



Monthly Newsletter - May 2026



Growing the dairy grazing sector, together

Your monthly update from the Dairy Grazing Alliance

Welcome to the DGA Newsletter

This month, we are focusing on a simple but important idea: **dairy is stronger when we recognize what we share**. Across the country, dairy farms operate in many different markets. Some are conventional, some are organic, some are grass-fed, some are pasture-based, and some carry additional certifications or product claims. Those differences matter because they help farms serve different customers and business models. Still, the foundation is shared: dairy farmers care for animals, manage land, grow or source feed, navigate uncertain markets, and work to sustain farms and rural communities.

We are highlighting a new article by our Executive Director, Joe Tomandl III, “**One Dairy: Why Our Industry Is Stronger When We Focus on What We Share**.” Joe’s message reminds us that conventional, organic, grass-fed, pasture-based, and other dairy systems all have a role in strengthening the future of dairy when we focus on shared values rather than divisions.

Inside this issue, you will also find updates on DGA learning opportunities, upcoming events, conservation funding resources, pasture economics, and new research on the hidden energy costs of grazing. We hope these resources help you stay informed, connected, and prepared for the season ahead.

Thank you for being part of the Dairy Grazing Alliance community.

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!](#)

Now available on the DGA blog

One Dairy: Why Our Industry Is Stronger When We Focus on What We Share

Executive Director Joe Tomandl's article on the importance of a "one dairy" approach.

In it, Joe reflects on the opportunity to build bridges across the dairy sector while advancing grazing, grass-fed dairy, sustainability, and long-term market value.



[Read full article](#)



**MANAGED
GRAZING**
INNOVATION CENTER

New Course!

Farm Transition Planning

The Farm Transition Planning course is designed to provide farmers, agricultural professionals, and anyone involved in farming with the knowledge and skills needed to plan and execute a successful transition of a farm from one generation to the next.



Farm transitions are crucial for the sustainability and prosperity of agriculture, and this course will guide you through the essential steps and considerations involved.



[Start Learning](#)

This course was created in collaboration with DGA and Penn State and is the outcome of a BFRDP-USDA grant.

Fall Semester 2026

As we wrap up the spring semester, we are looking ahead to the Fall 2026 semester.

Please take note of the important dates below for registration and semester start times.

Semester	Registration Starts	Registration Ends	Semester Starts	Semester Ends
Fall 2026	August 1st	September 21st	September 21st	December 11th

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



Monthly Roundtable

Organic Valley Producer Series: Organic Feeds & Pasture Management

Join us for an in-depth roundtable discussion focused on optimizing your grazing systems and sourcing high-quality organic feed. Whether you are navigating seasonal



transitions, managing grazing rotations, or verifying supplemental feed inputs, this session offers practical, producer-to-producer insights. Come prepared to share your strategies and learn from fellow farmers in the Organic Valley community.

This is the second Webinar in our Organic Valley series, bought to you by an OV FAFO grant.

Virtual event

Monday June 1, 2026

12:30 PM ET

[Register Here](#)

Graze

The magazine that is by graziers, for graziers

First-generation graziers build a farm

Turner Road Farm is revitalizing a worn-out farm with multi-species grazing

By Martha Hoffman Kerestes

Bayfield, Wisconsin — Far north in Wisconsin, just a few miles from Lake Superior, is a diversified farm built by two first-generation graziers.

Esme Martinson grew up on a blueberry farm with some hobby animals, and Josh Pearson grew up in town. Together they, with their daughter Nori, are producing grassfed beef, grass-finished lamb, and other products while rejuvenating old buildings and low-fertility land.



Josh and Esme manage 80 owned and 80 leased acres that include some wooded non-grazed portions. It started in 2012 on a small parcel when they had half a dozen sheep and roughly 3.5 acres to graze, and they stumbled onto rotational grazing by accident.

“In trying to make the grass last longer, we would set up small pens and move them every day,” Esme says. “We were just trying to keep them happy. We didn’t even know what it was called.”

They were dipping a toe into pastured eggs, raising a few hogs, and raising turkeys for meat.

It wasn’t planned this way, but this set the stage perfectly for when the opportunity came to buy the land across the road. Esme and Josh could show the USDA loan officer that they had the experience in farming and rotational grazing to qualify for a loan.

To see this article in full, order the specific [back issue](#) you are interested in or [subscribe here](#). This article appeared in the April 2026 issue of Graze.

April 2026 Graze - summary of articles in the issue:

- First-generation graziers revitalize a farm
- Advisors: managing manure
- Using EBVs for sheep selection
- Building loyalty in customers

Industry News and Resources

Resource to Explore Conservation and Sustainability Funding

The **Dairy Conservation Navigator** includes a funding opportunities page designed to help dairy farmers and advisors identify programs that may support sustainability and conservation efforts. [Explore the tool](#).

Pasture Value: Grass Is Not Free

As turnout decisions are being made and livestock prices remain strong, it is a good time to revisit a basic grazing economics question: what is pasture really worth?

Garth Ruff, Beef Cattle Field Specialist with Ohio State University Extension, frames pasture as a feedstuff that should be evaluated similarly to grain or purchased hay. That means asking what nutrients the forage provides, what it would cost to replace those nutrients with purchased feed, and how pasture use affects cost of production per head per day or per pound of gain. [Read more.](#)

Walking, Grazing, and the Hidden Energy Cost in Pasture-Based Dairy System

A recent Dellait Knowledge Center article by Álvaro García makes an important point for pasture-based dairy systems: walking and grazing are not free from an energy standpoint. Standard ration models often use baseline activity estimates, but real pasture conditions can increase energy expenditure because cows are walking longer distances, moving across uneven or muddy ground, navigating slopes, and harvesting forage from variable swards.

Dellait summarizes research suggesting that maintenance requirements in pasture systems may be underpredicted by 20–25% or more, depending on terrain, walking distance, pasture density, and environmental conditions. For a typical 600-kg Holstein, the article notes that NRC estimates roughly 0.27 Mcal NEL per kilometer walked, while field conditions may push the practical estimate closer to 0.32–0.34 Mcal NEL per kilometer. [Read more.](#)

Upcoming Events

- Temperate Silvopasture Symposium. May 27, 2026 | Kutztown, PA
- Heart of America Grazing Conference. July 15, 2026 | Effingham, IL
- [Artisan Cheesemaking Short course](#). August 7 - 8, 2026 | Ann Arbor, MI

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.

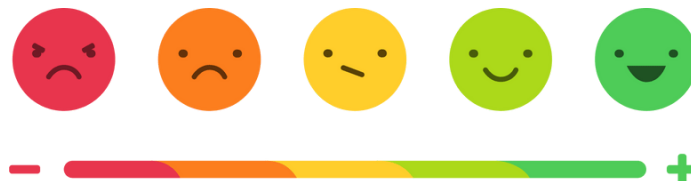
We'd love to feature:

- 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.



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 May 2026. For the most current information, please visit our website or contact us directly.

www.dga-national.org

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