



— HANDBOOK —

TRAINING GUIDELINES

DAIRY  GRAZING
APPRENTICESHIP

A GRASSWORKS INITIATIVE

THE DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP OF GRASSWORKS, INC. IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING A GUIDED PATHWAY TO INDEPENDENT GRAZING FARM OWNERSHIP, DEVELOPING GRAZING CAREERS AND STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING OF RURAL COMMUNITIES AND THE DAIRY INDUSTRY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Preface..... 5
Important Instructions for the Trainer..... 6
Important Instructions for the Apprentice 7

MAJOR WORK CATEGORIES

1. Manage Cattle Appropriately (includes heifers/ dry cows, calves and milk cows) 8
 A. Handle animals safely..... 8
 B. Verify herd health and wellness 8
 C. Evaluate animal productivity 8
 D. Evaluate calf needs and use appropriate resources to meet the requirements 9
 E. Establish cow breeding cycles 9
 F. Comprehend milk cow vaccination program ... 9
 G. Maintain Hoof Health..... 10
2. Manage Milking Operations..... 11
 A. Manage the milk cow environment..... 11
 B. Milk cows following prescribed procedures.... 11
 C. Manage milk quality 11
 D. Perform milk testing accurately 11
 E. Maintain stock records..... 12
 F. Identifies which cows to cull 12
 G. Dispose of dead stock..... 12
3. Assess dairy nutritional needs and requirements 13
 A. Select quality feed based on conditions 13
 B. Select feed appropriate to livestock needs 13
 C. Develop a strategy to optimize the amount of feed that comes from pasture..... 13
 D. Store supplemental feed 14
 E. Develop a plan to extend the grazing season .. 14
 F. Monitor feed, grain and supplemental nutrition 14
 G. Maintain supplement feed records and information 14

4. Optimize Pasture Production..... 15
 A. Estimate pasture production volume 15
 B. Select plants, grasses and legumes based on pasture conditions..... 15
 C. Manage break of grass 15
 D. Monitor pasture health and productivity 15
 E. Fertilize pastures based on the soil and nutritional needs 16
 F. Identify plant species and their needs..... 16
 G. Control weeds..... 16
 H. Renovate and overseed pastures 16
 I. Manage surplus pasture 17
5. Manage Soil and Water Resources for Productivity and Health 18
 A. Coordinate animal needs with pasture growth and growing seasons 18
 B. Assess soil needs based on the type and conditions..... 18
 C. Balance soils for proper nutrient content 18
 D. Select the best grasses and legumes based on the soil and water conditions..... 18
 E. Fertilize pastures based on conditions 18
 F. Handle chemicals safely and in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions 18
 G. Maintain soil conditions and fertility..... 19
 H. Plan for winter feeding, fall harvesting and purchasing winter feed supplies 19
 I. Manage water quality based on conditions 19
 J. Manage drought conditions based on soil types 19
 K. Determine integrated pest management practices for managed dairy grazing 19
 L. Manage manure..... 20
 M. Demonstrates awareness of both organic and conventional agronomic principles..... 20

continued

N. OPTIONAL: Apply land conservation techniques based on soil and water quality 20

6. Evaluate Information for Effective Decision Making..... 21

A. Use holistic (or other) goal setting and planning practices. 21

B. Acquire information from farm records..... 21

C. Adapt to circumstances or the environment based on reliable information 21

7. Manage Farm Business Operations Profitably 22

A. Manage time effectively..... 22

B. Analyze input costs and income relationships (milk, fuel, feed)..... 22

C. Balance profitability, family goals, and rural community impact 22

D. Develop contingency plans for weather, prices and unknowns..... 22

E. Maintain cattle specific records..... 22

F. Maintain enterprise records 23

G. Evaluate financial performance 23

8. OPTIONAL: Plan for Organic Farming Operations..... 24

A. Acquaint self with organic farming principles..... 24

B. Incorporate organic pasture management practices..... 24

C. Acquaint self with organic livestock management 24

D. Acquaint self with organic soil and agronomic practices 24

E. Adhere to organic certification and record keeping 25

F. Coordinate organic suppliers and resource providers..... 25

G. Evaluate organic milk markets..... 25

9. OPTIONAL: Design Pastures and Paddock Layouts..... 26

A. Comprehend efficient pasture layouts..... 26

B. Plan for managed grazing fences 26

C. Select appropriate managed grazing fences based on conditions..... 26

D. Install managed grazing fences 26

E. Create plan for moving livestock and accessing paddocks/pastures 27

F. Move mobile fences based on cow needs..... 27

G. Plan and assemble livestock watering systems 27

H. Create plans for pasture irrigation systems when applicable 27

10. OPTIONAL: Maintain Grazing Machinery, Facilities and Equipment..... 28

A. Work around farm equipment safely..... 28

B. Clean and sanitize milking facilities and equipment according to regulations 28

C. Troubleshoot equipment malfunctions..... 28

D. Maintain equipment used in managed grazing dairy operations 28

E. Repair equipment..... 28

11. OPTIONAL: Evaluate traditional, organic, and grass-based food and milk markets..... 29

A. Plan for creating value added dairy product..... 29

B. Characterize milk quality resulting from managed grazing and grass feed cows.... 29

C. Communicate the benefits of sustainable farming 30

D. Explain the value of grass finished milk products 30

E. Acquaint self with end user needs consumerism 30

F. Demonstrate being alert to global needs and market trends..... 30

PREFACE

This “Job Book” of Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Training Guidelines was developed by the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards and the Grassworks Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Advisory Committee. It is intended to be used by apprentices and employers as a “blueprint” for training in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Contract.

The care and maintenance of this book is the joint responsibility of the apprentice and the employer. The Training Guidelines were developed specifically for documenting the apprentice’s acquisition of skills.

Use this job book according to program policies and procedures.

Apprentices are required to comply with the specific safety and health standards issued by federal, state, and local authorities, especially the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) along with employers’ rules for the health and safety of employees.

All work shall be performed in a professional and workman like manner. All work shall be performed in accordance with any applicable building codes and professional industry standards.



IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TRAINER

The Training Guidelines identify skills required for this occupation and its related training program.

These Training Guidelines have been written in statements, which describe how well an apprentice must perform each skill in order to become competent, and complete his/her apprenticeship.

It is recommended that the apprentice progress through this document in a manner to ensure that a sufficient number of items are completed during each step in the apprenticeship progression to enable completion of all or substantially all by the end of the apprenticeship. However, the tasks identified do not need to be completed in the order presented. However, certain items are mandatory and must be completed by the apprentice before the end of his/her apprenticeship program.

The apprentice must demonstrate an acceptable skill/ knowledge level in order to have an item signed off by an evaluator. Each item should be discussed and/ or performed more than once. Items must be signed and dated by the evaluator and apprentice in ink.

Each of the identified knowledge has a typical example where the performance may be observed and evaluated. The typical example is just a suggestion. Other activities may be used to evaluate the apprentice’s performance.

Apprentices should review the guide with their supervisor on a regular basis. This will allow him/ her to schedule needed training. If a particular item does not become available during the job training, it may be simulated. The simulation will include detailed discussion on procedures, materials, tools, and safety requirements.

Trainers and apprentices are required to sign off and date the skills following each successful acquisition.



IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE APPRENTICE

Record all hours working for the employer.

A “Summary of Hours” should be completed, signed, and dated by both the apprentice and employer when all terms of the contract have been completed.

It is your responsibility to inform your local Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards Apprenticeship Training Representative regarding any changes in name or address.

You may want to keep a journal of your daily work, noting such things as why a task was not completed, hours worked, job location, weather, and keep a record of conversations regarding details of the job. On occasion, these detailed notes can be used to solve disputes and in rare instances, they may be used in court cases.

It is recommended that you progress through this document in a manner to ensure that a sufficient number of items are completed during each step in the apprenticeship progression to enable completion of all, or substantially all, by the end of the apprenticeship. However, the tasks identified do not need to be completed in the order presented.

You must demonstrate an acceptable skill/knowledge level in order to have an item signed off by an evaluator. Each item should be discussed and/or performed more than once. Items must be signed and dated by the evaluator and apprentice in ink.

Each of the identified knowledge has a typical example where the performance may be observed and evaluated. The typical example is just a suggestion. Other activities may be used to evaluate you.



MAJOR WORK CATEGORIES

All work items are mandatory unless specifically identified as “Not Mandatory”.

I. Manage Cattle Appropriately (includes heifers/dry cows, calves and milk cows)

A. Handle animal safely

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Maintains appropriate flight zone distances.			
2. The animals move calmly in the desired direction.			
3. Remains calm.			
4. Correctly uses head lock and halter.			
5. Properly uses safeguards while isolating an animal, including gates and proper deterrent tools.			

B. Verify herd health and wellness

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. While conducting farm operations, such as milking, recognizes symptoms and abnormal behavior that would indicate illness.			
2. Follows proper protocols to determine whether contacting a veterinarian is necessary.			
3. If contacting a veterinarian is not necessary, determines and administers the necessary on-farm treatment (ex. common metabolic disorders).			

C. Evaluate animal productivity

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Comprehends and monitors cattle body condition scoring.			
2. Monitors daily milk production.			
3. Comprehends and monitors breeding records, and records breeding dates.			

D. Evaluate calf needs and use appropriate resources to meet the requirements

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Feeds calves appropriate type and amount of food.			
2. Follows appropriate protocol for raising calves.			
3. Follows proper protocol for care and feeding of calves.			
4. Comprehends potential health risks of calves, and monitors for related symptoms.			
5. Comprehends health needs of a calf, and monitors for proper growth			
6. Demonstrates proper dehorning techniques			

E. Establish cow breeding cycles

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Identifies animals that are in heat.			
2. Comprehends and monitors breeding records.			

F. Comprehend milk cow vaccination program

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Explains resources available and procedures used on the farm.			
2. Summarizes the vaccination protocol.			

MAJOR WORK CATEGORIES

All work items are mandatory unless specifically identified as “Not Mandatory”.

G. Maintain Hoof Health

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Identifies the hoof condition.			
2. If the hoof condition is acute, able to treat it accordingly by use of antibiotics or other means.			
3. If the hoof condition is chronic, able to trim the hooves or administer another appropriate treatment.			

Notes

Include information regarding apprentice progress, special certificates, etc.

2. Manage Milking Operations

A. Manage the milk cow environment

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Conducts and monitors cow hygiene scoring on a routine basis.			

B. Milk cows following prescribed procedures

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Properly preps cattle using appropriate techniques, which might include the following, according to conditions: pre-dipping; stripping; wiping with individual towels; attaching milking unit; and post-dipping for milking.			
2. Observes and identifies potential abnormalities in utters or milk.			
3. Recognizes when milking is complete.			

C. Manage milk quality

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Identifies substandard trends in the weekly review.			
2. Takes appropriate action to ensure milk quality.			

D. Perform milk testing accurately

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	EVALUATOR SIGNATURE	APPR. INITIALS	DATE COMPLETED
1. Accurately performs DHI, antibiotic, anti-biotic sensitivity, milk components and bacteria milk testing.			
2. Follows the protocols for milk testing for individual cows.			