



## What's to love about food co-ops

### Background Information

In the United States, retail food cooperatives have a long and successful history. From the pioneering of nutritional labeling, to the introduction of natural and organic foods, food co-ops have played a leading role in bringing healthy innovations to the markets they serve. Today, NCGA's 128 co-ops continue this tradition with a strong emphasis on supporting local food systems and careful attention to environmental sustainability.

NCGA's member and associate food co-ops operate 165 stores, generate over \$1.4 billion in annual revenue and are owned by over 1.3 million consumer owners. In the spirit of the International Year of Cooperatives and its theme that "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World," NCGA undertook a study to document the social and economic impact that our affiliate cooperatives have on their local communities. The study was conducted by the ICA Group, a not-for-profit consulting firm with expertise in cooperatives, economic development, and business research.

In evaluating the difference food cooperatives make in the communities they serve five broad categories of impact were assessed:

- Supporting Local Food Systems
- Employment and Job Quality
- Economic Impact
- Environmental Stewardship
- Promoting Healthy & Sustainable Foods

For each of these categories we were interested in understanding not only the impact of food cooperatives but also how these impacts differ from those of conventional grocers. Accordingly our research focused on both the cooperative and conventional segments of the grocery industry in order to provide an appropriate context for evaluating food co-op performance. In addition to reviewing industry data for both the conventional and cooperative sectors, original survey work was undertaken to explore a number of issues in more detail.

This video along with the full report and static info graphics are promoted to the public on our consumer website at <http://strongertogether.coop/food-coops/food-co-op-impact-study/>.

## **Bio**

National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA), founded in 1999, is a business services cooperative for retail food co-ops located throughout the United States. NCGA helps unify food co-ops in order to optimize operational and marketing resources, strengthen purchasing power, and ultimately offer more value to natural food co-op owners and shoppers everywhere. Our 128 member and associate co-ops operate 165 storefronts in 35 states with combined annual sales over \$1.4 billion. NCGA is a winner of the dotCoop Global Awards for Cooperative Excellence in recognition of the application of cooperative values and principles to drive cooperative and business success. For a map of NCGA member and associate co-ops,

visit [www.ncga.coop](http://www.ncga.coop). To learn more about co-ops, visit [www.strongertogether.coop](http://www.strongertogether.coop) or [www.go.coop](http://www.go.coop).