

2018 Missouri Essay Contest Winner

Chloe Momphard, Troy FFA

“Look around you. Everything changes. Everything on this earth is in a continuous state of evolving, refining, improving, adapting enhancing...changing. You were not put on this earth to remain stagnant.” This quote from Steve Maraboli, author, speaks volumes when we relate it to agriculture and cooperatives. We are looking to improve and refine what we have already created. Cooperatives have played a large role in making agriculture what it is today by offering products such as rural electric, feed and management tools for livestock, and fertilizer for crops, through cheaper, more efficient alternatives. They are continuing to help farmers and ranchers by providing consulting firms with experts in management practices.

To keep advancing, cooperatives will need to further their involvement and enhance the services provided. To do this, they must reach out to the younger generation of agriculturalists. Involving young agriculturalists in opportunities like CYCLE, or offering job shadowing prospects at FSC Financial, MFA, and Dairy Farmers of America encourages young adults to get and stay involved in agriculture beyond the farm. These cooperatives may provide teenagers that may or may not have an agricultural background a chance to learn more about production agriculture. This may spark an interest for their future, directing them to become involved on a farm, or be a part of the advancement of agricultural products and services.

Cooperatives have been supporters of farmers from the beginning, starting with groups of farmers purchasing shared equipment, to selling feed, seed, and chemicals bought in bulk at volume discount pricing. Today, cooperatives offer grid testing and acreage specific prescriptions, along with machinery that operates in conjunction with GPS and “on the go” methods. These advancements allow farmers the opportunity to put the necessary nutrients into their fields while planting a seed that will thrive and produce the best yields in that specific soil. Additionally, cooperatives offer financing to those who may need it through programs to assist new farmers with the purchase of additional acreage, lines of credit to help cover operating costs until harvest, or loans to assist with the purchase of new or additional equipment or breeding stock. Cooperatives offering unique educational, technological, and financial advancements become invaluable to their agricultural partners, resulting in a win-win for all parties.

Providing education, products, and services that advance with technology is critical in this day and age. As the world population continues to grow, farmers have a daunting task before them. Cooperatives continue to be a critical part of agriculture because of their unique position within the industry. Young agriculturalists are innovators, so the programs cooperatives offer have to be relevant as technology changes and improves. Young agriculturalists look to cooperatives to help get the most for their money and maximize returns, while providing educational opportunities to keep them abreast of the latest technological advancements, and financing arrangements to meet their changing needs. Cooperatives and agriculturalists work hand in hand to successfully feed the world.