

In Italy co-op law stipulates that at least 80% of any surplus must be reinvested and not given away to either members or non members.

A true spirit of cooperation valorizes a deeper belief in the human capacity to care about others, and there are all sorts of reasons to be part of growing the cooperative movement. Often times, you'll save more as a consumer and earn more as a worker, since there is no middleman siphoning off the surplus. Being a member of a co-op also makes you an owner and that gives you a democratic voice in determining its future trajectory. Your chances of falling victim to such capitalist "market failures" as overseas outsourcing, environmental contamination, and workplace exploitation are much less. Many people also appreciate the opportunity to foster social change as part of a broader cooperative community. When you join a co-op, you're not just a hapless farmer, mindless consumer, or throwaway worker any more - you're part of a living breathing vibrant alternative to business as usual.

Put your time and effort where your heart is – Go Co-op!

To learn more about cooperatives checkout:

Curl, John. For All The People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation, Cooperative Movements, and Communalism in America (PM Press 2009)

International Cooperative Alliance: <http://www.ica.coop/al-ica/>

Restakis, John. Humanizing the Economy: Cooperatives in the Age of Capital (New Society Publishers 2010)

U.N. International Year of Cooperatives: <http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>

UW Center for Cooperatives: <http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/>

Rochdale Cooperative Principles

In 1844, the Rochdale Pioneers in England created a set of principles, intended to guide the activity of co-operatives throughout the world. In 1966, the International Co-operative Alliance modified the original Rochdale Principles, identifying six central co-operative principles and in 1995 a seventh principle was added.

1st Principle – Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations; open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle – Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle – Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative, and supporting activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle – Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations, controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5th Principle – Education, Training & Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6th Principle – Co-operation among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

7th Principle – Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

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Smoked Baby Swiss	8.00		
Organic Pepper Jack	8.00		
Organic Tomato Basil	8.00		
Organic Colby	8.00		
Organic Farmers	8.00		
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