Wisconsin Grass-fed Beef Coop

Annual Meeting

1/11/2014

Discussion notes

Presentation: Cecil Wright, Organic Maple Coop and Organic Valley

Cecil shared information on how the coop he formed—Maple Valley Cooperative and the coop he works for—Organic Valley, function. The group asked questions about how these coops work, then generated the following ideas for the Beef Coop to consider.

Discussion ideas:

* To address lack of participation among many members, pay dividends only to loyal member-suppliers.
* Create a feed pool to help members who may be short of hay.
* Coop invest in a portable scale that members can rent or borrow to keep track of weight gains, etc.
* Selectively solicit new members who can fill Coop’s gaps, e.g. larger producers, producers who can do finishing for the coop, producers who are fall calvers.
* Explore evolving into a hybrid coop, so we can solicit partners (like processors) as members or solicit investor members.
* Look into tapping into the North Country Cooperative Development Fund or other coop funding sources to get $$ for growth.
* Improve communication between staff and members, especially with regard to cattle supply.
* Revisit aging issues. Should the Coop go back to dry aging?
* Should the Coop think about investing in cold storage, so that it can store inventory and provide ground beef for members to sell individually.