DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP

HANDBOOK

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLEDGE

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation in recruitment, selection, employment, and training of Apprentices during the Apprenticeship. DGA will take affirmative action to provide equal opportunity in the Apprenticeship and will operate the Apprenticeship program as required under Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 30.

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OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION TO DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP

MISSION

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is dedicated to providing a guided pathway to dairy grazing farm business ownership, developing grazing careers, and strengthening the economic and environmental wellbeing 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 like-minded agricultural, environmental, and consumer groups.
- Providing opportunities for farmers and their customers to invest in the next generation of grazing farmers.

HISTORY

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) is an accredited National Apprenticeship registered with the Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor. Originating in Wisconsin, where it was developed by and for farmers to address farm loss, DGA grew out of a long history of peer-to-peer education networks among dairy graziers in the state. Pasture walks, field days, local and statewide grazing conferences, and individual mentoring relationships, as well as technical assistance funded by the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative and the Natural Resources Conservation Services, nurtured a robust grazing community, supported the development of GrassWorks (a statewide producer-run organization), and created the conditions for this innovative step in farmer education.

In 2010, a group of dairy graziers who were GrassWorks members developed the idea of formalizing farmer-centered education using the model of Apprenticeship to link current and aspiring dairy producers and provide a structure of support for the transfer of knowledge, skills, and farms to the next generation. Like Apprenticeships in other industries, it would combine on-the-job training with related classroom instruction and place experienced Mentors at the center of the education process.

A comprehensive formal curriculum in managed-grazing dairy production was then developed through a partnership between GrassWorks, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and the Wisconsin Technical College System with financial support from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture. Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship was formally established in June of 2011. Entrants to the program could progress through the program as Apprentices, Journey Dairy Graziers, and finally Mentors themselves capable of not only owning and operating a managed-grazing dairy farm but also training new Apprentices. By the end of 2012, 25 farmers had been approved as Mentor Dairy Graziers, nearly 100 people had applied to become an Apprentice, and the first four participants had graduated to Journey Dairy Grazier status.

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship has since become an independent 501(c)3 organization and its National Apprenticeship, the first institutionally supported and accredited career track for farming in the nation, now operates in multiple states.

TERMS

APPRENTICESHIP

A system of work-based learning that fulfills the needs of industry by preparing workers for skilled trades by combining paid on-the- job training and related instruction. An Apprenticeship is developed in partnership between an industry sponsor, a state or federal labor department, and accredited educational institutions. Once an Apprenticeship is legally recognized, the curriculum outline (or Work Process Schedule) is made available to state-level labor departments across the nation. A state-level Apprenticeship may become a National Apprenticeship registered with U.S. Department of Labor and expand into other states without direct involvement of state agencies.

APPRENTICE

A highly skilled worker whose qualifications are recognized and respected throughout an industry. For 100 years bricklayers, electricians, plumbers and other skilled workers have followed this career path, becoming Apprentices, Journey-workers and finally Mentors in their respective fields.

DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) refers to both the training program and the organization. The training program is a National Apprenticeship registered with the U.S. Department of Labor-Employment and Training Association. It consists of 4000 hours over two years, combining on-farm employment and training under an established Mentor Dairy Grazier with approved courses and/or other related instruction. The organization is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit that serves as the industry sponsor for the National Apprenticeship.

DGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board is the governing body of Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship. It composed of 15 members (12 voting members and 3 advisory members) and includes Mentor Dairy Graziers, Journey Dairy Graziers, industry representatives, and institutional partners. The board provides oversight of general operations and leadership in the development of policies,procedures, and sustainability of DGA.

GRASSWORKS

A producer-run organization based in Wisconsin that provides leadership and education to farmers and consumers for the advancement of managed-grazing agriculture to benefit present and future generations. GrassWorks was the initial industry sponsor during the development of Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship.

GRAZIER

A farmer who utilizes a “Managed Grazing”system to provide a majority of livestock feed from well managed pastures.

MANAGED GRAZING

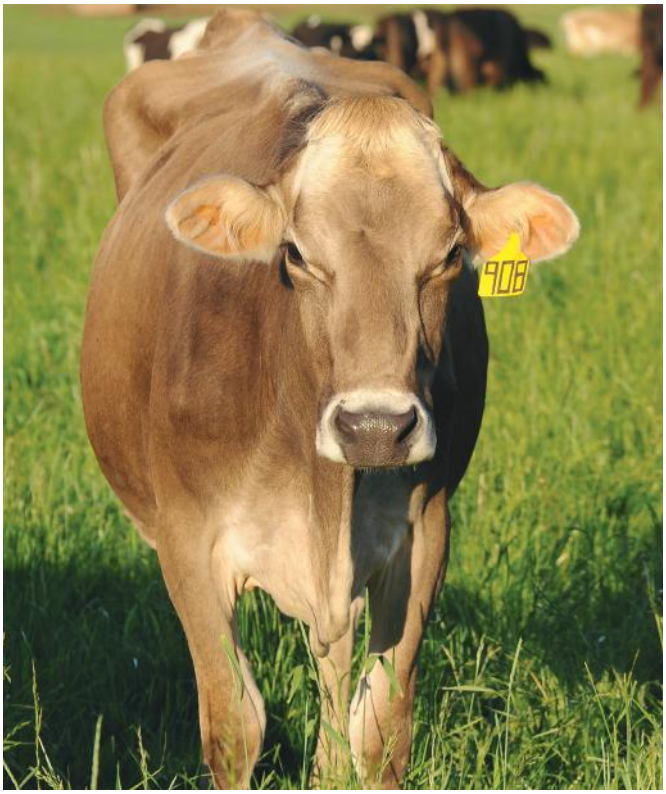
A sustainable farming method in which the majority of farm acres are planted to perennial forages and livestock are rotated through paddocks of nutritious grasses and legumes that are allowed to rest and re-grow. Managed grazing reduces phosphorous run off, builds soil and water resources, improves animal health, provides high-quality wildlife habitat,and produces high quality livestock and dairy products.

MENTOR DAIRY GRAZIER

An experienced and skilled dairy grazier whose farming operation has undergone an approval process and now serves as an educational farm site for the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship. Mentor Dairy Graziers are employers of and mentors for Apprentices, providing guidance on all aspects of running a successful dairy grazing farm, based on the DGA work process schedule(see Appendix A).

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP COMMITTEE

A standing committee on the DGA Board of Directors that oversees the Apprenticeship program. This committee is charged with assessing and approving proposed coursework for related instruction in participating states as well as any changes to the core curriculum. State Apprenticeship Committees report to the National Committee.



PROGRAM BASICS

The Apprenticeship is composed of 4000 hours of training over two years. Of those hours, 3700 are employment and training under the guidance of an approved Mentor Dairy Grazier. On-farm training is designed to prepare individuals in all aspects of owning and operating a managed-grazing dairy farm. Each Mentor-Apprentice pair is issued a copy of the DGA Training Guidelines (also known as the "Job Book"), which lays major work areas and guides the mentoring process.

The remaining 300 hours are related instruction,which includes:

- Formal Courses in Pasture Management, Milk Quality,Herd Health, Dairy Nutrition, Soil & Water Resources,and Farm Business Management
- Peer Discussion Groups, Pasture Walks, Farming Conferences, and Networking Opportunities
- Holistic Management and Professional Development Training

A local Education Coordinator conducts farm visits,first monthly and then bi-monthly, to guide the relationship, monitor Apprentice progress through the program, and provide on-farm technical services. Graduates become certified Journey Dairy Graziers with option to move into management positions and/or equity earning situations the Mentor or another farm, business partnership, farm start up or farm transfer. Journey Dairy Graziers may eventually become Mentors themselves, capable of taking on and training new Apprentices. In this way the program has potential for exponential growth. All DGA participants receive business planning services to help them reach their farming and career goals. DGA is an approved vendor for the USDA Farm Services Agency's Financial Management Training Program.

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

DGA establishes clear, accessible, institutionally supported steps for an individual to take from novice to successful independent farm operator. The program is open to anyone interesting in becoming a dairy farmer. But it also recognizes the skills and previous experience of participants (such as farm hands, hired milkers, herd managers and junior operators) by facilitating a competitive hiring process and accepting approved coursework that was taken previously to count toward Apprenticeship. To assist Journey Dairy Graziers in their transition into careers in dairy grazing, the following models of equity transfer are utilized:

1. FARM MANAGER

The Journey Dairy Grazier attains managerial position on one or more grazing dairy farms. Graduates of the Apprenticeship Program who do not yet want to commit to a particular farm or a specific location will be able to find employment as a dairy manager. Establishing a pool of highly qualified managers will ease the pressure on existing dairy farmers to expand in order to hire a permanent full-time manager with extensive training in dairy grazing. For existing farmers, the potential for labor relief could mean the difference between implementing managed grazing and expanding a confinement operation.

2. MENTOR FARM EXPANSION AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Mentor who now has a skilled employee/manager in the Journey Dairy Grazier is able to expand operation in current location and establishes milk-sharing partnership. This arrangement has worked well in New Zealand and is becoming more widely known in the region (Tranel 2015). Typically, in a milksharing partnership, one person (the Mentor) owns the land and the facilities and another person (the Journeyman) owns the cows and equipment. Here, the Journey Dairy Grazier manages the farm and the milk check is split between the partners. As with any business arrangement, steps are taken to ensure partnerships are transparent and lawful.

3. TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP

The late-career/retiring Mentor transfers ownership of existing farm to the Journey Dairy Grazier. As more farmers reach the age of retirement, this strategy is critical for bringing new farmers into land and dairy business ownership. Either of the above scenarios might lead to farmer transfer. A Journey Dairy Grazier may build equity, bring equity or manage a farm, as equity is gradually acquired. Many of Wisconsin's most successful and highly skilled graziers are at the later stages in their careers and are seeking to divest or transfer their farm business to someone who is highly qualified. Mentors who have spent their careers building a successful operation most often want their farm to stay a well-managed and profitable dairy grazing farm. The relationship built through the Apprenticeship not only provides for the transfer of knowledge and skills but also leads to an in-depth understanding of a particular farm and generates trust between the Mentor and Apprentice.

4. SPIN-OFF FARM

The Mentor (and/or other established dairy farmer) invests in new farm operated by the Journey Dairy Grazier at another location. There are several ways that this has worked. One scenario is the Journey Dairy Grazier is employed by the Mentor as a manager of the second farm. He or she earns a salary and/or a percentage of the milk check and also receives cattle, as partial compensation. Cattle are productive assets by which beginning farmers can build equity. They can be used as collateral for a loan—to buy more cattle, equipment and eventually, the land itself. Not all Apprentices may want to buy a farm and may prefer to live a farming lifestyle, manage a farm, raise a family and make a living without the responsibility of ownership.

The specific career path and eventual outcome will depend on the individual goals of Mentor and Apprentice as well as shared interests that develop during the Apprenticeship. An Apprentice may start out on one path and then switch to another. DGA provides beginning farmers with the skills, knowledge, relationships, opportunities and entrepreneurial confidence that they need to make decisions, seize opportunities and reach their goals.

The long range outcome of Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is to ensure the sustainability of the dairy industry by contributing to its diversification and resilience. A dairy industry based at least in part on managed grazing dairies is likely to have more, smaller scale farms and less concentration of ownership and cattle than one based solely on large scale confinement farming operations. By generating larger numbers of successful smaller farms, rather than a few larger farms, the DGA will help to maintain rural diversity. It will bring more individuals and families into rural communities, populate local schools, provide new customers for local businesses and restore a client-base for agricultural service agencies.

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

APPRENTICESHIP VERSUS INTERNSHIP

DGA is a formal Apprenticeship, not an internship. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, Apprentice and internships are actually very different. An internship or mentoring arrangement may be paid or unpaid and the scope and content are highly variable, depending on participants and organizations involved. Apprenticeship is a formal system of education that has a legal status and a well-established development process with agency oversight. The curriculum for an Apprenticeship, which is developed by stakeholders in an industry in order to serve the needs of that industry, is comprehensive and standardized. It guides the training process between the Mentor and the Apprentice, identifies the competencies that must be achieved, and includes related instruction to enhance training.

DGA also offers a Pre-Apprenticeship Internship option on its website that allows potential Mentors and potential Apprentices to test the relationship before committing to full Apprenticeship. Compensation and duration of internship must be mutually agreed upon by Mentor and Apprentice Candidate. Pre-Apprenticeship Internships are intended to lead to an eventual Apprenticeship but are not monitored by DGA and work hours do not count toward Apprenticeship training hours.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF APPRENTICESHIP TO THE MENTOR AND TO THE APPRENTICE?

Apprentices earn while they learn – they receive progressively increasing compensation while learning both on-the-job and in the classroom. Upon completing the program, they receive national recognition of their training and skills through graduation to Journeyworker status. Employers find that Apprenticeship offerings attract higher quality applicants who have a serious commitment to the success of an individual operation as well as to the sustainability of the industry. In addition, Apprenticeship ensures the training standards of the industry are met.

WHY THE FOCUS ON MANAGED GRAZING?

Managed grazing is a low input, cost effective farming method that works with nature to improve efficiency and farm profitability, maintain optimal animal health, and produce high quality milk that can be sold conventionally or to value-added (organic or grass-fed) processors for a premium. Because managed grazing systems require less capital investment for equipment and infrastructure than conventional operations, this method is ideal for start-up dairy farmers with minimal assets to invest. In addition, because grazing dairy cows tend to have a longer productive life, Mentor Dairy Graziers need fewer replacement cattle and have the opportunity to offer heifers as partial compensation to an Apprentice or Journey Dairy Grazier.

IS A MENTOR DAIRY GRAZIER REQUIRED TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR THE APPRENTICE?

No. Offering on-farm housing is not required for a Mentor Dairy Grazier to be approved by DGA. However, many Mentors do provide housing as part of overall compensation. Mentors can also help Apprentices who are willing to relocate find housing nearby. Sometimes Apprentices and Mentors are within commuting distance of one another.

WHAT IS THE HOURLY RATE PAID TO APPRENTICES?

As required by DGA National Apprenticeship Standards, the minimum starting wage for a Dairy Grazing Apprentice is $8.00 per hour with a $.50 raise every six months for Apprentices. Depending on the size and needs of the operation, Mentors may offer significantly higher rates of compensation to qualified applicants. Compensation must be mutually agreed upon by the Mentor and the Apprentice and may include in-kind compensation (such as housing, food, or cattle).

HOW DOES AN APPRENTICE BECOME AN INDEPENDENT DAIRY FARMER?

DGA is a comprehensive program that not only results in a pool of highly trained and confident individuals but also facilitates the movement from Apprentice into independent dairy farmer. To assist Mentor Dairy Graziers and Journeyworkers in achieving their individual as well as shared goals, DGA provides financial and business planning consultation. Second-year Apprentices are required to develop a business plan, which improves their chances of qualifying for a Beginning Farmer Loan through Farm Services Agency (FSA). DGA is an approved vendor for FSA's Financial Management Training Program. DGA has also developed proven economic models for assisting Journey Dairy Graziers in their transition to ownership, including building equity in cattle, milk-share partnerships, spin-off operations, and farm transfer. (See Objectives and Outcomes above.)

APPRENTICE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Must have high school diploma or higher or GED, or a composite score on the ACT of at least 18, or comparable Accuplacer test scores in math and reading.

- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- Must be physically able to perform the work of dairy farming with reasonable accommodations and without hazard to themselves or others.
- Must have reliable transportation to and from work and school.

RELATED INSTRUCTION FOR APPRENTICES

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship combines on-farm employment with related instruction and peer-to peer learning. Apprentices are responsible for enrolling in required courses and paying tuition. Of the 4000 hours, 300 total contact hours comprise the classroom and other related instruction. Required core courses are as follows: Pasture Management, Dairy Nutrition, Dairy Health, Milk Quality, Soil & Water Resources, and Farm Business Management.

Courses are offered online through DGA's **Managed Grazing Innovation Center**. Together with an Orientation and 16 hour Holistic Management course, classes account for 234 contact hours. Monthly farm visits with local Education Coordinators, discussion groups with peer cohorts, and farming conferences make up the remaining 66 hours.

Mentors are required to schedule Apprentice work hours to allow them to attend courses and other approved instruction. Mentors are not required to compensate Apprentices for related instruction hours.

Note: Apprentices who have taken approved coursework or comparable related instruction previous to entering program may receive credit for those hours. These credits are approved by the National Apprenticeship Training Committee.

DGA is proud to support current and former service members who are interested in getting started in dairy farming. The GI Bill™ and other veterans benefits are accepted.

RELATED INSTRUCTION OVERVIEW

SEMESTER	COURSE TITLE	CREDITS/ HOURS	CONTACT/ HOURS	CATEGORY	REQUIRED	DELIVERY SYSTEM	SOURCE	INSTRUCTOR TRAINING
All	Orientation	0	2	Pre-requisite	Yes	Online	Managed Grazing Innovation Center	Self-guided
Fall	Dairy Cattle Health and Wellness	1	36	Core Course	Yes	Online	Managed Grazing Innovation Center	BS or MS
Fall	Soil & Water Resources Management	1	36	Core Course	Yes	Online	Managed Grazing Innovation Center	BS or MS
Fall	Managed Grazing Systems for Dairy Cattle	1	36	Core Course	Yes	Online	Managed Grazing Innovation Center	BS or MS
Fall, Spring	Farm Business Management	1	36	Core Course	Yes	Online	Managed Grazing Innovation Center	BS or MS
Spring, Summer	Dairy Cattle Nutrition and Feeding	1	36	Core Course	Yes	Online	Managed Grazing Innovation Center	BS or MS
Spring, Summer	Milk Quality	1	36	Core Course	Yes	Online	Managed Grazing Innovation Center	BS or MS
Varies	Holistic Farming And Systems Approach	0	16	Elective*	No	Classroom	Program Sponsored	MS
Monthly	Education Coordinator Farm Visits	0	24	Elective*	Yes	One-on-One	Program Sponsored	DGA-Trained Staff
Varies	Discussion Groups/ Pasture Walks/ Farming Conferences	0	42	Elective*	Yes	Face-to-Face	Various	Various

**Because Apprentices may enter program at any time, classes are taken as available. Summer offering may vary, depending on scheduling and educational needs of Apprentices.*

***Elective coursework may be modified or substituted, contingent upon the specific needs of program participants in a particular geographic region/locale and subject to approval by the state Apprenticeship Committee. Apprentices will be required to complete a total of 300 hours of related instruction prior to completion of their Apprenticeship training.*

ROLE OF A MENTOR DAIRY GRAZIER

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship allows experienced dairy graziers to share and transfer knowledge, skills, and dairy farms to the next generation. This program would not be possible without their time, knowledge, expertise, and creativity as well as real-world experience and perspective.

Mentor Dairy Graziers provide guidance, feedback, and hands-on learning opportunities—their contribution is the core of the Apprenticeship education process. For his or her efforts, the Mentor Dairy Grazier gains a motivated Apprentice who is an asset to the operation during the two-year training period and who may become a trusted business partner or even the person to whom the farm is eventually transitioned. The investment made in and connection to the next generation of skilled dairy graziers improves the business of individual Mentor Graziers and makes an enormous difference in the life of an aspiring dairy farmer.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Must have five years of successful grazing experience or be a graduate of Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship with three years grazing experience beyond the program.
- Must be capable of training Apprentices in the core work processes identified in the DGA Work Process Schedule or employ a full-time experienced dairy grazier or other qualified individual to supervise and/or train the Apprentice.
- Prospective Mentor Dairy Graziers must go through an assessment process with final approval given by the Apprenticeship Training Committee.

BENEFITS

Within the framework of the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship, Mentor Dairy Graziers prepare the next generation of successful dairy graziers. Professional development courses in employee management, mentoring and business planning prepare Mentors for their central role in the program. The Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Training Guidelines (or "Job Book") serves as a comprehensive guide to the competencies that must be gained to successfully manage a dairy grazing farm. As an Apprentice gains more skills and confidence during the two-year learning process, the Mentor charts his or her progress in the Job Book.

The Apprentice becomes an asset to the operation, is able to manage the farm in the Mentor's absence, and may go on to build equity for his or her own farm. The Mentor may eventually transfer the farm to this person who has gained an understanding of the operation over the two-year training period. Involvement in the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship opens up many opportunities for Mentor Dairy Graziers, including financial planning support including sample equity building scenarios, such as start-up, spin-off, and farm transfer models.

Apprentices are networked and trained so when the two years are completed, he or she will have the necessary skills and relationships to begin working on a path of generating equity to purchase a farm, work into a farm transfer situation, continue in a sharemilking operation, or become a manager on a dairy grazing farm.

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship benefits from existing agricultural infrastructure as well as peer-to-peer education networks among dairy graziers in the states where it operates. DGA draws on and partners with existing educational institutions, service agencies, and dairy industry players, while placing experienced dairy farmers at the center of the education process.

The result is an educated, skilled, and experienced labor pool that:

- Increases potential for family farm transfers and start ups
- Gives grazing farmers the opportunity to invest in their farms through alternative investment models (i.e., expansion or spin off)
- Improves the likelihood of implementation of rotational grazing systems into our most environmentally sensitive areas
- Creates an opportunity for communities and municipalities to encourage rotational grazing in order to positively impact economies, food systems and/or the environment

Because managed grazing builds natural resources and improves long-term productive capacity with reduced reliance on off-farm inputs, it addresses many of the challenges that face our state and our nation. More well- managed grass-based farms can meet production demands without sacrificing the health and well-being of rural communities and ecosystems.

PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE:
Mentor Dairy Grazier Selection and Apprentice Hiring & Training

MENTOR DAIRY GRAZIER APPROVAL

1. **Interested Mentor registers for account and submits application at www.dga-national.org**

   1.1 Creates profile of farm business which can be kept hidden or made "public" for Apprentice Candidates to see

   1.2 Sets notification preferences to all Apprentice Candidates or only those who select zip code area

2. **Interested Mentor is assigned an Education Coordinator who will arrange farm assessment and interview and will guide the Apprenticeship process when an Apprentice is hired**

   2.1 Education Coordinator will assess farm as educational work site and conduct interview

   2.2 Education Coordinator submits farm assessment to Program Director

   2.3 DGA Apprentice Committee approves or rejects application — if approved, the farmer has Mentor status and is able to bring an employee through the Apprenticeship

   2.4 Approved Mentor has expanded "dashboard" and increased access on the website

3. **Mentor Searching for Apprentice**

   3.1 Mentors can search for an Apprentice on the DGA website using Map or Search or List features

   a. Can see map of current Apprentice Candidate locations
   b. Search by area or keyword
   c. Can see list of those who chose area or all Candidates

   3.2 Click on Candidate to view profile with option to

   a. Star — add to favorite
   b. Hide — don't show again
   c. Send message — start conversation
   d. Send Hire Message — see Hiring and Initiation below

   3.3 If profile is public, Mentors can receive messages from Apprentice Candidates, with option to reply or ignore and delete

   3.4 Messages from system notify Mentor of new Apprentice Candidates in area or outside area depending on profile settings

   3.5 Edit profile settings at any time

HIRING AND INITIATION OF APPRENTICESHIP

4. **Mentor contacts, interviews, sets initial compensation rates (must be at minimum $8.00 per hour with $.50 raise every 6 months), and hires Apprentice.**
   - 4.1 Mentor may contact Apprentice candidates either through the Website or via external email or phone to set up interview
   - 4.2 Compensation package (may include in-kind such as housing, gas, food, etc.) must meet minimum requirements and be mutually agreed upon by both parties
   - 4.3 Hire agreement is made verbally between Mentor and Apprentice
   - 4.4 Offer to Hire message is sent by Mentor to link records in the online system
   - 4.5 Apprentice Acceptance of Offer to Hire appears on Mentor dashboard
   - 4.6 Website sends Notice of New Hire to Staff and Education Coordinator
5. **Education Coordinator meets with Mentor and Apprentice**
   - 5.1 Clarify process, expectations, and requirements of program
   - 5.2 Go over Training Guidelines (Job Book) and
   - 5.3 Have Department Of Labor (DOL) application filled out and signed by Mentor and Apprentice
   - 5.4 Assess Internet capability and computer access
6. **Education Coordinator sends DOL application to Program Director**
   - 6.1 Program Director enters information in DOL RAPIDS System (DOL online database)
   - 6.2 Sets start date — triggers OJT (On-the-Job Training) hours tracking

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

7. **Mentors in geographic proximity work with local Education Coordinators to plan monthly apprentice discussion meetings**

   7.1 Peer group discussion rotates among farm sites in cohort

   7.2 Host Mentor, along with Education Coordinator, arranges to bring in speakers (local professionals, agency representatives, etc.) on specific topic

8. **The Apprenticeship consists of 4000 hours of training over two years**

   8.1 3,700 hours are on-the-job experience under the guidance of a Mentor Dairy Grazier

   8.2 Job Book/Work Process Schedule is followed to ensure Apprentice gains the breadth of experience required

   8.3 Mentors contribute teaching time to Apprentice over and above needs of regular employee

   8.4 300 hours are related instruction. Apprentice is responsible for registering and paying for required related instruction

   8.5 Mentors do not compensate Apprentices for related instruction time, but are required to give them time off to attend classes and fulfill these requirements

9. **Mentor can view Apprentice Personal Program Record (PPR) on website**

   9.1 Mentor contribution — Mentor or EC/Staff responsible for entering Mentor contribution

   9.2 Related instruction — view only (Program Director and/or Education Coordinator enters)

      a. Formal coursework
      b. Discussion groups
      c. Farm visits

10. **Recording Mentor Contribution**

   10.1 Go to Apprentice PPR

   10.2 Click on Work Hours to see records

   10.3 Click on Add Hours for new entry

      a. OJT (on-job-training) hours
      b. Teaching time (40 hours per month recommended)
      c. Wages
      d. In-kind amount and type (if any)

   10.4 Monthly reminder email to log information will come through system with link, but can be used any time to add or edit entries

11. **Mentor evaluates Apprentice on an ongoing basis and checks off competencies in Job Book**

12. Education Coordinator checks-in at farm site monthly for the first 6 months and then bi-monthly

12.1 Job Book is reviewed

12.2 Related instruction progress is recorded

12.3 Education Coordinator facilitates relationship and learning situation, works with Mentor and Apprentice to address any issues

13. At the end of six-month probationary period, Program Director and/or EC meets with pair to assess match, which will result in one of three outcomes:

13.1 Relationship is reconfirmed and continues for the remainder of the two years.

13.2 Relationship is dissolved and Mentor seeks different Apprentice

13.3 Relationship is dissolved and Mentor opts not to seek an Apprentice

14. Professional development and financial consultation are available to assist Mentor in meeting financial/career goals

14.1 When 2–3 year pathway is established, financial goals will be created with help of financial consultant

JOURNEYWORKER PHASE

15. Upon successful completion of the Apprenticeship, learners graduate to Journey Dairy Graziers status and can transfer into one or more of following situations:

15.1 Management

15.2 Equity earning

15.3 Farm transition

15.4 Farm purchase

16. Year 5 and forward, Journey Dairy Graziers can apply to become Mentors (educator /farmer)

17. Mentor may seek another Apprentice without going through application procedure

PROCEDURE:
Apprentice Application, Hiring and Training

APPRENTICE APPLICATION AND HIRING

1. **Apprentice registers for an account and submits application at www.dga-national.org**

   1.1 Fills out education, relevant experience, and goals

   1.2 Chooses preferred zip-code areas of placement on Mentor Map and indicates if willing to consider other areas

   1.3 Can indicate interest in Pre-Apprenticeship Internship

   1.4 Application process creates a personal "dashboard" on the DGA website.

2. **Apprentice Candidate Searching for Mentor**

   2.1 Apprentice searches for Mentor by selecting miles from current location (website will show only Mentors who have chosen to make their profiles public)

   2.2 Uses Mentor Map to see the zip code areas where Mentors with public profiles are located. Double click to get a list of profiles in that area and click on individual to view.

   2.3 Views Mentor profiles with option to

   a. Star — add to favorites
   b. Hide — don't show again
   c. Send message — start conversation

   2.4 Receives messages from Mentor within the system

   a. Mentor profile is available to view
   b. Option to reply or ignore and delete

   2.5 Mentors may also communicate with prospective candidates via email or telephone outside the DGA website, but ultimately, the hiring will need to be recorded on the website as this is our means of tracking work hours and related instruction.

   2.6 After successful interview process, Apprentice receives Offer to Hire message from Mentor to make it official in the system

   a. Accept or reject Offer to Hire
   b. Acceptance changes status to from Candidate to enrolled Apprentice in system
   c. Hired Apprentice is assigned an EC (typically same EC as Mentor) by staff
   d. Automated message re: New Hire goes to EC and Staff

2.7 Education Coordinator makes initial visit to Mentor-Apprentice pair

a. *Provides detailed overview of program and expectations of each participant.*
b. *Provides with DGA Training Guidelines (Job Book) and related handbooks*
c. *Mentor and Apprentice fill out and sign DOL form.*
d. *Copies and mails or scan and emails DOL application to Program Director*
e. *Reminds Apprentice to send copy of high school diploma, GED or post-secondary education transcripts to EC within a month*

2.8 Program Director receives DOL application from EC

a. *Apprentice start date entered manually by Program Director into DGA website and US Department of Labor website*
b. *Uploads DOL application, transcripts*

3. Apprentice candidate dashboard changes upon hiring on www.dga-national.org

3.1 New features with start date

a. *Progress widget*
b. *Upcoming events*
c. *Learning resources*
d. *Able to view Personal Program Record (PPR)*
   i. On-the Job Training (OJT) hours
   ii. Related Instruction (RI) coursework and credit hours
   iii. RI peer-to-peer discussion and farm visits

4. Apprentice issued a computer (if needed) and work site assessed for Internet capability

APPRENTICE TRAINING PROCEDURE

5. Apprentice begins work-based training

5.1 Mentor provides increasingly responsible work, based on Job Book competencies

5.2 Mentor is responsible for keeping track of work hours as well as additional training hours provided by Mentor

5.3 Both Mentor and Apprentice are responsible for maintaining records in the Job Book.

6. Apprentices enroll in required related instruction courses

6.1 Apprentices are responsible for enrolling themselves in courses and other educational opportunities that meet program requirements

6.2 Apprentices are responsible for paying tuition

6.3 Individuals who have not been hired by a Mentor and so are not yet officially in the program are encouraged to take advantage of educational opportunities

a. *Approved credits will count toward program requirements once apprentice is officially in the program*
b. *Mentor is not required to compensate Apprentices for related instruction hours*

7. Apprentice is networked into peer discussion group facilitated by Education Coordinator

7.1 Peer group is linked through DGA FaceBook group

7.2 Peer group meets monthly for discussion of specific topic (may depend on location)

a. *Peer group discussion rotates among farm sites in cohort*
b. *Mentors meet annually to select topics, farm sites and dates for the year*
c. *EC works with Host Mentor to bring in speakers (local professionals, agency representatives, etc.) on specific topic*

8. Education Coordinator checks-in with new Apprentice monthly during six month probation period and then bi-monthly for the remainder of the Apprenticeship period

8.1 Job Book is reviewed and updated

8.2 Related instruction progress is recorded

8.3 Education Coordinator facilitates relationship and learning situation, works with Mentor and Apprentice to address any issues.

9. At the end of six-month probationary period, Education Coordinator meets with pair to assess match. Meeting will result in one of three outcomes:

9.1 Relationship is reconfirmed and Apprenticeship continues.

9.2 Relationship is dissolved and Apprentice seeks different Mentor

9.3 Apprentice decides to leave program

10. After one year, apprentice will re-evaluate goals and network appropriately

11. When 2–3 year pathway is established, financial goals will be created with help of financial consultant

JOURNEYWORKER PHASE

12. Upon successful completion of the Apprenticeship, learners graduate to Journey Dairy Graziers status and can transfer into one or more of following situations:

12.1 Management

12.2 Equity earning

12.3 Farm transition

12.4 Farm purchase

13. Year 5 and forward, Journey Dairy Graziers can apply to become Mentors (educator /farmer)

14. Mentor may seek another Apprentice through the website

PROCEDURE:
Education Coordination

MENTOR APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

1. **Education Coordinator is assigned manually to Mentor candidate by Program Director in www.dga-national.org**
   - 1.1 Automatic notification of assignment goes to Mentor and Education Coordinator
   - 1.2 Mentors can see Education Coordinator profile and send message within system
2. **Education Coordinator makes initial contact with Mentor candidate within system (all system messages are automatically copied to Staff) or copies Program Director on personal email**
3. **Education Coordinator makes farm visit and conducts interview with Mentor candidate**
   - 3.1 Fills out Farm Assessment Form
   - 3.2 Copies and mails or scans and emails Farm Assessment Form to Program Director
4. **Program Director approves Mentor within the system**
   - 4.1 Automated message re: approval goes to Mentor and Education Coordinator
   - 4.2 Farm assessment uploaded by Program Director to Mentor Personal Program Record (PPR) — visible only to Education Coordinator and Staff

APPRENTICE HIRING AND APPRENTICESHIP INITIATION

5. **When an Apprentice is hired-Notice of New Hire goes to Education Coordinator and Staff**
6. **Education Coordinator is issued a Resource Guide & Record Keeping Book for new Mentor and Apprentice pair.**
7. **Education Coordinator has a Resource Guide for each Mentor Apprentice pair to record all farm visits and activities.**

    7.1 Education Coordinator meets with Mentor and Apprentice

    7.2 Issues DGA Training Guidelines (Job Book) and related handbooks

    7.3 Mentor and Apprentice fill out and sign the DOL application form.

    7.4 Copies and mails or scans and emails DOL application to Program Director

    7.5 Reminds Apprentice to submit proof of high school diploma or GED

    a. Education Coordinator sends proof to Program Director
    b. Program Director uploads to Apprentice PPR

8. **If Apprentice has relevant post-secondary education or other formal training, he or she may receive credit hours for related instruction in DGA**

    8.1 Apprentice sends copies of relevant transcripts to Education Coordinator who submits to Program Director for review and recommendation

    8.2 Apprenticeship Committee approves or rejects recommendation

    8.3 Program Director records approved credits in Apprentice PPR

9. **No credit for past job experience can be applied to DGA**
10. **Education Coordinator sends DOL application to Program Director 7-c**

    10.1 Program Director enters information in DOL online database (RAPIDS System)

    10.2 Sets start date — triggers OJT (On-the-Job Training) hours tracking

APPRENTICESHIP PROCESS AND COMPLETION

11. Education Coordinator networks Apprentice into facilitated peer discussion group

11.1 Peer group is linked electronically through DGA FaceBook group

11.2 Peer group meets regularly for discussion of timely topics

12. Education Coordinator provides guidance and oversight of related instruction for all Apprentices in cohort to ensure that they progress through program.

12.1 Each Apprentice is responsible for:

a. *Enrolling in and paying tuition for required courses (Program Director records grades and contact hours into Apprentice PPP)*
b. *Participating in scheduled farm visits and discussion groups (Education Coordinator records in Record Book and in each Apprentice PPR)*
c. *Reviewing online PPR to make sure information is accurate*

12.2 Each Mentor is responsible for:

a. *Providing at least 3,712 hours of employment and training over 2 years in all aspects of managed grazing dairy production as laid out in the Job Book*
b. *Contributing teaching time over and above requirements of regular employee (approximately 40 hours per month)*
c. *Compensating Apprentices at a minimum of $8.00/hr with $.50 raise per 6 months*
d. *Updating Work Hours on Apprentice PPR monthly*

13. Discussion Groups. Education Coordinator, with input from Mentor Farmers at farm sites in geographic proximity, sets schedule/topics for peer group meetings

13.1 Peer group meets regularly

13.2 Peer group discussion rotates among farm sites in cohort

13.3 Education Coordinator and host Mentor Dairy Grazier arrange to bring in speakers (local professionals, agency representatives, etc.) on a specific topic

13.4 Enter Date//Topic of Discussion Group in Record Book and on each Apprentice PPR

14. Farm Visits. Education Coordinator checks-in at farm site monthly for the first 6 months, then bi-monthly

14.1 Job Book is reviewed

14.2 Related instruction progress is monitored

14.3 Education Coordinator facilitates relationship and learning situation, works with Mentor and Apprentice to address any issues.

14.4 Enter Date/Topic of Farm Visit in Record Book and on each Apprentice PPR

15. Education Coordinator provides on-farm consulting to Mentor Farmer, monthly for first 6 months, then bi-monthly, in the following areas:

15.1 Employee management

15.2 Employer employee relations

15.3 Pasture management

15.4 Cattle management

15.5 Records and financial management

15.6 Optional (more advanced):

a. Farmstead design
b. Pasture and lane design
c. Water system designs
d. Pasture renovation
e. Milking system design
f. Building design

16. Before the end of six-month probationary period, Education Coordinator meets with pair to assess match. Meeting will result in one of three outcomes:

16.1 Relationship is reconfirmed and Apprenticeship continues.

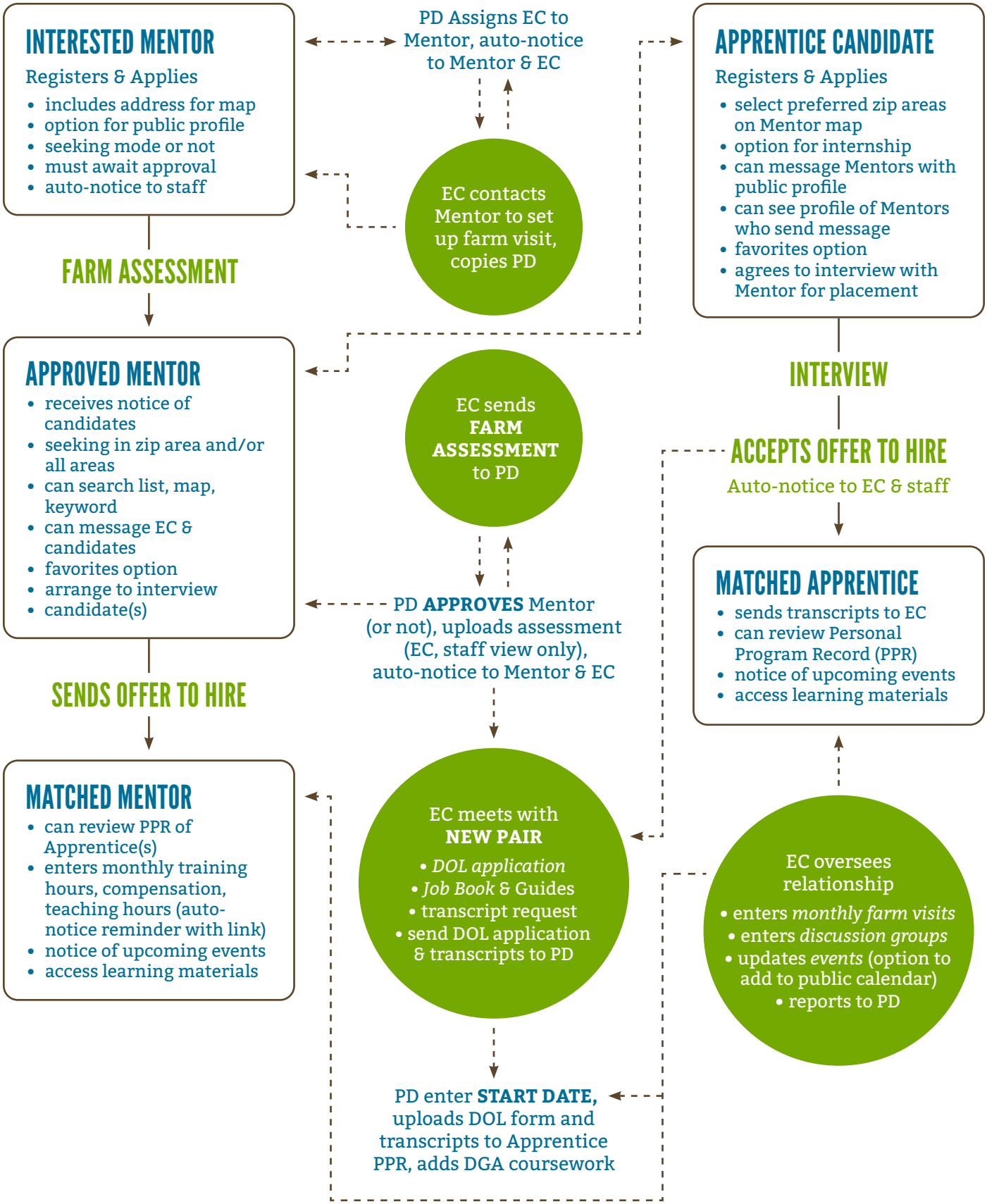
16.2 Relationship is dissolved and Mentor requests different apprentice

16.3 Mentor or/and Apprentice decides to leave program

17. After one year, Apprentice will re-evaluate goals and network appropriately

18. When 2–3 year pathway is established, financial goals will be created with help of Financial Consultant

19. Before, during and after the Apprenticeship period, Education Coordinator provides guidance, support, and information to Mentors and Apprentices on an as-needed basis. The Education Coordinator is the first contact point for program participants when they are unable to get the information they need from the website.


INTERESTED MENTOR
Registers & Applies
• includes address for map
• option for public profile
• seeking mode or not
• must await approval
• auto-notice to staff
PD Assigns EC to Mentor, auto-notice to Mentor & EC
APPRENTICE CANDIDATE
Registers & Applies
• select preferred zip areas on Mentor map
• option for internship
• can message Mentors with public profile
• can see profile of Mentors who send message
• favorites option
• agrees to interview with Mentor for placement
EC contacts Mentor to set up farm visit, copies PD
FARM ASSESSMENT
APPROVED MENTOR
• receives notice of candidates
• seeking in zip area and/or all areas
• can search list, map, keyword
• can message EC & candidates
• favorites option
• arrange to interview
• candidate(s)
EC sends FARM ASSESSMENT to PD
INTERVIEW
ACCEPTS OFFER TO HIRE
Auto-notice to EC & staff
MATCHED APPRENTICE
• sends transcripts to EC
• can review Personal Program Record (PPR)
• notice of upcoming events
• access learning materials
PD APPROVES Mentor (or not), uploads assessment (EC, staff view only), auto-notice to Mentor & EC
SENDS OFFER TO HIRE
MATCHED MENTOR
• can review PPR of Apprentice(s)
• enters monthly training hours, compensation, teaching hours (auto-notice reminder with link)
• notice of upcoming events
• access learning materials
EC meets with NEW PAIR
• DOL application
• Job Book & Guides
• transcript request
• send DOL application & transcripts to PD
EC oversees relationship
• enters monthly farm visits
• enters discussion groups
• updates events (option to add to public calendar)
• reports to PD
PD enter START DATE, uploads DOL form and transcripts to Apprentice PPR, adds DGA coursework

GENERAL CONTACT

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Visit website for complete listing of state and local Education Coordinators:

https://www.dga-national.org

DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP