel, Director General
- NCFC:
- Coop de France: Mrs. Chantal Chomel, Director of Legal & Fiscal Affairs
- La Coop fédérée: Mr. Denis Richard, President

As well, one-on-one telephone interviews were held with a sample of members and stakeholders (e.g. government) of these agricultural co-operative networks to ascertain their views and opinions on the benefits of belonging to such a network.

- SAOS and EFFP:
  → Scottish Executive: Alistair Prior, Food Industry Policy Leader, Food Industry Unit
  → East of Scotland Growers, Alistair Ewan, Managing Director
  → Scottish Pig Producers: Gordon McKen, Managing Director
  → Grainfarmers: Bruce Ferguson Regional Manager Berry Gardens: Mr. Nicholas Marston, Managing Director
  → Dairy Farmers of Britain: Mr. Matthew Sheehan, Membership Director
  → Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) Mr. Ian Leggat, Food and Farming Group
  → Co-operatives UK: David Button, Board member representing EFFP and SAOS
  → Plunkett Foundation: Peter Couchman, Chairman of the Board
  → La Coop fédérée
    - Unicoop (QC) : Mr. Gaétan Roger, General Manager
    - Coop Caraquet (NB) : Mr. René Chiasson, General Manager
    - Agriest (ON): Mr. Patrick Therrien, General Manager
The list of participants is included in Appendix 1

A face-to-face consultation with a focus group of representatives of the 18 established and emerging Anglophone and Francophone agricultural co-operatives and other agricultural stakeholders which responded to the invitation to attend. The face-to-face consultation was held at the Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative (Ag-CDI) Conference in Montreal on November 27, 2008. This consultation session was facilitated by an independent consultant, One World Inc.

An on-line survey questionnaire was circulated to over 700 Canadian Anglophone and Francophone agricultural co-operatives present in the Ag-CDI database. The purpose of the survey was to assess the current provision of services to these co-operatives and their common needs and interest in establishing greater collaboration among agricultural co-operatives at a pan-Canadian level.

A survey questionnaire was sent to all the provincial co-operative associations and conseils provinciaux to establish the level and type of services provided specifically to agricultural co-operatives and to the wider co-operative system.

- NCFC:
  - National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA): Mr Adam Schwartz, VP Corporate Affairs
  - United States Department of Agriculture: James Wadsworth, Senior Policy Analyst
  - Professor Michael Cook, Robert D Partridge Professor, University of Missouri-Columbia

- 9 of the 10 provincial co-operative associations responded
- 2 of the 9 conseils provinciaux responded

- 32 agricultural co-operatives responded to the on-line survey
In-depth phone interviews with senior managers and elected representatives of a variety of established Anglophone and Francophone agricultural co-operatives (and agri-food co-operatives closely involved in the supply chain) to probe specific needs, concerns and opportunities at a pan-Canadian level.

**Anglophone**

- Vineland Growers (ON): George Mitges, General Manager
- Gay Lea Foods Co-operative (ON) Michael Barrett, Chief Operations Officer
- Granny’s Poultry (MB): Randy Schroeder, Chairman of the Board
- Federated Co-operatives Ltd (SK): Mr Scott Banda, VP Corporate Affairs
- United Farmers of Alberta (AB): Mr Clarence Olthuis, Chairman of the Board

**Francophone**

- Coopérative agricole d'Embrun Itée (ON): Mr. Denis Bourdeau, Board member
- La Fromagerie coopérative de St-Albert Inc. (ON) : Mr. Réjean Ouimet, General Manager
- CUMA Franco-Agri inc (ON): Mr. Normand Brunette, Secretary-treasurer

**1.3 Final Report**

This report summarizes the responses and comments complied as a result of the consultations with the six (6) agricultural co-operative networks, 11 provincial associations and conseils provinciaux and 56 agricultural co-operatives and organizations that participated in the different phases of the research project. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every participant for providing the research team with their time and invaluable feedback.

Based on their responses and comments, the research team has identified key observations and issues as well as recommended next steps to meet the needs of agricultural co-operatives on a pan-Canadian level.
The report is aimed for circulation to the management team of Ag-CDI who commissioned the research as well as its managing organizations, CCA and CCCM, for their review and discussion. Following this review, a summary report will be developed for the sharing of results with the participants of the research project and the greater base of key stakeholders including the agricultural co-operatives and agricultural organizations across Canada.
2. Overview of Agricultural Co-operatives in Canada

Agricultural co-operatives in Canada have a long and fruitful history as drivers of rural economies and mainstays of many communities across the country.

Agricultural co-operatives can be broadly categorized as supply, marketing, production or service, according to the activity in which 50% or more of their total revenue is generated. Examples of these categories of agricultural co-operatives are listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Supply</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>Grazing</td>
<td>Soil conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed mill</td>
<td>Grains and oilseeds</td>
<td>Feeder financing</td>
<td>Seed cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm petroleum</td>
<td>Fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>Farmers’ markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle and hogs</td>
<td>Machinery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poultry and eggs</td>
<td>Animal reproduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honey and maple</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last significant study of agricultural co-operatives was undertaken in 2003 by the Co-operatives Secretariat. The study examined trends for agricultural co-operatives from 1998 to 2002. This period was particularly turbulent in Canadian agriculture as the sector underwent many structural changes such as consolidation, reorganization, divestment of assets and demutualization.

Based on the survey findings and the annual preparation of data by the Co-operatives Secretariat for non-financial co-operatives, it is possible to provide some headline statistics which reveals the breadth of agricultural co-operatives in Canada (using the 2004 statistics supplied by the Co-operatives Secretariat):

- 1,340 active agricultural co-ops with over 325,000 active memberships and nearly 30,000 employees
- Total annual revenues of over $12 billion
- Assets of $4.8 billion
It is important to note that this data provides a snapshot of Canadian agricultural co-operatives at their peak in terms of size, market share and revenues. Since 2002, some of Canada’s largest agricultural co-operatives have demutualized or ceased to function as a co-operative. These include Agricore, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Lilydale and Agrifoods International Co-operative.

There are some underlying trends which should not be ignored. For example the number of agricultural co-operatives has remained steady at around 1300 for nearly a decade which of course hides the amount of fluctuation within the sector including demutualization, mergers and acquisitions within the sector. The majority of active memberships are held with the agri-supply co-operatives reflecting on the more intensive nature of the relationship between the co-operative and farmer-member.

Furthermore, fertilizer and chemical sales represents the largest share of farm supply revenues reported by co-operatives, while dairy revenue represents the largest share of marketing revenues. In addition, agricultural marketing co-operatives had the greatest contribution to total net value added.

However, the statistics also noted that that the proportion of debt is greater than the proportion of equity in the capital structure of agricultural co-operatives, particularly of marketing co-operatives. This issue has been a longstanding inhibiting factor in the growth and development of large-scale value-added marketing and processing agricultural co-operatives in many developed economies.

The introduction of fiscal policies to support the introduction of a Co-operative Investment Plan (CIP) on a national basis (and using the Quebec CIP model as a framework) as supported by the two national co-operative associations and many large established agricultural co-operatives would go some way to addressing this issue.

Since 2002, some of Canada’s largest agricultural co-operatives have demutualized or ceased to function as a co-operative.
3. Overview of Agricultural Co-operative Networks

The driving factor behind the undertaking of this research and consultation project is the fact that, in Canada, there are over 1300 agricultural co-operatives operating across a wide variety of sectors spread across the country without a national network or body to address their specific needs on a collective basis.

Unlike Canada, many other countries have successfully established national networks to provide sector support on an organized basis to agricultural co-operatives, sharing information and best practices as well as providing government representation, technical support, training and other sector specific services.

The table\textsuperscript{1} below provides evidence of the size and scope of the agricultural co-operative sector in several countries and the widespread presence of national networks, even in countries with a smaller scale of agricultural co-operatives than in Canada:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Country} & \textbf{Producer Members} & \textbf{Agricultural Co-ops} & \textbf{Employees} & \textbf{Ag Co-op Network} \\
\hline
Germany & 3,100,000 & 4,434 & 155,000 & Yes \\
\hline
France & 1,300,000 & 16,800 & 120,000 & Yes \\
\hline
Italy & 1,178,000 & 8,327 & 77,500 & Yes \\
\hline
Canada & 360,000 & 1,340 & 33,000 & NO \\
\hline
Netherlands & 270,664 & 223 & 54,456 & Yes \\
\hline
UK & 235,000 & 583 & 12,600 & Yes \\
\hline
Denmark & 113,000 & 65 & 27,826 & Yes \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

These figures raise the fundamental question: why are Canadian agricultural co-operatives not organized at a national level?

\textsuperscript{1} Source: Plunkett Foundation, United Kingdom
3.1 Evolution of Agricultural Co-operatives in Canada

In order to begin to answer this question, it is important to first understand the evolution of agricultural co-operatives in Canada compared with other countries. History has shown that agricultural co-operatives became established during specific waves of co-operative action in periods of uncertainty or low prices such as pre-First World War, the 1920’s and 30’s and in the immediate post-Second World War period. These waves saw the establishment of co-operative creameries, grain marketing and farm input co-operatives.

Some of these sectors grew large enough to organize themselves on a provincial or interprovincial basis such as United Grain Growers which was based in the Western provinces and founded in 1906 and the Canadian Livestock Co-operative in the Maritimes which was established in 1930. Unlike Europe and the United States, farmer-controlled co-operatives and agricultural organizations in Canada did not seek to collaborate nationally on a sector or industry basis. Instead they organized at a regional or provincial level or through the provincial or national co-operative associations including CCA and CCCM which represented the broader range of co-operatives.

Due to the preponderance of co-operatives and credit unions in rural and agricultural communities, it was also natural that the national associations would focus their efforts on behalf of agricultural co-operatives to some extent. For example the work of George Keen, the Secretary of the Co-operative Union of Canada (later to become the Canadian Co-operative Association), aiming to resolve the “producer-consumer” split during the first half of the twentieth century is noteworthy.

Over the course of their history, a number of factors seemed to hinder the establishment of a national organization for agricultural co-operatives, including uncertainties about co-operative principles, the competing needs of large regional co-operatives, underlying philosophical disagreements, and to some extent the career interests of leaders from a number of organizations. This report is not the vehicle to explore these issues further as each of them would warrant considerable research to identify the primary causes. It is sufficient to say that each were in turn considerable barriers for closer collaboration on a national level.
3.2 Establishment of Agricultural Co-operatives Networks outside of Canada

At the same time as in Canada i.e. in the first half of the twentieth century, farmers began to organize themselves in co-operatives in Europe and the United States. Once many of these burgeoning agricultural co-operative sectors reached a critical mass, they would seek to grow closer ties and links amongst themselves on a national basis. These networks have their origins in the burgeoning agricultural co-operative movements that began in Europe and North America in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. Many of the national agricultural co-operative networks have been in existence since the early 1900’s. The leadership and vision shown by agricultural co-operative pioneers, the growing strength of agricultural co-operatives and the need for collective action to respond to contemporary threats and opportunities have all proved to be decisive factors in their establishment.

3.3 Establishment of La Coop fédérée

In Canada, the beginnings of the agricultural co-operative network, now known as La Coop fédérée, founded its roots in 1922, when it was established under a special Act of the Province of Quebec which gave consent to the creation of a federation of Québécois agricultural co-operatives, issue of the merger of three central co-operatives: la Cooperative des fromagers de Québec, le Comptoir cooperative de Montréal et la Société des producteurs de semences de Sainte-Rosalie. In its beginnings, the Québec government participated actively in the financing and operations of La Coop fédérée, including providing required support to weather the recession following the 1929 stock market crash. In 1939, over a hundred co-operatives joined La Coop fédérée, creating unity within the agricultural co-operative movement. Over time, La Coop fédérée increased its membership and added other sectors of agriculture to its operations resulting in the strong, member-driven and member-owned agricultural co-operative network that exists today.
3.4 Next steps

Therefore, this research started with a study of a sample of longer established and newer agricultural co-operative networks to further understand their history, role, structure and value to their co-operative members, as well as their successes and lessons learned in order to assess the possibility for replication in Canada.
3. Research into Established Agricultural Co-operative Networks

1. Research into Established Agricultural Co-operative Networks

The research team undertook literature reviews and one-on-one interviews with five established national agricultural co-operative networks outside of Canada as well as the only Canadian version of an agricultural co-operative network, La Coop fédérée, to uncover their key features, services, benefits to members and strategic direction.

The five (5) national networks could boast that they represented the majority of agricultural co-operatives and farmer-controlled businesses within their country. La Coop fédérée, as well as representing 106 francophone agricultural co-operatives in Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes, is also the largest agricultural co-operative in Quebec, the largest supplier of seed, crop protection and fertilizer in Quebec, the largest independent distributor of petroleum products in Quebec as well as a Canadian leader in the processing, marketing and exportation of pork and poultry products.

Although the mandates of the networks all have a similar theme of uniting forces for the collective good of all the member co-operatives, their membership, main functions, sectors and funding structure vary as indicated in the Table 3 below.

The funding is sourced from four main revenue streams, including government funding (Govt), member dues (Dues), fee-for-service activities (Fees) and operational income (Ops) with some networks accessing all four (Coop de France, SAOS, ICOS and EFFP) whereas NCFC was solely Dues based, while La Coop fédérée had a unique structure, being financed solely from fees and operations.

Co-op de France is comprised of 15 regional federations and 14 national federations which in turn represents 3,200 agricultural co-ops and 12,700 CUMA’s across France. Membership is mandated through the federations which centralizes representation through a tiered representative structure. Membership in a federation is also mandated legislatively by the French government.

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) is structured in a similar fashion as Co-op de France with 52 regional and national farmer co-operatives, representing over 3,000 local farmer co-ops and 26 state and regional agricultural co-operative councils.
Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) is structured as a co-operative itself, and directed and controlled by a National Council. The National Council is elected by the co-operative membership (of which there are currently more than 150 co-operatives), which in turn represents an individual membership of more than 150,000 people.

| The thirty-one (31) person National Council reflects the composition of the co-operative sector in Ireland: | ✓ 16 members from multi-purpose dairy co-ops  
✓ 5 representatives from co-operative livestock marts  
✓ 1 representative from a national wholesale co-operative  
✓ 1 representative from a cattle breeding co-operative  
✓ 4 representatives from miscellaneous Irish co-operatives  
✓ 4 representative of Irish agriculture and agri-business |

The Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society (SAOS) is owned by 80 member co-operatives (out of a total of 100+ agricultural co-ops and farmer-controlled businesses). An eight (8) person Board of Directors elected from the membership directs the society. In addition there is a Council of nineteen (19) which is made up of the Board and additional members, acting as a stakeholder forum, convening representatives of the diverse range of interests encompassed by SAOS.

English Farming and Food Partnerships (EFFP) is primarily a membership association for agricultural co-operatives and farmer-controlled businesses in England. It also conducts fee-for-service consultancy and training activities on behalf of agricultural co-operatives and in partnership with government. It has the smallest membership relatively speaking in terms of the total number of agricultural co-operatives and farmer-controlled businesses in England (70+ agricultural co-op members out of approximately 400 agricultural co-ops in England), partly due to its lack of maturity as an organization and the pressures on farming in the UK. However its membership includes the largest agricultural co-ops and it has broadened its associate membership category to major UK food businesses including Marks and Spencers, Tesco, Morrisons Supermarkets, McCain Food (GB) Ltd, McDonalds Restaurants and Waitrose.

The English, Scottish and Irish networks had a blended funding structure across the four revenue streams. The most significant impact was how it affected their relationship with government and how they used their position to ‘influence’ government policy as opposed to lobbying for legislative and fiscal changes in favour of agricultural co-operatives.
Both the Scottish and English agricultural co-operative networks received nearly half of their annual revenues from core government contracts and while their business models were slowly moving away from dependence on government, it affected their independence and long-term sustainability.

Also, both organizations commented that changes in government policy had a direct impact on securing future commitments for funding if policy shifted away from agricultural co-operatives.

La Coop fédérée’s members are agricultural co-operatives, which are both owners of La Coop through membership shares as well as producers for and users of La Coop’s products and services. This explains their very unique funding structure which is a direct result of La Coop fédérée being first and foremost a co-operative business offering agricultural inputs and services to its members at competitive prices. Therefore, their revenue stream is derived solely from its business operations and fee-for service activities, all of which depend on its ability to be competitive in their industry.
### TABLE 3: Overview of Agricultural Co-operative Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ag Coop Network</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Overall Mandate</th>
<th>Main functions</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Coop de France** | 15 regional federations and 14 national federations, representing 3 200 ag coops and 12 700 “CUMAs” across France | • since 1966, the professional body uniting the agricultural cooperative movement;  
• the political advocate for agricultural cooperatives (France and Europe gov’ts, media & society);  
• promoter of the stature and collective values of agricultural cooperatives;  
• promoter of sustainable development within the agricultural cooperative movement | External relations, legal and taxation, social issues, sustainable development, industry /distribution/ consumers | ☑️ ☐ ☐ ☑️ |
<p>| <strong>SAOS</strong>        | 75 agricultural co-operatives and farmer-controlled businesses in Scotland. | Established in 1905 as a development organisation owned by its membership, the purpose of SAOS is to strengthen the profitability, competitiveness and sustainability of Scotland’s farming, food and drink, and related rural industries and communities through the development of co-operation and joint venture. | Development agency: co-operation amongst farmers &amp; growers; collaboration in supply chains; local food; carbon management; fee for service. | ☑️ ☐ ☐ ☑️ |
| <strong>EFFP</strong>        | Over 70 ag coops and food businesses                                                                 | Recently established in 2004, EFFP is a specialist agricultural cooperative network, working across the full supply chain. They combine farming knowledge with food industry expertise to help address structural, commercial and relationship issues across the industry, from an objective and independent standpoint. | Business development, regional development, supply chain management, climate change &amp; networking /information | ☑️ ☐ ☐ ☑️ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ag Coop Network</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Overall Mandate</th>
<th>Main functions</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICOS</td>
<td>Over 150 coops and 150,000 memberships</td>
<td>Established in 1894, the mission statement of ICOS is ‘to lead, represent &amp; support the Irish Co-Operative agribusiness sector in achieving its business objectives’. As the co-ordinating organisation for co-operatives in Ireland, ICOS provides a range of services to its member co-operatives and represents them on national and international organisations.</td>
<td>Co-ordinating organisation for co-operatives in Ireland with strong agricultural focus : business development, policy development, membership and training</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCFC</td>
<td>52 regional and national farmer co-operatives, representing 3,000 local farmer co-ops and 26 state and regional agriculture co-op councils.</td>
<td>Since 1929, NCFC has been the voice of America’s farmer cooperatives. NCFC’s mandate is to advance the business and policy interests of America’s cooperatives and other farmer-owned enterprises through: Farmer ownership and control in the production and distribution chain, Continued economic viability of America’s farmers, ranchers, and the businesses they own, Stewardship of natural resources, Vibrant rural communities</td>
<td>Business and policy functions– legal and taxation, climate change, food safety, chemical security, immigration reform, clean water act, commodity purchasing, spill prevention</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Coop federee</td>
<td>106 francophone ag coops ; 57 000 members and 20 000 auxiliary members ; members are mostly in Quebec but some in ON &amp; NB</td>
<td>Since 1922, La Coop contributes to the economic, social and environmental development of (member) cooperative agricultural producers and affiliated cooperatives by: Developing an integrated cooperative network to supply professional use products &amp; services, Operating a network of complementary businesses that generate competitive earnings, Enabling member producers to democratically coordinate the value added production chain, Promoting cooperative education and values.</td>
<td>Access to high quality products and services at competitive prices Supply (seed/fertilizer, hardware, equipment, petroleum) Marketing (processing &amp; distribution of grain, pork and poultry) Member services (advocacy, legal, training, support) Operate 160 hardware stores, 3 hatcheries, 185 service stations, Olymel meat plants Independent petroleum distributor</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Core Services

As seen in the table above, there are similarities and differences in the main functions of each of the networks. The research however identified Core Services that were offered in varying degrees by each of the networks, as indicated in the Table 4 below:

Table 4: Overview of Core Services offered by Agricultural Co-operative Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Services</th>
<th>Coop de France</th>
<th>SAOS</th>
<th>EFFP</th>
<th>ICOS</th>
<th>NCFC</th>
<th>Coop Fedérée</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Services (Including Research &amp; Development)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Support (living the co-op principles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing &amp; Networking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Affairs &amp; Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Advisory Services:** Provision of specialist tools, advice, resources, expertise to allow for successful development of agricultural co-operatives. This also generally included a component of Research and Development, a service which focused on research and analysis of the trends within the agricultural industry sectors and innovation at local, regional, national, international levels.

**Co-operative Promotion:** Promoting the co-operative difference in the branding, marketing and information provided to the public and other audiences.
Co-operative Research: Research of best practices among co-operatives and innovation in the application of the co-operative model in the agricultural sector.

Co-operative Support: Assisting the co-operative members in living the co-operative principles in the management and governance of their co-operatives.

Government Affairs and Representation: Representation at political levels regarding agricultural co-operative interests and impact of proposed or existing legislation on the agricultural co-operative sector.

Information Sharing and Networking: Sharing of knowledge, expertise, best practices, resources among agricultural co-operatives and the broader co-operative community through websites, events, seminars and conferences etc.

Training and Education: Practical and technical education and training for farmer-directors, management and staff on agricultural co-operatives and broader co-op community, industry trends, best practices, regulations, etc.

Our research showed that although there is a range of Core Services which are offered by the agricultural co-operative networks (as listed above); there are differences in the focus of the services that are offered. The three services that were consistently offered through the networks were Advisory Services (including research), Information Sharing & Networking and co-operative promotion. In addition, Training & Education was viewed by most networks as an essential service for their members.
3. Benefits of belonging to an agricultural co-operative network

As part of the research project, a number of agricultural co-operatives who are presently members of the only Canadian-based agricultural co-operative network, La Coop fédérée, were interviewed one-on-one to ascertain what they perceived to be the benefits of belonging to such a network. We have included the views expressed in the interviews with La Coop fédérée members due to their relevance in a Canadian context. It is important to note the uniqueness of this model in Canada. While it is our opinion that it would be very difficult to replicate La Coop’s model at the national level, it should be noted that the types of benefits set out below are what a network should aim for over time.

The recurring themes across the interviews were of: communication and information sharing, indispensable expertise and support, purchasing power and co-operative structure.

For instance, the very structure of the La Coop fédérée makes for a successful relationship with its member co-operatives:

- The member co-operatives are producers for La Coop fédérée, users of La Coop fédérée’s products and services and owners of the network.
- They elect the board members who make the decisions, ensuring they have a voice in all of the business decisions made by the network on behalf of its co-op members.
- The co-operative structure benefits both La Coop and the individual co-operative members.

This structure alone however is not the only key ingredient to the success of the network: communication and living co-operative principles is essential as well:

- With regular communication at various levels (annual meetings, CEO meetings, on-site consultations, phone assistance, reporting, etc.) and democratic decision-making, the co-operative network members feel both heard and understood within La Coop fédérée.
- La Coop fédérée was seen as leading by example on how to do business by applying the co-operative values and was continually inciting and supporting the co-op members to do the same.
Ongoing communication and constant interaction leads to an intimate knowledge of the co-op members which is further revealed in their confidence, for example, in La Coop fédérée’s expertise in the agricultural co-operative sector, an expertise that is said to be indispensable to the success of their co-ops, if not their very survival. It was noted in the interviews that:

- This expertise is constantly improving, no doubt by the very structure of the network: by being exposed to and intimately involved with all aspects of its co-op members’ business, La Coop’s expertise cannot help but be continually refined and sharpened, which in turn, greatly assists all the co-op members and feeds the profitability of all.
- Accessibility and hands-on assistance were noted as key elements of an agricultural co-operative network’s delivery of support services.

Along with concrete business results, an agricultural co-operative network such as La Coop fédérée extends its value by representing the co-op members on a collective basis on other levels, such as government representation and research & development, which would be virtually impossible at the individual co-operative level:

- The results of the representations at the political level further strengthen the network (if not all agricultural co-operatives) by ensuring that agricultural co-operatives are seen as a vital part of the agricultural industry.
- Investments in research & development activities provide improvements to the inputs and outputs of producers which benefit their production and yield increased return for all.

However, given that La Coop fédérée’s network was limited to francophone co-operatives, and their membership was mainly in Quebec and a few other distinct provinces, the interviewees were asked what, if anything, could be gained by having a national agricultural co-operative network.
The responses included the following:

- Government representation: stronger if all agricultural co-operatives could be represented at national level
- Purchasing power: could further increase profitability if it could drive up volumes through combined purchases across a national network of agricultural co-operatives. Joint purchasing/supply of petroleum was cited as an example.
- Research & development: could be further facilitated by a wider network and pooling of resources and the area of energy was cited as an example.

4. Key Success Factors

Based on the research of all six agricultural co-operative networks studied here, the key success factors ascertained by the research team for the successful establishment and sustainability of a national agricultural co-operative network include the following:

- Leadership from agricultural co-operatives to establish the network
- Focus on core co-operative mandate, values and structure
- Government support in terms of policy focus and initial core funding
- Self-sustaining financial model: self-generated streams of revenue to cover operating costs
- Clearly identified and communicated services
- Agricultural industry focus and expertise
- Engaging members through working groups and committees
- Continuous communication and interaction with the co-operative members in order to ensure that they are well represented, heard and understood, and actions on the part of the network that reflect this common understanding
- Concrete member benefits via increased efficiency / profitability that benefits all members
5. Lessons Learned

Based on the research conducted, there are a number of lessons that can be learned from the formation and establishment of the agricultural co-operative networks examined in our research.

These include:

- Government support: need for but not dependence on government funding
- Leadership and commitment is required from agricultural co-operatives to ensure the network maintains its relevancy and viability
- Coordinated approach with the national co-operative apex body or bodies
- Proactive and focused on continuous improvement of services and delivery
- Ability to provide fee-for-service activities that are sector specific: the main areas favoured by the established networks were Training and Education, Information Sharing & Networking and Advisory services specific to agriculture
- Specific projects focused on unifying the members in a common effort that would provide them with tangible benefits clearly strengthened the relationship with the network. Examples seen in our research were: “Agri-confiance”, a co-operative agri-food branding and consumer awareness program undertaken by Co-op de France which readily identifies the safety, quality and co-operative nature of the product, as well as “Project Chrysalide” recently undertaken by La Coop fédérée which is an integrated process reengineering project with the main objective to strengthen the competitive position of members all along the input / output chain.
4. RESULTS OF A FACE-TO-FACE CONSULTATION WITH KEY CO-OPERATIVES AND STAKEHOLDERS

1. Face-to-face Consultation with Key Co-operatives and Stakeholders

Based on the research findings of the existing agricultural networks, the project team held a face-to-face consultation with a focus group of established Anglophone and Francophone agricultural co-operatives, emerging co-ops and other agricultural stakeholders during the Ag-CDI Conference in Montréal at the end of November 2008.

The objectives of the face-to-face consultation were:

- Share the context and background of this research with representatives from agricultural co-operatives
- Share the findings from the research of agricultural co-operative networks
- Receive feedback on the research and direction for further research areas
- Initiate a dialogue with agricultural co-operative leaders on the benefits and opportunities for closer collaboration at a pan-Canadian level
- Consult with agricultural co-operatives on their needs and identify the next steps in the research project.

Participants at this event valued the research being undertaken and saw this discussion as being very timely, not only within the current economic context, but also in view of the evolution of agriculture and co-operatives generally over the last few years.

The research team found that the timeliness of this project was well received by many leaders in the agricultural co-operative sector.

It should be noted that the Montreal session was not oriented towards finding a consensus but rather was an exploratory process with the participants in order to provide further guidance and direction to the research team for the next phase of the project. The following summarizes the common observations and comments received in the consultation session.
A need to deepen the research among Canadian agricultural co-operatives

The Montreal consultation concluded with clear direction from the participants to consult with a wider audience of agricultural co-operatives to gain further feedback and viewpoints on their needs and opportunities for closer collaboration.

It was suggested to further research Canadian agricultural and co-operative organizations, including how national and provincial organizations are meeting or can meet the types of needs of agricultural co-operatives and what lessons can be learned from their experiences.

The Core Services identified in the research of existing agricultural co-operative networks seemed to resonate with the participants; however the participants also noted that needs vary according to the size and type of the agricultural co-operative.

There was no consensus on whether the benefits of closer collaboration as identified by the research on agricultural co-operative networks could be replicated in Canada.

It was suggested to undertake further consultation with a wider range of different sized co-operatives in a more focused discussion on specific sets of needs.

No clear preference for a specific type of “network”

Participants were asked to identify what forms a “network” of agricultural co-operatives could take. The participants agreed that a network could take many forms, but there was no clear preference expressed for any particular network model. The models that were brought forward by the participants were:

a) A separate organization

Concerns were expressed about creating a new organization when many agricultural co-operatives aren’t even members of existing organizations that have a mandate to help them meet their needs.

The proliferation of too many organizations was a concern to some participants, some of whom were looking for a more cohesive or comprehensive approach: a new initiative should complement what is being done, not duplicate it.

The issue of complexity was also raised, with too many organizations approaching the same members.
b) A caucus, or a group of caucuses, within existing organizations for agricultural co-operatives

The approach has been used successfully in some organizations (e.g. CFA), and it was seen as a possibility to explore more fully as a way to meet certain needs without creating a distinct organization.

It was felt by some of the participants that coordinating the work of such caucuses across various organizations could constitute a feasible approach to meeting needs.

c) A coordinated approach among existing national and provincial co-operatives and agricultural organizations in response to specific issues requiring joint action

Whatever the form of the network that could eventually emerge from such discussions, it was clear to all participants that at the very least, there is a need for a better coordination of efforts within existing co-operative organizations at the provincial and national level in order to meet the needs of agricultural co-ops.

It was suggested to take a closer examination of the current mandates of national organizations (i.e. CCA / CCCM / CFA) to see where they would be able to meet the needs, and how they could strengthen their roles in this regard, before looking at new networks.

d) Regular conference and / or information sessions

Another suggestion was to have regular annual meetings in the form of a conference or similar event that would bring together representatives of the agricultural co-operative community to further discuss issues of common interest and share information and best practices.

Building on Ag-CDI

Participants said that Ag-CDI program presents an opportunity to start something new, but it is seen as relevant only for new co-operatives. In addition, the funding is time specific and would create a dependency on government funding that the research had already proved to be a barrier to achieving sustainability.
“Single voice” to speak on behalf of agricultural co-operatives at the federal level

There was a lot of discussion around the topic of representation of the agricultural co-operative community at the federal level. Participants saw the importance of having a unified voice at the national level on matters of interest to all agricultural co-operatives. There was also discussion about the ongoing need for two (linguistically) different national-level organizations focusing on co-operatives.

A number of factors prevent agricultural co-operatives from participating in some organizations

Participants discussed some of the reasons why so many agricultural co-operatives don’t belong to any organization with a mandate to provide them with services specifically tailored to meet their needs. After some discussion, the following reasons were given for a lack of affiliation:

- Historically, co-operatives form federations when they are under threat.
- Many co-ops in Canada have a weak co-operative identity and a stronger relationship with their commodity and industry sector partners.
- The free-rider phenomenon allows some co-operatives to not join any organization, but they still benefit nonetheless from the efforts and investments of others.
- The issue of trust (or lack thereof) was also identified as a possible limiting factor, as some co-operatives are competing with one another on a local level, and may therefore be reluctant to collaborate with one another in an organizational setting.

2. Next Steps

The invaluable feedback that was gathered from the participants at the Montreal consultation helped shape the direction and approach of the next phase of the research. In particular, to focus on canvassing the views, needs and issues being faced by Canadian agricultural co-operatives.
5. Results of wider Co-operative Sector Consultation

1. Results of surveys and one-on-one interviews with agricultural co-operatives and organizations across Canada

In order to widen the scope of consultation across a larger base of agricultural co-operatives and organizations across Canada, the research team designed Phase III of the project which included the following three components:

1.1 Online Survey of agricultural co-operatives

An online survey was developed, in both French and English, and sent to over 700 agricultural co-operatives, to identify:

a) what services were currently available to agricultural co-operatives and who were the primary providers of these services;

b) what services the agricultural co-operatives would ideally like to see offered, and at what level: regional, provincial or national;

c) what would be the key benefits of drawing closer ties among agricultural co-operatives across Canada;

d) what model might be most effective in realizing the benefits of creating closer ties among agricultural co-operatives across Canada.

• 33 agricultural co-operatives responded to the survey.

1.2 Survey of provincial co-operative associations and conseils provinciaux

An e-mail survey was sent to the 10 Provincial Associations and 8 conseils provinciaux to establish the services currently being provided specifically for agricultural co-operatives at the provincial level.

• To date, nine (9) of the Provincial Associations and two (2) of the conseils provinciaux responded to the survey
1.3 In-depth interviews with leaders from agricultural co-operatives

Leaders from a sample selection of francophone and anglophone agricultural co-operatives, ranging in size, region, sector and complexity, were interviewed by telephone to probe deeper into their views on the needs and opportunities within the agricultural co-operative sector and the possible benefits that could be gained through a national network.

- 5 anglophone agricultural co-operatives and 3 francophone agricultural co-operatives participated in the one-on-one interviews

The questionnaires and detailed results are included in Annex 2, 3 and 4. The overall conclusions of the three-tiered consultation are summarized below.

2. Overall Conclusions from Three-tiered Sector Consultation

2.1 Provision of Services

The majority of the on-line survey respondents indicated that the Core Services were not being provided to them by an agricultural network, although some did indicate that Government Affairs & Representation was being provided by an agricultural network at a Provincial Level.

Some of the one-on-one interviewees had access to such Core Services as Training, Information Sharing and Advisory Services, through an existing agricultural network (Growmark, La Coop fédérée).

The on-line survey respondents indicated that agricultural organizations were not frequently utilized for assistance. Only the Provincial Federation of Agriculture warranted a higher ranking for Government Affairs & Representation and a slightly lower ranking for Training & Education and Advisory Services.
It was clearly indicated by the interviewees that there was little or no utilization of other agricultural organizations such as Canadian Federation of Agriculture, National Farmer’s Union or the marketing boards. A higher number of the on-line survey respondents currently sought assistance from Provincial Co-operative Associations or conseils provinciaux.

In contrast, when asked to indicate the level at which the Core Services were actually being offered, on-line responses indicated that only 3 of the 7 Core Services were perceived to be offered at the Provincial Level:

- Advisory Services
- Government Affairs & Representation
- Information Sharing & Networking

Similarly, the one-on-one interviewees also thought that the Core Services were being offered to a lesser degree by the Provincial Associations, with capacity / resources stated as an issue; only Training and Education was said to be specific to agricultural co-operatives.

The one-on-one interviewees felt that Advisory Services and Information Sharing & Networking were very limited at the Provincial level. Comments included little or no technical services for agricultural co-operatives in evidence and certainly not for larger and more complex co-operatives. In addition, the respondents commented that they traditionally did not look to the co-operative associations for Information Sharing & Networking.

In a separate direct survey of Provincial Co-operative Associations and Conseils provinciaux, the responses included in the tables below indicate that although the Core Services were being offered across all regions (excepting MB), very few were tailored to an agricultural co-operative audience. Of those offered with agricultural co-ops in mind, the funding was sourced from specific programs, such as Ag-CDI, which, if no longer available, would make the offering of these tailored services improbable at the provincial association level.
Table 5: Breakdown of survey responses from provincial associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Service</th>
<th>Provincial Cooperative Association</th>
<th>Not offered</th>
<th>Specific to Agricultural Cooperative</th>
<th>Specific to agricultural cooperative to some extent</th>
<th>Not specific to agricultural cooperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Services</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>BC, ON</td>
<td>SK, MB, NB, NS, PEI, NFLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Promotion</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>BC, ON</td>
<td>SK, MB, NB, NS, PEI, NFLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative research</td>
<td>MB</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>BC, SK, MB, NB, NS, PEI, NFLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Affairs &amp; Representation</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>SK, ON</td>
<td>SK, MB, NB, NS, PEI, NFLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing &amp; Networking</td>
<td>BC, ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>SK, NB, NS, PEI, NFLD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Development</td>
<td>MB</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>BC, ON</td>
<td>SK, MB, NB, NS, PEI, NFLD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; Education</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>BC, ON</td>
<td>SK, MB, NB, NS, PEI, NFLD</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Conseils provinciaux table to be completed pending receipt of completed surveys)

Further results of the on-line survey indicate that both the Regional Level and National Level received low rankings with respect to the current provision of all of the Core Services. As well, the majority of respondents replied that Co-operative Research and Research & Development were not currently provided at any level.

2.2 Ideal Service Offering

Results of the on-line survey rank the following 4 Core Services as most important:

1. Training & Education
2. Information Sharing & Networking
3. Government Affairs & Representation
4. Advisory Services
In contrast, the one-on-one interviews with both the Anglophone and Francophone agricultural co-operatives, ranked the following 4 Core Services as most important:

1. Co-operative Research
2. Information Sharing & Networking
3. Research & Development
4. Training & Education

Of interest to note is that the key difference between the two set of responses is the Research components; this probably stems from the fact that the majority of the one-on-one interviewees have been exposed to this service through access to an agricultural network, while the majority of the on-line survey respondents had not.

The reasons provided by the one-on-one interviewees for these rankings included the following:

**Co-operative Research:**
- Important when focused on ways to make the co-operative more profitable;

**Information Sharing & Networking:**
- It was recognized that there at there is not enough interaction on issues by the agricultural co-operative sector as there should be. For example, agricultural co-operatives are becoming increasingly affected by global and inter-regional issues and therefore need to have a common understanding of these issues;
- There was a strong desire for a Canadian based agricultural co-operative conference with Canadian content from different academic disciplines and sharing of best practices similar in format and approach to agricultural co-operative conferences organized in the U.S.;
- There was a perceived benefit in sharing best practices, doing cross promotion and branding of the co-operative model;
- Seen as a means to share ideas and lessons learnt as well as offering high profile conferences such as currently offered by NCFC in the U.S.;
- Could also mean finding ways to combine purchasing power among co-operatives, if not only provincially but on a national level.
**Research and Development:**

- Seen as a means to identify services to meet unmet needs of the co-operatives and to develop these services;
- Seen as a means in assisting co-operatives in emerging markets such as renewable energy where it was said that they could not succeed on their own.

**Training and Education:**

- There was seen to be real value in training and education being provided through a co-operative lens. This viewpoint was reinforced by negative comments about training programs services offered through non-co-operative private firms indicating that co-operatives do not always get their value for money. It was recognized that time invested in board and director education and training is critical for co-ops and that co-op Boards need to be more diligent in their director development programs.
- Another similar comment indicated that, now more than ever, directors / elected representatives need to be better educated, business-minded and be able to read financial reports and other such documents to properly assume their responsibilities within the co-operative. Training and education was therefore critical to the success of the co-operative.

Advisory services was ranked less important as it was felt that these services could be purchased, on a as needed basis, from independent consultants or other organizations or were currently being provided by an existing network, such as Growmark or La Coop fédérée.

When asked at what level they would ideally like to see the Core Services offered, the majority of the on-line survey respondents indicated that they would like to see all the seven Core Services offered at a Provincial Level.

Certain core services were thought to also be suitable at the National Level:

- Government Affairs & Representation
- Information Sharing & Networking
- Co-operative Research
- Research & Development
Advisory Services and Information Sharing & Networking garnered a slight majority support to be offered at the Regional Level.

The results of the one-on-one interviews varied based on the type and size of the co-op. However, the combined results indicate the following:

- Co-operative Promotion and Government Representation was supported at the Provincial Level;
- Information Sharing, Government Affairs and Education and Training was supported at the National Level;
- There was little to no support for Regional delivery of services (which perhaps reflects the lack of integrated networks at this level).

Information Sharing & Networking

Viewed as very important that this takes place at the National level as the larger more established co-operatives are fairly isolated in their own provinces and actually benefit from peer to peer networking and exposure to co-operatives across the country.

Training and Education

In the interest of avoiding duplication of activities at the provincial and national levels, this Core Service should be coordinated at the National Level with a national scope. It was also agreed that the co-operative principles and model should be taught in the schools and universities to educate the younger generation at an earlier age, as they will be the next generation of co-op leaders.

2.3 Benefits of a National Agricultural Co-operative Network

“Co-operative training and education programs for farmer-directors, boards and management” and “Representation of Canadian agricultural co-operatives at political level – federal and provincial” were identified by the on-line respondents as the most important benefits of drawing closer ties among agricultural co-operatives at a National Level.
These benefits tie in directly with the Core Services of Training & Education and Government Affairs & Representation, which were seen earlier to rank among the most important. The same two benefits were ranked as more important by the Anglophone one-on-one interviewees.

Specific Comments

Government Representation

Needed to be done at the provincial and national levels as agriculture is a huge component of the economy. It was recognized that it may not be the largest in terms of the number of co-operatives but the impact it has on the agricultural sector and food security is very important.

Co-operative Training and Education programs

The identified needs are very specific and can be met by a nationally coordinated program. The main issue was that private sector was taking advantage of gaps in service provision at the provincial and national levels and some respondents saw an opportunity for a national organization to become the go-to place for agricultural co-ops in terms of either providing value added services or providing a referral service to other specialists across the country and further afield.

It was also recognized that a concentrated effort needed to be undertaken to promote the co-operative model in farming and agriculture, including formal courses at the secondary and post secondary education levels. This would help with succession planning at the management and board levels within many agricultural co-operatives.

Information Sharing and Networking

There was less importance assigned to Information Sharing / Conferences than was seen in earlier comments. The main comments were that these services require a more substantial and ongoing coordination than a short-lived conference or event.

In contrast, the Francophone one-on-one interviews agreed that “Information sharing to collectively strengthen agricultural co-operatives”, “Co-operative training and education programs for farmer-directors, boards and management” and “Promotion of the co-operative model in farming and agriculture” would be the key benefits of an agricultural co-operative network.
2.4 Effectiveness of Proposed National Network Options

The on-line survey respondents were asked to rank the probable effectiveness of the four network options proposed in the Montreal consultation, in terms of establishing closer links between agricultural co-operatives across Canada and in building capacity to ensure the offering of Core Services specific to their needs.

There was no evident preference for any of the proposed models among the on-line survey respondents, although the following network options received the highest rankings:

- “Coordinated approach among existing national and provincial co-operatives / agricultural organizations in response to specific issues requiring joint action”
- “Coordination of regular conference and / or information sessions (e.g. Annual Agricultural Co-operative Conference)”

There was less of an appetite for a “Separate independent organization” or a “Caucus established within existing organizations”.

Similarly, there was no clear consensus among the anglophone and francophone one-on-one interviewees although “Coordination of regular conference and / or information sessions (e.g. Annual Agricultural Co-operative Conference)” and a “Caucus, or a group of caucuses, within existing co-operative / agricultural organization such as CFA, CCA, CCCM etc” were the more popular model options.

It was commented that an Annual Conference would need to include a Research component which similar in format and approach to agricultural co-operative conferences organized in the U.S.

It was noted in the one-on-one interviews with the Francophone co-operatives that no matter what the model, cultural diversity and bilingualism would be an important factor to consider. This did not mean there needed to be a separate offering but rather an integrated offering that was respectful of the cultural differences.
3. Overall Observations

It would appear that there are unmet needs with regards to the Core Services, given that:

- the majority of the respondents sought assistance from their Provincial Co-operative Associations;
- the Provincial Co-operative Associations did not deliver the Core Services rated as important in a significant degree due to capacity / resource issues;
- the Core Services were not typically accessed through other agricultural networks or organizations.

The following areas were deemed more important by the agricultural co-operatives:

1. **Information Sharing & Networking** was the only Core Service that garnered a high importance ranking at each of the three levels: national, provincial and regional.

2. **Training and Education** was also ranked as more important and yet received a weak ranking for the provision of this service at any level: national, provincial or regional. Board training was cited as the most prevalent need. There was a higher preference for Training & Education to be delivered at the Provincial Level, but there was also recognition of a need to avoid duplication of effort.

Overall, the agricultural co-operatives indicated their preference for access to the Core Services at the **Provincial Level**.

The two most popular benefits of establishing closer links among agricultural co-operatives across Canada were:

1. **“Co-operative training and education programs for farmer-directors, boards and management”**

2. **“Representation of Canadian agricultural co-operatives at political level – federal and provincial”**
There was no clear consensus on a preferred network model however there was a clear lack of desire for the establishment of a “Separate organization”.

In contrast, there was a clear desire to see more coordination among existing national and provincial co-operative organizations in order to draw closer ties among agricultural co-operatives across the nation, given that the following were ranked as more effective in establishing these ties:

1. “Coordination among provincial and national organizations”
2. “Caucuses in existing organizations”
3. “Coordination of regular conferences”

These combined responses start to build the framework within which agricultural co-operatives would like to achieve a greater unification:

• Capitalize on the existence of National organizations to develop, coordinate and represent on behalf of all agricultural co-operatives;
• Capitalize on the existence of Provincial Associations to access the services required;
• Concentrate on the key Core Services which are not currently available to the agricultural co-operatives, such as Information Sharing & Networking or Training & Education, thereby building an immediate interest and value in a national network;
• Offer access to the network and its services in both official languages.
6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

1. Overall Conclusions and Recommended Next Steps

A synthesis of the information gathered through the literature review, consultation, surveys and one-on-one interviews would lead us to present the following framework to provide services to agricultural co-operatives in Canada in a more coordinated manner.

The following Characteristics would need to be present and adhered to on a strict basis in order to ensure the success of any services offered in a coordinated manner to Canadian agricultural co-operatives:

**A coordinated approach**

It was repeated frequently that there is less of an appetite for a separate organization. Instead, the co-operatives would like to see existing organizations such as CCA, CCCM, the provincial associations and the conseil provinciaux increase their leadership role and their capacity to deliver sector specific services to meet their needs through a more coordinated approach.

The majority of the Core Services were being accessed mainly through Provincial Co-operative Associations, which did not necessarily tailor their offering to agricultural co-operatives; this resulted in unmet needs with regards to the Core Services as well as an opportunity to capitalize on an existing relationship between the agricultural co-operatives and their provincial co-operative associations for the delivery of these services. This would also satisfy the common desire expressed by the agricultural co-operatives throughout this project to see Core Services delivered at the provincial level.

This coordinated approach could also extend to other key organizations within the agricultural sector, specifically when common issues arise where joint action is required.

**Co-op values and structure: member-driven and member-owned**

Successful networks simulated those that they served by adopting a co-operative structure and adhering strictly to the co-operative principles, ensuring that they were integrated fully in their business and their dealings with the co-operative members as well as encouraging their co-op members to do the same in their respective co-operatives, thus helping them to live their co-operative values.
Cultural diversity: respect and integration of both French and English

It was noted by the Francophone co-operatives that no matter what form a network could take, it would have to take into account and respect the cultural diversity that exists in Canada and be able to access the network and its services in French. This did not mean that there needs to be a separate offering but rather an integrated offering that respected this cultural diversity.

This research has identified a need for services for agricultural co-operatives to be provided in a coordinated manner and that are easy to access. The agricultural co-operatives that have been consulted in this research have identified the following Core Services:

1. **Training & Education** and **Information Sharing & Networking** specifically focused on the agricultural co-operative sector repeatedly ranked as being most important and were not readily available to the agricultural co-operatives.

Both Training & Education and Information Sharing & Networking would need to be established as a concerted, ongoing effort versus an event driven service. This would in turn entail ongoing communication and member engagement, which were seen to be key success factors among established networks.

2. **Government Representation** was also identified a Core Service based on the research. This would work towards creating a single voice on behalf of agricultural co-operatives at the federal level and possibly lending expertise and assistance at the provincial level when warranted.

3. **Research** was also identified as a core service and correlates very closely with the need to share information and provide more coordinated training services.

Our research of national networks showed a continuum in the provision of Core Services as an agricultural co-operative network matured and strengthened, whereby certain Core Services had a stronger presence than others, depending on the maturity or sophistication of the network.
The three Core Services listed above, Training and Education; Information Sharing and Networking; and Government Representation, were seen to be an integral part of the core offering of the established agricultural networks included in our research. This correlates with the identification of priorities of Canadian agricultural co-operatives included in our research.

The other Core Services are considered to be less of a priority for Canadian agricultural co-operatives due to the following reasons:

- Advisory Services were also part of the core offering of most of the agricultural networks studied, however, the responses from agricultural co-operatives included in our research project, ranked this Core Service as less important than the others, stating that the sector specific services could be bought as needed. For emerging co-operatives, this service is provided by the Provincial Associations.

- The more mature and sophisticated agricultural co-operatives networks that we researched also had a Co-operative Promotion and a Research & Development component as part of their offering. In our findings, co-operatives that belonged to a network involved in Promotion and Research & Development ranked these Core Services among the most important, whereas co-operatives which had not been exposed, ranked them as less important.

- Although it is felt that Research & Development is important for the ongoing success of agricultural co-operatives, it would seem prudent that this Core Service be delayed until such time the priority Core Services have been developed to meet the needs of agricultural co-operatives. In the meantime, Research & Development could be integrated within the Information Sharing & Networking service, such as including a Research component in annual conferences and actively seeking closer collaboration with the Co-operatives Secretariat, the national and provincial co-operative associations / conseils provinciaux and the university-based co-operative research centres.

- Similarly, Co-operative Promotion with the agricultural sector could be first integrated into ongoing activities of overall co-operative promotion of the national and provincial co-operative associations.
2. Recommended Next Steps

The steps set out within this section have been prepared with the purpose of building upon the momentum created through this project and the widespread consultation with the agricultural co-operative sector in Canada that has taken place; the Core Services identified in the consultation phases; as well as the lessons learned and key success factors of agricultural co-operative networks that the research identified. In addition, consideration has been given to two important factors, namely:

- the currently available resources within the two national co-operative associations and the capacity levels within the provincial associations and conseil provinciaux
- the anticipated renewal of the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI) and the integration of the Ag-CDI program within CDI

Firstly, based on the feedback and consultation there is a clear need for specific services aimed at agricultural co-operatives across Canada. There was also a clear preference for a more coordinated approach among existing co-operative organizations at the national and provincial levels. It was identified in the research that successfully established networks have adopted and adhered to co-operative principles and values. And finally, specific to the Canadian context, any service provision needs to be accessible in both official languages.

Therefore we recommend the following initiatives to encourage over time closer collaboration and partnership at the pan-Canadian level for agricultural co-operatives:

2.1 Information Sharing and Networking

The Core Service of Information Sharing and Networking was identified as a key priority by the participants in our research and therefore has been identified the first action to be taken.

In the interests of engaging agricultural co-operatives and building on the momentum created by the research project, it is proposed that CCA and CCCM initiate the following activities:
a) Establish an Agricultural Co-operative Working Group

Establish a working group comprised of leading agricultural co-operatives and representatives from the national and provincial co-operative associations and conseils provinciaux with the objective of initiating and planning the activities listed below.

b) Organization of a Canadian Agricultural Co-operative Conference

It is proposed that the first activity that the working group undertakes is to work towards the organization of a national agricultural co-operative conference in February 2010.

The purpose of the conference is three-fold:

- address priority needs within the agricultural co-operative sector through networking, information sharing and knowledge exchange within the context of a face-to-face meeting
- provide an opportunity for provincial associations and conseils provinciaux to meet and network with agricultural co-operatives within their own networks
- build upon the momentum created by the research project and the establishment of the Forum through capacity building sessions at the conference and review progress following the circulation of this report.

It is proposed that the conference takes place in the winter months to ensure maximum participation. It is proposed that organizing an event in February 2010 would provide ample opportunity to organize the event in the intervening months. The conference would feature a blend of keynote presentations from national and international agricultural co-operative experts, commentators and leaders; plenary discussion; specialised workshops; and networking opportunities. The conference will be similar in terms of scope and content to the U.S. based agricultural co-operative conferences but would be primarily Canadian in its focus. The Conference would need to be delivered in both official languages and provide a balanced perspective for anglophone and francophone agricultural co-operatives.
c) Opportunities for sharing information

It is proposed that the working group begins to explore ways to develop opportunities to share information such as a dedicated e-newsletter focused on agricultural co-operative issues. Using social media and networks could be explored as a low cost but effective means to communicate key issues instead of traditional high cost newsletter etc.

d) Creating linkages with emerging and existing agricultural networks

As identified in the research there is a lack of engagement with a number of national and provincial agricultural associations and networks. The working group could explore ways in which agricultural co-operatives could establish links with existing networks and associations. In addition, the national co-operative associations and national agricultural associations could meet on regular basis to share information, develop joint policy and speak on behalf of agricultural co-operatives. This could also begin to meet the needs of agricultural co-operatives in terms of Government Representation.

e) Creating linkages at an international level

This research has identified that agricultural co-operative networks exist in many other parts of the world and that the agricultural co-operatives who participated in this research are keen to learn more from these organizations. By establishing links and relationships with these networks, Canadian agricultural co-operatives will be better placed to share information, best practices and research for their mutual benefit. The working group could explore closer linkages with these networks and seek ways in which they can share information regularly. In addition, these agricultural co-operatives networks could be invited to participate at the Canadian Agricultural Co-operative Conference in 2010.

2.2 Training and Education

Training and Education has been identified as a priority need for agricultural co-operatives and the working group could seek to build on existing programs e.g. La Coop fédérée, Growmark, Ontario Co-operative Association management certificate and the dairy farmer director development program being developed by CCA and Gay Lea.
It is proposed that the target audience for any program development would be current and potential directors and delegates as opposed to co-operative managers. As stated earlier, many of the agricultural co-operatives interviewed saw a value in a nationally coordinated program being developed to ensure consistency and quality control while recognizing that much of it would be delivered at a provincial level.

The focus on agricultural co-operative education and training does require an acceptance that the framework may be generic but that resources used within a program need to be tailored to meet the needs of farmers in terms of case studies etc. In addition, it is recognized that training occurs in different forms and should not be one size fits all (e.g. online, face-to-face, coaching and mentoring).

The exact timing of the development of an education and training program needs to be considered by the Working Group due to the intensive development costs, the need to avoid duplication and to engage with agricultural co-operatives to assess their development needs.

2.3 Updating the research data on Canadian agricultural co-operatives

The level of interest amongst established agricultural co-operatives and emerging agricultural co-operatives in understanding the size and scope of the sector as well as the absence of any significant national research on the sector in the last 7 years prompts the need for coordinated national research projects which profile the size, scale and scope of the sector and the collation of benchmark statistics to measure the relative strength and weaknesses of the sector over period of time. The Co-operatives Secretariat, in partnership with national and provincial co-operative associations and conseils as well as the Centres for the Study of Co-operatives should undertake to develop measures of growth, collect and collate statistical data on at least a bi-annual basis and share widely with the sector. The organization of the national co-operative research conference in March 2009 by CCA and CCCM with support from the Co-operatives Secretariat provides an opportunity for the sector to liaise with co-operative academics and identify and prioritize research areas in the coming years.
3. Other issues to consider

In addition to the priority Core Services that were identified in the research a number of issues were raised that may not warrant immediate action but need to be considered in the establishment of a Canadian agricultural co-operative network.

3.1 Group purchasing / integrated co-operative systems

A number of respondents were keen to explore the opportunity of creating integrated group or co-operative purchasing and supply systems within the Canadian agricultural co-operative sector. The creation of an integrated pan-Canadian agricultural co-operative purchasing or marketing system should be applauded for its vision and ambition. The benefits for individual co-operatives would be significant and could look to other integrated co-operative systems (e.g. the UK’s co-operative branding scheme to understand some of the barriers they have overcome and the lessons learned). However it requires vision and leadership from leading agricultural co-operatives as well as a clear and compelling case for the competitive advantages of exploring this further.
### A1 - List of Participants at the Montreal Consultation November 27, 2008

**Participants in Face-to-Face Consultation Session (November 27th 2008 - Montréal, Québec)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, John</td>
<td></td>
<td>Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachiri, Jamilia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiative (MAFRI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bédard, Lorraine</td>
<td>Corporate Secretary</td>
<td>Agropur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaylock, Sheri</td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers' Markets Association of MB Co-op Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burton, Christine</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-operative and Rural Secretariat / Secrétariat rural aux coopératives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloutier, Ghislain</td>
<td>Vice-president</td>
<td>La Coop fédérée</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code, Bill</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vancouver Island Heritage Foodservice Co-operative Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gagné, Brigitte</td>
<td>Directrice général</td>
<td>Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauthier, Claude</td>
<td>Director of Operations, ON</td>
<td>GROWMARK Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guy, Denyse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter, Carol</td>
<td></td>
<td>Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maruszeczka, Dave</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alberta Rhodiola Rosea Growers Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCullum, Brian</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Brunswick Co-op Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriel, Frank</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coopérative des producteurs et transformateurs en agroalimentaire de l’Abitibi-Témiscamingue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neal-Smith, David</td>
<td></td>
<td>English Farming and Food Partnerships (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repko, Paul</td>
<td></td>
<td>AGRIS Co-operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauvé, John</td>
<td></td>
<td>AGRIS Co-operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott, Ramona</td>
<td></td>
<td>Horse Lake Community Farm Co-operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyabji, Alan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-op Management Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zettel, Ted</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organic Meadow Co-operative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A2 - Results from online survey of Agricultural Co-operatives

DETAILS OF ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The on-line survey was administered through the web-based service called “Survey Monkey” and the results were compiled and tabulated by the software. Thirty-two responses were compiled.

- 67.7% of the respondents completing the survey were management and 32.3% were elected representatives of the agricultural co-operatives.
- 77.4% of the respondents were mature co-operatives (incorporated for more than 5 years) and 22.6% were emerging co-operatives (incorporated within last 5 years).

The categories of the agricultural co-operatives that responded were:

- 30.8% - Agricultural Supply
- 30.8% - Marketing and Processing of Agricultural Products
- 23.0% - Agricultural Production
- 15.4% - Agricultural Services

The tiers of the agricultural co-operatives that responded were:

- Tier 1 – 80.0%
- Tier 2 – 16.7%
- Tier 3 – 3.3%

The total annual sales or revenues of the agricultural co-operatives that responded were:

- 51.7% - < $1 million
- 34.5% - $1 million - $10 million
- 3.4% - $10 million - $50 million
- 0.0% - $50 million - $100 million
- 10.3% - > $100 million
Importance of Core Services
The research team identified the key Core Services as those that received 50% or more the responses in the More Important and Very Important categories, as noted below. Those marked with an “X” garnered less than 50% of the responses in the More Important and Very Important categories. As can be seen, Information Sharing & Networking was most important, followed by Training & Education and Government Representation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MV Ranking</th>
<th>Advisory Services</th>
<th>Co-operative Promotion</th>
<th>Co-operative Research</th>
<th>Government Affairs &amp; Representation</th>
<th>Information Sharing &amp; Networking</th>
<th>Research &amp; Development</th>
<th>Training &amp; Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Importance to co-operative overall</td>
<td>50,0%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>60,0%</td>
<td>73,1%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>61,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Helping co-operative be more competitive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>60,0%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>53,4%</td>
<td>56,6%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>60,0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Providing lasting benefit to members</td>
<td>51,7%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>51,7%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>53,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Benefit of having closer ties among agricultural co-ops</td>
<td>53,9%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>60,0%</td>
<td>53,9%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>61,6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MV Ranking = 50% of more of the responses in categories of “More Important” and “Very Important”

Ideal Access to Core Services
The research team identified the most popular Levels for each of the Core Services by the majority of responses in each of the categories. Those marked with an “X” garnered less than 50% of the responses. As can be seen, Information Sharing & Networking was desired at all three levels whereas Training & Education and Advisory Services was seen ideally at the regional and provincial levels. Government Representation, Co-operative Research and Research & Development were ideally seen at the Provincial and National levels, whereas Co-operative Promotion was desired only at the Provincial level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MV Ranking</th>
<th>Advisory Services</th>
<th>Co-operative Promotion</th>
<th>Co-operative Research</th>
<th>Government Affairs &amp; Representation</th>
<th>Information Sharing &amp; Networking</th>
<th>Research &amp; Development</th>
<th>Training &amp; Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>53,8%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>53,8%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>55,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>69,2%</td>
<td>79,6%</td>
<td>68,0%</td>
<td>77,8%</td>
<td>69,2%</td>
<td>73,1%</td>
<td>70,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>52,0%</td>
<td>51,9%</td>
<td>50,0%</td>
<td>50,0%</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MV Ranking = 50% of more of the responses in respective level
Current Access to Core Services

The research team evaluated the current access to Core Services by looking at the majority of the responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Service</th>
<th>Regional / Régional</th>
<th>Provincial</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Not Provided / Non disponible</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Not rated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Services / Services Conseil</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Promotion / Promotion de secteur coopérative</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Research / Recherche sur les coopératives</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Affairs &amp; Representation / Relations gouvernementales et representation auprès des instances publiques</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing and Networking / Réseautage et partage d'informations</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development / Recherche et développement</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Education / Formation et Instruction</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in the table, there was weak response for the current access to Core Services at both the National and Regional Levels.

At the Provincial Level, a slight majority of respondents indicated that Advisory Services, Government Representation, Information Sharing & Networking were offered.

A slight majority indicated that Co-operative Promotion, Co-operative Research and Research & Development were not being provided at any level.
The Provincial Co-operative Association got the highest percentage of respondents stating they sought assistance through this co-operative network.

No other co-operative network received a majority ranking.

From which cooperative networks do you get assistance for your co-operative?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative Network</th>
<th>YES / OUI</th>
<th>NO / NON</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Not Rated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Co-operative Association (e.g., CCA/CCCM / Association nationale (p.ex. la CCA ou le CCCM)</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial co-operative association or Conseil / Association au Conseil provincial(e)</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other co-operative organization or association / Toute autre organisation ou association de cooperatives</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At what level are core services provided by agricultural cooperative networks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Regional / Régional</th>
<th>Provincial</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>No Provided / Non disponible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Services / Services Conseil</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Promotion / Promotion de secteur cooperative</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Research / Recherche sur les cooperatives</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Affairs &amp; Representation / Relations gouvernementales et representation auprès des instances publiques</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing and Networking / Réseautage et partage d'informations</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development / Recherche et développement</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Education / Formation et instruction</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents indicated that the Core Services were not being provided to them by an agricultural network.

A higher incidence of respondents however did indicate that Government Affairs & Representation was being provided by an agricultural network at a Provincial Level.
### Are Core Services being provided by other agricultural organizations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Canadian Federation of Agriculture / La Fédération canadienne de l’agriculture</th>
<th>Provincial federation of agriculture / Une federation agricole provinciale</th>
<th>Supply management body or marketing board / Un organisme de gestion des approvisionnements ou un office de commercialisation</th>
<th>Agricultural sector specific organization or association / Une organisation / une association particulièere au secteur agricole</th>
<th>Other agricultural organization or association / Toute autre organisation au association agricole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Services / Services Conseil</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Promotion / Promotion de secteur cooperative</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Research / Recherche sur les cooperatives</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Affairs &amp; Representation / Relations gouvernementales et representation auprès des instances publiques</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing and Networking / Réseautage et partage d'informations</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development / Recherche et développement</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Education / Formation et instruction</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other / Autres(s)</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less than half of the respondents answered, indicating that these organizations were not frequently utilized by agricultural co-operatives.

Only the Provincial Federation of Agriculture warranted an MV ranking for Government Affairs and Representation, with both Training and Education and Advisory Services receiving a slightly lower ranking.
Preferred Network Model Option

The respondents were asked to rank the effectiveness of the suggested network models in establishing closer links between agricultural co-operatives across Canada and in building capacity by ensuring the offering of Core Services specific to their needs, such as government representation, information sharing, delivery of specialized advisory services, promotion of the co-operative model in agriculture, as well as research and innovation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network Models</th>
<th>MV Ranking</th>
<th>Including “effective” ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent organization separate from existing co-operative / agricultural organization / Establissement d’un organisme indépendant des institutions cooperatives et/ou agricoles existantes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucus, or a group of caucuses, within existing co-operative / agricultural organization such as CFA, CCA, CCCM etc / Establisement d’un ou de plusieurs caucus ou sein d’une institution cooperative et/ou agricole existante (p.ex. la FCA, la CCA, our le CCCM, etc.)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated approach among existing national and provincial co-operatives / agricultural organizations in response to specific issues requiring joint action (e.g., legislative or fiscal issues) / Elaboration d’une approche coordonnée entre les institutions existantes (cooperative nationals et provincials, organismes agricoles) en ce qui concerne des questions précises nécessitant une action conjointe (p. Ex. Des questions d’ordre legislatif ou fiscal)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordination of regular conference and / or information session (e.g., Annual Agricultural Co-operative Conference) / Tenue de conferences et/ou de sessions d’information requilieres (p.ex. mise sure pied d’une Conference annuelle des cooperatives agricoles)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MV Ranking = 50% or more of the responses in categories of “More Effective” and “Very Effective”

The majority of the responses ranked “Coordinated approach among existing national and provincial cooperatives / agricultural organizations in response to specific issues requiring joint action” as the most preferred followed by the “Coordination of regular conferences / information sessions”.
A3 - Survey of Provincial Associations and Conseils Provinciaux

Agricultural Co-operative Networks – Research and Consultation Project – Provincial Association Survey

This survey is part of a research and consultation study that seeks to answer three questions:

What types of networks exist in Canada, the US and relevant European countries to serve agricultural co-ops?

Have agricultural co-op networks or federations existed (or attempted to exist) in Canada in the past and what lessons can be learned from their experience?

What are the common needs or opportunities amongst Canada’s existing and emerging agricultural co-ops that could be addressed through some type of national network or common forum? Are the co-ops interested in pursuing such a network or forum?

The results of this survey will be added to the findings of several other study components and compiled in a final report by March 31, 2009. Other components of the study include:

- Research of all key agricultural co-operative networks in Canada, the United States and Europe, documenting their role, value and potential for replication
- Face-to-face consultation with a sampling of established agricultural co-operatives, emerging co-ops and other agricultural stakeholders
- In-depth telephone interviews with leaders of established agricultural co-ops in Canada

Our research has revealed that there are agricultural co-operative networks in Quebec, the United States and most countries in Europe including England, Scotland, Ireland and France.
There are a number of core services that were provided by most of them and can be defined as follows:

**Advisory Services:** Provision of specialist tools, advice, resources, expertise to allow for successful development of agricultural co-operative

**Co-operative Promotion:** Promoting the co-operative difference in the branding, marketing and information provided to the public and other audiences

**Co-operative Research:** Research of best practices among co-operatives and innovation in the application of the co-operative model in the agricultural sector

**Government Affairs and Representation:** Representation at political levels regarding agricultural co-operative interests and impact of proposed / existing legislation on the agricultural co-operative sector

**Information Sharing and Networking:** Sharing of knowledge, expertise, best practices, resources amongst agricultural co-operatives and the broader co-operative community through websites, events, seminars and conferences etc

**Research and Development:** Research and analysis of agriculture industry / sectors / and innovation at local, regional, national, international levels

**Training and Education:** Practical / technical education and training for farmer-directors, management and staff on agricultural co-operatives and broader co-op community, industry trends, best practices, regulations, etc.

Please indicate if...

1) your provincial association provides these services

2) who the target audience is: a) all co-ops b) agricultural co-ops specifically or c) agricultural co-ops to some extent (i.e. all co-ops but ag co-ops are the main recipients of these services); and

3) please provide examples of the types of services you provide under the core service areas listed below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Services</th>
<th>Service provided</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Agri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Affairs and Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Sharing and Networking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please send your response to Quintin Fox (Quintin.fox@coopscanada.coop) by Friday March 6, 2009.
A4 - Questions from in-depth interviews with Agricultural Co-operators

One-on-One Interview Questionnaire – English Version

Agricultural Co-operative Network: Research and Consultation

In-depth interview questions – February 2009

Introduction

This survey is part of a research and consultation study commissioned by the Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative (Ag-CDI), which is financially supported by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and is co-managed by the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and le Conseil canadien de coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM).

The research and consultation study seeks to answer three questions:

1. What types of networks exist in Canada, the US and relevant European countries to serve agricultural co-ops?
2. Have agricultural co-op networks or federations existed (or attempted to exist) in Canada in the past and what lessons can be learned from their experience?
3. What are the common needs or opportunities amongst Canada’s existing and emerging agricultural co-ops that could be addressed through some type of national network or common forum? Are the co-ops interested in pursuing such a network or forum?

This interview, which will be conducted by telephone by members of the project team, should take no more than 40 minutes.

The purpose of the interview is to build a clearer picture of the needs of established agricultural co-operatives (and agri-food co-operatives closely involved in the supply chain) and whether they could be better served by a network or a sharing of information at a pan-Canadian level which is focused on agricultural co-operatives.

The results of this survey will be added to the findings of several other study components and compiled in a final report by March 31, 2009. Other components of the study include:

- Review of existing literature on co-op networks in Canada, the US and Europe;
- Research of key agricultural co-operative networks in Canada, the United States and Europe, documenting their role, value and potential for replication;
- Face-to-face consultation with a sampling of established agricultural co-operatives, emerging co-ops and other agricultural stakeholders, held at the Agricultural Co-operative Development Initiative (Ag-CDI) Conference, November 27, 2008;
**We will protect the confidentiality of all responses.** Your responses are intended to assist us in identifying and understanding the current needs of agricultural co-ops, and potential opportunities for how these needs might be best met.

### 1. Interviewee information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First name:</th>
<th>________________________________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last name:</td>
<td>________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Title / Position:</td>
<td>________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Name:</td>
<td>________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel:</td>
<td>________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you: Management? __________ Elected representative? __________

### About your co-operative:

1.1) What are the principal activities of your co-operative?

1.2) The Co-operative Secretariat of the Federal Government classifies agricultural co-operatives under the following categories. Which classification best describes your co-op?

- [ ] Agricultural supply
- [ ] Marketing and Processing of Agricultural Products
- [ ] Agricultural Production
- [ ] Agricultural Services
- [ ] Other (please state): ________________________________________________________

1.3) Please indicate which of the following tiers best describes your co-operative:

- [ ] Tier 1: primary co-op (single co-operative operating in a specific area)
- [ ] Tier 2: regional, district or provincial co-op (typically owned by multiple co-operatives)
- [ ] Tier 3: national co-op organization (typically owned by tier 2 co-operatives)

1.4) What is your total membership? __________________________
1.5) What are your organization’s total annual sales or revenues?

___ < $1 million
___ $1 million - $10 million
___ $10 million - $50 million
___ $50 million - $100 million
___ $100 million +

1.6) How many people does your organization currently employ (full time equivalents)? ___

2. Services of a Co-operative Network

Our research conducted in the fall of 2008 revealed that there are agricultural co-operative networks in Quebec, most countries in Europe including England, Scotland, Ireland and France as well as the United States which provide several of the core services listed below:

Advisory Services:
Provision of specialist tools, advice, resources, expertise to allow for successful development of agricultural co-operative

Co-operative Promotion:
Promoting the cooperative difference in the branding, marketing and information provided to the public and other audiences

Co-operative Research:
Research of best practices among cooperatives and innovation in the application of the cooperative model in the agricultural sector

Government Affairs and Representation:
Representation at political levels regarding agricultural co-operative interests and impact of proposed / existing legislation on the agricultural co-operative sector

Information Sharing and Networking:
Sharing of knowledge, expertise, best practices, resources amongst agricultural co-operatives and the broader co-operative community through websites, events, seminars and conferences etc

Research and Development:
Research and analysis of agriculture industry / sectors / and innovation at local, regional, national, international levels

Training and Education:
Practical / technical education and training for farmer-directors, management and staff on agricultural co-operatives and broader co-op community, industry trends, best practices, regulations, etc.
2.1) Please rate the services listed above, in order of importance, in terms of helping your co-operative become more competitive and provide the reasoning for your rating.

2.2) Please rate the services listed above, in order of importance, in terms of helping your co-operative become more engaged and provide lasting benefits to your members and provide the reasoning for your rating.

2.3) Please indicate which of the services listed above are currently being provided to your co-operative by co-operative associations (e.g. national or provincial co-operative association or conseils, regional co-operative development body).

Which of the services provided are specific to agricultural co-operatives?

2.4) Please indicate which of the services listed above are currently being provided to your co-operative by an agricultural co-operative network (e.g. La Coop Fédérée, Growmark etc).

2.5) Please indicate which of the services listed above are being provided by other organizations or networks to support your co-operative become more efficient and better serve your members (e.g. CFA, provincial federation of agriculture; supply management body or marketing board; NFU; etc)

Which of the services provided are specific to agricultural cooperatives?

2.6) In an ideal world, what services would you like see provided to your co-operative and which of the following levels would be most appropriate for the delivery of each of the services:— regional, provincial or national? Why?
3. Agricultural Co-op Service Providers

Please state from which networks you currently seek support for the activities of your co-operative.

Co-operative Organizations ____________________________ Yes ____ No _____
National co-operative association (e.g. CCA / CCCM) ____ ____
Provincial co-operative association / conseil ____ ____

Other co-operative organization or association (please state):________________________________________

Canadian Federation of Agriculture ____ ____
Provincial Federation of Agriculture ____ ____
National Farmers Union ____ ____

Agriculture Organizations (please state): __________________________

Supply management body or marketing board (please state): __________________________

Agricultural industry organization or association (please state): __________________________

Other agricultural organization or association (please state): ___________________________

4. Agricultural Co-operative Networks

Please rate, in order of importance to your co-operative, the potential results that could be realized through the establishment of closer links between agricultural co-operatives across Canada. Please give reasons for your ratings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representation of Canadian agricultural co-operatives at political level – federal and provincial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information sharing to collectively strengthen agricultural co-operatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delivery of specialist advisory and technical support services to agricultural co-operatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual or bi-annual conference focused on issues affecting Canadian agricultural co-operatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research into innovation in agricultural co-operation and farmer collaboration, market and industry trends, best practices and global case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion of the co-operative model in farming and agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-operative training and education programs tailored for farmer-directors, boards and management of agricultural co-operatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1) Are there any other activities that you would like to see through the establishment of closer links between agricultural co-operatives across Canada?

4.2) The research undertaken by CCA and CCCM has identified a number of different organizational structures that could be adopted in establishing a pan-Canadian network for agricultural co-operatives.

Please rate, in order of importance for your co-operative, the following possible types of networks in terms of their probability of garnering support among agricultural co-operatives and of building capacity with the sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Types of networks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Independent organization separate from existing co-operative / agricultural organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Caucus, or a group of caucuses, within existing co-operative / agricultural organization such as CFA, CCA, CCCM etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Coordinated approach among existing national and provincial co-operatives / agricultural organizations in response to specific issues requiring joint action (e.g. legislative or fiscal issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Coordination of regular conference and / or information sessions (e.g. Annual Agricultural Co-operative Conference)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other (please state):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3) For each of your responses above, please state your reasoning below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Network</th>
<th>Reason:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4) Additional comments (please feel free to add any additional comments below that you would find valuable to the research project in general):

Thank you for your time and input in this important research project.