

Cooperative council has a new name

After surviving 47 years, the Virginia Council of Farmer Cooperatives is no more.

Don't worry, it's good news. At the annual council meeting March 4 at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, council members voted to change the formal name of their organization to The Virginia Cooperative Council, Inc.

"To date we've talked to a lot of folks without hearing any objections," said Richard Johnstone, VCC President, who explained the name change has been in the works for several years and is designed to better reflect the wide range of services offered by cooperatives and the diverse customer base in Virginia.

"The change doesn't diminish the role of our founders, the farmer-owned cooperatives that started the organization," said Dr. Dixie Watts Reaves, council advisor. She said it was more of an attempt to reach out and encompass all cooperative organizations in the state.

"It puts us in sync with our regional cooperative councils around the nation, and opens doors to other new cooperatives that are just organizing and may be reluctant to join a group," added Phil Miller, VCC executive secretary.

Johnstone reported that the board of directors had discussed the name change with many of the farmer-based members of the council and there was no objection. The new name could also help the council attract new funding for the cooperative education programs as well as bolster membership and open up new avenues of resources and funding.

The vote to change the name to Virginia Cooperative Council was unanimous, and a new logo and publications designs are underway.