

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL



Wholesale and retail co-operatives were founded to provide members with products otherwise unavailable in their communities. This model has grown so well that co-operative networks have joined forces as a federation to facilitate wholesale purchasing and specialized services, such as marketing.

Several categories of wholesale and retail co-operatives can be found in Canada, but the most notable are co-ops specializing in food, books, petroleum products, hardware, pharmacy, travel services, alcohol, and sports and leisure equipment.

“RETAIL CO-OPS PLAY A PREDOMINANT ROLE IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF THESE COMMUNITIES

The power of wholesale and retail co-operatives

Considering the particular needs of Canada's Arctic communities, governments supported co-operatives there as early as the 1940s. Today, the area boasts a great number of co-ops of all kinds. Among them, retail co-ops have become the largest private employer and now play a predominant role in the social and economic life of these communities. Today, the business lines of co-operatives in the Arctic have diversified to include such services as telecommunications, petroleum, tourism, marketing of Inuit arts, financial services, transportation, construction and even health care services.



IN NUMBERS¹

533
CO-OPERATIVES

\$8 NEARLY
billion
IN ASSETS

5,800,000
MEMBERS

\$16 billion
IN SALES

OVER
32,000
EMPLOYEES

Our members in this sector

Arctic Co-operatives is a service federation owned and controlled by 31 community-based Member Co-ops in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. It provides these territories with a wide range of operational and technical support services, including business services, retail services, petroleum support services, Canadian Arctic producers, Northern Images stores, cable television, Inns North hotels.

Co-op Atlantic is a regional organization owned by over a hundred retail and agricultural co-operatives based in the Atlantic Provinces and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine. Co-op Atlantic provides member co-operatives and clients throughout the region with products and services in the food, agriculture, energy, real estate and social housing sectors.

Mountain Equipment Co-op is an outdoor retail co-operative that exists to encourage and inspire Canadians to live active outdoor lifestyles. MEC supports a range of outdoor activities and is well known for selling high-quality well-designed products. MEC has more than 3.5 million members across Canada, whom it serves through 17 stores in 6 provinces.

Ontario Natural Foods Co-op is a co-operatively structured food distributor. ONFC's mission is to proactively bring the market natural, organic and local foods within a co-operative network. ONFC offers over 4,000 products from 250-plus vendors, including organic and natural foods and beverages, meat, fish, eco-friendly household cleaning items, baby items, personal care and everything in between.

Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) provides central wholesaling, manufacturing, marketing and administrative services to approximately 225 member retail co-operatives located across western Canada. FCL operates 4 warehouse facilities, 6 animal feed plants, 10 propane distribution centers, a refinery complex, a grocery distributor and a number of corporate food stores and petroleum operations.

The member co-operatives of the **Fédération québécoise des coopératives en milieu scolaire** are identified under the COOPSCO banner. In 2011, these co-operatives earned consolidated sales of nearly \$125 million dollars. They can be found in most of Québec's colleges and universities, and in many secondary schools.

The **Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec** is owned by its 14 member co-ops in the Inuit communities of the Hudson and Ungava coasts of Northern Québec, or Nunavik. These co-ops have a wide service offer, ranging from retail, banking, post, telecommunications and maritime transportation to marketing Inuit art, construction and travel agencies.

Calgary Co-op is one of the largest retail co-operatives in North America. With over 440,000 members, 3,500 employees, assets of \$485 million dollars and annual sales over \$1.1 billion, Calgary Co-op is committed to lead in food, petroleum, home health care, pharmacy, wine, spirits, beer and travel.

Founded in 1909, **UFA Co-operative Limited** is an Alberta-based agricultural co-operative with more than 120,000 member-owners. UFA's network comprises more than 110 bulk fuel and cardlock petroleum locations, 35 farm and ranch supply stores and a support office. Independent petroleum agents and more than 1,200 UFA employees provide products, services and agricultural solutions to farmers, ranchers, members and commercial customers.



¹ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2012

² Canadian Grocer, 2013