

DATE

ADDRESS BLOCK

Dear X

As a member of a farmer cooperative, I would like to remind you of the important role farmer cooperatives play in rural America. More than two million farmers and ranchers belong to at least one farmer cooperative, and those co-ops do everything from providing farmers with feed, seed, fertilizer, and fuel to acting as bargaining agents to providing credit. As a farmer in your district, I am writing to let you know that I need my farmer cooperative to help my operation survive in today's economy.

[You can insert additional information on your cooperative or operation here; location, size, crops produced or handled, etc.]

More than 100 years ago, farmers joined together to form farmer cooperatives, to give individual producers a fair chance to compete with the very large and concentrated companies that dominated the marketplace. On their own, farmers were too small and too numerous to deal effectively with larger agribusinesses in the supply, processing, and marketing sectors of agriculture. What held true then still holds true today. Producers and their co-ops are still selling into markets dominated by fewer, larger buyers.

Farmer cooperatives market a wide range of agricultural commodities, and many engage in value-added processing to produce products that meet changing consumer demand. In addition, many cooperatives are major exporters, allowing individual producers like me to compete in the global marketplace in a way that would be impossible on my own.

The benefits of farmer co-ops start on the farm, but they go well beyond the farm gate, directly supporting rural America with jobs and economic development. In this way, co-ops are a key in preserving the uniquely American way of life enjoyed by me and my neighbors. Farmer co-ops provide over 250,000 jobs, with a total payroll in excess of \$8 billion. And in 2008, total profits for farmer co-ops was \$4.2 billion—this money is either returned to farmers who are member-owners of the co-op or reinvested into the co-op, which benefits co-op members and further bolsters the local community. Farmer co-ops are vital to rural America.

Please do not hesitate to contact the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the trade association representing the interests of farmer co-ops, if they can be a resource to you. I look forward to working with you to achieve the common goal of a farmer-focused, economically viable and globally competitive agricultural sector.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME & ADDRESS