



DAIRY  **GRAZING**
A P P R E N T I C E S H I P

DAIRYGRAZINGAPPRENTICESHIP.ORG

DGA: First in the Nation



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National Standards for Training in Managed Grazing Dairy Production

- Guided work experience
- Related instruction
- Facilitated peer group
- Industry networking
- Pathway to farm ownership

Employee Development



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A Proven Educational Model

Formal Apprenticeship: 4000 hours over 2 years

- 3718 hours of on-farm employment and training, guided by “Job Book”
- 288 hours of related instruction
 - Herd Health
 - Milk Quality
 - Dairy Nutrition
 - Pasture Management
 - Holistic Management
 - Peer Discussion Groups
- Financial planning services



Education & Outreach Materials



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MAJOR WORK CATEGORIES
All work items are mandatory unless specified otherwise in "Not Mandatory"

WORK CATEGORY	CHALLENGE/EMPHASIS	APPL. WEEKS	APPL. DATES
A. Manage Dairy Operations (include tasks by year, calves and milk cows)			
1. Handle animal health			
1.1. Monitor appropriate flight times/durations			
1.2. The available dairy's daily or other disease/diagnoses			
1.3. Monitor diets			
1.4. Control deworming and other			
1.5. Prepare and use good quality bedding or material including pens and proper deworming tools			
2. Study the life cycle and welfare of dairy cattle/cows			
2.1. Understand reproductive operations such as milking, pregnancy management and disease/diagnoses that would affect the herd			
2.2. Follow proper protocols to determine whether calving is a normal or abnormal event			
2.3. The relationship between diet and dairy cow health and production (e.g., the relationship between diet and reproductive performance)			
3. Evaluate animal productivity			
3.1. Compare milk production and other body condition scoring			
3.2. Measure dairy milk production			
3.3. Compare milk production and other body condition scoring			

CHALLENGE/EMPHASIS	APPL. WEEKS	APPL. DATES
3. Balance calf needs and use appropriate resources for the operation		
4. Understand the health care of calves and monitor for illness or disease		
5. Understand the health care of calves and monitor for illness or disease		
6. Understand the health care of calves and monitor for illness or disease		
7. Understand the health care of calves and monitor for illness or disease		
8. Understand the health care of calves and monitor for illness or disease		
9. Understand the health care of calves and monitor for illness or disease		
10. Understand the health care of calves and monitor for illness or disease		

DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP
A GRASSWORKS INITIATIVE

A NEW DIRECTION IN FARMER EDUCATION

A FIRST OF ITS KIND

The emerging industry of managed grazing could create the first major educational opportunity for the next generation of dairy farmers. Right now, the only way to learn the skills and knowledge of this new practice is to learn from the best in the industry. Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is the first of its kind to provide a formal, structured program in managed grazing to the next generation of dairy farmers.

OUR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM PREPARES INDIVIDUALS TO OWN AND OPERATE A DAIRY FARM BY COMBINING ON-THE-JOB TRAINING WITH RELATED INSTRUCTION. APPRENTICES CAN WHILE THEY LEARN DURING THIS PROCESS. ALTHOUGH FORMAL APPRENTICESHIP HAS BEEN USED SUCCESSFULLY TO TRAIN HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS, DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE NATION.

THIS IS THE PLACE, NOW IS THE TIME

Despite the economic and cultural significance of dairy farming in Wisconsin, the industry has been in decline and is not recovering. Beginning farmers are not entering the profession at the same rates. Because of their production volume, the average age of dairy farm operators in the state is 57 years old. Farmers are expected to continue to have fewer children, and the industry is expected to continue to have fewer operators. The industry is expected to continue to have fewer operators. The industry is expected to continue to have fewer operators.

ALONGSIDE THE CHALLENGE OF SO MANY FARMS ON THE EDGE OF EXPANSION OR RETIREMENT LIES THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSITION THE INDUSTRY TO A MORE ECONOMICALLY PROFITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DAIRY PRODUCTION. THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY IS IMMEDIATE AND FOR ONLY ABOUT A DECADE.

The transition will require the implementation of management systems that can be sustained and replicated on moderately sized farms. The most efficient, productive and profitable dairy farming method available to a small and mid-sized farm is managed grazing.

While managed grazing farms have been making gains and milk, as many as 450,000 cows are raised on farms with low opportunities for investment. Economic and environmental benefits of managed grazing are not being realized.

The health and longevity of grazing animals means that dairy farmers often have more requirements for care of their management. This creates the opportunity of setting up a second job for farmers with the skills and knowledge of dairy farming. Such a second job can be a career opportunity for an experienced dairy farmer and more retirement options for their own production.

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is a unique alternative model for generating managed dairy farms, willing new farmers into successfully raise farm numbers, sustain rural communities, and help to restore natural resources.



BECOME A DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICE

DO YOU WANT TO BE A DAIRY FARMER?

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EDUCATE, TRAIN, TRANSFER & INVEST.

BECOME A MASTER DAIRY GRAZER

TAKE YOUR GRAZING OPERATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

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EDUCATE, TRAIN, TRANSFER & INVEST.

Options for Farm Transfer / Investment



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*Average age of dairy farmers in U.S. is 60 years old.
What are their options for farm transfer?*

*What are options for mid-career farmers seeking
opportunities to expand and/or invest?*

- Milk-share Partnership
- Spin-off Farm
- Transition of Ownership



Outcomes: Apprenticeship



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- ❑ Acquired skills, knowledge, and experience to own and operate a managed-grazing dairy
- ❑ Networked with dairy industry and local professionals
- ❑ Access to opportunities to:
 - Earn equity in cattle
 - Enter into a business partnership
 - Purchase a start-up farm
 - Transition into ownership
 - Manage a grazing-based dairy

* DGA is an FSA educational provider



Outcomes: Master



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- Employees who are highly skilled, competent, and trustworthy
- Managers for current dairy grazing operation and/or investment farm



- Financial models and support to help meet career goals, including retirement or exiting industry

Skilled People



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- ✓ Better employees
- ✓ Opportunities to expand
- ✓ Opportunities to transfer
- ✓ Solution to farm loss
- ✓ Strengthen our dairy infrastructure
- ✓ Strengthen our communities
- ✓ Protect our environment

Current Status of DGA




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- Operating in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Missouri.
- 55 approved farm sites; 17 current Master-Apprentice pairs; 8 graduates who now own start-ups, are earning equity, or manage a farm; 80+ are awaiting placement.
- Training manual, guidebooks, outreach materials.
- Website with online applications and searchable database to facilitate Master-Apprentice matches.
- Relationships with private investors.
- Approved vendor for Farm Services Agency's Financial Management Training Program.
- 501(c)3 Non-Profit Status.

How to Get Involved






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Username Password

Don't have a login?

ABOUT APPLY DONATE PRESS CONTACT PARTNERS



DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP

For beginning farmers, Apprenticeship answers the questions, "How do I get the skills I need to run a dairy farm? How can I support myself while I learn? What are steps to ownership?"

For established farmers, becoming a Master Dairy Grazer provides an opportunity to share knowledge and experience with the next generation, invest in and improve their own operation, and eventually transfer their dairy farm.

Formal Apprenticeship could initiate a paradigm shift in farmer education and help transition agriculture to the next generation of sustainable producers.

What you need to know...

- The Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is a 2-year program established by GrassWorks and the WI Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (BAS) with the support from USDA-NEFA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. It is composed of 4000 paid hours of training over two years (the equivalent of a full-time job). 3712 hours are on-the-farm employment and mentoring by a Master Dairy Grazer; 288 hours are paid related instruction.
- This program will help the dairy industry transition to the next generation by training new farmers in "Managed Grazing," an economically and environmentally sustainable farming method.
- A graduate of the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship will be capable of becoming an independent owner-operator of a grazing dairy farm, a milk-share partner or a farm manager.
- The Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is open to anyone—from the complete novice to the seasoned farmhand—who wants to become a dairy farmer. Individuals may receive program credit for approved previous education.

Frequently asked questions

What are the benefits of an apprenticeship?

Apprentices earn while they learn—they receive progressively increasing compensation while learning both on-the-job and in the classroom. Upon completing the program, their status as a skilled worker is recognized nationally.

WE'RE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR

Master Dairy Grazers
Dairy Grazing Apprentices

Contact:

Joe Tomandl, III
Program Director
723rd Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904
715-562-0399
ejtom@highes.net

WATCH A VIDEO

From the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

SEE ALL OUR FARM SITES


Showing Wisconsin and Minnesota.

BECOME A MASTER CRAZIER

Fill out the online application today.

BECOME AN APPRENTICE

Fill out the online application today.



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VIEWING OPTIONS

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Fill out the online application today.

BECOME AN APPRENTICE

Fill out the online application today.

Profile

Name: Firstname Lastname
Area: Minnesota
City: Woodbury
State: Minnesota
Area: Minnesota

Education

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Experience

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Career Goals

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Special Interest

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Preferred Placement Area

Minnesota

Willing to Move?

Yes

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Grant Funding Support



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- USDA-NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
- NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant
- The McKnight Foundation
- The Otto Bremer Foundation
- The Brookby Foundation
- WI Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
- Wisconsin Farmers Union

2015 Industry Sponsors



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Nicolet
NATIONAL BANK

Midwestern
BIO  **ag**
BETTER FARMING
THROUGH BETTER SOIL

Graze
the magazine that is 'by graziers, for graziers'

Spalding Laboratories

CRV Better Cows, Better Life

ABS and GENO Global

BestYet Sires

Organic Valley/CROPP

Skilled People Are The Key



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