

A Survey of New Cooperative Ventures Since 1994

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Introduction

During the 1990s, anecdotal evidence and popular press articles suggest that a wave of new agricultural, value-added cooperatives have been created. Several newly created non-agricultural cooperatives have also recently been publicized. Are the numbers of cooperatives increasing? Unfortunately, no comprehensive data sources on cooperative numbers exist. The goal of this study was to conduct a survey of appropriate organizations in each state (e.g., the State Cooperative Association, the Department of Commerce, the Secretary of State, Department of Revenue, State Treasurer, etc.) to determine the number and purpose of cooperatives established in each state over the past five years.

A thorough search has been conducted for information concerning the creation of new cooperatives in the United States. The Infotrac SearchBank, First Search, EconLit, Agricola, as well as other various citation indexes regarding social sciences and businesses, were all explored for publications on 'cooperative trends' and 'new cooperative creations'. Few relevant publications were found. Further, no relevant information was found regarding cooperative databases. A reference librarian suggested searching the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and/or the U.S. Census Bureau since these agencies maintain data and statistics. Both agencies were contacted.¹

While an abundance of information is maintained regarding agricultural cooperatives, a lack of information exists pertaining to non-agricultural cooperatives.² Non-agricultural cooperatives often play an important role in rural and urban areas by providing necessary services such as housing for the elderly and poor, affordable health care, child-care, and education (Bhuyan, et al.). Limited information describing how these non-agricultural cooperatives operate, how they were formed,

and the challenges they face, exists. The Bhuyan et al. study randomly selected 162 non-agricultural cooperatives across the U.S. in an attempt to answer these questions. Overall, these cooperatives were found to play a significant role in the nation's economy. Although the Bhuyan et al. study explains some of the current difficulties of non-agricultural cooperatives, it does not examine those cooperatives that failed. As a result, the overall impact of non-agricultural cooperatives on the nation's economy cannot be determined since a comprehensive data source does not currently exist.

Methods

This project was initiated in May 1999 and completed August 1999. Beginning in May, a search for new cooperative data was conducted on the national level. The United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, especially the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (USDA-RBS), National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), National Council on Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC), Cooperative Development Institute (CDI), North Dakota State University's Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives, and the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) were all contacted by phone. Information or statistics regarding both agricultural and non-agricultural cooperatives that have been created since 1990 was requested. Also, the U.S. Census Bureau was contacted in order to search for statistics on the establishment of new businesses.

A survey was then sent to each USDA state cooperative specialist contact. This survey requested any information that the specialist may have pertaining to the number of new cooperatives that have been created in their state by year since 1990. Also, the primary purpose or function of these cooperatives (e.g., how are

they classified), as well as any other relevant statistics were also requested (see Appendix A). Approximately 67 surveys were mailed out on June 15, 1999. In early June, the corporations division and/or business entities division at the Secretary of State (SOS) offices were initially contacted. Follow-up contacts continued throughout the summer. Details of the information (or absence of information) gathered from each state agency regarding cooperative start-ups is reported in Appendix B.

Major Findings

After speaking to Randy Torgerson, the deputy administrator for Cooperative Services at the USDA-RBS, we realized that a search for accurate information on cooperatives would be more challenging than was originally

anticipated. First, no data is maintained on registered farm cooperatives at the USDA-RBS unless they are currently in operation. Depending on the stages in the development process of a given cooperative, the business may or may not be considered to be ‘operating’. Also, it has been found that several smaller cooperatives do not bother to formally register with USDA-RBS. Currently, there is no legal requirement for cooperatives to register and report to this agency, making it impossible for the USDA-RBS to maintain accurate cooperative data. The only information that the statistics division at USDA-RBS was able to provide on farmer cooperatives was unpublished data through 1997. The number of new farm cooperatives that have reported to the USDA between 1990 and 1997 are as follows:

Table 1: Agricultural Cooperatives Created by Year in the U.S.

Year	Number Cooperatives Created
1990	86
1991	70
1992	39
1993	65
1994	42
1995	18
1996	12
1997	42

Source: USDA-RBS, May 1999.

Charles Kraenzle, the Director of Statistics at USDA-RBS, sent a list of farmer cooperatives that are currently registered on the USDA's mailing list.³ This list, however, does not provide information as to when each of these cooperatives were officially organized as this information had not been collected until 1997. In order to update the database on farmer cooperatives, a question was added to the USDA-RBS' annual survey requesting larger cooperatives to provide the date in which they were organized. Overall, the USDA-RBS has attempted to provide the most accurate data on farmer cooperatives at this point in time.

Since cooperatives are corporations, they are required to register at the state level. Thus, USDA-RBS suggested seeking the assistance of state agencies regarding the incorporation of new businesses under state laws. Torgerson sent a catalogue of state cooperative statutes to serve as a reference for this research work (Baarda). Although this report provides important information regarding state incorporation statutes, it is somewhat dated (1982). In early June, Don Frederick, the cooperative law specialist for the USDA, was contacted for further guidance. As Frederick noted, one complicating factor to the sort of search that Torgerson suggested is that some cooperatives incorporate under ordinary corporate statutes, while adopting cooperative bylaws to operate on a co-op basis. Others formally incorporate as cooperatives. Similarly, limited liability corporations (LLC) may be found to operate in the same manner. Therefore, the information that state offices maintain will more-than-likely be skewed because of the loopholes in cooperative law. Complications with state laws and bylaws, as well as constantly changing statutes, were too complex and time-consuming to analyze at this point in time.

USDA-RBS was also asked for information regarding non-agricultural cooperatives. According to Torgerson, there is no centralized data source for this type of cooperative. Recently, USDA-RBS has been attempting to develop new legislation in order to enable them

to be a repository of information for all cooperatives.

The NCBA and the NCFC were also contacted for any information they may have regarding cooperative establishment. Jill Stevenson at NCBA explained that no data is stored regarding a cooperative's organization date. Also, the business information manager at NCFC, Sandy Burleson, expressed that the USDA would have the statistics requested. These organizations were able to provide references to potential sources of data, but were unable to produce the information requested from their records. CDI was also contacted for information regarding cooperatives in the northeastern region. Although CDI provides technical assistance to a variety of cooperative groups (including non-agricultural cooperatives), Sara MacKay, an assistant at CDI, explained that from the time CDI was formed in 1995, no tracking of new cooperatives has been done. MacKay's supervisor further directed me to individually contact each Secretary of State (SOS) office because they would maintain the most accurate data.

Each SOS office throughout the country was separately contacted in order to retrieve data and statistics on incorporated cooperatives. Nineteen of the fifty states contacted were unable to provide any information on cooperatives due to the nature of their database. The corporations filed within the SOS offices were not coded according to business entity type. Therefore, it was impossible for these states to extract separate filings from their database unless given a specific corporation's name or charter number. In turn, various state-run cooperative associations (e.g., The Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives) were contacted in an effort to obtain information that could not be provided by the SOS office. Most of these organizations, however, were unable to offer any relevant data. For example, since UWCC is a private trade association, it does not have the capacity to identify newly organized cooperatives. Robert Cropp, at UWCC, was surprised that cooperative numbers are not

better monitored since continuous changes occur through new creations, mergers, consolidations and failures. Cropp also verified that while Wisconsin's SOS does not have the capacity to extract cooperative information from their database, other offices throughout the country should hopefully be able to provide some data, since it would be difficult to find it elsewhere.

The other thirty-one states were able to provide information, albeit usually for a fee. As mentioned earlier, due to differences in cooperative statutes and bylaws, cooperatives may be filed as an LLC or a general business corporation. As a result, some of the data gathered from the SOS offices may be erroneous since all cooperatives may not have been counted.

Survey responses from USDA cooperative specialists did not provide much additional assistance. Of the sixty-seven surveys mailed, only twenty-one responses were received. Of these, six responded with useful information, while the remaining fifteen stated that they could not provide the information requested. Most of the cooperative specialists said that they are only familiar with cooperatives in their area that they have personally assisted in creating. Otherwise, respondents suggested using other sources for information—including the Secretary of State.

As a last resort, the farmer cooperative specialist, Renee Wells, at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) was sought out for information in hopes that the IRS database would include cooperatives. She explained that the only type

of cooperatives required to file a different type of return are farmer cooperatives. Otherwise, there is no particular registration requirement that pertains to other types of cooperatives. The database at the IRS does not provide classifications codes or differentiate between the enquiry identification numbers within the database. Therefore, no relevant information pertaining to the incorporation dates of new cooperatives could be obtained from the IRS.

Implications

Further research needs to be conducted regarding cooperatives throughout the United States. In particular, non-agricultural cooperatives should be targeted in this research, since limited information exists regarding these cooperatives. As this report has shown, there is clearly a need for the establishment of a national database on co-op statistics. The existing statutory cooperative laws, which vary from state to state, have made the compilation of cooperative statistics difficult. The current lack of uniformity in cooperative statistics makes the results of any analysis dubious.

The USDA-RBS would be ideal for housing such data, as the majority of agricultural and fishing cooperatives currently register with that agency. One way to improve cooperative data would be to mandate that all cooperatives formally register with USDA-RBS. Moreover, the status of these cooperatives, from creation through dissolution, should be tracked. This could ultimately reveal characteristics of successful or failed cooperative ventures.

Endnotes

1. The information gained from both agencies is reported in the “major findings” section of this report.
2. This information imbalance is a result of USDA's focus on agricultural cooperatives. They have played a primary role in obtaining and disseminating information regarding agricultural cooperatives.
3. Fisheries, although registered at the USDA-RBS, are not included on this mailing list.

References

- Baarda, James R. *State Incorporation Statutes for Farmer Cooperatives*. USDA, Agricultural Cooperative Service, Cooperative Information Report 30 (October 1982).
- Bhuyan, S., F.L. Leistritz, and D.W. Cobia. "Non-Agricultural Cooperatives in the United States: Roles, Difficulties, and Prospects." *Agricultural Economics Report No. 388*. Department of Agricultural Economics, North Dakota State University, April, 1998.

Table 2: Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Cooperative Creations in the U.S. 1990-1999

State	Total	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Alabama	n/a										
Alaska	24	0	1	2	1	7	4	2	3	4	0
Arizona	7	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0
Arkansas ¹	230*	0	0	0	1	1	0	110	30	85	3
California	45	3	7	7	5	4	4	7	7	1	0
Colorado	33	1	16	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	0
Connecticut	2										
Delaware	n/a										
Florida ²	6	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	0
Georgia	122	10	8	6	19	11	12	18	12	19	7
Hawaii	28	2	1	2	5	7	1	5	0	2	3
Idaho	21	5	2	1	2	1	3	0	2	5	0
Illinois	n/a										
Indiana	n/a										
Iowa	87	5	6	5	9	5	8	10	9	19	11
Kansas	23	0	0	2	0	3	2	5	4	7	0
Kentucky	62	7	9	4	5	9	5	4	8	7	4
Louisiana	20										
Maine	37	2	1	1	5	7	2	4	4	8	3
Maryland	62*										
Massachusetts ³	59	7	6	11	11	9	10	2	3	0	0
Michigan	n/a										
Minnesota	310										
Mississippi	12	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	1	0	0
Missouri	n/a										
Montana	n/a										
Nebraska	14										
Nevada	n/a										
New Hampshire	n/a										
New Jersey	n/a										
New Mexico	37										
New York	n/a										
North Carolina	23	1	3	0	4	4	0	6	3	0	2
North Dakota	n/a										
Ohio	11	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	3	1	0
Oklahoma	n/a										
Oregon	57	8	3	9	5	8	4	5	8	3	4
Pennsylvania	n/a										
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Dakota	35	4	4	5	4	4	3	1	5	5	0
Tennessee	n/a										
Texas	n/a										

**Table 2: Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Cooperative Creations in the U.S. 1990-1999
(Continued)**

State	Total	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Utah	n/a										
Vermont	n/a										
Virginia	n/a										
Washington	93	10	5	8	11	9	9	10	12	12	7
West Virginia	n/a										
Wisconsin	110	9	11	5	16	11	16	14	12	16	0
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Compiled from various sources including the Corporations Department and/or Business Entity Division at the Secretary of State Office as well as USDA-RBS, May 1999-August 1999.

*When an asterisk follows the total column number it represents the total number of cooperatives in each state and not the total number of cooperatives created since 1990.

n/a = Information is not available for those states.

¹ The cooperatives listed in Arkansas are not broken down by year. Therefore, the number of cooperatives in Arkansas between 1990-1999 is probably overestimated.

² No information could be found for non-agricultural cooperatives; the total number of new cooperatives listed for Florida only includes farmer cooperatives.

³ The incorporated cooperatives registered at the SOS office in Massachusetts since 1990 are solely comprised of 'employment cooperatives' and 'housing cooperatives'.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. How many new cooperatives (agricultural, consumer, service, etc.) have been created in your state since 1990?
2. When was each cooperative established?
3. What is the primary purpose or function of these cooperatives (e.g., how are they classified, as agricultural, consumer or service)?
4. How many members are involved in each cooperative?
5. Any other relevant statistics.

Appendix B: Adrienne Bernardi's Findings from State Agencies Regarding Cooperative Start-ups

Alabama

Robina Wilson in the Corporations Department at the Secretary of State (SOS) office informed me that cooperatives can not be extracted from the database because the different business entities are not coded within the database.

Clyde Rice, the cooperative development specialist for the USDA, responded to the cooperative survey and reported five new cooperatives in the state of Alabama since 1990.

Alaska

Dean Stewart at USDA Rural Development in Alaska, referred me to Nancy Anderson, the coordinator at the Cooperative Development Center for Alaska Village Initiatives. The Development Center provided information on 32 cooperatives established in Alaska since October of 1997. This listing might be incomplete because the state's SIC codes database (where the list was compiled from) does not identify cooperatives as a specific type of business organization.

Arizona

Ann Rackley, the reproduction clerk at the Secretary of State office faxed me an *ad hoc* request form for co-op information. Information was received on Arizona cooperatives in July.

Arkansas

A complete list of cooperatives in Arkansas was downloaded from the SOS web page <<http://www.sosweb.state.ar.us>>. However, the dates in which each co-op was incorporated were not found in the database.

California

Jim Lauch in the information technology section at the SOS office informed me that all of the data stored is 'raw' and 'in bulk'; therefore, I was unable to obtain a listing of California cooperatives. I inquired about any corporate classification codes that could possibly be useful, but I was told there was no way to extract these from the database. Lauch then suggested I contact Information America, Infotek, or Acusearch because they gather data from the SOS and then organize it. Although these information centers provide corporate info, they first require a name or an identification number for each business.

Heather Kohler at the Center for Cooperatives at the University of California, Davis supplied information for California cooperatives: 45 cooperatives have been created since 1990. All of these were separated by sector.

Colorado

Information regarding Colorado's cooperatives has been ordered through Barbara Wachsmann at the SOS Corporations Department.

Connecticut

Johan Strandson, cooperative development specialist for the USDA, sent information regarding the Canaan Valley Agricultural Waste Management Cooperative and the Connecticut

Energy Cooperative, Inc. According to Strandson, these are the only cooperatives that have been created in Connecticut since 1990.

Delaware

The SOS Division of Corporations' Technical Department did not have the capability to extract a sub-listing of cooperatives from the list of corporations currently filed. Different business entities are not coded.

Florida

Joseph Mueller, the RBS program director, responded to the cooperative survey and personally knows of six cooperatives that have been created in Florida since 1990. He was not familiar with any of the consumer or credit unions that may have been formed over the past 10 years.

The SOS office in Florida could not determine the number of new cooperative corporations that have filed since 1990. The database is not currently equipped with codes that separate different business entities.

Georgia

After a search through the Georgia Net Authority, I was able to find a listing of cooperatives through their web page <<http://www.ganet.state.ga.us>>.

Hawaii

Information forwarded from USDA in response to the survey reported 28 cooperatives formed since 1990, seven of which have ceased operation. The names as well as the business addresses were provided for these Hawaii cooperatives.

Idaho

Natalie Lamb faxed an order form for business entity data reports. Information on 21 cooperatives that have filed with the SOS office since 1990 was received.

Illinois

Barbara Lefferts in the Corporations Department was unable to provide any

cooperative information. Cooperative information cannot be extracted from the Illinois database.

Indiana

My attempts to contact the SOS office by phone failed. I mailed a letter to the SOS office, but it was returned in the mail.

Iowa

Cheryl Allen, the data processing assistant at Iowa's SOS office sent a listing of new cooperatives created in Iowa since 1990.

Kansas

Melissa Wengeman faxed me a list of Kansas cooperatives. This list, however, had cooperatives dated from the early 1900's to the mid-70s. Ms. Wengeman informed me that corporations are not coded to identify the different business entities. Therefore, the search she ran for 'co-ops' on her database only picked up those with "cooperative" or "co-op" in the name of the business and disregarded those without "co-op" or "cooperative" that may have later been established.

Galen Rapp at USDA-RBS sent information on cooperative statistics. There have been 23 new cooperatives incorporated in Kansas from 1990-1998. Those LLCs, which function similar to cooperatives, were not included in the material sent.

Kentucky

Ms. Ison from the Business Services Division at the SOS office faxed an entire listing of Kentucky cooperatives by year from 1990 to present. Overall, 62 new cooperatives have been created in Kentucky since 1990.

Louisiana

On July 7th, a list of Louisiana cooperatives since 1990 was ordered, but has not yet been received.

John Broussard, the program director at USDA-RBS in Louisiana, was unable to provide information about cooperatives, but he referred me to Charles Kraenzle, the director of

Statistics at USDA-RBS in Washington, D.C. Kraenzle could only provide information on farmer cooperatives that have registered with the agency.

Maine

By phone, the Corporations Department reported the number of new cooperatives since 1990. Overall, 37 new cooperatives have been created in Maine since 1990. In order to receive the names of each of these cooperatives, the Bureau of Corporations needs to run a special program for a minimum fee, but we did not order any further information.

Maryland

Debbie Dickerson at the Department of Assessments and Taxation Corporation Charter reported 26 active stock and 37 active non-stock cooperatives as of November 1998. She informed me that these cooperatives were not necessarily 'new'.

Michigan

Data at the Consumer and Industry Services in the Corporations Section is stored for a six month period on paper. A listing of new incorporations is broken down by month and but not coded and organized, except for dividing the corporations into profit/nonprofit and foreign/domestic. Anita Baker, the supervisor at the Records and Certifications Unit, was contacted and could only provide those cooperatives with 'co-op' in the name.

Joel Welty, the executive director at the Michigan Alliance of Cooperatives has assisted in organizing seven new cooperatives since 1990.

Massachusetts

Richard Burke at USDA Rural Development is looking for information regarding cooperatives in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.

Minnesota

Millie Cardinal sent the names and registered office addresses of all Minnesota

cooperatives organized since 1990. There have been a total of 310 cooperatives created in Minnesota since 1990.

A database does not exist for cooperatives within the state. Currently, the USDA and the Minnesota Association of Cooperatives are working together to establish a database for Minnesota cooperatives.

Mississippi

Ray Bailey, the assistant Secretary of State in Mississippi sent a listing of cooperatives from their database.

The Mississippi Center for Cooperative Development was unable to extract the information requested from their database.

Missouri

The Corporations Department can only search for individual corporations if given a charter number or a business name.

Nathan Chitwood from USDA Rural Development responded to the cooperative survey and informed me that his agency does not track all cooperatives formed in Missouri. I was referred to Kristi Livingston, the project development specialist at the Missouri Institute of Cooperatives.

Ms. Livingston informed me that the Institute specifically works with agricultural and energy cooperatives. The Institute does not track the times in which these cooperatives have been organized as they are followed for various other reasons. Livingston was currently aware of two new ethanol cooperatives, a couple of marketing cooperatives operating with milk as well as a beef group, some soybean projects and a housing cooperative.

Montana

Carol Dennis in the Business Services Division explained that their database requires an exact name of the business to obtain any sort of information. The different business entities are not coded or separated in any way.

Nebraska

Steve Williams at the Nebraska Department of Economic Development e-mailed me a list of 14 cooperatives organized since 1990. He obtained this information from *Dun & Bradstreet Market Identifiers* in their dialog file (#516). His search could be modified since the law in Nebraska requires "co-op" to be in the business name. However, since cooperatives are self-reporting, there may be inconsistencies with the count.

Nevada

I faxed a letter with a request for information to the Deputy Secretary of Commercial Recording.

New Hampshire

The SOS provided a total number of cooperatives that were incorporated within the state of New Hampshire as of December 1998. The Corporations Department searched for this total number of records by a code of types. However, there was no way to know incorporation dates because they are not stored on file.

New Jersey

The Division of Commercial Recording was contacted for information; they referred me to their SOS web page to further search for information since they were not able to extract a total listing of cooperatives. After reviewing the corporation's homepage section, a listing of 127 cooperatives was found. These records did not display an incorporation date. The query of the database did not have a specific type code description for 'cooperatives'. However, type codes existed for various business types including: professional corporations, limited partnerships, domestic limited liability corporations, non-profit corporations and domestic profit corporations along with several foreign business entity types. Therefore, the 'cooperatives' that were found within the database were mostly coded as domestic profit (DP) or non-profit corporations (NP).

Although, others were found to be coded as different business entity types as well. Since the type code descriptions list did not include a category for cooperative corporations, no accurate findings could be provided for cooperatives within the state of New Jersey. Moreover, in order to provide an accurate search for cooperative information, the business entity name or identification number must first be provided.

New Mexico

The only office that handles corporate records and filings, the Public Regulation Commission at the SOS office, currently does not have a database set up with coded business entities. Therefore, it is impossible to extract different entities since all corporations are simply filed in alphabetical order.

Tillie Martinez, a specialist within the Computer Department reported 56 new cooperatives since 1990; several of these have dissolved, therefore 37 currently exist since 1990. Martinez sent a printout of the business names and registered addresses of cooperatives.

New York

The Corporations Specialist at the SOS office informed me that corporations are filed 'name by name' and are not broken down by a list, as there is no current coding.

Robert Pestridge, the cooperative specialist in New York State, currently works with existing agricultural cooperatives. In general, most agricultural cooperatives register under the state cooperative law. He informed me that the IRS specifically looks at operation; some businesses may operate or function as a general business corporation or LLC yet adopt cooperative by-laws. Some groups tend to operate as a general business corporation because it allows flexibility. General business corporations that adopt by-laws do not have to be listed, and LLCs who adopt cooperative bylaws cannot use 'co-op' or 'cooperative' in the business name. Therefore, current business listings provided by the Secretary of State may be inaccurate.

North Carolina

Bonnie Elek at the North Carolina SOS office provided all of the business names and registered business addresses for cooperatives formed since 1990.

Julie Hessman, the business and cooperative specialist at USDA-RBS, sent a listing of all incorporations for cooperatives in the state of North Carolina.

North Dakota

The Secretary of State Business Division provided a listing of all new cooperatives created in the state during 1990-1999.

Ohio

The cooperative development specialist for USDA Rural Development, William Taylor, responded to the cooperative survey on June 28th. Since 1994, he has helped to start seven new agricultural marketing cooperatives. Since there have been other incorporations without his assistance he referred me to the, Secretary of State, J. Kenneth Blackwell.

Marilyn McNab, from the SOS office informed me that different business entities are coded within the database, so cooperative numbers could be extracted. Since 1990, 11 new cooperatives have been established. The names and registered business addresses were also provided in the report.

Oklahoma

The Corporations Department could not provide cooperative information from their records.

Oregon

Robert Haase, the USDA cooperative development specialist, directed me to the Oregon SOS office for information.

Caroline Thrasher in the Business Regulations Unit of the Corporations Division provided information on the 57 new cooperatives that have been created in Oregon since 1990.

Pennsylvania

The revenue clerk at the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania office told me that a name must first be provided before any information could be obtained regarding any type of corporation.

Gerald Ely, the cooperative development specialist for USDA Rural Development, responded to the cooperative survey and listed several cooperatives that have formed in the agricultural sector since 1995. He has not worked with any consumer or housing cooperatives and told me to contact the Secretary of State.

I contacted Travis Bloc who is an associate at the Corporations Bureau. I was faxed an order form for business list information, however it has been brought to my attention that searches can only be performed for profit or non-profit corporations and cooperative associations cannot be extracted.

Rhode Island

Cathy Albanese at the Corporations Department at the SOS searched for listed cooperatives within the database through a charter code. The North Kingstown Producers Cooperative Association was the only cooperative to form within the past ten years.

South Carolina

After searching the Corporations Department's database, a listing of all corporations was provided. There is no coding currently established on South Carolina's database.

I contacted David Sumpter who performed a special search for cooperatives within the database. Mr. Sumpter extracted two cooperatives both incorporated in 1990. Both of these cooperatives are in the agricultural sector.

The cooperative specialist for USDA Rural Development in South Carolina, was unable to provide additional information.

South Dakota

Burton Pfluger, the Farm Financial Management extension specialist at South Dakota State University, found 35 new cooperatives that were created since 1990. I compared these figures to those received from the SOS and they correlated with Pfluger's. I was unable to obtain any business names; however, the majority of these cooperatives are in the agriculture sector.

Tennessee

Information has been ordered from the SOS office.

Texas

The SOS office in the Corporations Department could not provide a listing because there is no way to extract different types of business entities because no coding is provided on the database. The only way to receive information on cooperatives is if "co-op" is included in the business name.

The State Department of Agriculture does not maintain information on the times in which businesses are established.

Utah

Mike Machia at the Department of Commerce, Division of Corporations faxed information on the number of new corporations created in Utah since 1990. However, these figures were not separated by business type.

Vermont

Corporations are listed in alphabetical order and different entity types are not separated. Therefore, it was not possible to extract or determine the number of cooperatives that have been established in Vermont since 1990.

Virginia

The state Corporations Commission informed me that the database does not allow for differentiation among corporations.

West Virginia

The Corporations Department was unable to create a list of cooperatives from their database because corporations are not coded.

Washington

Lance Torno, in the Corporate Division of SOS, faxed a complete listing of new cooperatives created in Washington since 1990. The database at the SOS in Washington is equipped with a corporate coding system that allows for different business entity types to be extracted.

Wisconsin

Robert Ritger, in the Department of Financial Institutions, sent a compilation of the number of cooperative associations organized from 1990 through 1998. These cooperatives are categorized as two types; those organized as capital shares, and those organized as member cooperatives. The cooperatives have not been indexed by the type of activity in which they are engaged.

Wyoming

The Corporations Department can only track cooperatives with "co-op" in the business name. Corporate identification numbers (CID) are assigned to corporations in Wyoming, but the CID number is a file number assigned to the corporation for tracking purposes.

Business and Cooperatives Program specialist, Karlene Sjoden, informed me that no new cooperatives have been created in Wyoming since 1990. However, she did explain that one should be forming between Wyoming and Nebraska. The cooperative is an edible dry bean producer's cooperative and will take approximately two to three years to form.