



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

A Pathway to Livestock Farming: Providing Access to Land and a Guiding Hand



Presenter: Robert Bauer

Southwest Badger Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc
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Mentorship program helps grass-based livestock farmers in SW Wisconsin

- Audiences
 - Beginning & experienced farmers
 - Military veterans
 - Non-farming landowners
- Key approaches
 - Mentorships with experienced farmers
 - Financial coaching with Paul Dietmann
 - Access to land through grazing broker
- Overall target outcome
 - 15 mentors to partner with beginners
 - 15 beginners to receive business plan review
 - 15 beginning farmers to gain access to land by renting



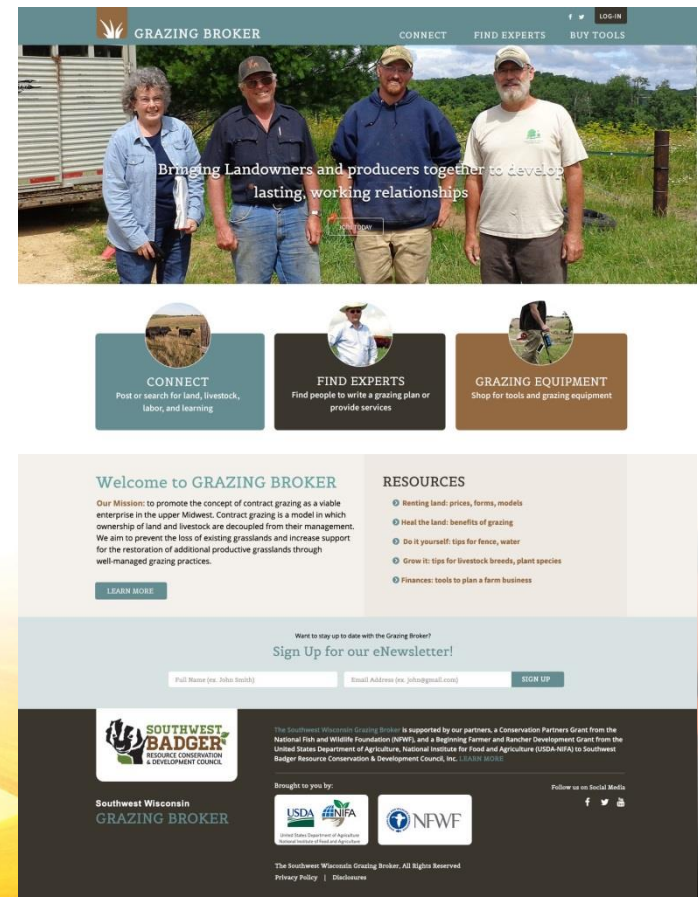
Individual coaching helps new farmers but motivation is required



- Applicants
 - 25 beginning, 18 experienced farmers
 - Includes 7 veterans, 1 active military, 3 military family members
- Orientation:
 - 17 beginners, 7 mentors
 - Toolkit structures the mentorship
- Check-ins:
 - 16 beginners, 7 mentors
 - Mentorship provides practical insights, support, and inspiration needed to do grazing best management practices

A farmer-to-farmer network is underway in Southwest Wisconsin

- 35 people received a copy of *Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers*
- Survey of 25 participants to determine classroom training
- Participant surveys in December will guide future matchmaking process
- *Grazingbroker.org* will connect livestock producers with non-farming landowners





Self-guided learning is key to adult education

- Location of people affects match success, but motivation and free time can bridge distance
- We need to improve how to stage beginners through the process of starting to farm
- We need to improve self-assessment resources so beginners know the path from dreams to farming



Self-assessment can help farmers get started

- *Farm Coach* from University of Vermont is useful for self-assessment but is not customizable to other states
- *Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers* by Lisa Kivirist describes 4 types of beginning farmers
- *Mentor-Intern Handbook*, Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy Farmers, has tools to setup mentorships



Future work will build on existing resources

- Launch *Grazingbroker.org* in August
- Establish a 3-year grazing broker demonstration site by end of August
- Fundraise for chute and scale to rent to beginning livestock farmers
- Work with Farmer-Veteran Coalition on a “Something Special from Wisconsin” label for “Homegrown by Heroes”
- Develop mentors into a list – a network handbook to continue informal matching





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Smart farmers start on rented land!

Robert Bauer, Grazing Broker

Southwest Badger RC&D Council, Inc

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