



December 2025 Newsletter

Note from the editor

Happy December from all of us at DGA!

December is a time of reflection, a season to look back on the year's accomplishments and plan for the future. For graziers, it's a time to assess winter feed supplies, review herd performance, and begin thinking about the next grazing season. It's also a time for continued learning and connection, as we attend winter conferences and workshops, sharing knowledge and preparing for the year ahead.

This month, we're excited to share an update on the Managed Grazing Innovation Center (MGIC), including our plans for 2026 and new educational opportunities. We'll also highlight some important industry news and research findings that can help you prepare for the coming year.

As we celebrate the holiday season, we are grateful for the dedication and hard work of every member of the dairy grazing community. Your commitment to sustainable agriculture is what makes this industry so resilient and innovative. Thank you!

Please send us your news and comments. We would love to highlight awards, successes, grants, activities, media coverage, classes you would like MGIC to develop, etc. Please send your news to Jessica Duran. (jessica@dga-national.org) and if you want to share this Newsletter with someone use [this link!](#)

Jessica Duran, MGIC Director

Industry Headlines

- **1,810 Dairy Farms to 24: Inside North Dakota's Collapse.** North Dakota's dairy landscape has dramatically shifted from 1,810 farms to just 24, a consolidation driven by the undeniable economic advantages of scale in feed and transportation. This analysis breaks down the math behind the collapse and outlines critical survival strategies for the future—from embracing robotics to capturing organic premiums. [Read the full analysis](#)
- **Horizon Family Brands Acquires Maple Hill Creamery.** Horizon Family Brands has officially acquired Maple Hill Creamery, uniting America's original 100% grass-fed organic dairy brand with Horizon's extensive "better-for-you" portfolio. The strategic move aims to accelerate product innovation, strengthen supply chains, and deepen the industry's commitment to regenerative agriculture and sustainable farming practices. [Read the press release](#)
- **USDA Announces \$700 Million Regenerative Agriculture Pilot Program.** The current administration has announced a \$700 million voluntary regenerative agriculture pilot program. The program will provide funding to farmers who adopt conservation practices focused on improving soil health and water quality. [Learn more](#)
- **2025 Dairy Year in Review.** Industry analysts are reviewing the ten key forces that have redefined the dairy industry in 2025, from heifer shortages to FMMO changes, and offering strategies for farms to thrive through 2028. [Read the review](#)

Preparing for winter resources

- **Keys to Successful Winter Adaptive Grazing.** As farmers manage their herds through the winter, experts emphasize the importance of planning, managing stocking rates, prioritizing nutrient distribution, and investing in flexible infrastructure for successful adaptive grazing. [Learn more](#)
- **Bale Grazing Gains Popularity for Winter Management.** More beef and dairy operations are choosing bale grazing to minimize winter equipment use and labor. This practice also offers the benefit of spreading nutrients directly on pastures, improving soil fertility for the next grazing season. [Read about the benefits](#)

Research

- This study reveals that [regenerative dairy farming systems](#) produce milk and yogurt with significantly higher levels of omega-3s and antioxidants while reducing environmental impact compared to conventional grazing methods.

An Update on DGA

MGIC: A Year of Transformation and a Vision for 2026

2025 has been a landmark year for the Managed Grazing Innovation Center (MGIC), marked by strategic growth, technological advancement, and a renewed focus on serving the educational needs of the dairy grazing community.

As we celebrate the successful conclusion of our Fall Semester, we are taking a moment to look back at what we achieved together—and excited to share where we are going in 2026.

A Successful Semester on a New Platform

This fall marked a turning point for us as we completed our first full semester on the new MGIC platform. This transition has been a game-changer. Not only has it secured significant cost savings for the organization, but it has also upgraded the student experience, providing a more robust and engaging environment for learning.

But tools are only as good as the people using them. To keep the conversation going beyond the classroom, we have officially launched our dedicated social media communities. You can now follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) (with LinkedIn arriving soon) to share knowledge, swap stories, and celebrate the grazing community every day.



Looking Ahead to 2026: Growing Together

Our vision for 2026 is simple, **we want to be right where you are.** Whether you are checking fence lines or planning the future of your family farm, we are building tools to make our resources more accessible and our community stronger.

1. MGIC in Your Pocket (Mobile App) We know your "office" is often a pasture or a barn, not a desk. That's why we are thrilled to announce the development of the **Mobile App** in 2026. This will put our courses and community directly at your fingertips, making it easier than ever to access what you need, exactly when you need it.

2. Strengthening the Ag Education Network We believe that when one of us grows, we all grow. Building on our recent platform success, we are opening our doors to partner organizations to share our digital infrastructure. By helping other agricultural groups deliver high-quality online education, we aim to lift up the wider grazing community and expand our collective impact.

New Resources for Real-World Challenges

We've listened to your feedback and are launching two targeted courses at the beginning of 2026 to address the critical needs of grazing dairies:

- **Farm Succession Planning:** Securing your legacy is just as important as managing your land. This course guides families through the complex process of transition, offering the tools needed to plan for a secure future.
- **Reproductive Management:** Gain in-depth training on the specific reproductive strategies essential for a thriving pasture-based herd.

And Don't Forget to Join Us for Spring Semester!

Ready to keep learning? **Registration opens December 26, 2025.**

Classes run from **January 12 – April 3, 2026.** We invite you to join us for another season of connection, insight, and growth.

Jessica Duran
MGIC Director
jessica@dga-national.org

Graze

The magazine that is by graziers, for graziers

FROM SEASONAL CONVENTIONAL TO ORGANIC

*Low-input dairy graziers make shifts for
long-term sustainability and efficiency*

By Martha Hoffman Kerestes

Belleville, Pennsylvania — After 30 years shipping conventional milk on a spring-seasonal schedule, the Bylers switched to the Organic Valley truck and moved to bi-seasonal calving.



But that's just one of many adjustments they've made over time to set the farm up for short- and long-term success.

Low-input management is the cornerstone, and that means outwintered herds, nurse cows, natural service, limited machinery, and more. Matt Byler, 53, and his son Garrett, 31, run the 250-cow dairy with a full-time DGA apprentice and a part-time employee.

Cows doing the work

The Bylers manage around 750 rented and owned acres, although some are still in the process of organic transition. Their central Pennsylvania ground is relatively flat. The milking herd has access to the 320-acre home farm for year-round grazing, and there is off-farm acreage for young stock and dry cows.

All grain is purchased — the herd gets 10 lbs./head/day in the parlor. The pelleted mix is primarily ground corn and provides 20-25% of cows' dry matter needs for the day. At times the herd gets some purchased corn silage too.

To see this article in full, order the specific [back issue](#) you are interested in or [subscribe here](#). This article appeared in the October 2025 issue of Graze.

December 2025 Graze - summary of articles in the issue:

- Thinking outside the box with grazing
- World-class grassfed beef... from cull cows?
- Marketing lamb: when, how, and where?
- Grassfed panel: increasing components

Grants - Opportunities for you

- **CIG:** Looking for dairies in MN, WI, PA, and VT interested in improving their grazing infrastructure and management. For more information, complete this [interest form](#) or contact Ashley at ashley@dga-national.org.
- **GLPF:** Looking for farms in the Great Lakes Basin interested in adding grazing to or expanding their current operation. For more information, [click here](#).
- **NRCS-WI:** Looking for grazing farms with current EQIP or CSP contracts in Southern WI to utilize PaddockTrac and get real time pasture growth data. Contact greg@dga-national.org

UNIFORM-AGRI: Looking for an all-in-one solution to manage your pasture and animal records? Check this out!**If you are part of DGA you will get a few months for free!** For more information contact Lauren Silver at l.siver@uniform-agri.com

Jobs and Careers

- Many of our Mentors are looking for Interns and Apprentices! Don't miss your chance to connect and learn—apply today!
- [Other opportunities here](#).

Upcoming Industry Events

- GrassWorks Grazing Conference January 22-24, 2026 | La Crosse, Wisconsin
- IDFA Dairy Forum 2026 January 25-28, 2026 | Palm Desert, California
- NOFA-NY Winter Conference January 9-10, 2026 | Purchase, NY
- Great Lakes Regional Dairy Conference February 5-6, 2026 | Mount Pleasant, Michigan
- Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit March 10 -11, 2026 | Albany, NY

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.

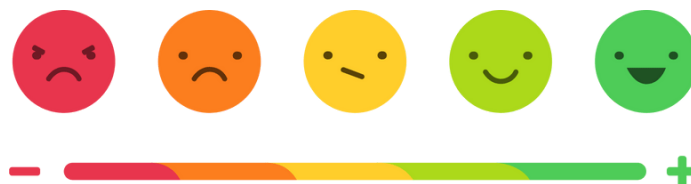
We'd love to feature:

- 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 Jessica Duran at jessica@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

Get involved!! Dairy Grazing Alliance is training a new generation of dairy farmers who utilize regenerative practices to revitalize rural communities, protect the

environment, and produce nutrient-dense dairy products.

[Donate here](#)



Thank you for being part of the Dairy Grazing Alliance community. Together, we're building a more sustainable and profitable future for dairy grazing.



This newsletter was compiled in December 2025. For the most current information, please visit our website or contact us directly.

www.dga-national.org

Dairy Grazing Alliance | 247606 Gad Rd | Medford, WI 54451 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!