

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Positive Inquiry/ Success Map and Resource Map

1. What does your Co-op do really well?

- Successful MSU Grant (Specialty Crop Block Grant that brought Amy)
- Diverse producers, big vision, Value Added Products, try to collaborate (spirit)
- Networking among growers
- Bridging gaps – meeting logistical needs for growers & buyers
- The co-op is a presence in the community
- Ravalli Electric Co-op & Ravalli Federal Credit Union: provide great experiences, help people that couldn't get funding, provide education (cooperative principles)
- Bringing technology to Agricultural market – online market

2. What has your Co-op done that makes your proud?

- Meeting a long standing need for local food availability in the Bitterroot
- Having member/owners engaged in co-op
- Bitterroot Community Federal Credit Union shows pride in lending to the Darby Community by helping people that could not get funding. Has expanded with a branch in Hamilton
- Increased the awareness of the affordability of local food to those who may have not thought about buying local, and created more demand for the food to be available in the stores.

3. What resources made these successes possible?

University of Montana

MSU Extension Services - Amy

Social Capital (people)

Land Access

Diversity in farms: products

Infrastructure with various farmers; kitchen

Space to grow

Lake County CDC

RCEDA

Credit Unions

Youth Homes

Cooperative Development Specialist in Stevensville

Other resource idea: REC, Bitterroot Community Federal Credit Union and/or Farmers State

Bank could provide L2L Co-op information in their monthly statements, i.e. a request or invitation to buy a share

4. Loyal to Local has identified that they need to work with other grower co-ops

- They have had success with Triple Seed Divide and Poultry Growers Co-op
- Will work with the Credit Unions & REC
- National Co-op Networking – Amy networks with other co-ops in other states

Vision of a Co-op Economy

- Sustainable – aiming for local services & products
- Bridge with other co-ops
- B2B with other co-ops and local businesses
- Meeting the needs of many – how do we identify the gaps
- Awareness, PR, Marketing – how to do it
- Work on mind set – first thought is local, not Amazon
- Accessibility – what is the yellow pages of the new economy? How do we take in information?
- Resilient – co-ops can overcome diversity
- Don't have to wait for a disaster to happen to find out who your neighbor is
- Relationships with other co-op members (not just your own co-op)
- Easier to be friends with someone you've had a beer with
- Celebration of community resiliency

Strategy for Design/ Delivery

- Contact BFCU BoD to attend meeting and ask about marketing
- OPT In/Out option for L2L CSA with other co-ops: MFCU, REC, etc.
Reciprocity – L2L will share MFCU with their members
- Develop marketing material
Next step with online platform (action steps formed)
- Hold L2L BoD meeting; firm up vision, brand, promotion
- Promotion example: Hospital makes pre-tax payroll deduction for CSA share available to employees; maybe this year, likely next for CSA payments
- Network with public assistance: awareness of L2L with SNAP
Modify payment schedules for CSA (SNAP won't pay in advance)
- Processing machine – RCCOA/ HOF/ L2L – grant for M&E