

NCBA CLUSA – Session Proposal

Session Title: *Harnessing Cooperatives to Build Better Food Systems*

Session Description:

The cooperative business model is a democratic ownership model where consumers and/or employees own the businesses that impact their lives. They operate at all levels of the food system. They include seed companies tailored to your local conditions, vast agricultural and dairy enterprises, financial institutions servicing agricultural needs, and local co-op groceries premised on bringing healthier, equitable and sustainable food to their communities.

This panel discussion – led by the National Cooperative Business Association, National Cooperative Bank and National Co+op Grocers - will discuss how people in the cooperative movement are working to build on the successes of these well-established cooperative ventures, using the ideas, lessons and partnerships existing co-ops offer to innovate food systems that better serve local communities. The panel will pay particular attention to addressing the aftermath of COVID-19.

Cooperatives' history of empowerment is inspiring. However, building a better cooperative movement means we must discuss cooperatives' current business climate and the related strengths and weaknesses of our model. Co-ops' contributions to their local communities will be discussed and analyzed for best practices and suggestions for paths forward.

Attendees will gain a greater appreciation for the breadth of the cooperative business model, ongoing advocacy that might expand its impacts in the food system, the financial ecosystem for cooperative food systems and exposure to potential collaborators and networks wherein they can learn more about cooperative development, cooperative identity and networking.

*Date Note: The speakers are only available to present on June 23rd (Wed) and June 24th (Thurs). **The speakers are not available to present on Monday, June 22nd.***

Speakers (Proposed):

Speaker(s) from the National Co+op Grocers to be confirmed.

John Holdsclaw, Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at the National Cooperative Bank (NCB)

- [Bio linked here](#)

Doug O'Brien, President & CEO of NCBA CLUSA International

- [Bio linked here](#)