

Stories From Our Entrepreneurs

Ray Shatney and Janet Steward of Greenfield Highland Beef, in Greensboro Bend and Plainfield, Vermont, have raised prizewinning Highland cattle on their family farm since 1967. But the COVID-19 pandemic “changed most everything that we do,” Janet says—from selling breeding stock nationally to marketing meat locally. With restaurants and farmers’ markets closed, Janet and Ray started selling frozen meat and offering home delivery, but they worried about weathering the pandemic. Urgent challenges included figuring out how to manage supply and demand longer term and how to care for their existing herd while learning to manage demanding online orders.



Luckily, Greenfield Highland Beef already had ties to The Carrot Project, which had helped the business purchase equipment in 2010. A decade later, Janet and a dozen other farmers benefitted from the organization’s rapid response to the pandemic, including with virtual consulting sessions.

“I try to make lemonade out of lemons, and this has forced me to do something I’ve needed to do for a long time, which is develop an online marketing presence,” she said. The Carrot Project connected Janet with a marketing consultant, who called her on the phone to help her set up an online ordering platform. “This is critically important,” Janet said. “I hope this online change will allow us to continue to be sustainable in the new normal, whatever that is.”

Alliance Leadership

Executive Committee

Ela Chapin, *Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program*
Todd Erling, *Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation*
Dorothy Suput, *The Carrot Project*

Steering Committee

Stephen Hadcock, *Cornell Cooperative Extension*
Jim Hafner, *Land for Good*
Jennifer Hashley, *New Entry Sustainable Farming Project*
Nathan L’Etoile, *American Farmland Trust*
Christopher Wayne, *Grow NY*

To learn more, visit
thecarrotproject.org/sector_development/agricultural_viability_alliance or contact
Johanna de Graffenreid at johanna@thecarrotproject.org