

# The Northeast Cooperative Council

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## cooperative notes

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To learn more about NECC or read past issues of *Cooperative Notes*, visit the NECC Web pages at: [www.cooperatives.aem.cornell.edu/](http://www.cooperatives.aem.cornell.edu/)



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The Northeast Cooperative Council held its Cooperative Leaders Forum and 61ST Annual Meeting on March 18-19 at the Doubletree Hotel in Syracuse, NY. The Forum was held in conjunction with CoBANK's customer meeting.



**Dr. Brent Hueth** kicked off the Forum on Thursday with an address on **"The Economic Impact of Cooperatives in the U.S."** Hueth is the Director of the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives and Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. His research and teaching focuses on cooperative organizations and agricultural markets. He is a co-editor of the recently published book titled *Cooperative Conversions, Failures and Restructurings: Case Studies and Lessons from U.S. and Canadian Agriculture* which is available online at [www.kis.usask.ca/CoopBook.html](http://www.kis.usask.ca/CoopBook.html).



**Charles Conner** offered **"An Update from Washington."** Conner became president and CEO of NCFC in February 2009. Before joining NCFC, he served as Deputy Secretary for the USDA and Chief Operating Officer overseeing day-to-day operations

including development of a \$95 billion budget for the 26 USDA agencies representing 300 programs and more than 100,000 employees.

He highlighted the four major issues for cooperatives in this session of Congress: Antitrust exemptions, Environmental/climate change regulations, taxes and food safety. In regard to antitrust issues, the Dept. of Justice, DOJ began a series of workshops focusing on antitrust activity in the food industry. Cooperatives are coming under more scrutiny by the Antitrust Division in DOJ.

NCFC's response is a three pronged approach through: government relations, public relations and grassroots

efforts. They are emphasizing how farmer cooperatives are integral to the success of the U.S. food and ag. system. Cooperatives add competition to the system helping farmers of all sizes and ensuring the fairest prices to consumers.

In regard to climate change, NCFC is tracking relevant legislation and regulatory changes that affect farmer co-ops. Efforts are aimed at ensuring the viability of farmer owned refineries, maintaining the ability of U.S. agriculture to compete in international markets, and encourage the adoption of any regulations on a global scale. In the area of taxes, focus on the tax issues related to the expiration of Bush tax cuts, and insure that agriculture is included in the tax provisions of the Jobs Bill.

High profile food safety incidents are making food safety a priority issue. NCFC is tracking the FDA Modernization Act in the Senate. Immigration reform is moving forward slowly. The best bet is the AgJOBS bill introduced in both the House and Senate. Sen. Lugar was recruited as the first Republican co-sponsor in the Senate. Looking ahead, there will be continuing pressure on reducing funding for the Farm Bill with a greater share shifting out of farm related programs into nutrition.

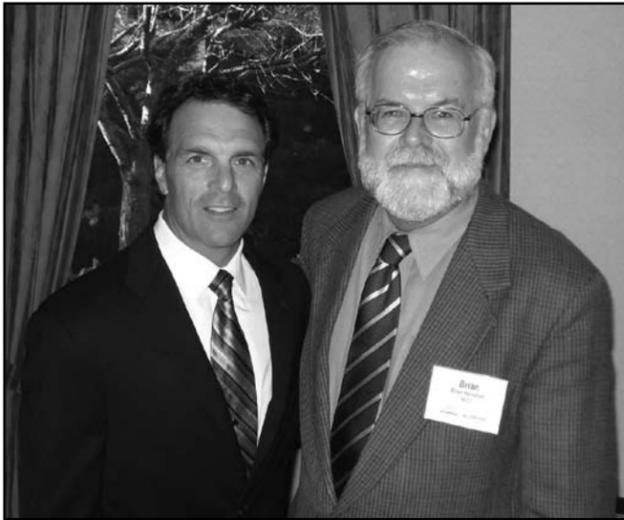


**Dr. Marci Rossell** presented an **"Economic Outlook."** Rossell is a Former CNBC Chief Economist and Co-Host of SQUAWK BOX. She stimulated the audience speaking on the nexus of economics, politics, culture and the media. Her animated style was honed when she served as the popular, lively Chief Economist for CNBC in the months immediately following September 11th. In her presentation, she covered a range of complex economic issues and made them relevant to the group.



**John Sununu** addressed the subjects of **"Finance and Energy Policy."** He covered a range of topics related to energy policy. Senator Sununu (R-NH) cut a unique path from the private sector to public office, serving for three terms in the House of

Representatives and for six years as the youngest member of the United States Senate. Before entering public service, Sununu worked for emerging high-tech firms as an engineer, strategy consultant, and a chief financial officer. Sununu currently serves as one of five panel members responsible for the oversight of TARP funds and has developed numerous proposals for regulatory reform, mortgage issuance, and national insurance oversight.



**Doug Flutie and Brian Henehan (BC Alum)**

The Thursday afternoon program was followed by a reception hosted by CoBANK directors. The CoBANK dinner speaker at the annual banquet was Doug Flutie. For over 20 years, Doug Flutie's name has been synonymous with excellence in college and professional football. He will always be remembered for throwing the Hail Mary Touchdown Pass in the last seconds of Boston College's 47-45 upset over Miami, the same season he won the Heisman Trophy. Doug went on to play for the USFL, the NFL, and the Canadian Football League which included three Grey Cup Championships and Grey Cup MVP honors. Doug returned to the NFL, led the Buffalo Bills to the playoffs and was named the 1998 NFL's Comeback Player of the year. Flutie ended his career as a backup quarterback for the Pats in 2005. In his final play, he made history by successfully executing the NFL's first drop kick since 1941.

The Forum continued on Friday morning with a presentation by Dr. Ed McLaughlin on **"Trends in the Supermarket Industry"**. McLaughlin is the Robert G. Tobin Professor of Marketing, Director of the Undergraduate Business Program and Director of the Food Industry Management Program at Cornell University.

A panel discussion followed on **"Marketing Sustainability"**. The panel members included Prof. McLaughlin, Richard

Naczi, the Chief Executive Officer of American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc., headquartered in Syracuse, New York, and Jed Davis, Director of Sustainability for Cabot Creamery Cooperative. The group engaged in a lively discussion about retailers and cooperatives are developing marketing strategies based on sustainability.

The forum wrapped up with round table discussions for directors and managers. These sessions have become very popular and allow leaders from across the Northeast to discuss current issues and share strategies. For more information on the meeting and presentations by speakers, visit the following website: <http://cooperatives.aem.cornell.edu/partners.htm>

## Directors and Officers Elected

The Council announces the election of directors for 2010. Four directors were elected or re-elected to serve on the 12 member board. Sandy Stauffer was re-elected to represent Dairylea Cooperative. Bill Banker was elected to represent Agri-Mark. Jay Hardenburg was re-elected to represent National Grape Cooperative. And, Judy Joy, was elected to represent Ocean Spray Cranberries.

Officers were elected at the Council board's reorganization meeting. Eric Zuber, a dairy farmer from Western New York as well as a director of Upstate-Niagara Cooperative and O-AT-KA Milk Products was elected to serve as President of the Council. Craig Pollock, loan officer with Farm Credit East, was elected Vice-President. Theron Kibbe, director of marketing for Farm Credit East continues to serve as Treasurer. Brian Henehan, Senior Extension Associate at Cornell University, was re-appointed Secretary.

## Cornell Hosts Upstate Niagara Board of Directors

The board of directors of the Upstate Niagara Cooperative participated in an all day program in Warren Hall hosted by the Cornell Cooperative Enterprise Program in the College of Ag and Life Sciences at Cornell University. The group was welcomed by Dr. Loren Tauer, Chair of the Dept. of Applied Economics and Management. The agenda for the day included faculty presentations by: Dr. Andrew Novakovic, Dr. Mark Stephenson, Dr. Robert Boynton, Dr. Todd Schmit, Dr. Kathryn Boor, Dr. Barbara Knuth, Dr. Ynte Schukken, Ed Staehr and Brian Henehan. Subjects ranged from understanding protein markets, assessing price volatility, policy issues in dairy markets, international markets, food and beverage manufacturing in New York State, current food science research, signs of a strong board as well as updates on FARMNET and Quality Milk Production Services.

## President's Column



As incoming president of NECC I first would like to thank Will Baildon for his leadership the last two years as well as Sandy Stauffer who held the president's term before Will. Both Will and Sandy still serve on the board which is a great asset going forward.

As your new president my primary focus is to continue programs as we have had in the past continuing on with our young leadership program and our annual meeting which has been held in conjunction with CoBank's regional meeting. The relationship with CoBank has enabled us to bring in some great speakers and we look forward to growing our relationship to an even higher level.

The surveys we got back from the March meeting revealed that the conference was well accepted. Marci Rossell's economic talk came out a pretty big hit. It would be great if her thoughts could get some momentum with some of our representatives in government. Ed McLaughlin captivated me with that viral video. I think it had an effect on other directors too because when we got to the director round table the talk was on the tweetering and how to do damage control if viral communication should attack your coop and how to intercept such activities or be pro active against such an event. It amazed me how much difference a year makes, last year the discussion at the

round table focused on the importance of liquidity in the business. In all I would like to thank Brian Henehan, Carol Thomson, and CoBank for putting together a great conference.

Going forward the board has elected to hold the young leadership conference every other year so right now we are planning a July 2011 conference. Tentatively Agri-Mark, Inc. will be the host. So start to line up your young cooperatives for 2011, it takes numbers to make a good conference.

We continue to work with the Mid-Atlantic Alliance of Cooperatives (MAAC) to the south of us to help bolster both programs. Their program is more youth orientated but as the world gets smaller there is room for interaction for both organizations.

As far as national issues we will keep close watch on the Capper-Volstead act and other antitrust legislation litigation. It seems nowadays you are only one news story away from being a target on this important subject to agriculture.

In closing we will be doing the planning for the March annual meeting. We urge you to stay in touch and/or if you have ideas or concerns for improving the council then please contact me at [tzuber@rochester.rr.com](mailto:tzuber@rochester.rr.com).

Sincerely *Eric* Eric Zuber

## EVENTS

**Mid-Atlantic Alliance of Cooperatives, MAAC** – Summer Youth Institute on June 27-30 at the Lock Haven University in Lock Haven, PA For more information see <http://www.maacooperatives.org/id40.html>

**National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, NCFC** Washington Conference on June 15-17 at the Hyatt Regency in Washington, DC for more information see [www.ncfc.org](http://www.ncfc.org)

**National Society for Accountants of Cooperatives, NSAC** will hold its Annual Meeting and conference on August 2-4 in Orlando, FL for more information see [www.nsac.coop](http://www.nsac.coop)

