

FARMER CO-OPS PROVIDING FOR

TENNESSEE

Farmer cooperatives in Tennessee and across the country give individual farmers the opportunity to participate more fully in the agricultural and food system, from farm to retail. Through cooperatives, farmers are able to own and lead businesses that help strengthen their competitiveness in domestic and international markets.

Nationwide, farmer cooperatives support more than 200,000 jobs, with a total payroll exceeding \$12 billion, and contribute significantly to the economic well-being of rural America. The information below highlights the impact of farmer cooperatives in Tennessee.



102

Farmer Co-ops in State

61,625

Farmer-Members in State

2,600

Jobs in State

\$139,406,125

Wages in State

USDA-RD Agriculture Cooperative Statistics 2024 & 2025

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF FARMER COOPERATIVES

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GROWING MORE THAN CROPS: A TENNESSEE FARMER'S CONSERVATION LEGACY

A lifelong member of Hardin Farmers Cooperative, now part of First Farmers Cooperative, Alex has spent nearly two decades building Growing Acres Farm in Hardin County around no-till practices, cover crops, and careful crop rotation. That commitment earned him the 2026 National Conservation Legacy Award from the American Soybean Association, one of agriculture's highest conservation honors.

But Alex's impact goes beyond his own fields. In 2013, he and neighboring farmers founded Tennessee Valley Farmers to tackle chronic flooding along the Tennessee River, eventually building a relationship with TVA that now helps protect thousands of acres before major storms arrive. It is the cooperative spirit in action: farmers solving together what none could solve alone.

"It doesn't matter how many acres you have," Alex says. "The important thing is how well you manage those acres."



For Tennessee agriculture, Alex Forsbach is exactly the kind of farmer cooperatives are built to support, and exactly the kind of farmer who makes cooperatives worth belonging to.

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