



Democracy
at Work
Institute
USFWC

An Introduction To
Worker Cooperatives for Farmers
and Start-Ups
Thursday, January 30th, 6pm est

Welcome

- Welcome from Democracy at Work Institute and National Young Farmers Coalition
- Introduction to Farming:
 - Faith Gilbert, Author of The Cooperative Farming Handbook
- Worker Cooperative Examples:
 - Frederic Theriault, Tourne-Sol Cooperative Farm
 - Dylan Zeitlyn, Diggers Mirth Farm
 - Stone Soup Cooperative Farm
- A First Look at Steps in Cooperative Development
- Cooperative Resources
- Questions?



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COOPERATIVE FARMING

TOOLS AND FRAMEWORKS
FOR FARMING TOGETHER

COOPERATIVE farming LANDSCAPE

LAND SHARING
BUYING TOGETHER
LEASING TOGETHER

CO-OP HOUSING
ECOVILLAGES

COOP
PAULTRY

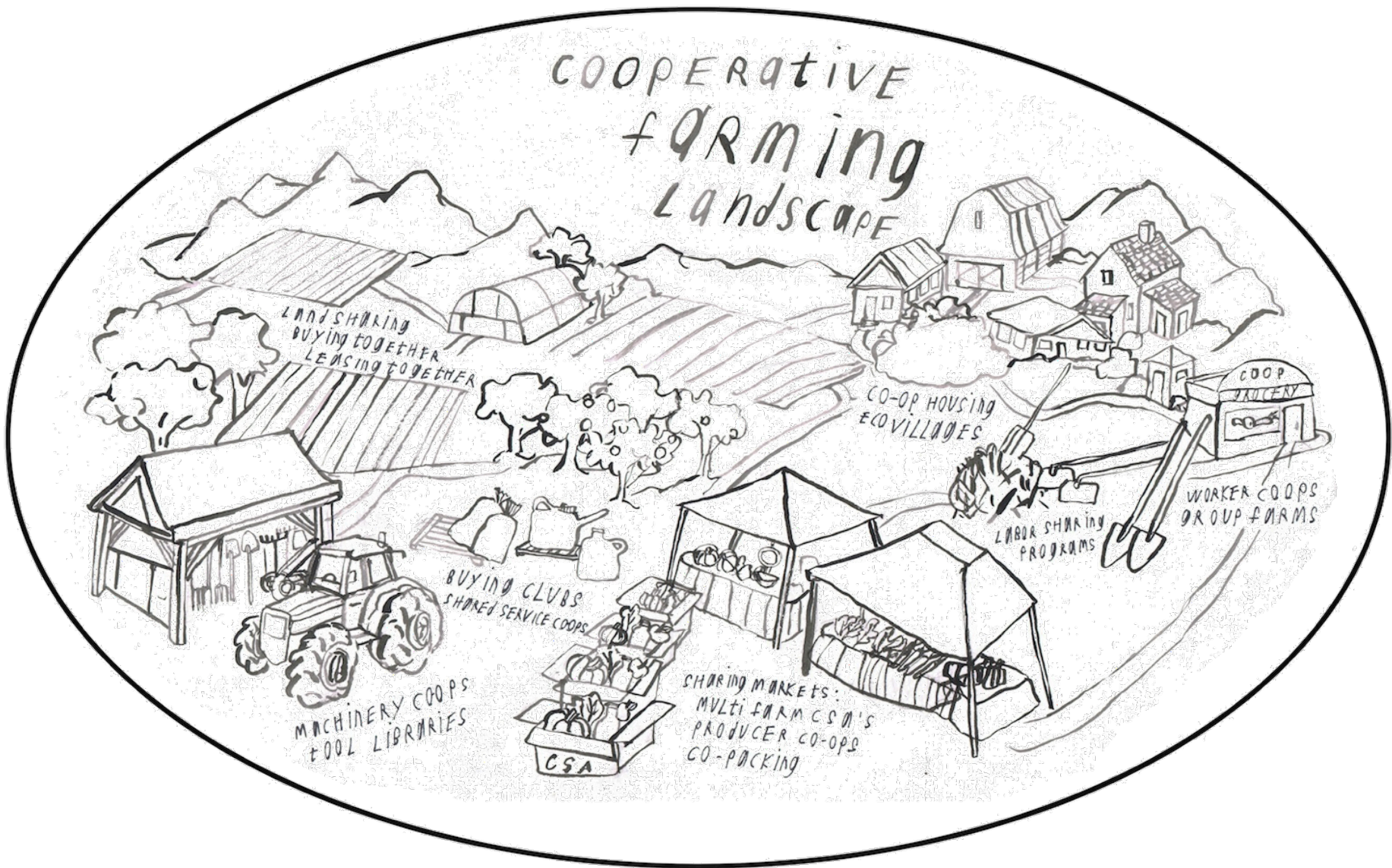
LABOR SHARING
PROGRAMS

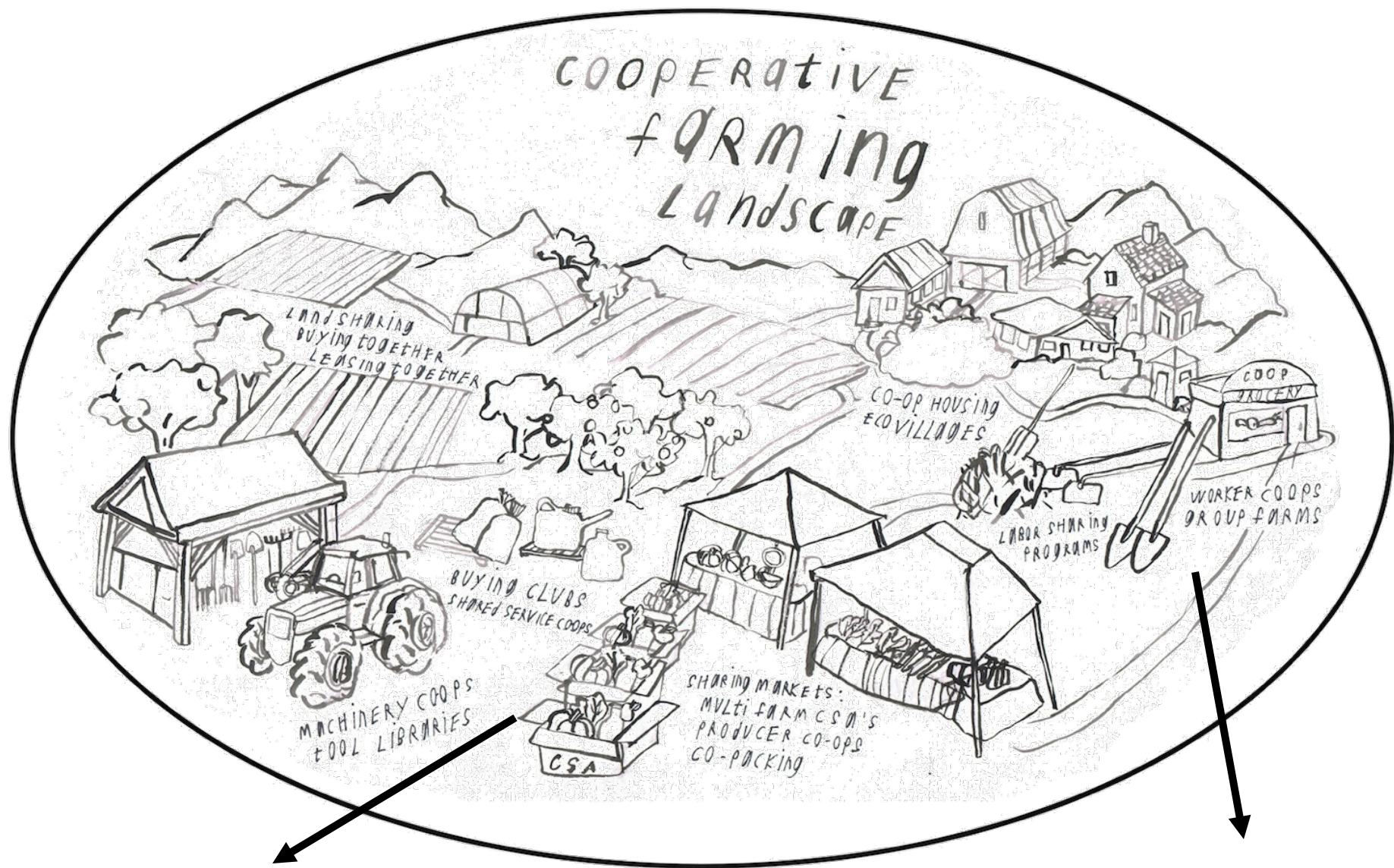
BUYING CLUBS
SHARED SERVICE COOPS

MACHINERY COOPS
TOOL LIBRARIES

SHARING MARKETS:
MULTI-FARM CSA'S
PRODUCER CO-OPS
CO-PACKING

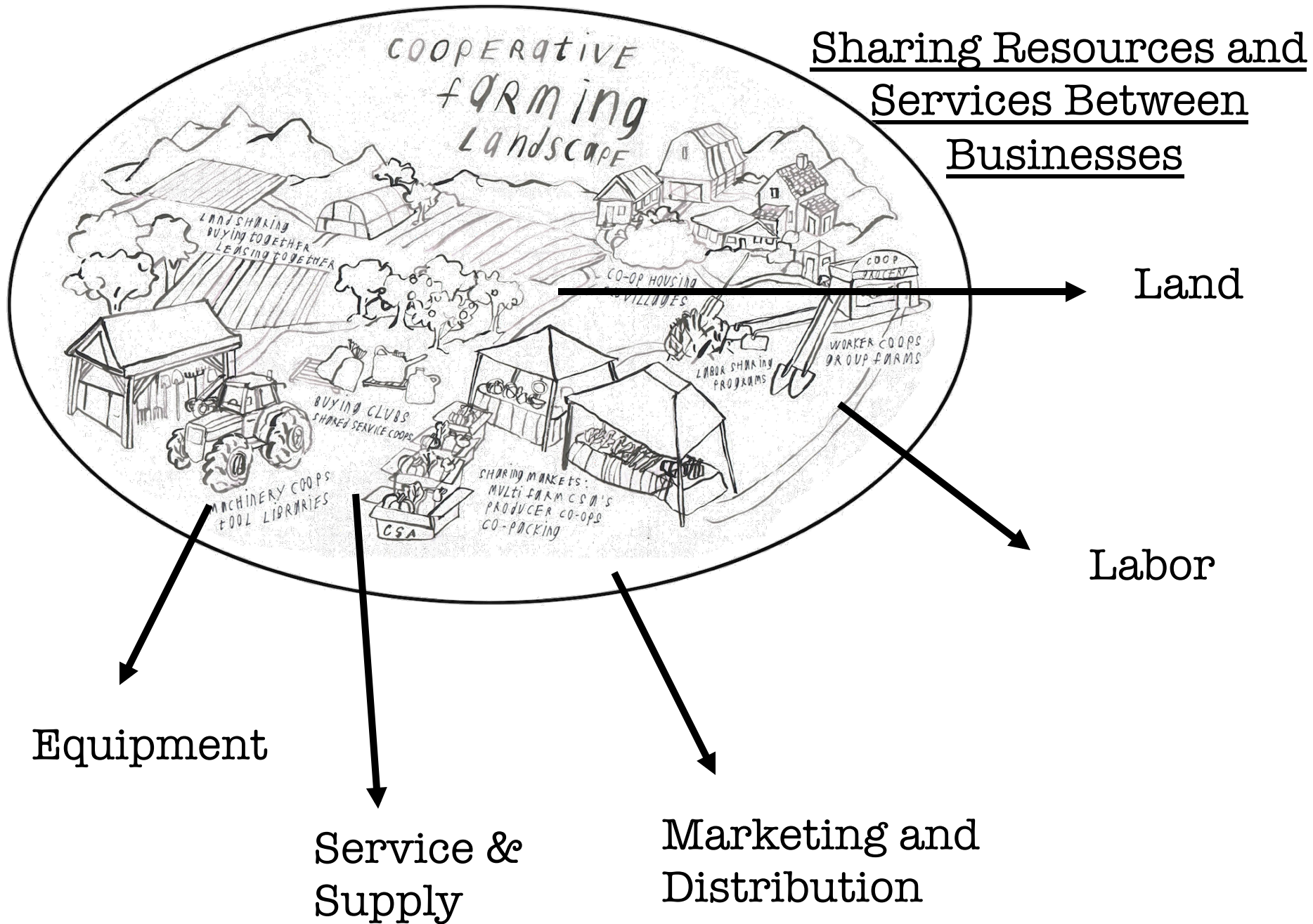
CSA

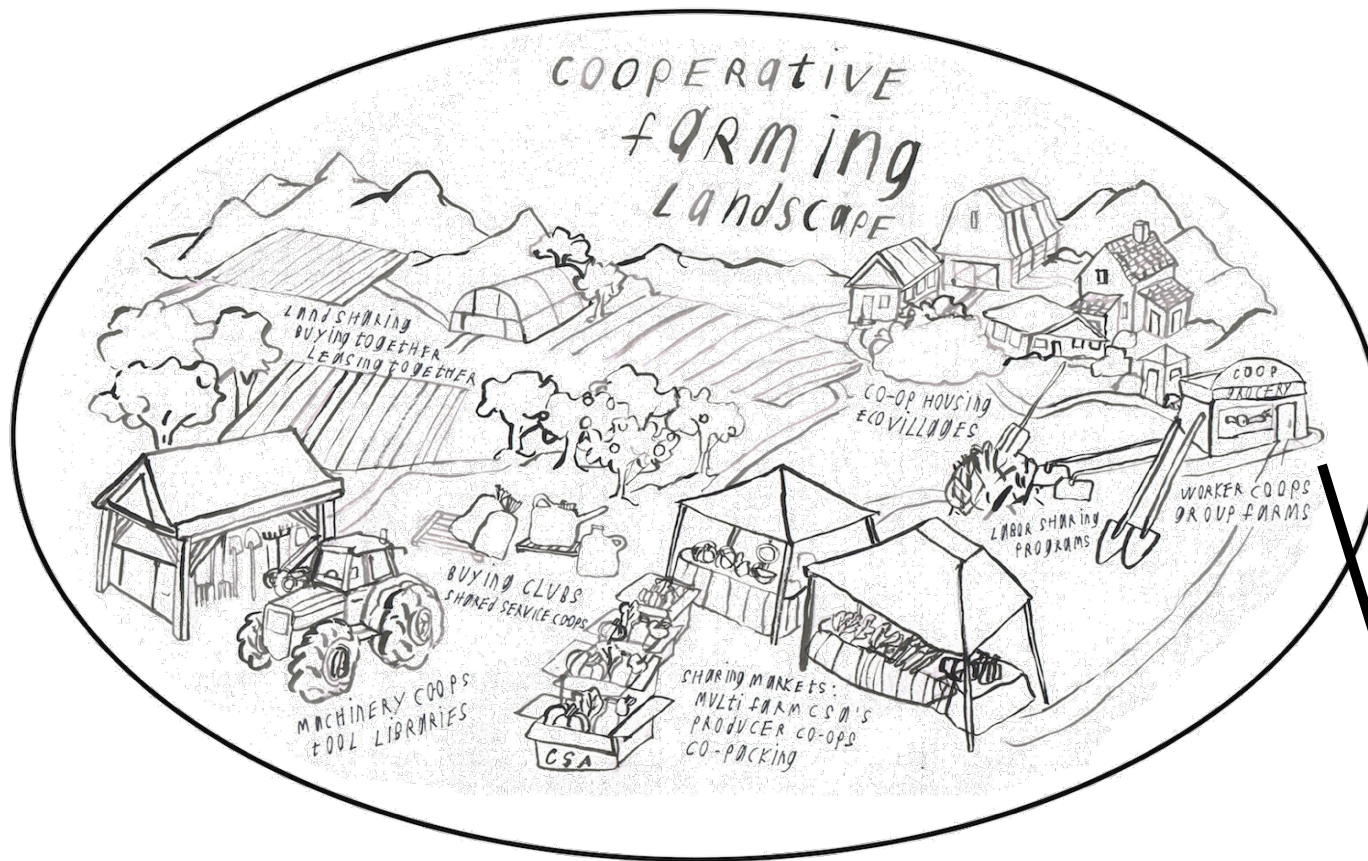




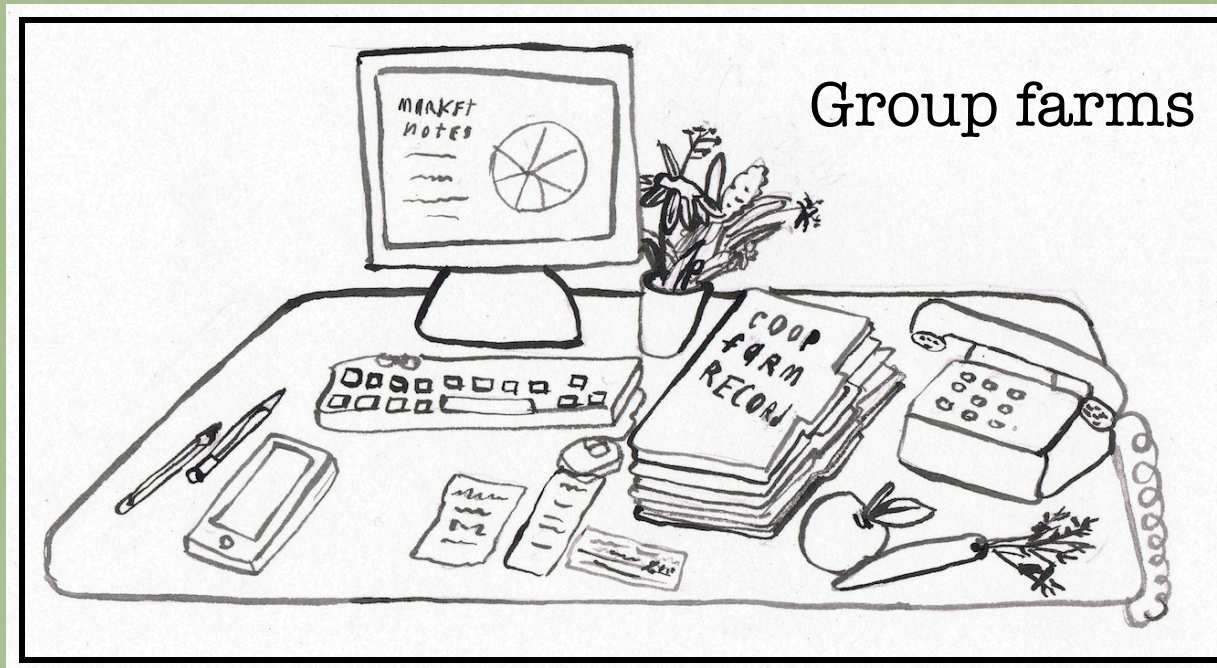
Sharing Resources and Services
Between Businesses

Managing a Farm as a Group





Group-managed farms



Group farms

Worker Co-ops

Participatory
management

Multi-owner Farms

Farm communities





Diggers Mirth, VT



Ferme Tourne-Sol, QC

A worker co-op is based on cooperative principles:

1. Owned by the workers in the business.
2. One member, one vote.
3. Surplus is shared equitably among members.

Some have “flat” structures; some have managers/employees and tiered income.

Can have employees that are not co-owners.

Ferme Coopérative Tourne-Sol worker coop farm in Québec

Frédéric Thériault (frederic@fermetournesol.qc.ca)



Ferme Coopérative Tourne-Sol



- Founded 2005
- Certified organic
- Les Cèdres, Qc
- 16 acres rented land
- Diversified crops
- Marketing
 - CSA – 300 baskets
 - Farmer's market









Worker's Cooperative



from Left to Right: Emily Board, Daniel Brisebois, Frédéric Thériault, Reid Allaway and Renée Primeau

- 5 founding members work full time
- 3-5 apprentices seasonally full time
 - Mid Apr to end Oct

The advantages of being a coop farm

- Pool resources together at startup
 - Experience, money, assets
- Collective decision making
- Competent work force stays with coop
- Synergy
 - accomplish more than you would on your own
 - Share the burden and responsibility
- Flexibility in schedules

The Challenges

- Learning to communicate
- Efficient decision making
- Delegation of responsibilities
- What is someone wants to leave?
- You won't always be right, learn to let go





Diggers Mirth Collective Farm

DYLAN ZEITLYN













STONE SOUP FARM

STONE SOUP FARM





CREATING A WORKER COOPERATIVE

Resources for Starting Out

- Technical Assistance Providers
 - [Democracy at Work Network](#)
 - [Cooperation Works!](#) network of rural cooperative development centers
 - Local Cooperatives
- Online Resources
 - [USDA Rural Development](#)
 - [Democracy At Work Institute](#)
 - Cooperative Farming Handbook

Questions?