

Crop/Livestock Integration: Bridging the Generations

In both case studies below, the young person is contributing fresh perspectives and new energy to add a new farm enterprise, helping the farm operations become more economically and environmentally resilient.

Garth Gatson

6th-generation farm in Missouri

Garth, age 31, owns no land. He runs a beef heifer development enterprise on pasture and cropland owned by his father and grandfather.

Garth provides labor for their crop and livestock operations. In return, he gets access to crop residue, cover crops, and pasture for grazing, allowing him to minimize purchased feed for his heifers. Sourcing his heifers from family members' cow-calf herds reduces risk from cattle price volatility for both parties.

This multi-generational partnership has helped the farmers diversify income streams. It brings the family members closer together and strengthens their legacy as a farming family.

“The synergy between one generation’s foundations and the next’s energy and vision is key for us.”

—Garth Gatson



Doug and Maddie Hanson

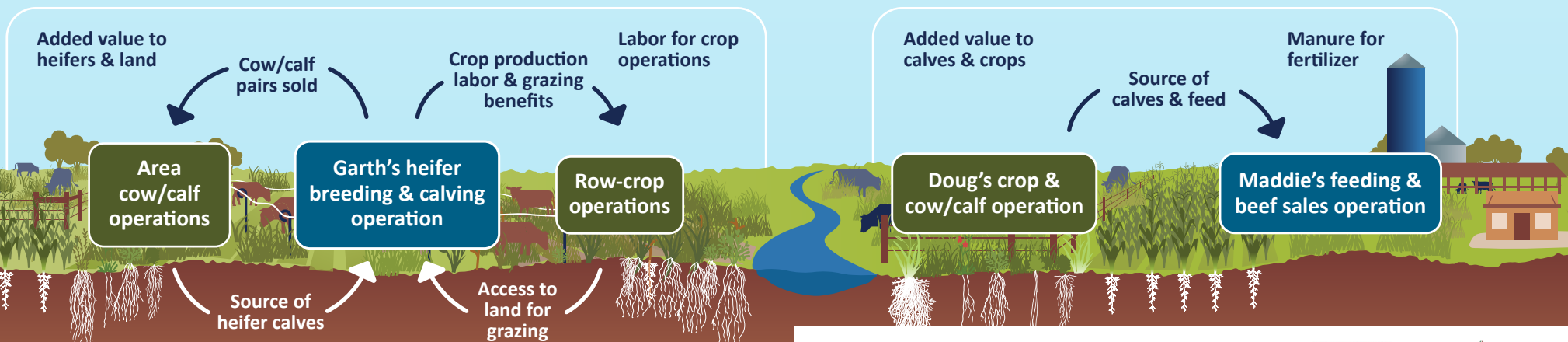
5th-generation farm in Illinois

Doug Hanson farms 680 acres: 600 acres are cropped in an annual rotation, and 80 acres are in rotationally-grazed perennial pasture. Doug harvests cover crops from his tillable land and feeds them to his cow/calf herd over the winter, which reduces feed costs.

Daughter Maddie Hanson joined the farm operation in 2022. She purchased a home and cattle facility a few miles away from Doug’s farm. Maddie’s enterprise focuses on finishing feeder cattle from her father’s herd and marketing the fed cattle as beef sold direct to consumers. Their collaboration provides the opportunity for higher profits and less risk for both farms, adding stability and value for both.

“Having livestock as a part of our operation allows us to expand as a business without taking on more farm ground.”

—Doug Hanson



Read the case studies online at z.umn.edu/mmih_casestudies

