

Nuttiporn Phetphong 2013: Business Environment and the Perception of Agricultural Cooperative Managers. Master of Arts (Cooperative Economics), Major Field: Cooperative Economics, Department of Cooperative. Thesis Advisor: Associate Professor Suwanna Thuvachote, M.Sc. 103 pages.

Cooperative managers are key to the success of such organizations. They use their skills, knowledge and ability to manage their operations, as well as to deal with the business environment that agricultural cooperatives operate in. This research aims to study and analyze the factors that influence the perception and understanding of the business environment, which is held by managers of agricultural cooperatives. Questionnaires were sent by mail to a total of 421 managers of all a large agricultural cooperatives (those with more than 1,000 members). We have received responses from 258 managers, which represents 61.28 percent of the cooperative managers who were surveyed.

The study showed that more than 80 percent of the managers, who responded to the questionnaire, attach great or extreme importance to the cooperative principles, in almost every respect. The most of managers do not understand the roles and responsibilities between manager and the board of directors especially, setting the long policy of the business and approving purchase of major capital asset. 78.3 and 51.5 percent of these managers respectively, had a good to excellent understanding of cooperative financial statements and also of cooperative financial analysis. In terms of the external business environment, most of the managers were able track and understand almost all of the relevant issues. However, with regards to the trade in commodities in the futures markets, only a medium level of understanding was demonstrated in many cases. The analysis found that the two factors affecting understanding of the overall business environment were their level of education was a bachelor's degree or higher and increasing of self assessment score in management issue of agricultural manager will affect their understanding of the overall business environment better, with 99 percent confidence level.

---

Student's signature

Thesis Advisor's signature