



# Ways YOU Can Help CREATE A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

# Farmers Training Farmers in Grazing Based Dairy MAKING FOOD GOOD

## NUTRITIOUS DAIRY PRODUCTS

Milk, cheese, yogurt, and butter from grazing dairy cows are not only delicious but are also high in antioxidants and essential nutrients.

- **Vitamin A** is important for vision, for healthy skin and mucus membranes, and for strong bones and teeth.
- **Beta-carotene** (pro-vitamin A) enhances immune system, helps the reproductive system function properly and may protect against cancer.
- **Lutein** reduces the risk of macular degeneration, improves skin health and may help prevent breast and colon cancer.
- **Vitamin D** plays a critical role in the body's use of calcium and phosphorous.
- **Vitamin E** acts as an antioxidant, protecting vitamins A and C, red blood cells and essential fatty acids from destruction.
- **Selenium** is a mineral that acts as an antioxidant by protecting cells from damage by free radicals.
- **Omega 3** is an essential fatty acid that plays a vital role in healthy functioning and balance of cells and systems.
- **Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA)** is a polyunsaturated fat that has been proven to be a potent defense against cancer.

## THRIVING RURAL COMMUNITIES

DGA aims to create more managed-grazing dairy farms that will diversify the dairy industry, repopulate rural communities, and support local businesses. These farms generate **\$34,000** of economic activity per cow per year to the local economy and support the infrastructure upon which other value-added farming enterprises depend.

**SHOP** the DGA Store, where a portion of every purchase goes to support programming.

<https://institchesink.com/product-category/dairy-grazing-apprenticeship-dga/>

**DONATE** to the DGA Scholarship Fund to help provide training support for Apprentices at <https://www.dga-national.org/donate>

**INVEST** in innovative models for decentralized development of a grazing-based dairy industry.

- ◆ Land/farms to be leased to DGA graduates
- ◆ DGA Education Farms to train multiple Apprentices in one location and accelerate program outcomes

Learn more: <https://new-dairy-concept.dga-national.org/>

CONTACT DGA FOR MORE INFORMATION

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[dga-national.org](https://dga-national.org)

## Who will produce our food?

The trend in recent decades toward consolidation and expansion of large confinement dairy operations, while successful in terms of production levels, has resulted in increased threats to animal, human, and environmental health as well as barriers to ownership for aspiring dairy farmers. Retiring producers who do not have an identified successor are often forced to sell their cows and land, which often goes in row crop production or non-agricultural development.

*The average age of farmers nationwide is 59 years old.* While this generational shift has potential to exacerbate challenges, it also provides a critical opportunity to alter the course of the dairy industry.

## An Innovative Direction in Farmer Education

### DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP (DGA) IS THE FIRST FORMAL APPRENTICESHIP FOR FARMING IN THE NATION.

Modelled after the system of education used to train skilled people in the trades for more than a century, DGA provides a structure of support for the transfer of knowledge, skills, and farms from one generation to the next.

Apprentices earn while they learn! The two year program combines fulltime on-farm employment and mentoring under an experienced farmer with formal coursework.

Apprentices who complete the program become Journey Dairy Graziers and may move into management, equity earning situations, milk-share partnerships, farm start-ups or farm transfer. Once established, they have the option of becoming Masters and training Apprentices themselves.

## DAIRY FARMING FOR GOOD

### WHAT IS MANAGED GRAZING?

Managed grazing is a sustainable farming method in which the majority of farm acres are planted to perennial pasture and livestock are rotated through paddocks of high quality grasses and legumes that are allowed to rest and regrow.

Farmers use lightweight portable fencing in place of predators, keeping grazing animals closer together and moving, to mimic natural prairie or oak savannah ecosystem system.

The result is **HEALTHY ANIMALS** who enjoy:

- A diverse and nutritious forage-based diet appropriate to ruminants
- Social interaction, physical exercise, and natural herd behaviors
- Improved health, longevity, and quality of life



## Farming that RESTORES Ecosystems

### BUILDING SOILS

Grazing animals distribute organic matter that is vital to soil organisms, which in turn make nutrients available to the plants that they eat. This is the nutrient cycle that is the basis of healthy ecosystem.

### RESTORING WATER RESOURCES

The well-established root systems of permanent pastures act like sponges, slowing the movement of water, allowing natural filtration, keeping soil in place, and reducing run-off. Well managed grazing farms improve quality of both ground water and surface water.

### CONSERVING ENERGY & SEQUESTERING CARBON

Managed grazing not only reduces the use of fossil fuels and off-farm inputs, because animal harvest their own feed and provide natural fertilizer, but also captures atmospheric carbon and stores it in the soil.

### PROTECTING CRITICAL HABITAT

Diverse pasture plants, clean water, and sustained rest periods in grazing systems restores and protects habitat for pollinators, ground-nesting birds, endangered reptiles and amphibians, and other wild life.