

Ag CoOps Focus Of USDA, Farmers Union Effort

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Officials from the USDA Rural Development announced the signing of an agreement to work with the National Farmers Union (NFU) and Michigan Farmers Union to cooperate in the promotion and utilization of programs and activities aimed at starting new agricultural cooperatives and developing

rural businesses. The organizations signed the partnership agreement in an effort to continue and enhance their strong and beneficial working relationship.

"By working cooperatively with USDA Rural Development state and area offices, we are further equipped to assist producer groups in the preparation of various projects involving

agricultural cooperatives, value-added processing, rural business development, and in launching a variety of innovative co-ops," said NFU President Leland Swenson.

"It is important that rural cooperatives are given every opportunity to access and use USDA rural development programs to assist in the creation and expansion of economic

opportunities to the fullest extent possible," said Donald L. Hare, state director for USDA rural development operations in Michigan.

"These agreements unite the shared missions of our organizations to serve rural America and help family farmers and rural citizens succeed through the promotion of economic and cooperative development, particular-

ly the formation of value-added processing and marketing cooperatives," said Carl McIlvain, Michigan Farmers Union President, Hastings, Mich.

Rural development is a mission area within USDA responsible for administering various rural housing, business, industry and rural community development loan and grant programs.

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