



Missouri Institute of Cooperatives

Dear Agricultural Educator:

MIC is pleased to provide **new curriculum and resources to foster learning about the cooperative form of business**. The **Cooperative Essentials Unit**, developed for MIC by Vivayic in close cooperation with DESE, has been added to the Ag Management, Economics & Sales curriculum.

The lessons are designed to complement MIC's *Public Speaking* and *Create Your Own Cooperative* contests. Our goal is to increase students' knowledge and also make it easier for your students to participate in the contests. Detailed information for the contests is enclosed. This information is also available at **www.mic.coop** with a special section of **resources for teachers and students**. In addition, MIC members are ready to participate and support the learning activities.

Create Your Own Cooperative Contest

The purpose of the Create Your Own Cooperative Contest is to provide hands-on leadership and entrepreneurial experiences. This first-hand understanding of business development and cooperative organizations offers your students valuable tools to become effective business leaders. From the district winners of the Create Your Own Cooperative Contest, first and second place state winners will be selected. The state winner will be invited to attend MIC's annual meeting in early 2017. A member of the first and second place teams will receive an expense paid trip to a selected Cooperative Youth Leadership Institute. **MIC will also award the state winners and the top class or chapter in each district \$500.**

Public Speaking Contest

The purpose of the FFA Public Speaking Contest is to foster a greater understanding of the cooperative form of business and to provide students an opportunity to enhance their skills in speaking about agriculture and the cooperatives that serve rural Missouri.

The theme for the 2016-2017 Contest is "**Cooperatives are Built to Serve**".

- Local, area and district contests will be held simultaneously with other speaking contests. The state contest for the MIC sponsored FFA Public Speaking Contest will be held in conjunction with the MIC annual meeting in early 2017. The state winner speaks at the MIC Annual Banquet on the evening of the state speaking contest.
- Cash awards are given to the top three contestants at the state level and their chapters. The first and second place state contestants will also receive an expense paid trip to a selected Cooperative Youth Leadership Institute.
- If you have a student interested in the contest please contact your district supervisor.

For more information or questions about the curriculum or the contests, please contact Kristi Livingston at 573-882-0140 or LivingstonK@missouri.edu.

Thank you for giving so generously of your time to support students' opportunity to learn about cooperatives.

Sincerely,

Matt Staley
MIC President and Chair, Cooperative Education Committee

Create Your Own Cooperative Contest

Objectives

Provide students with hands-on experience to learn the benefits and challenges of operating a cooperative business.

Encourage students to develop business and leadership skills.

Contest Rules & Awards

Any Missouri FFA chapter or class can enter the "Create Your Own Cooperative" contest by submitting a completed award application form by January 13.

The contest entry can be for a class project, club chapter activity or other appropriate school activity carried out by the students under the guidance of an instructor.

The contest awards will be presented at the winner's annual school awards ceremony. Participants will compete with other schools in their district.

The Missouri Institute of Cooperatives will award the top class or chapter in each district **\$500**.

The Missouri Institute of Cooperatives will select first and second place state winning teams from the district winners. A member of the first place and the second place teams will receive an expense paid trip to a selected Cooperative Youth Leadership Institute. The state winner will be invited to MIC's annual meeting in the first quarter of the calendar year.

The winning entry for the state contest will be made available on request for review by future contestants.

How to Begin

1. Visit mic.coop/curriculumresources as a starting place for helpful information on the cooperative form of business. "Coops 101 - An Introduction to Cooperatives" is also available from USDA: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/files/cir55.pdf>. If you have questions, contact Kristi Livingston at LivingstonK@missouri.edu.

Complete the contest entry form found on page 4.

Students may not be familiar with the concepts behind a cooperative business. It will be important for them to understand the basic principles prior to organizing a cooperative.

2. Organize a tour of a local cooperative or ask a local cooperative member to speak to the class about the basics of cooperative organizations. Find out why people in the community have formed cooperatives rather than another form of business. A list of MIC member cooperatives is available at mic.coop/mocoops.

3. Have students determine a common need. *The fundamental reason for establishing a cooperative is to enable a group of people to accomplish a goal or meet a shared need by working together. What are their goals? What problems are critical? How would cooperative business principles help to solve problems and reach a common goal? How does this differ from other business structures?*

4. Set up a steering committee. *If students indicate a strong interest in working together to solve a problem, they are ready to explore the formation of a cooperative by electing a temporary steering committee. The total class or chapter will be too large to plan, shape and draft a proposal for organizing a cooperative to achieve specific goals.*

5. Obtain support and approval of the entire class. *A cooperative can succeed only when the majority understand and share a commitment to make it work. The potential members need to discuss the specific goals, suggest changes, and finally approve their plan.*

6. Form a new committee to draft the bylaws. *A cooperative is a legal corporation organized according to Missouri laws. The bylaws explain what the cooperative can do and how it shall be organized and function as a business.*

7. Have class members conduct an organizational meeting. *At this time class members can decide if they want to adopt the bylaws. If they do, the process of electing a board of directors and signing up members can begin. When the board of directors has been elected, it is time to employ a manager and to approve policies to guide the cooperative's activities.*

8. The cooperative carries out its functions. *The manager carries out the day-to-day operation of business and ensures that the policies adopted by the board are followed. The manager hires the staff to conduct the business operation. The board monitors the operation and initiates any changes in the policies necessary to strengthen the cooperative.*

9. Keep members informed and actively involved in the operation of the cooperative. *The board is the direct contact between the members and the cooperative business. It is essential that members understand and approve the actions of the board and management. Two-way communication is of utmost importance and should be encouraged through meetings — annual or special, newsletters, advertisements, etc.*

For more information on the Create Your Own Cooperative Contest, please email Kristi Livingston at LivingstonK@missouri.edu.

There are several short videos that provide an excellent overview of cooperatives. These videos can be found at mic.coop/coopvideos.



Create Your Own Cooperative Contest

Contest Entry Form

NAME OF SCHOOL

CLASS OR CHAPTER

INSTRUCTOR

PHONE

STREET ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, & ZIP

NAME OF COOPERATIVE

HOW MANY MEMBERS JOINED THE COOPERATIVE?

DATE COOPERATIVE ORGANIZED

LIST BOARD OF DIRECTORS & GIVE OFFICERS	LIST MANAGER & ANY OTHER EMPLOYEES



Discussion of the Cooperative Experience

In a one to two page, double spaced report, please provide the following information:

1. Describe the purpose of the cooperative.
2. How was the initial capital provided?
3. Financial information about the cooperative business:

Total Receipts / Total Expenses / Total Profit or Loss

4. How were the profits or losses distributed?
5. List some of the difficulties the group encountered in organizing a cooperative and how they were solved.
6. List some of the things the group learned from the experience of organizing a cooperative.
7. What are the future plans of the cooperative?
8. If selected as the first or second place state team, who is most likely to represent the cooperative at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Institute. Please briefly describe why this person has been selected to represent the cooperative.

The above report is submitted: _____
Date

Manager

Secretary of the Board

Chairman of the Board

Treasurer of the Board

Please include the following when mailing:

- ◆ Completed contest entry form,
- ◆ Your cooperative's bylaws, and
- ◆ The written report

Mail by January 13 to:

Missouri Institute of Cooperatives
125D Mumford Hall
Columbia, MO 65211-6200

If you have questions about this form contact:

Kristi Livingston
MIC Education Coordinator

Phone: 573-882-0140
livingstonk@missouri.edu