

# Sustainability & Farmer Co-ops

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National Council of Farmer Cooperatives





When you hear  
“sustainability” do  
you picture this?

Or this?





Co-ops have a vital role to play in defining sustainability for their members—and if co-ops don't do it, others will.



## The three pillars of sustainability

- Environmental stewardship
- Long-term economic viability
- Good neighbors/social responsibility



Question to ponder:  
Are farmer co-ops inherently  
sustainable?





Is the family farm/agriculture inherently sustainable?





## Thinking about environmental stewardship

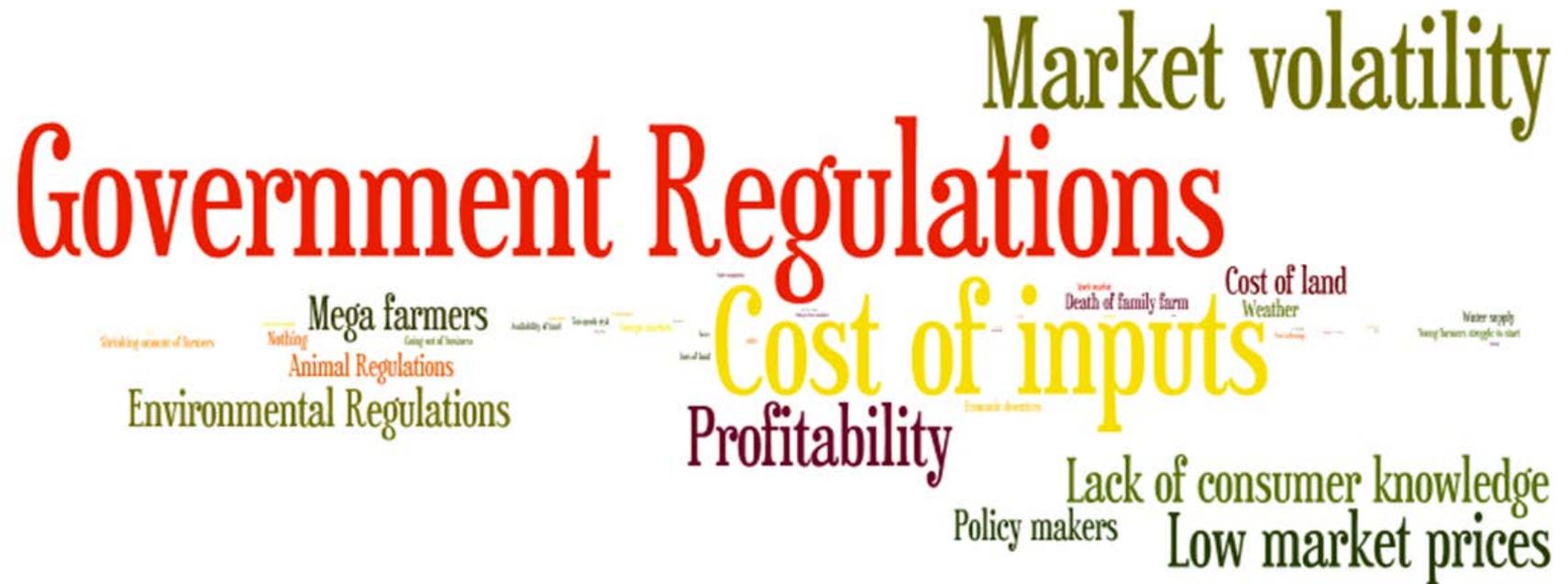
- What are you as a producer already doing to reduce: soil erosion, input usage, production efficiency?
  - Precision agriculture/data driven agriculture
  - GMOs
  - Nutrient management
- What are your co-ops doing to assist producer-members in these areas?
  - 4R principles
  - Agronomy services
  - Thought leadership



Need to shift thinking on  
sustainability in this area from  
this...



What concerns you most about agriculture today?





To this...



What excites you most about agriculture today?





## Thinking about long-term economic viability

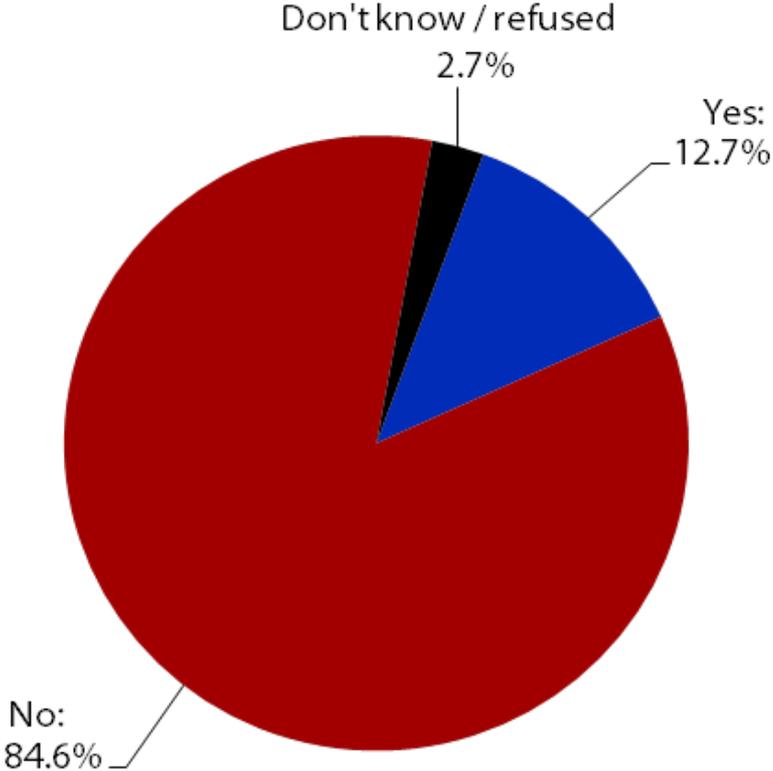
- Is your co-op prepared to meet the needs of a changing member demographic?
- Is there a marketplace advantage in belonging to a farmer co-op?



Looking ahead 5 years, will your operation have outgrown the need to work with a co-op?

### Large-Scale Producers

\*Respondents who currently work with a local Co-op



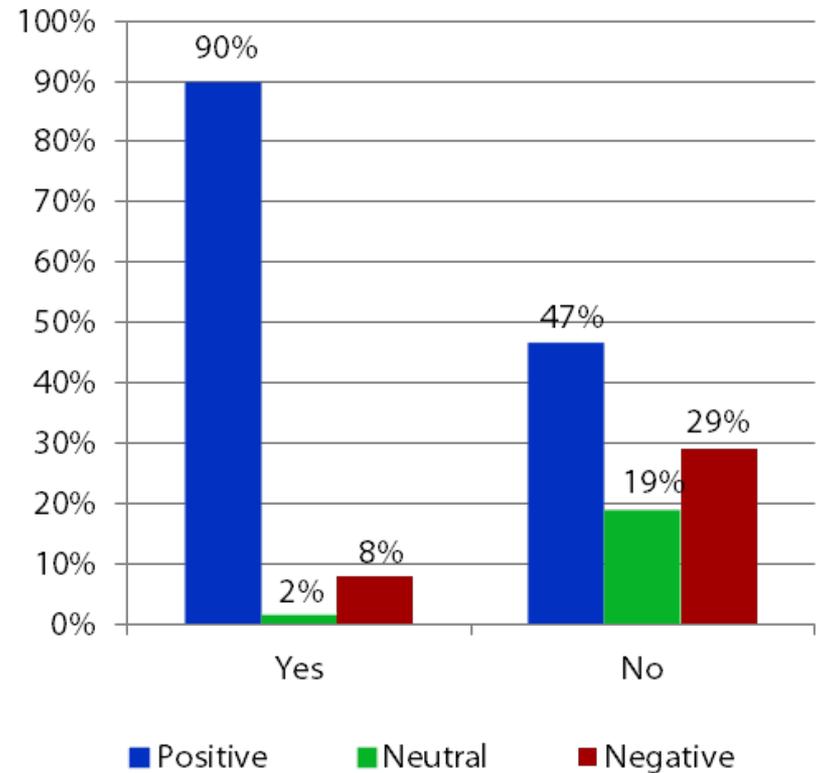
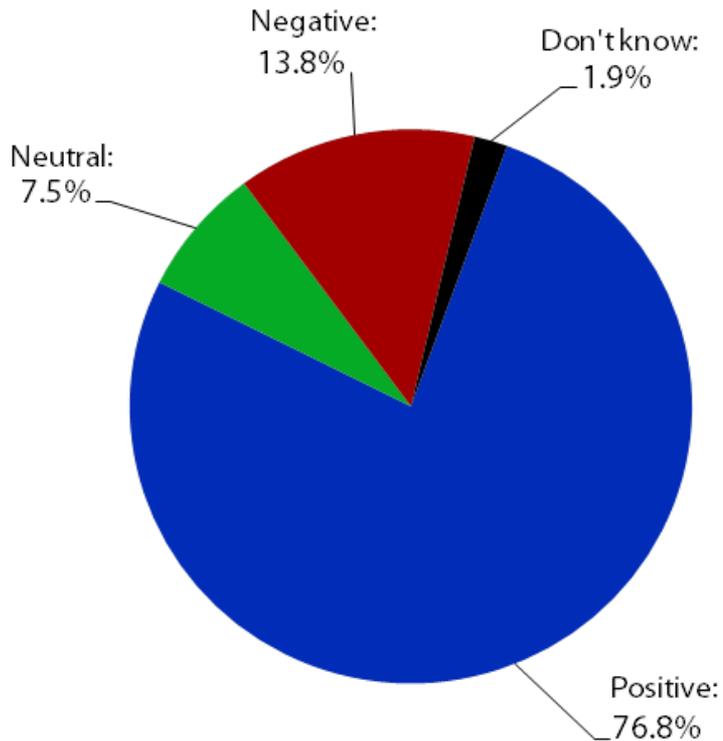


Is your long-term outlook for the success of the cooperative system generally positive or negative?

**Large-Scale Producers**

All Respondents

Works with a Co-op

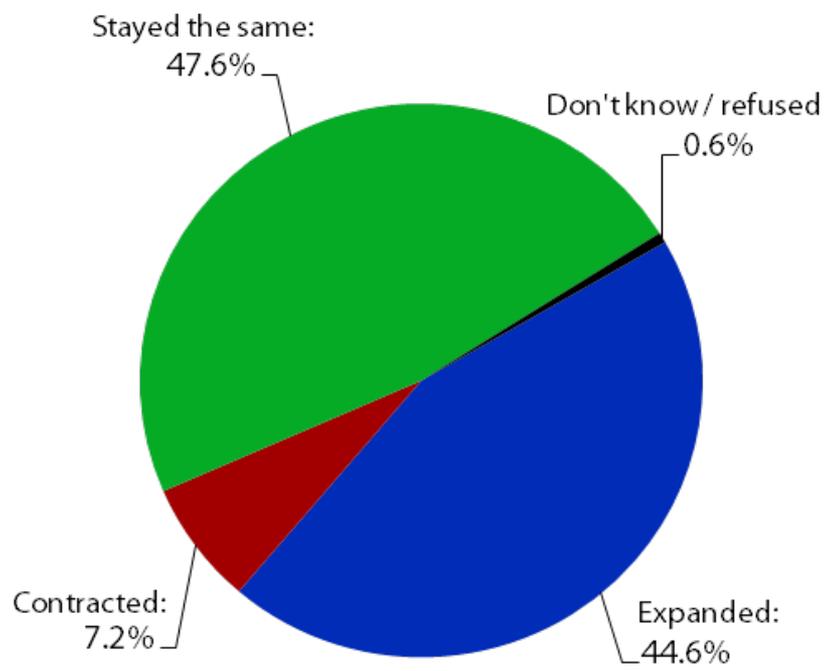




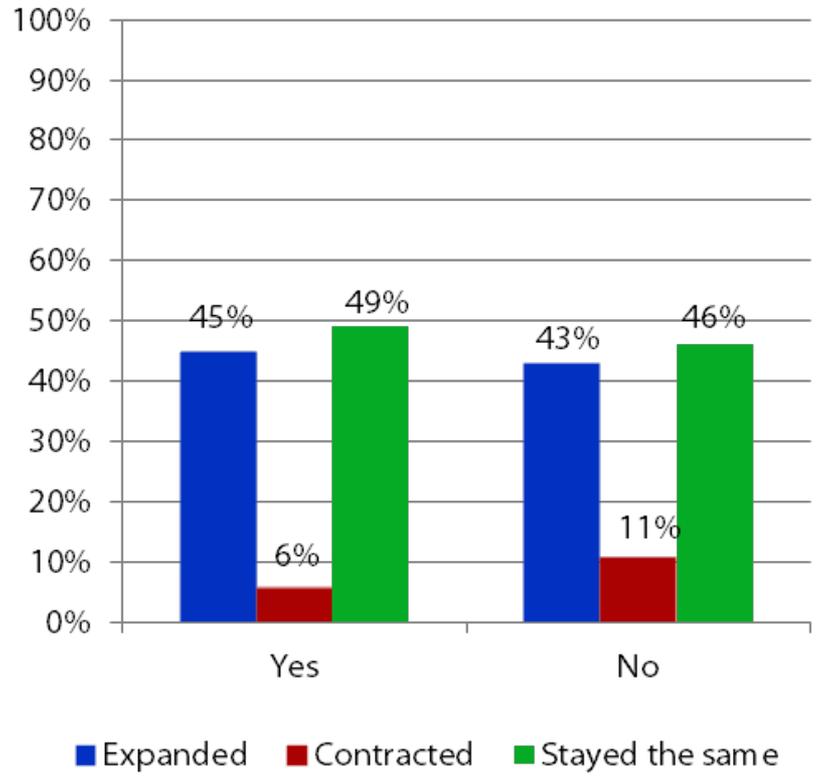
# How has the size of your farm or ranch changed over the past five years?

## Young Producers

All Respondents



Works with a Co-op

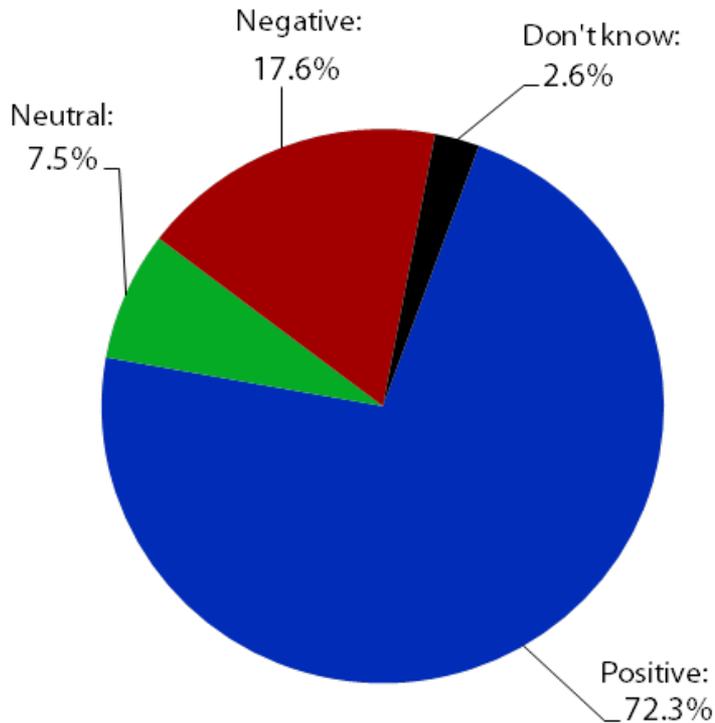




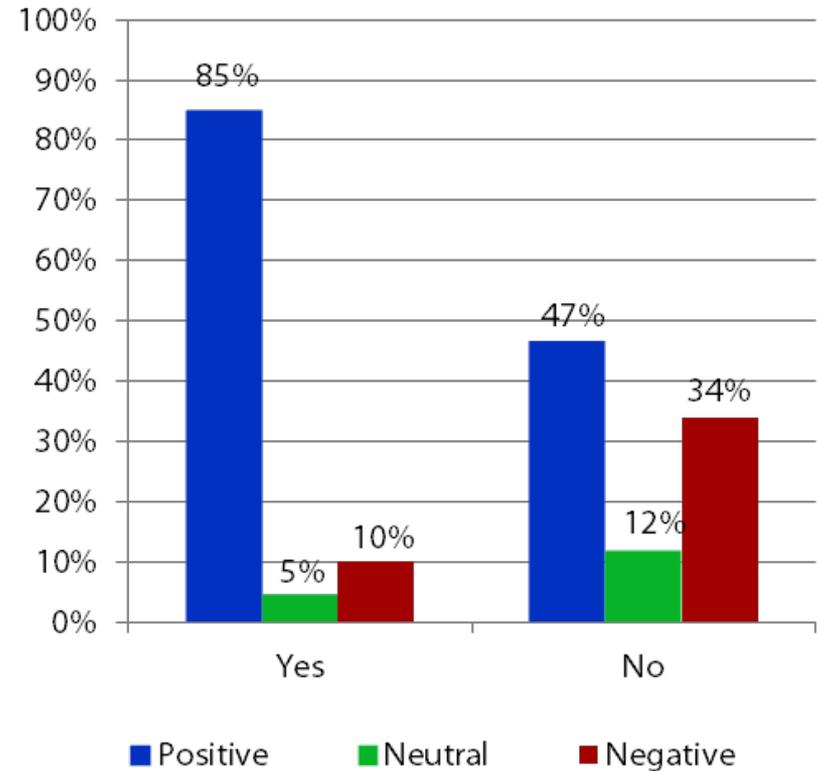
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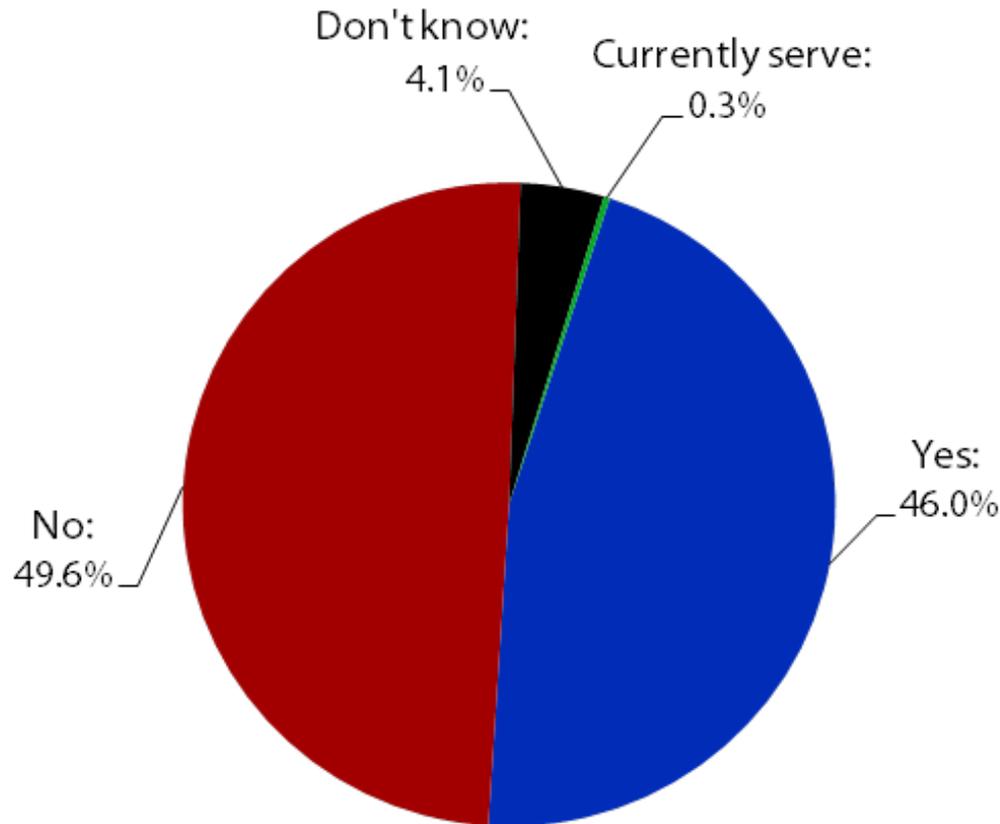




Would you find value in serving in a cooperative leadership role in the future?

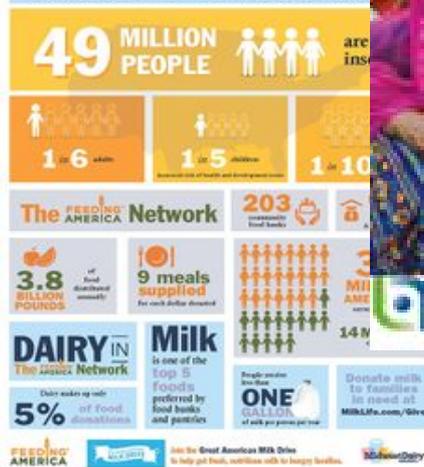
**Young Producers**

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# Thinking about social responsibility



**LAND O'LAKES, INC.**  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Farm co-ops and our members have a great story to tell about sustainability—and it's past time that we start telling it!



## But concrete plans are also being demanded by:

- Buyers' mandates
- Consumer interest
- Environmental advocacy groups
- Social media attention
- Regulatory action
- Changing market trends and norms



## Finding a farmer co-op approach to sustainability

- September 2014—Co-op CEOs push to have NCFC look at a unified approach to sustainability for members
- November 2014—Survey of membership on current practices and areas of need
- December 2014-January 2015—Work with co-op sustainability staff to identify objectives and next steps
- February 2015—Report to NCFC Council for approval & focus on issue at Annual Meeting



Will the results of this week's elections have any impact on sustainability?



I'M THE  
FACE OF  
TODAY'S  
FARMER  
CO-OPS.

**Thank you.**