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Dairy Grazing Alliance Adds Three Strategic Hires to Accelerate Growth of U.S. Dairy Grazing Sector

Alex Peterson, former chair of the U.S. Dairy Export Council, is Senior Director of Corporate Partnerships & Market Development; Fabian Bernal is Senior Director of Sustainability Impact & Strategic Modeling; and Lissy Matthews is Senior Director of Advancement & Strategic Partnerships

(Madison, Wis.) Feb. 25, 2026 — [Dairy Grazing Alliance](#) (DGA) today announced three new employees who will help DGA accelerate growth of America's dairy grazing sector within the broader U.S. dairy industry.

Alex Peterson joins the Alliance as Senior Director of Corporate Partnerships & Market Development; Fabian Bernal is Senior Director of Sustainability Impact & Strategic Modeling; and Lissy Matthews is DGA's new Senior Director of Advancement & Strategic Partnerships.

All three positions are new to DGA and were created to strengthen the organization's leadership, partnerships and internal capacity to support the growth of U.S. dairy grazing.

"We are thrilled to welcome Alex, Fabian and Lissy to our DGA team," said Joe Tomandl III, DGA's founder and executive director, and a fourth-generation dairy grazing farmer. "In each of their unique roles, they will help us build partnerships and producer-focused strategies that drive significant growth in the dairy grazing sector, and expand our data and verification work for more definition and impact."

The Alliance is best known for its Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program, which was started in 2010 and is a paid Apprenticeship registered with the U.S. Department of Labor. The Apprenticeship has logged more than 750,000 hours of on-farm training across the United States. In 2024, the organization expanded its work to advance the development of America's dairy grazing sector as a strong and complementary part of the entire U.S. dairy industry.

Today, DGA collaborates with a wide range of dairy industry stakeholders — farming operations, dairy industry organizations, major CPG brands, research institutions, among others — who see value in growing the dairy grazing sector. Dairy grazing strengthens the broader U.S. dairy industry by expanding market opportunities, increasing domestic supply of grass-fed dairy to meet increasing consumer demand, diversifying production approaches, and supporting environmental and transparency goals already underway across the dairy industry.

Peterson's work with stakeholders will be pivotal to strengthening market demand for dairy grazing and attracting investment to support the sector's growth. He will build and manage

relationships with corporate partners, investors and supply chain stakeholders, with an immediate focus on advancing current initiatives and aligning market opportunity with producer capacity.

For the past 15 years, Peterson has been an active third-generation managed grazing dairy farmer in Missouri. He has served in leadership of regional and national dairy promotion, cooperative and policy advocacy boards.

“I have had the privilege of being engaged from the pasture to the parlor to the domestic and international consumer’s plate,” said Peterson. “I strongly believe that U.S. dairy needs to strengthen our domestic portfolio in the clear and growing market of pasture-based dairy products.”

Bernal's leadership will help DGA expand its data and analytical capacity to generate practical insights that support dairy grazing farmers and strengthen market credibility. He brings experience in dairy production and agricultural economics, application of sustainability concepts, life-cycle assessment, and environmental modeling, with a focus on translating farm performance into credible metrics that support decision-making across the value chain.

“I’m excited to join DGA at a time when the dairy sector has a real opportunity to demonstrate the value of grazing systems through credible, science-based evidence,” said Bernal. “By advancing practical standards, streamlined MMRV, and modernized reporting capacity, we are strengthening the sector’s ability to stand on its own merits — translating on-farm management into transparent, verifiable environmental and economic outcomes for farmers, processors and consumers. This work builds the resilience, credibility and data infrastructure needed for dairy grazing to demonstrate its value, support farm viability, and meet growing market expectations with confidence.”

Matthews will lead DGA’s development efforts, working to secure and steward the financial, relational and strategic capital necessary to advance DGA’s mission and long-term sustainability. She brings deep experience advancing regenerative agriculture through cross-sector collaboration and organizational leadership. Most recently, she served in an executive role at Advancing Eco Agriculture (AEA), where she worked with farmers, funders and mission-driven food organizations to support resilient agricultural systems. She also contributed to the development of the crop-specific Integrity Grown™ verification program, designed to validate regenerative practices and strengthen alignment across the agricultural value chain.

"Having spent my career working alongside farmers and mission-driven food organizations, I'm honored to join DGA at a time of growing opportunity for dairy grazing," said Matthews. "I look forward to building strong partnerships, engaging leaders across the regenerative agriculture community, and expanding philanthropic investment to support farmers and advance the long-term impact and visibility of grazing nationwide."

DGA has also recently welcomed new board members and advisors whose experience across dairy, agriculture and sustainability strengthens DGA's governance and industry engagement.

About Dairy Grazing Alliance

The mission of [Dairy Grazing Alliance](#) (DGA) is to catalyze the development of and support for a vibrant dairy grazing sector. It was formed in 2024 to advance the development of the dairy grazing sector as a strong and complementary part of the overall U.S. dairy industry.

DGA, which houses the [Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship](#), collaborates with a diverse group of stakeholders to develop and strengthen the U.S. dairy grazing value chain. It fosters partnership and inspires innovation and action between farming operations, major CPG brands, research institutions, among others.

For more information about DGA, please visit www.dga-national.org.

About Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

The [Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship](#) is making dairy farming a reality for a new generation. Housed within the [Dairy Grazing Alliance](#), the Apprenticeship strengthens the pipeline of skilled managed dairy grazing professionals and supports the transfer of farming wisdom from one generation to the next. It is a paid Apprenticeship that is registered with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Since the Apprenticeship was founded in 2010, it has provided more than 750,000 hours of on-farm training and related coursework in managed grazing dairy production to hundreds of farmers located in 16 states nationwide, including Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin. It is the first formal agricultural Apprenticeship in the nation.

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