

# **RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS' VIEWS OF TOP- DOWN ORGANIZED COOPERATIVES**

by  
**Svetlana Golovina**  
**Kurgan State Agricultural Academy, Russia**  
and  
**Jerker Nilsson**  
**Swedish University of Agricultural Science, Uppsala, Sweden**

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## **Abstract**

In Russia many agricultural supply and marketing cooperatives have been established by governmental authorities, and agricultural producers may join them freely. Although this practice is contrary to cooperative experiences historically and internationally it may have a rationale; the development of cooperatives, which are highly needed in Russian agriculture, might be faster. This reasoning presupposes, however, that the members find their membership valuable so that they later get positive views of cooperatives. This study investigates whether this process takes place. The study compares data from two surveys among members of cooperatives within the Kurgan region. The surveys were conducted in early 2008 when the cooperatives were just established and in late 2008 when some of the cooperatives were about to be dissolved. The findings show that the respondents in the latter survey rank lower in terms of attitudes, willingness to trade, willingness to govern, willingness to invest, and trust.

**Key words:** Russia, transition agriculture, cooperatives, socio-psychology