

39th ICOS National Conference
David Christensen – Kingston Hill Farm Ltd

Reflections on Farmer Cooperation in the UK



Outline of Presentation

- Introduction to me
- Our farming business
- UK Dairy Coops and our Retail Sector
- Why are cooperatives so important
- Reflections on getting involved
- Being an effective representative
- Questions and discussion

Distant relatives....



Not much progress.....



Arnold Christensen



The Christensen family today



Kingston Hill Farm



Farming alongside the river Thames



The Dairy Herd



60 point rotary parlour



Heifer replacements



The beef enterprise



UK Retail Grocery Retail Sector

1. Top Tier :	Marks and Spencer	£5.2 bn
	Waitrose	£6.1 bn
2. Big Four :	Tesco	£63.5 bn
	Asda	£23 bn
	Sainsburys	£26.1 bn
	Morrisons	£17.6 bn
3. Discounters	Aldi	£6.9 bn
	Lidl	£4 bn

Recent History of Cooperation in the UK Dairy Sector

- Milk Marketing Board
- Milk Marque
- Competition authorities
- First Milk, Dairy Farmers of Britain, Milk Link
- Milk Link and Arla merger
- AFMP entry

Arla and Milk Link Merger

- Idea came from the Board's annual strategy review
- Recognised our weaknesses and threats
- A Board who were determined to act
- Reviewed all options
- Absolute determination that we would remain a cooperative
- Proceeded to work to a merger with Arla

Why are Cooperatives so important?

- Financial benefit
- Extension of my business
- Tool to make good use of my time
- Keep the market straight
- Want to be part of the supply chain
- Fundamental if we are to benefit from the growth in demand for food

What should the Board focus on?

- Strategy
- Performance
- Risk
- Communication
- People

Reflections on getting involved

- Don't try to run the business
- Employ the very best people
- But will always need the interface
- The role of non farming non executives directors
- The importance of training and development from as early a time as is sensible
- Sensible remuneration relative to the role

Being an effective representative

- Be respected as a farmer and person
- Read and take time to understand the sector
- Be aware of the bigger picture
- Networking
- Empathy – a key attribute
- Avoid arrogance
- Preparation

Key phrases

- Thank you
- I don't know
- I'm sorry
- I got that wrong

Thank you for your attention

