
DAIRY  **GRAZING**
A P P R E N T I C E S H I P

DGA-NATIONAL.ORG





Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship: A National Program for Training Dairy Farmers

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Beginning Farmer and Rancher
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- The average age of dairy producers in the U.S. is 58.5 years old. In the next decade, hundreds of farms and thousands of acres will change hands.
- DGA serves **current, retiring, and aspiring dairy farmers**, primarily in WI, MN, and MO but with strong interest in ME, NY, and PA.
- Beginning dairy farmers require specialized knowledge, skills, experience, relationships, and capital for land, cows and equipment.
- Aspiring dairy farmers include **young people, students, women, veterans, hired hands, herdsman, farm managers, and farm workers**.
- DGA has an **affirmative action policy** that guides outreach and recruitment of underserved populations.



In 2010, DGA was established as a formal Apprenticeship through a partnership between GrassWorks, Inc., the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and the Wisconsin Technical College System, with the support of a 2010 BRFDP Development Grant and a 2011 BFRDP Standard Grant.

The current 2014 BFRDP Standard Grant provides support at a critical stage of development as DGA prepares to become a National Apprenticeship and a standard career track for new dairy farmers.



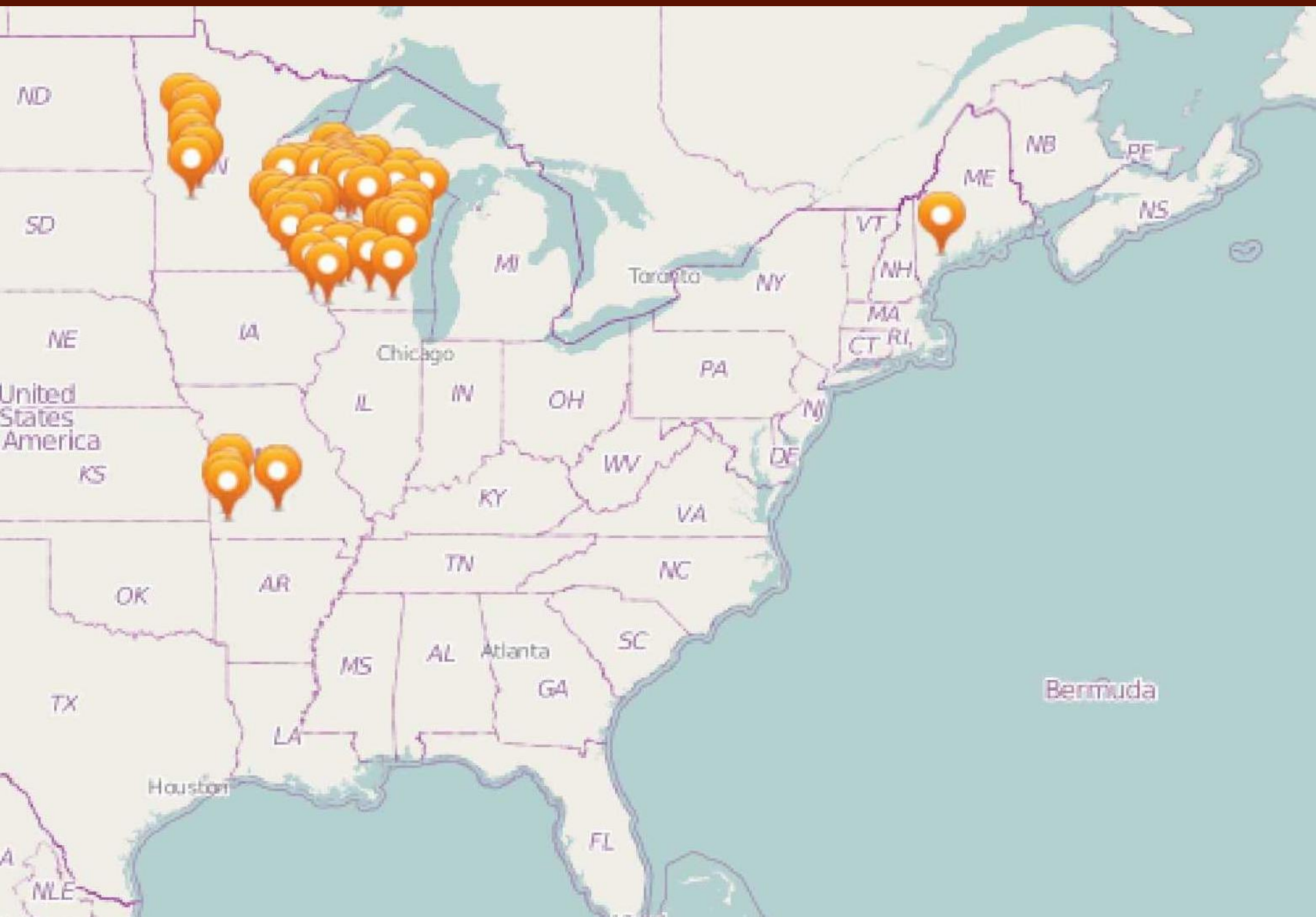
- U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration
- Northcentral Technical College, Wisconsin
- Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy & Livestock Farmers, UW Madison
- University of Missouri Extension
- Grasslands, Inc.
- Cadwallader Consulting, LLC
- USDA Farm Services Agency



Key Approaches

- Accredited **National Apprenticeship** under Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration.
- **4000 hours** of training over **two years**, combines on-farm employment and training with related instruction.
- *DGA Training Guidelines* provide structure to mentoring relationship.
- Educational and technical support from on-the-ground DGA staff, peer group discussions, and local networking.
- Financial planning services for Masters and Apprentices.
- Relationships with industry and private investors.
- **Approved vendor** for Farm Services Agency's Financial Management Training Program.

Approved Farm Sites





Education/Outreach Materials



MAJOR WORK CATEGORIES

All work items are mandatory unless specifically identified as "Not Mandatory"

A. Manage Calf Appropriately (includes health care, colostrum, calves and milk cows)

4. Handle animal safely

ON-FARM EVALUATION	CHALLENGE/COMPETENCY	APPLY DETAILS	ASSESS/DEVELOP
	1. Maximize appropriate flight zone distance.		
	2. The animal moves easily in the desired direction.		
	3. Restrain safely.		
	4. Corral or use head lock and baby.		
	5. Properly open and close while loading or unloading including gates and proper door entry tools.		

B. Varyly for health and wellness

ON-FARM EVALUATION	CHALLENGE/COMPETENCY	APPLY DETAILS	ASSESS/DEVELOP
	1. Identify underlying herd conditions such as milking, pregnancy, compression and stressed animals that would indicate illness.		
	2. Follow proper protocols to determine whether contacting a veterinarian is warranted.		
	3. Use antibiotic resistance to treat only when necessary and administer the necessary resistance to prevent (i.e. common antibiotic resistance).		

C. Evaluate animal productivity

ON-FARM EVALUATION	CHALLENGE/COMPETENCY	APPLY DETAILS	ASSESS/DEVELOP
	1. Comprehensive and consistent health/body condition scoring.		
	2. Monitor daily milk production.		
	3. Comprehensive and consistent cow strip records and records breeding dates.		

D. Manage calf needs and use appropriate resources to meet the requirements

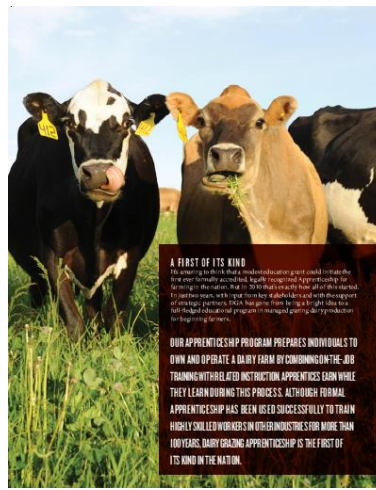
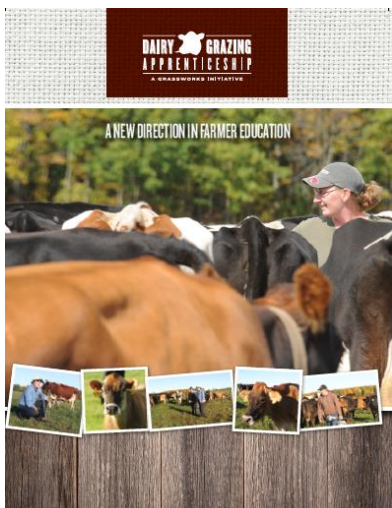
ON-FARM EVALUATION	CHALLENGE/COMPETENCY	APPLY DETAILS	ASSESS/DEVELOP
	1. Fresh colostrum appropriate type and amount of feed.		
	2. Follow appropriate protocol for raising calves.		
	3. Follow proper protocols on care and feeding of calves.		
	4. Comprehensive preventative health care of calves and monitor for related injuries.		
	5. Comprehensive health records of calf and monitor for proper growth.		
	6. Understand proper dosing techniques.		

E. Manage cow breeding cycle

ON-FARM EVALUATION	CHALLENGE/COMPETENCY	APPLY DETAILS	ASSESS/DEVELOP
	1. Identify animals that are in heat.		
	2. Comprehensive and consistent breeding records.		

F. Cow protocol with cow vaccination program

ON-FARM EVALUATION	CHALLENGE/COMPETENCY	APPLY DETAILS	ASSESS/DEVELOP
	1. Explain in person or verbally and procedures involve the farm.		
	2. Demonstrate the vaccination protocol.		



THIS IS THE PLACE. NOW IS THE TIME

Despite the economic and cultural significance of dairy farming in Wisconsin, the industry continues to be small and old. Most dairy farms, beginning farmers are not entering the production side of the industry. Most of our young producers have the average age of 47 years. Only one operator in the state is 37 years old. We have to expand the workforce. We have four producers that most industry work. Dairy operations have expanded by increasing the number of cows on a high-tech, modern farm. Dairy operations have largely accepted the model of expansion in order to stay competitive.

While 80% of Wisconsin dairy herds have fewer than 100 cows per farm, the number of 100 cow dairies has increased significantly. The trend toward consolidation and expansion leads to highly capital intensive farming, which results in more farm labor and lower primary owner operators.

ALONGSIDE THE CHALLENGE OF SO MANY FARMS ON THE EDGE OF EXPANSION OR RETIREMENT LIES THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSITION THE INDUSTRY TRAINING GENERATIONS PROFITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DAIRY PRODUCERS. THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY IS IMMEDIATE AND FOR ONLY ABOUT A DECADE.

The transition will require robust implementation of management systems that can be sustained and applied on moderately sized farms. The most efficient, productive and profitable dairy farming method suitable to small and mid-sized farms is managed grazing.

While managed grazing farms often have modern milking parlors and milks as many as 100-200 cows, successful grazers have low opportunities for expansion. Because of the low cost of land, the number of animals and acres is, this is an ideal sector for the small and mid-sized grazing farms are required for beginning farmers to buy sight.

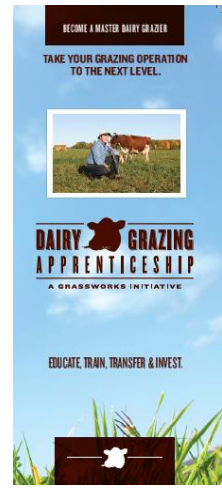
The health and longevity of grazing animals means that dairy grazers often have more replacement cost of their management. This creates the possibility of setting up a second-growth farm or multi-generational grazing operation. This is a viable business model for the investment opportunities for the entrepreneurial dairy farmers and more retirement options for their owner producers.

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship which includes alternative models for generating managed grazing dairy farms, will bring more farmers into secondary, repair farm markets, western rural communities, and help to restore natural resources.



Photos are not easy to create a highly trained set of skills for the first time the more you understand the more you know. It's a challenge to learn what you're doing, understand and learn a trade.

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
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**YOUR
FUTURE IS
THE
FUTURE
OF DAIRY**

APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship is a structured system of training designed to prepare individuals for skilled occupations by combining on-the-job training with related instruction. Apprentices earn while they learn and their skills are nationally recognized.

For 100 years, skilled trades have used Apprenticeship to train certified skilled workers and ensure their standard of training.

Overall Target Outcomes

- **Establish** DGA as a National Apprenticeship under DOL-Employment and Training Administration.
- **Strengthen** DGA in Wisconsin by providing additional services to participants.
- **Support** the development of DGA in Missouri as a template for state-by-state expansion.
- **Enroll** at least 30 Apprentices (15 in Wisconsin and 15 in Missouri).
- **Graduate** at least 20 Apprentices to certified Journey Dairy Grazier status.
- **Start or retain** at least 10 managed grazing dairy farms (5 in each state).
- **Strive** for 10 percent of graduates from underserved groups—women, veterans, ethnic or racial minorities.

Skilled People are the Key



- Distance learning education and specialized teaching modules that meets local needs
- Outreach to veterans, women, farm workers, immigrants, and other underserved groups
- Resources, strategies, and issues regarding land access for beginning farmers
- Potential partnerships for expansion into additional states



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