

NCGA and Wedge Co-op Honored with dotCoop Awards

BY DAVE GUTKNECHT

On November 18, dotCoop, the sponsor of the .coop domain name, announced its first Global Awards for Cooperative Excellence.

The winners

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd., a fertilizer production and distribution cooperative based in India.

In this category—cooperatives with over \$50 million in revenue or assets—honorable mentions were: Cabot Creamery Cooperative of the U.S. and Credit Cooperatif of France.

National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA), a U.S. cooperative of over 110 retail food co-ops. In this category—cooperatives with \$1–\$50 million in revenue or assets—honorable mention was given to **Wedge Community Co-op** of the U.S.

Pachamama Coffee Cooperative, a U.S.-based cooperative owned by 150,000 coffee farmers worldwide. In this category—cooperatives with under \$1 million in revenue or assets—honorable mention was given to CAC Santa Maria Magdalena of Peru and FESAN of Chile.

Additionally, judges gave special recognition to the **Co-operative Press Limited** in the U.K., the world's oldest cooperative newspaper.

The dotCoop Global Awards are given to cooperatives that demonstrate a strong commitment to the cooperative business model, with mission and practices clearly demonstrating this commitment, especially on their websites. The awards, chosen from over 50 applications from

around the globe, were presented by dotCoop Board Chair Louie Doering at the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

NCGA wins

Among the activities NCGA conducted over the past year that factored into its recognition:

- Supporting the development and implementation of a www.go.coop website to promote co-ops and to demonstrate the important role that co-ops in all sectors play in everyday lives.

- Sponsoring an online video contest, My Co-op Rocks, for which co-op staff, members and shoppers were invited to create and enter a two-minute video that reflects the reasons they love their co-op, at www.mycooprocks.coop.

- Hosting a 2009 “Co-ops Rock!” benefit concert to raise funds for the Cooperative Disaster Relief Fund, which provides financial relief for farmers impacted by weather events and natural disasters.

- Serving as founding member and major financial sponsor for The Alliance for Employee Benefit Cooperatives, a coalition of cooperative organizations committed to advancing health care and benefits coverage for American workers and families.

- Establishing a Developmental Cooperative,



a subsidiary co-op aimed at helping its member co-ops obtain capital and strategic support for expansion and/or new store projects.



The Wedge gets honorable mention

The Wedge Co-op, in receiving honorable mention, was cited for programs including:

- Developing IS4C open-source software for retail co-ops.

- Operating Co-op Partners Warehouse, a regional distributor.

- Establishing WedgeShare, a philanthropic fund.

- Purchasing an organic farm, Gardens of Eagan.

- Emphasizing local food, products and businesses.

- Partnering with Spire Federal Credit Union to offer a low-interest Visa card.

- Helping initiate the Sow the Seeds fund to assist sustainable farmers.

- Launching a new nonprofit, the Organic Field School.

- Continuing support of school children's lessons through Midwest Food Connection.

- Returning over \$5 million cash in patronage refunds over the past 10 years. ■



Call for Proposals



Blossoming Prairie Foundation is now accepting proposals for its 2010 funding cycle.

The Foundation's mission is to promote innovative ideas, practices and procedures in the area of organic and natural foods in order to further the health of the people, the health of the environment and cooperative ideals.

The Blossoming Prairie Foundation makes grants to nonprofit, charitable organizations that conduct any of the following activities:

- Developmental, research and educational efforts in the organic industry and the cooperative community
- The development of organic and natural products.
- Cooperative development in the natural products industry.

Grants are not made to individuals. To be considered for a grant, your organization can follow the guidelines on the “Grants” page of the Blossoming Prairie web site at: www.blossomingprairie.org. Deadline for proposals is 5:00pm, Feb. 1, 2010.

For more information:
Please call Lynn Olson, Grant Administrator at (609)556-3055 or e-mail at bpinfo@yahoo.com



Cooperative Grocer

FOR RETAILERS AND COOPERATORS

IN FUTURE ISSUES...

- Building local food sales
- Understanding new consumer studies
- Creating community outreach events
- Controlling shrink in produce
- Writing clean HABA standards
- Improving your customer service
- Capitalizing with patronage dividends