
Meat Producer Organizations

— *Cooperatives and Nonprofits* —



Types of Cooperative Organizations We'll Discuss

- **North Cascade Meat Producers Cooperative** - Meat Processors Service and Shared Branding Marking Cooperative -
- **Island Grown Meat Producers Cooperative** - Meat Processors Service Cooperative
- **Puget Sound Food Hub Cooperative** - Aggregation and Distribution Cooperative
- **Whidbey Island and SJI Food Hub Cooperatives** - Place Based Marketing and Retail Sales Platform Cooperatives
- **Organic Valley Dairy Cooperative** - Aggregation Pool, Shared Branding and Distribution Cooperative

Types of Other Shared Mission Organizations

- **Northwest Meat Processors Association** - Member Association, primarily focused on networking and industry career advancement opportunities for members. Nonprofit, 501(c)3
- **San Juan Island Agricultural Resource Center** - A volunteer team of farmers, food artisans and ag organizations with a mission to protect and restore agricultural resources in San Juan County. Nonprofit, 501(c)5 (?)
- **Adirondack Grazers' Cooperative** - A Grazing Association Turned Cooperative - Marketing, Branding and Advocacy Coop
- **The Grassfed Exchange** - Nonprofit Member organization. Primarily focused on an annual conference and other networking and industry education activities. Also a brand promotion/ industry advocacy group

What is a Cooperative

- Owned in common for a common need
- One member one vote
- Investment and patronage model
- Shared risks and benefits
- Organization or incorporation structure
- Board of directors



Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community



Some Types of Cooperatives

- **Producer Cooperatives**
- **Purchasing or Shared Services Cooperatives**
- **Multi-stakeholder Cooperatives**
- **Many others**



Barriers to Startup

A Cooperative is just like any other business, but larger and more complex:

- Generally initiated as a volunteer-led organization. Producer cooperatives usually are led by hard working individuals, who do not have a great excess of time or resources to invest
 - Steering and Governance is at-will, and must do the work of engaging solutions collaboratively and equitably. Developing balanced, equitable boards is important.
 - Ideas need to be reinforced by regional need, capacity and ability. Managing expectations and 'leading with patience and understanding' can be key
 - Some infrastructure is very large and expensive to start. Determining funding and equity investment is sometimes risky.
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North Cascade Meat Producers Cooperative

- Organized as a nonprofit
- Founded in 2016
- Owns a Mobile Slaughter Unit
- Provides USDA and Custom Exempt Slaughter and Cut and Wrap Services
- Adding Value Added Services
- Provides marketing and branding services
- Once offered a branded meat program, looking to return to that in the future



Island Grown Farmers Cooperative - *Meat Producers Coop*

- Founded in 2000, when they constructed an MPU - one of the first if not THE first in the country to coordinate USDA processing in an MPU
- IGFC started as an effort to develop access to markets for producers in the San Juan Islands, while also offering 'completely island grown animals' for processing, as their MPU travels on the ferry
- Currently has roughly 12 employees
- Roughly 80 members, with another 20 on a waitlist
- Operations are at the Port of Skagit, with a brand new facility.
- Installing a kill floor in 2023
- Primarily a slaughter and cut and wrap services cooperative



Puget Sound Food Hub Coop

- Founded in 2010, with NABC
- 120+ members and vendors - multi stakeholder
- Aggregation and Distribution Services Coop, exclusively for wholesale and institutions
- Two order and aggregation days per week. Three delivery days to Seattle and the Canadian border. Markets in 14 counties, from 4 sources.
- \$10million in sales in 2021 - \$3.5 million in 2023
- 10+ employees
- Looking into Value Added Processing Services



Whidbey Island and SJI Food Hub Coops

- Both are 3 years old, in their current incarnation
- Offer Retail online sales, with pick up days
- Place based marketing/ branding services, for increased value proposition of their farm products
- WIG has 1 full time and 3 part time staff
- SJI has two part time positions
- Both require fiscal sponsorship and organizational technical service support to build capacity
- Both are relatively remote, with limited market expansion opportunities; while their farmers have a higher cost of operation than mainland producers.



Organic Valley - La Farge Wisconsin

- Organic dairy marketing cooperative founded in Wisconsin in 1988
- Originally formed as a Agregation, Pool Cooperative to collectively advocate for pricing needs, and offer a collective branded product line
- Now consists of 2,000 member farms across the country (Oregon)
- Half of their members are small Mennonite and Amish farms-
- Today, OVC also sells produce, beef and pork under the Organic Prairie label
- \$1.2 billion in sales, in 2021
- “In spite of the pandemic, OVC managed to stabilize prices for farmers, improve the coops financial standing and grow demand for products”

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Questions? Comments?

- Funding Questions for coops or as individual producers?
- Organizational Questions?
- Legal Formation Questions?
- Margin or Markup Questions?
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