

# Agricultural Cooperative Director Training

Crystal Valley Cooperative | Mankato, MN | January 7-8, 2025

## Tuesday, January 7

5:00 p.m. Social sponsored by CoBank

6:00 p.m. Introductions and Supper

7:00 p.m. **From Argentina to Minnesota: Cooperative Learnings and Strategic Insights**  
A group of cooperative directors will discuss their study tour conducted in conjunction with the strategic planning retreat and compare / contrast Argentina cooperatives with Minnesota cooperatives. Dr. Boland will facilitate the discussion with some pictures.

## Wednesday, January 8

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Introductions

9:00 a.m. **Multidimensional Governance & Developing your Co-op Leadership Toolbox**  
Dr. John Park, Roy B. Davis Professor of Agricultural Cooperation, Texas A&M University

Co-op leadership is multi-dimensional. In this interactive session, Dr. John Park will help co-op directors reframe their thinking about effective co-op governance to include the self, the board, and the organization. Directors will complete a self-assessment to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, leaving the session with goals for improving their co-op leadership skills.

9:45 a.m. Networking Break

10:15 a.m. **Learning from Experience: Implementing and Reflecting on Cooperative Governance Improvements**  
Dr. John Park, Roy B. Davis Professor of Agricultural Cooperation, Texas A&M University  
CEO and Director presenters TBD

Building on the foundational insights gained in the previous session on cooperative governance, this follow-up session provides a unique opportunity to review the results of implemented assessments and learn from peer directors. Dr. John Park

will facilitate an interactive discussion where directors from Texas and New Mexico will share their experiences, successes, and challenges in applying their self-assessment findings within their cooperatives.

11:15 a.m. **Agricultural Outlook for Minnesota in 2025**  
Robert Craven, Extension Economist, University of Minnesota

This session is designed specifically for cooperative producers who are keen to understand the trends, challenges, and opportunities that lie ahead in the agricultural sector. Craven will address market trends, policy developments, and the overall economic conditions affecting agriculture in Minnesota.

12:00 Lunch

1:00 **What do you know and don't know as a director?**  
Dr. Michael Boland, Professor, University of Minnesota

Mike will provide selected questions similar to those used on the National Association of Corporate Directors director certification exam. Mike passed the exam in 2022. Each director will complete the questions and they will be discussed with the group. Questions from the governance section with a heavy emphasis on the CEO-board relationship (recruitment, evaluation, compensation, etc.) will comprise most of the 'exam.' In addition, information from a recent certificate program on AI and cybersecurity and what corporate directors should know will be discussed.

2:15 p.m. Networking Break

2:45 p.m. **Insights from the Top: Navigating Major Changes in Cooperatives**  
Facilitators: Brian Thilges, Member Relations Ag, Land O'Lakes, Inc.  
Courtney Berner, Executive Director, UW Center for Cooperatives  
Jim Lange, Board Chair, ALCIVIA  
Jim Dell, CEO and President, ALCIVIA  
Tracy Studer, Board Chair, Gold Eagle Cooperative  
Chris Boshart, CEO, Gold Eagle Cooperative

Join us for a compelling panel discussion featuring cooperative board chairs and CEOs who have recently led their organizations through significant changes, such as leadership transitions, mergers, or strategic restructures. This session offers an exclusive opportunity to hear directly from experienced leaders about their challenges and successes in managing these pivotal moments.

4:00 p.m. Adjourn