



November 2025 Newsletter

Note from the editor

As we enter the final months of 2025, I am reflecting on what an incredible year of growth and learning this has been for the Dairy Grazing Alliance.

This November newsletter captures the essence of where we are as an organization: growing, evolving, and **strengthening** our foundation to better serve you, the dairy grazing community. The article you'll read about our "**growing pains and growing gains**" by Jill **Matchet**, our Grants Manager, **represents** more than just organizational development; it reflects our commitment to transparency and **continuous** improvement in service of our mission.

As we prepare for winter and begin planning for 2026, I'm energized by the possibilities ahead. The partnerships we're building, the research we're supporting, and the community we're fostering all point toward a bright future for dairy grazing.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Your dedication to sustainable farming practices and your willingness to share knowledge with fellow graziers is what makes this community so special.

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)

Jessica Duran, MGIC Director

Industry Headlines

- **Labor Shortages Threaten Dairy Infrastructure Investment.** The National Milk Producers Federation warns that critical labor shortages put \$11 billion in U.S. dairy infrastructure investments at risk, highlighting the importance of efficient management systems like those used in grazing operations. [Read the report](#)
- **German Researchers Develop "Dairy Farm of the Future".** Research in Germany is developing innovative dairy barn systems where cows and calves live together as family herds with freedom to move between barn and pasture environments, potentially revolutionizing dairy housing concepts. [Read about the innovation](#)
- **Cropland Grazing Delivers Economic and Soil Health Benefits.** South Dakota studies demonstrate that grazing cover crops and crop residues reduces feed costs while improving soil fertility, offering dairy farmers additional opportunities to extend grazing seasons and improve farm economics. [Learn more](#)

Research Spotlight

- A recent study in the *Journal of Animal Science* found that **virtual fencing is a viable tool for managing lactating dairy cows** in rotational grazing systems. The research showed **no negative impacts** on cow behavior, stress levels, feed intake, or milk yield when compared to traditional electric fencing. Cows learned the virtual system quickly, with those on a daily rotation seeming to adapt even faster, suggesting the technology can be implemented without compromising animal welfare or production. [Read more](#)

Preparing for winter resources

- Protecting your pastures while winter grazing, by SD State University. [Read more](#)
- Fall Pasture report. [Read more.](#)
- See the **National Drought Mitigation Center (Ranch Planning)** and **Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch** for a decision-making guide and example drought plans.
- Soil fertility recommendations for pastures by [New Jersey Agricultural Experimental Station](#).

An Update on DGA

Growing Pains, Growing Gains: A Year of Change at the Dairy Grazing Alliance

As the Dairy Grazing Alliance (DGA) grows, so does the complexity behind the scenes. With new funding, partnerships, and impact come greater needs for stronger systems, compliance, and careful stewardship of our resources.

This year marked my first anniversary with DGA, a year defined by learning and transformation. I joined as the organization recognized the need for dedicated support to manage the nuances of federal grants and funding. My focus has been building internal processes that keep us compliant, accountable, and aligned with our funders' expectations.

Growth Brings Both Challenges and Opportunities

Our biggest challenges included transitioning away from a major federal funding source, improving sub-recipient monitoring, rolling out new internal systems, and shifting from a “small nonprofit” mindset to a more structured organization. Increased funding also brought a new level of financial and administrative scrutiny.

Yet, these challenges sparked meaningful progress, driven by visionary leadership, a team eager to adapt, and our continued agility as a mission-focused organization.

A Year of Learning and Progress

Our annual audit, including a Single Audit, underscored both how far we've come and where we can still grow. Support from partners like The Charity CFO and CliftonLarsonAllen has been invaluable in strengthening our financial and grant management systems.

Looking Ahead

Growth isn't always easy, but it's essential. We're building a stronger foundation to ensure DGA's mission remains not only inspiring, but sustainable for years to come.

Jill Matchett
Grants Manager
jill@dga-national.org



A GROWING HERDSHARE BUSINESS

Nurse cows and tall grazing help make the system work smoothly for the Bairs

By Martha Hoffman Kerestes

Troy, Ohio — Two dozen years after first turning their conventional herd out to pasture, David and Annette Bair are bringing on the next generation, milking 48 cows for one of the largest herdshare programs in Ohio, and eyeing more growth as demand continues to expand.



It's a long way down the road from where things were at when David got fed up harvesting feed for the confinement dairy around the turn of the century. He was moving from 3rd and 4th cut hay straight into corn silage and then directly into high moisture ear corn, and it was a lot of time to spend on the tractor.

"I was spending every day for 90 days that the weather was fit in the tractor chopping, and it was costing a lot of money to do that," David says. "I just thought we could do better if we could just send the cows out and harvest their own feed." When he pitched the idea of letting the cows out to graze, his dad was hesitant but willing to try.

"My dad's biggest fear was 'what if it turns dry?'," David explains. "He was worried pasture wouldn't be able to keep supplying forage if it turned dry." David seeded 25 acres and grazed the herd in 2001 for part of their ration. And one part of his father's fear came true as the season turned dry, but the pasture didn't fail them.

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.

October 2025 Graze - summary of articles in the issue:

- First-generation graziers find a future in grass-fed dairy
- Advisors: reducing labor needs
- Managing lambs after weaning
- Building resilience with big bluestem

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.silver@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

- [PDPW Dairy Events](#) | Madison, Wisconsin
- ADPI Dairy Ingredients Seminar December 8-10, 2025 | Santa Barbara, California
- 2026 Dairy Convention January 7-8, 2026 | Provo, Utah
- Form-A-Feed Professional Dairy Conference January 14-15, 2026 | Larchwood, Iowa
- 2026 Cultivating Resilience Winter Conference February 6, 2026 | Michigan
- ADSA Annual Meeting 2026 June 21-25, 2026 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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.

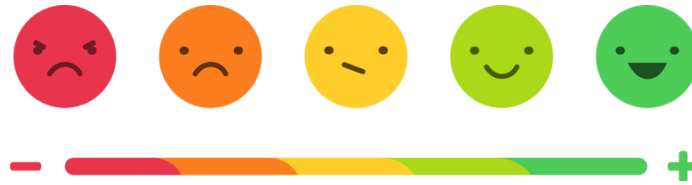
We'd love to feature:

- 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.



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

www.dga-national.org

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