



## Heifer International

Heifer International is a global development organization on a mission to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way. Working with farmers and their communities to identify and invest in business opportunities that deliver living incomes, Heifer International creates solutions to local challenges designed to build inclusive, resilient economies. Since launching in 1944, Heifer International has assisted more than 35 million people, with millions more now on a pathway to living incomes.



## Heifer USA

Heifer International has promoted sustainable agriculture in the United States for decades. In 2015, Heifer USA shifted its strategy to focus on supporting farmers to deliver healthy food to reliable markets by providing technical assistance and expertise, investing with them in farmer-focused infrastructure. Since 2015, Heifer USA has supported more than 2,500 U.S. farming families to build small-scale, sustainable produce and livestock businesses. Its model is made up of three separate entities that come together to meet farmers' needs from farm to table – Heifer USA, Cypress Valley Meat Company and Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative.

Farmers first attend trainings provided by Heifer USA's experts at the Heifer Ranch, where they have access to a living classroom and benefit from research on improved sustainable agricultural methods, which can be applied on their own farms. Some farmers will have their animals processed into quality meat products by Cypress Valley Meat Company, ready for market. Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative then provides a reliable market and an established e-commerce platform enabling farmers to get their products direct to consumers. As demand grows, more farmers will be able to join Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative, creating a network of sustainable farms producing high quality, healthy products.

Local farmers and their cooperatives can only compete in the marketplace if they have the infrastructure to support them and this is where investment is needed. Together, Heifer USA, Cypress Valley Meat Company and Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative provide vital services to farmers across the South and jobs for local people.



■ Active Projects  
■ Past Projects



Cattle



Poultry



Small Ruminants



Swine



Vegetables

## Heifer Ranch

Providing farming education activities throughout the year, Heifer Ranch works to increase smallholder farmers' knowledge of regenerative agriculture practices and promote sustainable and healthy food production. Heifer Ranch operates a certified organic market garden and raises livestock for meat sold by Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative. Heifer USA's agricultural staff lead workshops alongside farmers and other partners. Trainings focus on topics such as grass-fed cattle production and root crop production. Heifer Ranch further educates farmers and contributes to industry data and analysis by using its land to test equipment, feed and techniques, reducing the financial burden and potential production losses for farmers. As a Savory Institute Hub candidate, Heifer Ranch is establishing baseline metrics to accurately measure improvements to the soil, water cycle and biodiversity and carbon sequestration. This data will help scientists gauge the impact and benefits of climate-friendly, regenerative practices.

## Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative

Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative, a 15-member farmer cooperative currently purchases high quality meat raised on pasture using small-batch regenerative farming from approximately 35 small and medium-sized farms. Selling direct to consumers across the United States and to a meat wholesaler, it offers beef, pork, lamb and chicken through its e-commerce platform, enabling farmers to access high-value markets where customers pay a premium. As one of Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative's largest producers, Heifer Ranch helps the cooperative to scale up production, with an end goal of transferring the ranch's sizeable market portion to a growing pool of new farmers when they reach that collective capacity. The cooperative provides its farmers shared services such as aggregated purchasing, marketing, packaging, distribution, along with credit services, reducing overheads and increasing capital availability. Heifer USA has supported Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative since its inception in 2014, providing the capital needed to reach commercial viability. In 2020, Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative projects over \$12 million in sales, mostly through its e-commerce system, and farmer payments of approximately \$3.9 million.



## Cypress Valley Meat Company

Cypress Valley provides meat processing services to over 900 farmers, with Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative being its largest customer. It processes Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative's grass-fed beef and lamb, pasture-raised poultry, and forested pork. With 84 employees spread across four processing plants in Clinton, Pottsville and Vilonia, Arkansas, Cypress Valley is creating local jobs and hiring people during the COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative, Cypress Valley launched Natural State Processing Company. Heifer USA has provided the finance Cypress Valley and Grass Roots Farmers' Cooperative need to scale this business to meet market demand for high quality, small-scale, humane, USDA-certified poultry processing.