

COOPERATIVE BUYING

Discussion about joint purchasing of equipment and machinery has been sparked in a number of quarters of late. Some of those in the RIA work groups have talked of shared buying as another avenue of cooperative action. The idea is being encouraged by the Potsdam Food Co-op, which is considering different cooperative ventures it might foster or pursue—firewood, fuel oil, auto repair, credit union, insurance, etc.

Some of the items that have been mentioned are a cement mixer, compost shredder, brush hog, bulldozer. There are probably other possibilities also--any kind of machinery, tool, equipment that is prohibitively expensive for a single family to purchase and whose use is intermittent and flexible.

The details of how such a purchase might work would be developed by those who would be involved in the transaction. The Food Co-op or the RIA would serve only as the catalyst to publicize the concept and to bring together any interested parties. How those folks would settle the problems of maintenance, repair, schedule of use, etc. would be up to them.

One such cooperative purchase has already been consummated. Some of the members of one of the work groups went in together on a cement mixer. The best new one they looked at cost \$370. They found a good used one for \$150 and bought that. The motor on it worked, but it needed a new belt. Thus the total expense for each of the five households was a little over \$30. Because these folks are working together on a regular basis, they have developed a certain trust and foundation that enables them more easily to make such a joint purchase and to expect that they can work out any problems of use, repair, etc. But there is no reason why other such groups can't be formed, given that many of us know and trust each other well enough to risk \$30 or \$40 together. And for another group, perhaps cooperative buying together might lead to cooperative working together.

If you are interested in any such cooperative purchasing, make a contact. Ross Kostin and Laurie Davis (344-7066), Valerie Sumner and David Katz (386-4393) and Bill and Carol Sutkus (287-3759) are coordinating connections.

-- Bill Sutkus

FIRST AID COURSE

The idea for taking a first aid course grew out of the weekly labor co-op, but seems to be a good idea for all of us involved in rural living. Being safety-minded is preventative, but what action do you take in case of an accident or injury?

The American Red Cross office in Ogdensburg organizes Standard First Aid Classes (Basic Adult) for a minimum group of five or six people. Once they have enough people the Red Cross will find an instructor. There is no charge for the course itself, and the only cost is for the book which is \$4.75.