



“Farm and Food Business Viability for Thriving Communities”

Agricultural Viability Alliance CFF Presentation

Speaker Bios

May, 26th 2021

Todd Erling

Executive Director, Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation

Agricultural Viability Alliance Executive Committee Member

[Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corp | Todd Erling](#)

With an academic background in environmental design and planning from Miami University and the Pratt Institute, years of experience in community and economic development, and growing up in the family orchards, Todd brings a holistic approach to agribusiness development. Todd lives on his wife’s family farm in Southern Columbia County and has hands-on knowledge of the challenges to the Valley’s agriculture while applying practical Economic Development programs and projects to protect and preserve open space by keeping farmers in business. With HVADC’s Board of Directors, Todd has developed the first regional entity to focus on farms and local food business as economic development in the Hudson Valley. HVADC has grown to having multi-year service contracts with 8 counties’ economic development offices and raising over \$4 million since 2007 for programs and service to assist ag-related/ag-dependent businesses in the region. HVADC has assisted projects in accessing over \$30 million in funding.

Lee Hennessy

Owner, farmer, and cheesemaker at Moxie Ridge Farm & Creamery

[Moxie Ridge Farm & Creamery](#)

Lee is the owner, farmer, and cheesemaker at Moxie Ridge Farm & Creamery, a small-scale diversified goat dairy in Washington County, NY. Started in March of 2017, Moxie Ridge specializes in pre-industrial farming methods and creating simple, traditional foods from the animals he raises. As a first-generation farmer and transgender man, he hopes to empower and educate new LGBTQ+ and BIPOC farmers through sharing his work and experiences at Moxie Ridge. When he is not milking goats, shearing sheep, making cheese, or selling at the farmers market, he enjoys watching hot air balloons from his back deck, reading, and learning to play new instruments.

To learn more, visit <https://www.thecarrotproject.org/agricultural-viability-alliance/>
or contact Johanna de Graffenreid at johanna@thecarrotproject.org



Chris Wayne

Farmer Assistance Director, GrowNYC

Agricultural Viability Alliance Steering Committee Member

[Farmer Assistance Profiles | GrowNYC](#)

Chris came to GrowNYC in 2009 after 2 years of small scale fruit and vegetable farming in Costa Rica and a childhood on his dad's farm in Danbury, CT. After a season as a Greenmarket manager, Chris joined the team of the New Farmer Development Project, where he helped to identify, educate, and support immigrant farmers to start environmentally and economically sustainable farms within 200 miles of NYC. In 2010 Chris stepped into the role of Beginning Farmer Coordinator, where he managed workshop, mentorship, business training, and microloan programming for aspiring farmers.

In his current capacity as Farmer Assistance Director, Chris works to develop and manage technical assistance programming for both beginning farmers and established farmers who sell through the Greenmarket Program, with a specific focus on land transition, succession, and marketing projects.

Moderated by:

Johanna de Graffenreid

Coordinator, Agricultural Viability Alliance

[About Us](#)

Johanna de Graffenreid began working with youth teaching sustainable farming practices while in college, and found her roots in the environmental justice movement while working for Greenpeace in 2009. She has since worked around the United States with education and advocacy organizations focused on a range of environmental issues. She left the frontlines fighting mountain-top removal for Coal River Mountain Watch in West Virginia to earn a Masters of Environmental Law and Policy from the Vermont Law School in 2015. After graduating, Johanna worked in the Gulf Coast region on climate justice as well as oil and gas accountability campaigns. In 2017, Johanna moved back to Vermont to advance state-based toxics and sustainable agriculture policy. She is excited to join our team coordinating The Agricultural Viability Alliance, supporting a region-wide coalition to advance food and farm enterprises in the Northeast.

To learn more, visit <https://www.thecarrotproject.org/agricultural-viability-alliance/>
or contact Johanna de Graffenreid at johanna@thecarrotproject.org