



Monthly Newsletter - September 2026



Growing the dairy grazing sector, together

Your monthly update from the Dairy Grazing Alliance

Welcome to the DGA Newsletter

Happy September from all of us at DGA!

Fall is just around the corner, and there's a lot to share from across the DGA community this September. In this issue, our Producer Services Manager, Ashley Hughes, shares the latest update from DGA's Conservation Innovation Grant work, and we're celebrating DGA Mentor Terri Hawbaker, who is being recognized as Female Farmer of the Year at the 2026 Women in Agribusiness Summit.

We're also sharing details about a new Monthly Virtual Cohort Meeting Series for DGA Apprentices, along with the latest from *Graze* and information about an upcoming DGA webinar in October. You'll also find new funding and scholarship opportunities, industry news, and a full slate of pasture walks, field days and other events happening this fall.

Thanks, as always, for being part of the DGA community.

Happy grazing!

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) On-Farm Trials Update

By Ashley Hughes, Producer Services Manager

DGA's Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) On-Farm Trials project is moving right along. Enrollment is nearly complete. We have 9 fully onboarded farms in Wisconsin, 6 in Pennsylvania, and 3 in Vermont. Our final two farms are working through the onboarding process, and we hope to have them enrolled very soon to round out our 20-farm cohort.

The overall goal of this CIG project is to increase the adoption of managed grazing while addressing the barriers to doing so. Throughout the process of supporting producers in their transition to managed grazing, we are also working to quantify the environmental, economic, and social impacts of that transition for dairy and heifer graziers. With the help of our partners at Water and Land Solutions LLC, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Missouri, and the Food Finance Institute, we have begun our analysis on the related baseline metrics. This will give us a comprehensive picture of where each farm's starting point is and will serve as a consistent comparison point for project-end data to track the impact of the transition to managed grazing.

We have a great group of knowledgeable technical assistance providers who are delivering boots-on-the-ground support to our project farms: Michael Geissinger in Wisconsin, Amber Donaldson in Pennsylvania, and Anne Phillips in Vermont. Paul Daigle has provided valuable support as well, particularly with developing grazing plans. Half of the enrolled farms now have grazing plans in place, with the rest in progress. These grazing plans will act as a roadmap for implementation throughout the project while addressing resource concerns to improve the conservation benefits associated with managed grazing.

Incorporating technology has been an interesting part of the project as well. Farms have begun to use data from PaddockTrac and Pasture.io to help make informed grazing management decisions. Both platforms create a feed wedge to help producers visualize pasture availability, along with other important grazing management data. While this technology is new to many of our producers, we hope to see a real benefit in pasture management and utilization as a result of incorporating it.

We're grateful for the continued engagement from all our participating producers and excited about the work we have ahead. Now that enrollment is nearing completion and implementation is underway, we're looking forward to seeing the value of managed grazing in action.



**MANAGED
GRAZING**
INNOVATION CENTER

Registration closes on September 21st!

Semester	Registration Ends	Semester Starts	Semester Ends
Fall 2026	September 21st	September 21st	December 11th

Register for MGIC's Fall 2026 Semester

Don't forget to follow MGIC on social media to get the latest news!



New Monthly Virtual Cohort Meetings for DGA Apprentices

DGA is launching a new Monthly Virtual Cohort Meeting Series to help Apprentices connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. These casual, one-hour gatherings are built to create a stronger sense of community among Apprentices, no matter where you're located.

Come with your camera on or off, bring your lunch or coffee, and settle in to connect with fellow Apprentices. There will be plenty of DGA prizes and giveaways along the way, too.

The first meeting is Wednesday, September 16 at 11 a.m. Central / 12 p.m. Eastern. A Google Meet calendar invitation will be sent to Apprentices. After the first gathering, the group will help decide the best time for future monthly sessions.

Watch your inbox for the invitation. We hope to see you there.



Coming in October: Organic Valley Producer Series Webinar

**Navigating Organic Program and
Product Standards on October 5**

Our October webinar is the fifth and final session in the Organic Valley Producer Series, funded through an Organic Valley FAFO grant. This interactive roundtable focuses on succession planning and introduces you to (or refreshes your memory on) the Organic Valley Resources library.

Succession planning can be a loaded topic, but DGA has resources to help you start those conversations. Come prepared to share your experiences and pick up practical strategies from fellow farmers in the Organic Valley community.

Join us October 5th at 12:30pm ET

DGA Mentor Terri Hawbaker Named Female Farmer of the Year

We're proud to share that DGA Mentor Terri Hawbaker, owner of Grazeway Dairy Farms in Pewamo, Michigan, has been named Female Farmer of the Year at the [2026 Women in Agribusiness Summit](#). The honor is a new category of the Women in Agribusiness Demeter Award of Excellence, created for the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

Terri built Grazeway from the ground up in 2002, and today runs a 337-acre, seasonal pasture-based operation with a 150-cow milking herd and grass-finished beef.

Beyond her own farm, Terri hosts grazing and conservation field days, mentors international agricultural fellows, and is a steady advocate for bringing more women into agricultural leadership. She'll be recognized on stage at the Summit, held September 22 to 24 in New Orleans.

Congratulations, Terri. The whole DGA community is cheering you on.



Graze

The magazine that is by graziers, for graziers

New on the Graze Blog

There's something new on the *Graze* website: a blog featuring practical ideas and perspectives from graziers and grazing experts. The first articles cover warm-season natives, mycorrhizal fungi, grassfed dairy genetics, and grazing through drought.

Explore the Graze blog:

- [**Building Resilience with Warm-Season Natives**](#) by Gene Schriefer
- [**The Importance of Mycorrhizal Fungi**](#) by Dr. Allen Williams
- [**What's Your Ideal Grassfed Cow?**](#) by Graze's 100% Grassfed Dairy Panel
- [**Grazing Through a Drought**](#) by Janet McNally

What's Your Ideal Grassfed Cow?

By Graze's 100% Grassfed Dairy Panel

Graze's 100% Grassfed Dairy Panel appears in every other print issue sharing their perspective on a variety of topics and issues pertinent to 100% grassfed dairy production.



By Dwight Stoltzfoos

Cows that are well adapted to a zero-grain, full-forage diet are important on a dairy like ours. What breed or color they are is less important to us than the actual traits. My father crossed his Holsteins to Jersey and New Zealand Friesians in the 90s after moving to serious grazing and organic certified. By the late 2000s, the NZ Friesians were averaging under 1000 lbs. bodyweight, and we were slowly decreasing grain before quitting completely in 2012.

We switched our A.I. genetics over to mostly Norwegian Red with some good Australian Ayrshire from John O'Brien mixed in. Around 2018, after 8-10 years of this push toward the mid-sized Ayrshire, we discontinued the three weeks of A.I. at the beginning of the annual June breeding season as we finally had enough of our own home-raised bulls to go all natural. We did introduce two nearly pure Fleckvieh bulls to the herd about 3-4 years ago, and this year we are milking our first daughters out of those bulls.

The combination of Ayrshire/Norwegian Red and Fleckvieh seems to really fit our system well, as we like the deep-chested and thick-legged cows with wide leg spacings (especially front legs) that we are seeing more and more of. We also observe that the red cows average a bit less sensitive than black cows to the heat extremes we experience here in southeast Pennsylvania. ***Continue reading this article [here](#).***

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Industry News and Resources

MDARD Expands Regenerative Agriculture Work with Investment in Dairy Grazing

Michigan's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is putting real resources behind dairy grazing. Through its Regenerative Agriculture Program, MDARD awarded a \$275,490 grant to the Wallace Center at Winrock International to help beginning, small, and medium-sized dairies transition to grazing. The work includes a practical transition playbook, expanded technical assistance and workforce development, a statewide resource map for Michigan graziers, and educational events where farmers can learn directly from experienced graziers. As MDARD Director Tim Boring described it, grazing gives producers a way to lower input costs and strengthen the long-term profitability of their operations.

AgCareers Feed Your Future Scholarship

AgCareers has expanded its Feed Your Future Scholarship. The program now awards four \$1,000 scholarships each year: two for college and university students and two for high school students. To apply, students need to be enrolled at a high school or post-secondary school in the U.S. or Canada with at least one semester remaining after 2026, and be studying agriculture or planning a career in the field. The application includes a short questionnaire and a resume uploaded to the AgCareers database.

Legacy Landscapes Grazing Lands Grant Program

Legacy Landscapes helps ranchers in Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, Kansas, Arizona, and Texas improve their grazing lands, strengthen their operations, and reach new markets. Participating producers can receive more than \$70,000 in support, including funding for practice implementation, a digital record-keeping subscription, an individual marketing plan, and optional reimbursements for soil and fecal analysis. Each producer also works one-on-one with a local grazing and livestock expert, and the program offers marketing support for direct-to-consumer, value-added, and regional processing opportunities. The current project runs through the end of 2028.

DATCP Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is accepting applications for its Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants, which support farmer-led groups working on soil and water quality in their local watersheds. Grants fund cost-share programs, on-farm demonstrations and research, and education and outreach. Groups can receive up to \$40,000. To qualify, you need at least five farmers in the same watershed and at least one collaborator, such as a county land conservation department, the UW Division of Extension, the Wisconsin DNR, or a nonprofit conservation organization.

Applications are due September 15, 2026. Details and application materials are on DATCP's Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants webpage at datcp.wi.gov

Upcoming Events

- [NODPA-NY Organic Dairy Pasture Walk](#) — September 22 | Freedom, NY
- [NODPA-NY, Triple Creek Farm, and Organic Valley Soil, Pasture, and Dairy Cow Health Pasture Walk](#) — September 23 | Candor, NY
- [26th Annual NODPA Field Days](#) — September 24–25 | Leesport, PA
- [World Dairy Expo](#) — September 29–October 2 | Madison, WI

Share Your Story with the DGA Community

We want to hear from you! Do you have a success story, upcoming event, research findings, or innovative practice you'd like to share with fellow dairy graziers? We're always looking for content that can benefit our community.

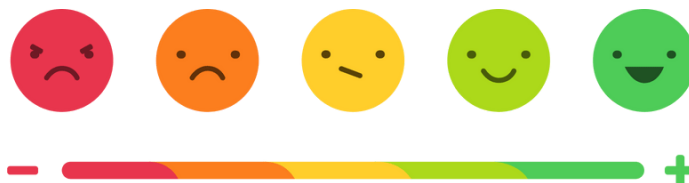
We'd love to feature:

- Farm success stories and lessons learned
- Upcoming conferences, field days, or educational events
- New research or publications relevant to dairy grazing
- Innovative grazing practices or technologies
- Questions you'd like us to address in future newsletters

Submit your suggestions, stories, or events to info@dga-national.org.

Your contributions help make this newsletter a valuable resource for the entire dairy grazing community!

Help us make the DGA Newsletter even better! Your feedback is invaluable in helping us create content that truly serves the dairy grazing community. This survey takes about 3-5 minutes to complete. [Survey](#)



Support DGA

Help strengthen the future of managed grazing dairy in the U.S. Your support advances farmers, education, innovation, and market opportunities that help dairy thrive.



Thank you for being part of the Dairy Grazing Alliance community. Together, we're advancing managed grazing and helping build a thriving, resilient future for dairy farmers, rural communities, and the land.



This newsletter was compiled in September 2026. For the most current information, please visit our website or contact us directly.

www.dga-national.org

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