

# Farm Cooperatives and the Social Economy: The Case of Spain\*

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## Abstract

The term “Social Economy” is used to mean a set of organizations that share specific operational features, such as solidarity, mutual assistance, open membership, democratic management and people-based decision-making and distribution of surpluses, which depend on the activity carried out by each person irrespective of the capital invested. Farm cooperatives undoubtedly belong to this group. In recent years, Spanish farm cooperatives have been experiencing substantial business development. This process is a consequence of the latest changes in the regulations governing Spanish cooperatives. Major cooperative groups with high turnovers have developed in this positive environment. Although there are differences between countries, the European cooperative movement is a good example of the prominence that cooperatives have achieved in many sectors. Their traditional goals are changing and one of their current priorities is to meet the requirements of the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) as regards agricultural multi-functionality. Nevertheless, the principles of this concept were already present in their own tenets. This paper aims to show the role of the cooperatives in the new social requirements, taking into account their functioning principles and the new conceptual frame they are involved in.

## The social economy as a theoretical frame

In historical analysis we find, as Desroche (1976) said, that cooperation was initially the “daughter of necessity”, a response to the pressure of needs strongly felt by various sectors of society. We also find a similar explanation in the economic theories of the non-profit organizations: the social economy is born and develops as a response to the failings of the dominant economy, and particularly to those needs that the mar-

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\* The authors would like to thank CIRIEC – Spain, and Mary Georgina **Hardinge** for assistance with the translation.

kets fail to address (Spear *et al.*, 2001:359). However, this is not the only role played by the social economy.

Another dimension of the social economy is a collective identity, that is to say, membership of a group whose members are aware that they share a common destiny (De Tocqueville, 1991).

Nowadays, we can observe that new fields are opening up for social economy initiatives as a consequence of new social emerging demands that can no longer be properly satisfied by the market or by public intervention.

In view of the foregoing, we can define the term “social economy” as those organizations which share certain specific principles or operational features: solidarity, mutual assistance, membership open to all, democratic management and people-based decision-making and distribution of surpluses, which depend on the activity carried out by each person irrespective of the capital invested (Chaves and Monzón, 2000).

Nevertheless, not all countries share the same view of what may or may not be included in the term social economy.

Regarding the Spanish agricultural sector, in the light of the above definition, a first, broad approach enables us to identify what is known as agricultural associationism with the market-oriented social economy. This area is made up of farm cooperatives and Agricultural Transformation Companies (Sociedades Agrarias de Transformación) (Juliá and Server, forthcoming).

In the case of cooperatives, as a result of their business activity, management characteristics and society by-laws, there is no doubt that they constitute the basic, unquestionable element of the social economy in the agricultural sphere.

Regarding the Agricultural Transformation Companies, their place in the Social Economy is not so obvious. On the one hand, they can be defined both as general partnerships and as capitalist companies. On the other hand, although their membership is limited to farmers, farm workers or people with farming-related purposes, their statutes, by law, enable voting in proportion to share capital to be adopted in the case of financial decisions. However, if we consider the way these enterprises operate in practice, we find that the system they use to establish vote regulation is the same that cooperatives use: “one member, one vote”, so from this point of view, they should be included in the sphere of the Social Economy. However, their formal status and legal regulatory system do not allow their inclusion in that group.

Until the 1990s the cooperatives and Agricultural Transformation Companies were the only types of company in Spain that could be recognized as Farm Producer Organizations (Juliá and Server, 1990), as they were the only organizations which were set up on the initiative of farmers and the only ones that fully complied with the terms of the European directives and the Spanish regulations that implemented them.

The fact of including farm cooperatives within the scope of the social economy gives them a greater voice in the European institutions, which undoubtedly favors their development.

The social economy is increasingly important in Europe and all the enterprises it

includes will therefore be in a better position to comply with the new requirements now being enforced. Farm cooperatives make an obvious contribution to the development of rural communities by generating jobs and enabling farmers to remain in their villages. In most cases, farm cooperatives are located in places where no capitalist enterprise would operate, so the cooperative is the only option for these communities to maintain a certain quality of life.

In this way, also it is interesting to say that the cooperatives are following the European model of agriculture even more closely, if that is possible. As has sometimes been said, this contrasts with the models applied in other areas of the world in that it is essentially based on defending a social model of welfare economy or market-oriented social economy that, despite an exclusively productive agriculture, pursues agricultural multi-functionality. That means that farm cooperatives in Europe are completely involved with the rural communities, helping them to get the best reward for their job, but without forgetting their principles.

But there are other fields where cooperatives can play a very important role, as for example rural tourism and organic farming. As will be later observed, in these matters individual initiatives often do not have much impact, so it becomes necessary for farmers to cooperate.

We believe that all these considerations clarify the connection between cooperatives and the social economy. Farm cooperatives are indispensable to the development of rural economies, attending to a part of the market that is not covered by other enterprises. This is precisely one aspect of the definition of the social economy.

In the next sections we will analyze the importance of farm cooperatives, not only in Spain, but also in other European countries, paying special attention to their economic and social contributions.

## **Spanish farm cooperatives**

### ***Background***

The origins of cooperatives in Spain date back to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, some authors consider the medieval guilds to have been antecedents of this movement. Although limited to basic forms of solidarity, they constituted the very first associations.

Be that as it may, the farm cooperative movement in Spain began to develop at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Cooperativism in Spain was initially encouraged by the social doctrine of the Catholic Church as a reaction to the existing social problems.

The Associations Act (1887) and the Farm Unions Act (1906) brought the first great advance in the consolidation of cooperatives all over Spain by creating a legal framework that provided a real basis for their development. The number of farm unions rose from 6 in 1906 to 1,772 six years later (Juliá and Segura, 1987), a fact that gives

an idea of the importance of this regulatory framework.

However, the first specific Cooperatives Act was only passed under the Republic on 9 September 1931. Under this law, the cooperators were assigned the task of cooperating, and the government the task of encouraging it. To achieve this goal it was necessary to provide the cooperatives with a specific legal system.

In addition, this law created a Special Registry of Cooperatives in the Ministry of Labor, where all the cooperatives would be registered and would thereby acquire legal status.

After the civil war, the new Cooperatives Act of the new State was passed in 1942. This new law structured the general framework for cooperatives, subordinating them to the official Trade Union Organization of the National Movement and the State and placing the Trade Union Work of Cooperation (*Obra Sindical de la Cooperación*) in charge of the hierarchic organization of the cooperative movement. This body supervised the cooperatives' activities and was in charge of preserving the "purity" of the cooperative spirit. In order to achieve these objectives it was even empowered to veto the candidates in cooperative management elections (Sanz, 1974).

Despite the Government's desire to control every aspect in the operation of the cooperatives, the majority of the current farm cooperatives were set up during the period this Cooperative Act was effective. This indicates that farmers accepted the situation. In 1969, they already numbered 7,500.

The first business restructuring of cooperatives took place with the 1974 Cooperatives General Act and the 1978 Regulations for Cooperative Societies, as they introduced a more business-oriented concept and began to encourage second-tier cooperative structures.

The 1980s were unquestionably a crucial period for farm cooperatives in Spain. Several Autonomous Communities (regions) passed their own Cooperatives Acts during this decade and the Spanish parliament passed the Cooperatives General Act in 1987. These created a legal framework that is unique in the European Cooperative law, as no other country has the same number of laws in force. During the 1990s these laws have been modified and new ones have been passed (Marí and Juliá, 2001).

A significant development in the General Act is that it explicitly recognizes that this kind of society carries out business activities and contributes to leaving mutualism behind and to overcoming old myths. This implies a great step forward in the pursuit of their objectives. Whereas traditionally, cooperatives were defined as not-for-profit organizations, now, after the 1987 General Act, it has been recognized that they can develop as businesses. As such, they can distribute surpluses although not in proportion to capital invested but rather to the activity carried out by each participant.

During the 1990s, Spanish farm cooperative organizations have undergone major changes which confirm that this decade has been another special period in their development. While the 1987 Cooperatives Act provided the tools that enabled the cooperatives to develop as businesses, the aim of the new legislation is to create a more flexible framework enabling cooperatives to regulate themselves by establish-

ing rules in their statutes to govern their business activities.

Additionally, the 1990s saw the consolidation of second-tier cooperatives and consortia. A large number of these were created, especially in regions with a long tradition of farm cooperatives.

In certain cases, this formula has not sufficed to tackle the current challenges and competitiveness of the market. As a result, a new amalgamation process is taking place in order to overcome the excessive number of small cooperatives in many districts.

If the previous decade was characterized by the evident growth of farm cooperatives, in the last few years we witness a tendency towards mergers. The main goals are to achieve higher turnover and market power.

**Table 1: Evolution of the number of cooperatives, members and turnover between 1997 and 2000 in Spain**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	Variation 97/00
No. of cooperatives	4,283	3,930	3,915	3,902	-9.8%
No. of members	1,093,000	1,120,000	1,098,089	983,000	-11.2%
Turnover <sup>1</sup>	7,841	8,985	10,219	10,818	+27.5%

<sup>1</sup> Millions of euros.

Source: *Juliá and Meliá, 2001*.

### *The farm cooperative movement in Spain: a promising reality*

Nowadays, Spanish farm cooperatives play a key role, not only in social aspects but also in the economic sphere. As we have mentioned before, they have experienced significant business development. In fact, over a million farmers belong to one of the 4,000 existing cooperatives. This means that most farm owners are members of a cooperative. As a result, about 30 percent of the Final Agricultural Output is marketed through these organizations. Collectively, over the past few years their trading volume has grown to 10,818 million euros (Juliá and Meliá, 2000).

As in other European countries, this evolution has taken place in the context of a progressive reduction in the number of cooperatives through a continuous process of consolidation and integration. As a result, their greater size makes their presence in the markets more perceptible and also improves their competitiveness.

The most recent figures (Table 2) show this trend and the presence of cooperatives in the various Autonomous Communities, which is obviously related to the agricultural nature of each region. In the regions with greater cooperative activity, the sectors with a significant presence of cooperatives are those with a higher share of the Final Agricultural Output.

**Table 2: Number of cooperatives, members and trading volume in Spain**

	No. of cooperatives			No. of members			Turnover <sup>1</sup>		
	1999	2000	%	1999	2000	%	1999	2000	%
Andalusia	792	783	20.07	235,346	238,750	24.28	413,885	405,630	22.47
Aragon	225	205	5.25	105,346	52,797	5.37	77,638	93,215	5.16
Asturias	72	75	1.92	20,479	20,246	2.06	103,767	67,312	3.73
Balearic Islands	32	39	1.00	6,172	5,849	0.59	9,548	7,043	0.39
Canary Islands	55	38	0.97	12,289	8,150	0.83	19,404	15,700	0.87
Cantabria	20	26	0.67	7,740	7,735	0.79	7,448	9,500	0.53
Castile-La Mancha	423	449	11.51	131,678	125,273	12.74	98,519	152,390	8.44
Castile-Leon	363	348	8.92	132,453	72,500	7.37	122,024	202,179	11.20
Catalonia	441	435	11.15	80,214	55,620	5.66	274,758	189,620	10.50
Extremadura	362	324	8.30	49,180	49,180	5.00	67,007	75,100	4.16
Galicia	195	198	5.07	41,253	48,500	4.93	70,497	128,400	7.11
La Rioja	65	42	1.08	8,190	12,080	1.23	6,988	23,551	1.30
Madrid	39	35	0.90	14,630	8,650	0.88	11,514	11,200	0.62
Murcia	88	85	2.18	22,790	22,640	2.30	59,629	78,520	4.35
Navarra	137	179	4.59	24,362	24,720	2.51	87,769	89,254	4.94
Basque Country	70	79	2.02	14,425	13,190	1.34	28,221	31,125	1.72
Valencian C.	536	562	14.40	191,542	217,330	22.10	241,623	225,710	12.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,915</b>	<b>3,902</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,098,089</b>	<b>983,210</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,700,238</b>	<b>1,805,449</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> millions of pesetas.

Source: *Confederación de Cooperativas Agrarias de España, 2002.*

The fruit and vegetable sector in the Valencia Region is a good example, as are the production of fruit and vegetables, stock-keeping and other products in Andalusia or Catalonia.

In short, the farm cooperative movement is quite well represented in the Spanish agro-food sector. In addition, Spanish farm cooperatives show the same strengths and weaknesses as other Spanish agro-business companies.

In terms of their average size (number of members and average turnover), Spanish farm cooperatives can be considered medium and small sized enterprises. They are a widespread feature of the Spanish farming sector, are generally composed of farmers who own small or medium-sized farms and in some sub-sectors are in considerable need of technological modernization. However, they have consolidated a well-deserved prestige and in some cases have become market leaders due to the quality of their products and their ability to satisfy the demands of the large food retailing groups. This is the case of citrus fruits and, to a lesser extent, wine and oil.

Their volume of trade has increased significantly during the last few years. According to data provided by the Spanish Confederation of Farm Cooperatives, in 1986 the 4,323 cooperatives had a total of 1,155,000 members and sales of slightly over 3,000 million euros. The number of cooperatives has since fallen to 3,915, with

1,098,000 members, but the volume of trade has increased considerably, to 10,220 million euros. Despite this concentration and growth, the size of Spanish farm cooperatives is not comparable to that of farm cooperatives in some countries with a longer cooperative tradition (*e.g.*, Denmark, the Netherlands, France).

Fruit and vegetables make the biggest sector in terms of volume of trade and marketing structure, although supplies are their biggest business area. Nevertheless, it should be noted that while every marketing cooperative has a supply section, marketing of produce to others is their defining feature.

**Table 3: Sector classification in Spain (1999)**

Sector	Cooperatives	Members	Turnover <sup>1</sup>
Stock-keeping	602	80,000	326,954
Herbaceous crops	705	120,000	120,274
Industrial crops	95	18,500	72,174
Wine and viticulture	753	160,000	107,043
Fruit and vegetables	989	165,000	377,659
Olive oil	950	295,000	216,000
Supplies	1,890	458,000	408,930

<sup>1</sup> millions of pesetas.

Source: *Confederación de Cooperativas Agrarias de España*, 1999.

In terms of market share, besides rice and tobacco, the oil and wine sectors also achieve a higher market share than that of fruit and vegetables. However, the size and volume of trade of the first are lower than those of the latter, and their share would fall considerably if only high quality wine and oil were taken into account.

A significant increase in the market share achieved by some products should also be highlighted, such as cereals and milk, which have more than trebled their figures over the last 15 years (Table 4).

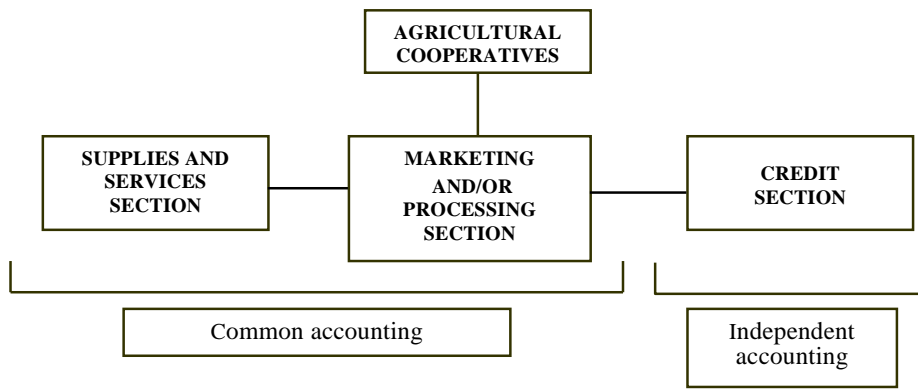
**Table 4: Cooperatives' sales in Spain, by produce (%)**

	Fruit	Vegetables	Cereals	Milk
1986	26	12	10	10
1992	32	15	17	16
1996	45	15	20	27
1999	45 (citrus fruits) 35 (other fruits)	15	35	45 (25 processed)

Source: *Juliá and Meliá*, 2000.

As regards the way they are managed, the multi-sector cooperative model is widespread among Spanish farm cooperative societies. This contrasts with the system used in other European countries. The cooperatives are divided into different sections or business departments that manage their own supplies, processing and marketing. In most cases the cooperatives also have a specific section that provides farming-related supplies and services to cooperative members. In some Autonomous Regions the cooperatives also have a credit section which uses the money deposited in the members' savings accounts to provide funding to the members and to the cooperative itself. Although the Bank of Spain does not consider these credit sections to be proper financial institutions, some regions, such as Extremadura, the Valencian Community, Catalonia or Andalusia, have passed regional legislation to regulate their financial activities (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Most frequent arrangement in farm cooperatives in Valencia (Spain)**



Source: Caballer, Juliá and Segura, 1987.

The cooperatives have recognized that one of their weaknesses, perhaps the greatest, has been their limited size. In order to improve this situation, several business association formulas have been developed. For instance, the number of second-tier structures increased considerably in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2000 the 186 second-tier cooperatives had a total turnover of 4,200 million euros and achieved over 40 percent of the sales value of the entire Spanish farming sector. Most farm cooperatives belong to an organization of this type. These organizations may be considered a key element in the Spanish farm cooperative movement (Montero, 1999).

Some of these second-tier organizations are the driving force behind a number of mergers and integration processes that were initiated in different farming sub-sectors at the end of the 1990s. They have also been instrumental in setting up cooperative



company groups led by a second-tier cooperative in partnership with some first-tier cooperatives, other corporate partners and, on occasion, with government. These groups have set up a number of trading companies that have enabled them to increase their presence on the markets and, in some sectors, helped to position them among the leaders. This is the case of ANECOOP in the fruit and vegetables sector, AGROPECUARIA de NAVARRA in cereals and other products and ACOR in the sugar sector, all of which achieve turnovers in the 200 to 500 million euro range.

Mergers (Table 5) encounter greater difficulties among cooperative societies than among capitalist companies. One of the reasons is the lack of a stock exchange quotation to act as a market reference and enable the value of a company's shares to be established when a merger takes place. Another is that the process is much more complex because the cooperatives' statutes and by-laws do not usually make proper provision for this eventuality. Another handicap that must be taken into account is that their membership is not very used to this kind of process.

**Table 5: Integration and mergers of farm cooperatives in Spain in 2000**

Autonomous Communities	Number of integrations	Integration formula
Andalusia	3	2 second-tier cooperatives 1 Limited liability company formed by cooperatives
Aragon	3	3 mergers
Asturias	0	—
Balearic Islands	0	—
Canary Islands	1	1 merger
Castile-La Mancha	3	3 mergers
Castile and Leon	1	1 second-tier cooperative
Catalonia	7	7 mergers
Euskadi (Basque C.)	0	—
Extremadura	2	2 higher-tier cooperatives
Galicia	1	1 merger
La Rioja	2	1 second-tier cooperative 1 merger
Murcia	3	3 mergers
Navarra	1	1 second-tier cooperative
Valencia	8	8 mergers

Source: *Marí and Juliá, 2001.*

Despite all this, the sector has a long-standing tradition of representation, well-structured into Unions, central cooperative organizations, and a high percentage of membership of second-tier structures, which have played a key role in the development of the consolidation process. These higher-level organizations have fostered

awareness of the need for such a process and enthusiastically encouraged it. Although the current situation is still far from that of other European countries, they deserve recognition for the success of their work in this direction, which in recent years has given rise to a significant number of mergers throughout the country.

Back to 1992, at the First Congress of Spanish Agricultural Economists, professor Tamames underlined the need to develop a suitable model of agriculture that would encompass the entire agro-food sector in order to achieve added value and would apply association formulas to the integration of marketing, processing and intermediation. This clearly points to the need for agro-industrial development in the Spanish cooperative sector.

For this reason, the major cooperative groups have become the true catalysts of several new agro-industrial companies that operate in sectors such as canned fruits and vegetables, juices, meat products and prepared foods. Indirectly, this implies that farmers have a significant involvement in the Spanish agro-food sector through their cooperatives' shareholdings in these companies. Some good examples are AGRICONSA, INDULLEIDA, CEVENASA, INTERMALTA and COPROLIVA, all of which are linked to the above mentioned cooperative groups (Juliá and Server, forthcoming).

### **The example of European cooperatives**

Farm cooperatives carry considerable weight in the European agricultural sector as they represent more than 60 percent of the supply of farm products. For this reason they are considered an essential factor in any adjustment of the PAC, as COGECA, the main organization that represents these cooperatives, has frequently pointed out.

However, while they share common characteristics, there are also important differences between the European farm cooperatives. From the management and legal point of view, for instance, the member states have adopted different models.

In terms of regulation, we find three models (Juliá and Server, 1999):

- Countries that have an extensive legal framework of specific laws for cooperative societies. This is the case of Germany, France, Spain, Greece, Finland, Italy, Austria, Luxemburg, Portugal, and Sweden. Additionally, France and Greece even have special laws for farm cooperatives;
- A second model is that adopted by countries such as The Netherlands and Belgium, whose cooperatives are also governed by special regulations but these are placed within the framework of other general regulations;
- A third group is formed by countries that have no specific regulations for cooperative societies, which are governed by ordinary company law. This is the case of the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland.

In relation to models of organization, we also find a variety of situations. Some countries have extensive, complex organs of representation, ranging from territorial organizations (local federations) to sector organizations (fruit and vegetable producers'

federations, for instance), which in some cases coexist with cross-sector organizations. The best representative of this model is France. This country is characterized by having very solid cooperatives that also have the support of well-organized representative structures. This territorial model has prevailed in countries where the regions have considerable political power: Spain, Germany or Belgium.

In other countries such as The Netherlands and Ireland the representative institutions are organized by particular sectors. Finally, affinity or similarity of ideology or beliefs has created other forms of organization, as in the case of Italy and Belgium.

As regards economic development, here too there are major differences. The importance of farm cooperatives in particular sectors in each country depends on their economic development and in general, greater economic development is associated with greater average size.

As an example, the considerable presence and influence of French cooperatives in sectors such as cereals and milk products can be explained by their considerable development in business terms. French cooperative organizations have undergone a major process of association and integration, forming groups that have steadily improved their position in the agro-food chain and have become leaders in some sub-sectors. Cases such as SODIAL (the top French cooperative group), SOCOPA, UNCAA or CANA are very good examples.

Similarly, The Netherlands has undergone an intensive concentration process and consolidated a strong cooperative sector that excels in sectors such as milk products, flowers, fruit and vegetables. The same situation is repeated in Denmark, especially in pork meat, where the cooperative sector is absolutely predominant and just 4 cooperative organizations (slaughterhouses) control over 95 percent of the market.

Therefore, although farm cooperatives do not show the same level of development in all European countries, they share two main features: the general pattern of growth in recent years and the fact that in many sub-sectors, such as milk products, fruit and vegetables, cereals and some meats, they have become the strongest players on the market.

The explanation for the growth and current market power of European cooperatives lies in their evolution as businesses. The key to this has been their progressive consolidation, whether through the creation of cooperative groups, through second-tier cooperatives, through mergers or by establishing business structures based on working together with other types of business organizations. All this has undoubtedly made them much more competitive (Table 6).

Nevertheless, perhaps the most important factor has been the recognition of cooperatives as the business structure that best fits the demands of farm policy. The core objective of this policy is to make farmers prime agents in their own future. This has given them a greater institutional role in many aspects of policy implementation.

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## **The new challenges facing farm cooperatives: conclusion**

At the beginning of this paper we have defined “social economy” as consisting of those organizations that share certain specific principles or operational features.

In the agricultural sphere, there is no doubt that farm cooperatives constitute the basic element of the social economy. They are considered like all organizations included in the social economy and are becoming increasingly important in Europe due to their social contribution to community development.

In the case of Spain, farm cooperatives have been facing a number of challenges in the near past. Last Cooperative Acts have enabled cooperatives to develop as businesses, due to a more flexible framework in which the cooperatives can regulate themselves by establishing rules governing their business activities. All of these have contributed to the development of the cooperatives, but some problems still remain.

The first problem is size. In most European countries cooperatives are big enterprises with considerable market power and sufficient financial resources to undertake expensive research projects and major investments. The situation we find in Spain is very different: most cooperatives are medium-size organizations in terms of both membership and sales.

Although the 1980s were a key period for the development of second-tier cooperatives, it soon became evident that the results were not sufficient and new formulas were needed. Consequently, during the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century we have witnessed a number of mergers that have increased the business size of the cooperatives in question. In order to improve their position in the agro-food supply chain, the second-tier cooperatives are encouraging these mergers.

In this sense, the European example is very clear. The key to their growth and current market power has been their progressive consolidation, whether through the creation of cooperative groups, second-tier cooperatives, mergers or by establishing business structures based on working together with other types of business organizations. All this has undoubtedly made them more competitive.

Another challenge that farm cooperatives have to tackle in the near future is the new Common Agricultural Policy requirements in relation to what is known as agricultural multi-functionality. This must be considered from two points of view: developing other activities related to farming proper, and furthering environmental conservation or stewardship.

In relation to the first point, the experience of other European countries may be very useful. The establishment of a network of rural households for what is known as rural tourism, green tourism or agro-tourism, represents a supplementary source of income for farmers. Individual initiatives often do not have much impact. For this reason farmers must cooperate, build networks, complement the existing services and satisfy the customer’s expectations. The development of these activities in the rural context also demands close cooperation among farmers in the accommodation and catering sphere in order to guarantee quality service. Regarding the second point,

production methods that respect the environment already exist, such as integrated production and organic farming. However, the fact that major retailers do not show any real interest in this type of production means that producers do not apply them. In this situation, cooperatives can and should play an essential role in the development of these systems of production. They should market them through the right channels and in a way that makes customers aware of the special features of the product. Some cooperatives have already started to work in this field.

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**Table 6: Statistics on cooperatives in the European Union**

	Number of cooperatives, number of members and volume of business						Market share of cooperatives in different sectors 1997			
	Number of cooperatives	Number of members	Volume of business <sup>1</sup>	Volume of business / cooperative <sup>2</sup>	Volume of business / member <sup>3</sup>	Milk	Fruit and Veggies.	Beef and veal	Pork	Cereals / Seeds
Belgium (91)	1,265	397,915	6,214	4.91	15.62	53	75	0	20	30
Denmark (91)	214	113,000	12,100	56.54	107.08	94	70-80	66	91	60
Germany (96)	3,950	3,280,000	39,300	9.95	11.98	52	40	28	27	45-50
Greece (96)	6,919	782,000	850	0.12	1.09	20 <sup>5</sup>	57 <sup>5</sup>	25	3	49
Spain (96)	4,350	950,000	6,300	1.45	6.63	30	45	9	8	22
France (96)	3,618	720,000	52,600	14.54	73.06	47	40	30	85	68
Ireland (95)	128	186,000	9,590	74.92	51.56	99.5 <sup>6</sup>	14.3 <sup>6</sup>	15-20 <sup>6</sup>	66 <sup>6</sup>	57 <sup>6</sup>
Italy (95)	8,850	1,124,900	16,450	1.86	14.62	40 <sup>4</sup>	43 <sup>4</sup>	12 <sup>4</sup>	13 <sup>4</sup>	20 <sup>4</sup>
Luxemburg (95)	25	113,200	120	4.80	–	81 <sup>6</sup>	–	38 <sup>6</sup>	37 <sup>6</sup>	79 <sup>6</sup>
Holland (96)	251	273,000	22,400	89.24	82.05	83 <sup>6</sup>	76	16 <sup>6</sup>	34 <sup>6</sup>	65 <sup>6</sup>
Austria (96)	1,757	2,182,00	N,D,	–	–	90 <sup>5</sup>	18 <sup>5</sup>	5	15	60 <sup>5</sup>
Portugal (96)	909	800,000	1,270	1.40	1.59	–	–	–	–	–
Finland (95)	403	1,228,500	7,590	18.83	6.18	97	–	65	68	46
Sweden (95)	50	300,000	8,240	164.80	27.47	100	20 <sup>6</sup>	72.9	78	75 <sup>6</sup>
UK (95)	506	271,000	7,660	15.14	28.27	67 <sup>6</sup>	67 <sup>6</sup>	–	28 <sup>6</sup>	24 <sup>6</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33,195</b>	<b>10,539,515</b>	<b>190,684</b>	<b>5.744</b>	<b>18.09</b>	–	–	–	–	–

<sup>1</sup> Millions of ecus

<sup>2</sup> Millions of ecus / cooperative

<sup>3</sup> '000 ecus / member

<sup>4</sup> 1994

<sup>5</sup> 1995

<sup>6</sup> 1996

Source: *COGECA. 1997 and European Commission, 1999.*