



Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is dedicated to providing a guided pathway to independent dairy farm ownership, developing grazing careers, and strengthening the economic and environmental well-being of rural communities and the dairy industry.

We accomplish this mission by:

- *Linking current and aspiring graziers in the transfer of farms and graziers skills and knowledge.*
- *Developing alliances with agricultural, environmental, and consumer groups.*
- *Providing opportunities for farmers and their customers to invest in the next generation of grazing farmers.*

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

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Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship - In Brief

Backgrounder
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Dairy farms are an important part of rural economies in the United States. Mid-sized dairy farms generate \$34,000 per cow annually in the local community and support the infrastructure upon which other family scale farming operations and rural economies depend. In recent decades new farmers have not entered the profession at rates that offset the loss of retiring producers. Because the average age of farmers is 59 years old and many do not have an identified successor, farm loss persists in many communities.

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) is working to reverse this trend by matching current and aspiring dairy farmers, providing comprehensive training and support, and developing models of equity building, investment, farm start-up, and farm transfer.

Initially developed as a state-wide program in Wisconsin, DGA is now an independent nonprofit organization with a National Apprenticeship under the U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Administration. DGA addresses barriers to farm ownership for aspiring dairy farmers and creates options for existing farmers who want to develop employees, expand their dairy grazing business or transfer the farm upon retirement. The program was developed with support from USDA-NIFA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (2010, 2011, 2014, and 2017).

- DGA is a National Apprenticeship that can operate in any state.
- DGA is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
- DGA consists of 4000 hours over two years. It combines on-farm employment and mentorship under an approved Master Dairy Grazier (3700 hours) with related instruction (300 hours).
- Apprentices earn while they learn. They gain skills, knowledge, experience, relationships, and confidence during the program and graduate capable of owning and operating or managing a grazing dairy farm.
- Custom courses designed to enhance on-farm training for Apprentice are offered through DGA's own online school Managed Grazing Innovation Center.
- DGA has successfully implemented equity building, farm start-up, and farm transfer models.
- DGA currently has 200+ approved Mentor Dairy Graziers in 15 states:

Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin. The program has 44 active Mentor-Apprentice pairs, 52 Journey Dairy Graziers, and 189 Apprentice Candidates seeking to be hired.

Visit www.dga-national.org for application information, case studies, news, events, partners, and opportunities to get involved.