



Contact: Andrea Cumpston
202.383.5447
acumpston@ncba.coop

Laura Telander Graf
651.698.4006
ltgcommunications@comcast.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Survey Finds Americans Rate Consumer Cooperatives More Highly Than For-Profit Businesses on Measures of Quality and Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 2, 2012) – Nearly one-third of Americans (29 percent) say they belong to a consumer cooperative and 72 percent of Americans think cooperatives such as credit unions and rural electric co-ops are “helpful to consumers” with only 11 percent saying they are “unhelpful,” according to a new national survey. The survey was developed by the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) and Consumer Federation of America (CFA), and was administered to a representative sample of 1,008 adult Americans by Opinion Research Corp International (ORC) on the weekend of April 19, 2012.

“This survey illustrates that the 29,000 cooperatives in this country offer a much-needed alternative that consumers appreciate,” said Liz Bailey, interim president and chief executive officer of the NCBA. “At a time when the entire business community is focused on demonstrating shared value and social responsibility, it’s gratifying to know that Americans continue to place their trust in member-owned, democratically governed cooperative business enterprises.”

Further, survey respondents rated consumer cooperatives more highly than for-profit businesses on measures of quality and service. Cooperatives outranked for-profits in several areas:

Quality	Co-op	For-profit
Run their business in trustworthy manner	76%	61%
Have the best interests of customer in mind	74%	52%
Are committed to providing the highest quality of service to their customers	77%	64%
Provide products that are of high value	75%	70%
Can be counted on to meet their customer’s needs	79%	67%
Offer fair, competitive prices	77%	70%

“The Consumer Federation of America has long believed that cooperatives offer pro-consumer services and enhance pro-consumer competition in the marketplace,” said Stephen Brobeck, executive director of CFA. “It is gratifying to learn from this survey that consumers agree with us.”

Consumer cooperatives are owned and democratically controlled by their members – the people who use the co-op’s services – and include credit unions, childcare cooperatives, electric and telecommunications cooperatives, food co-ops, health care co-ops, housing cooperatives and more. Cooperatives return dividends to their members—not to outside investors, as in for-profit businesses.

About National Cooperative Business Association (www.ncba.coop)

National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) is the national association for cooperative businesses providing cross-sector education, support and advocacy to help start and grow co-ops across a variety of sectors, including agriculture, childcare, energy, financial service and credit unions, food distribution, healthcare, housing, retail and telecommunications. For nearly 100 years, our mission has been to develop, advance and protect cooperative businesses demonstrating that cooperatives are a better business model for advancing economic and social impact. For 50 years, we have supported cooperative development globally through our CLUSA International Program.

About the International Year of Cooperatives (www.usa2012.coop)

2012 was named the International Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations. A yearlong celebration of the co-op business model and its positive economic impact across the globe, reminding us that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility.

About Consumer Federation of America (www.consumerfed.org)

The Consumer Federation of America (CFA) is a non-profit association of some 280 national, state, and local pro-consumer organizations founded in 1968 to promote the consumer interest through research, education and advocacy.

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