

# How do Growing Projects Work?

## Dairy and Livestock Model



Growing Hope Globally gives US communities the opportunity to respond to global hunger from right where you are through our unique Growing Project model. Growing Projects leverage local assets and create space for learning, spiritual growth, and community building.

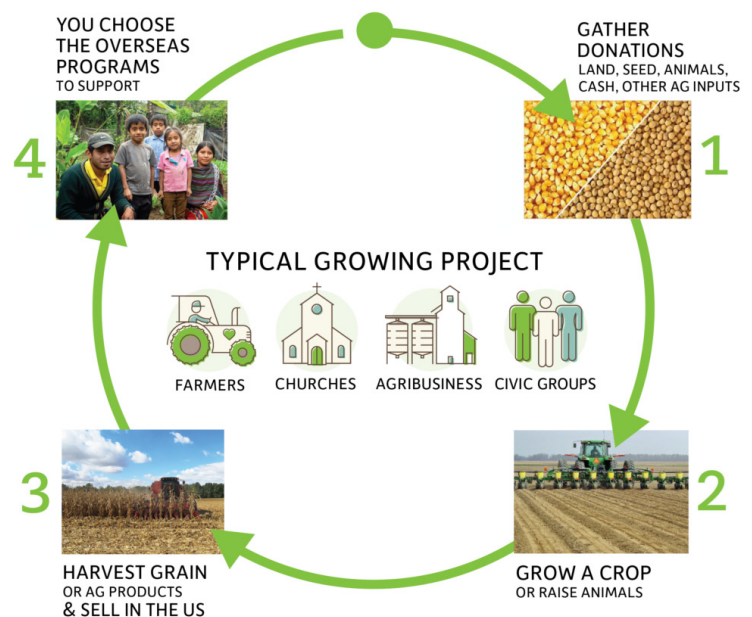
**Gathering Donations:** Most dairy or livestock Growing Projects begin with the commitment of local farm(s) to donate the milk or meat from one or several of their animals. Others have the opportunity to participate by “sponsoring” the animals or contributing toward their care. It is important to know how many animals are being contributed and how much it costs to feed and care for them. Donations might include veterinary services and supplies, feed and feed delivery services, nutritionist services and more. Donations can be in-kind or cash. Churches, civic groups, and agribusinesses are usually happy to help when they know what is needed.

**Raising the Animals:** The farmers in the project raise the animals as usual along with the rest of their herd. In the case of dairy projects, the milk need not be separated out - simply take the average production and multiply it by the number of animals involved. For meat animals, when they reach market weight, they can be sold through usual channels or they can be butchered locally and the meat can be offered for sale as an additional fundraiser.

**Celebrate and Educate:** Dairy or livestock Growing Projects provide a wonderful opportunity to educate the larger community about what farming is really like. A Farm Day celebration can be held to generate continued interest in the Growing Project and encourage non-farmers to learn more about agriculture.

**Calculating the Proceeds:** Farmers may or may not choose to actually use the donations generated by the project to care for the animals. In some situations, the animals are merely symbolic and are utilized to generate wider community engagement. In these cases, the sponsorship funds, and in-kind animal are monetized along with the milk or meat donation and all are contributed to the Growing Project. It is helpful for the farmers, suppliers, community organizations and others involved to meet two to four times a year to tally all of the donations, set sponsorship goals for the following year, etc.

**Choose the Overseas Program to Support:** Visit [GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs](http://GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs) for a list of all of the overseas programs currently in need of funding. You decide how your donations are used. Donations can be given to support specific programs or church related partners, or the overall work of Growing Hope Globally. It is important to let supporters know how their donations made an impact through e-mails, thank you notes, or newsletters.



# Red Arrow Dairy Growing Project

## Dairy and Livestock Model Example

In Southern Michigan, three churches, one dairy and five suppliers work together to raise funds for Growing Hope Globally. Grace, Heritage and Third Christian Reformed Churches in Kalamazoo raise funds to “rent” five cows from Red Arrow Dairy, located in Hartford, MI. The “rent” money is actually contributed directly to the Growing Project. The dairy continues to own, house, feed and milk the cows and donates their milk. They also connect with their veterinarian, animal health, nutritional and feed suppliers, inviting them to contribute to the program. The churches, dairy and suppliers each contribute about 1/3 of the total and the resulting impact is more significant than any of them would be able to do on their own.

The group comes together for a special Day at the Dairy event every other year. In addition to being a celebration of the way the group works together to address hunger, it provides an opportunity for families from the suburban churches to learn more about the dairy industry and see where their food comes from. The event includes hay rides, milking parlor and calf barn tours and even opportunities to watch a calf be born!



## Getting Started

1. Reach out to us at [Info@GrowingHopeGlobally.org](mailto:Info@GrowingHopeGlobally.org) to get connected with a local staff person. You can also find upcoming opportunities to learn more at [GrowingHopeGlobally.org/events](https://GrowingHopeGlobally.org/events)
2. Brainstorm a list of names of other people in your community that might be willing to be part of your Growing Project Team. Farmers are critical to the success of a project, but so are people that can manage outreach efforts, track receipts, seek donations, or coordinate events like Farm Day celebrations. Get together and see what ideas you can develop.
3. Once you have a plan for how many animals are going to be involved, and have calculated the costs to raise them, reach out to community members for support. Churches, local agribusinesses, agricultural associations and civic groups are all good places to start.
4. Most importantly, get started as soon as possible. Nothing creates excitement like a plan that is in motion, especially when it is going to support a great cause.

# FFA Chapter Resources

## Getting Started Checklist

**Livestock or Dairy Growing Projects can begin at any time of year. However, starting at the beginning of a semester is the best way to make a plan and execute it while enthusiasm is high. Create a calendar of when you want to complete the following:**

- Complete activities A1 - A6 in the International Agricultural Development SAE for All Career Kit to familiarize yourselves with terminology, career paths, and the challenges farmers face around the world.
- Watch a webinar under the “Get Involved” tab to get inspired about the kind of programs your Growing Project could support. Read about our overseas programs under the “Support a Program” tab.
- Work as a chapter to write down your “why”. Supporters will be excited to help if they know why your chapter wants to respond to world hunger.
- Brainstorm about people in the community that might want to participate in a Growing Project. Are there dairies, farmers, veterinarians, feed suppliers, co-ops, churches, agricultural associations or other organizations that might be supportive?
- Meet with a dairy, farmer, or banker if possible to better understand the inputs that might be needed. Then match each need with a potential supporter.
- Make sure everyone in your chapter has a role to play in the project. Form committees that are responsible for Marketing and Communications, Record Keeping, and External Relations. Sample committee descriptions are available on the following page.
- Begin outreach efforts. Prepare a presentation, brochure or letter to share with potential supporters. Be ready to ask for the inputs you need from them. Your presentation and letter should include: why your chapter is starting a Growing Project, an overview of your project, what you are asking them to donate, how their donation will be utilized, and how funds raised in the project will be used.
- Communicate with farmers to see how they’d like your chapter to work with them during the year. Opportunities could include feeding animals, hauling feed or other supplies, cleaning pens and hauling manure or loading animals for market.
- Plan and host a Farm Day. Invite your supporters to join you for an event where you thank them for their support and update them on how the funds raised will be used. If your chapter plans to continue your project next year, let them know.
- Choose the overseas program(s) you want to support with your Growing Project proceeds. Visit [GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs](http://GrowingHopeGlobally.org/programs) for a list of programs that need funding. Once you have made your decision, fill in a Growing Project Designation Form and send it to Growing Hope along with your proceeds.
- Create a report on your project. An end of year report can be helpful for students that do the project in the future.

# FFA Chapter Resources

## Sample Committee Role Descriptions

We've found that Growing Projects are most successful when everyone has a clear job to do. Planning well and assigning responsibilities enables the project to run smoothly and keeps supporters engaged throughout the year. You may need to create additional committees or assign additional tasks to complete everything your chapter wants to accomplish in your Growing Project.

### External Relations Committee:

- With the rest of the chapter, brainstorm a list of businesses, organizations and individuals that can be asked to support the Growing Project with in-kind or cash donations. Develop a calendar that assigns responsibility to specific committee members for contacting each potential donor.
- Develop a plan for following up with each supporter. Do you want to send letters, emails, or make phone calls to update them on the project during the growing season?
- With the marketing and communications team, develop a presentation to share with potential supporters that explains your Growing Project and your chapter's goals.
- Create a list of tasks that the Growing Project farmers want assistance with and make a sign-up sheet for dates when students can volunteer to help.

### Record Keeping Committee:

- Create a budget for the project and a plan for tracking gifts, income, and expenses.
- Track the hours spent by each committee on the project.
- If you are doing a dairy project, work with the farmers involved to calculate the real costs of owning a cow for a year. Don't forget to include depreciation, interest and feed costs.
- Fill out the Growing Project Designation Form and send it along with your proceeds to Growing Hope Globally once you have chosen which program(s) to support.

### Marketing and Communications Committee:

- Develop a marketing plan and calendar. Think through the marketing resources your group might need (brochures, news articles, social media posts, etc.), and determine when they will be needed. Assign each item to a specific committee member.
- Ask the external relations team what they will need for reaching out to the community
- Consider which events in the Growing Project might be newsworthy (Farm Day, meat sales or making in your donation, for example) and spread the word by doing social media posts and sending a press release to your local media outlets in advance so they will consider covering it.
- Find ways to publicly thank the supporters of your Growing Project
- Do you want to post a Growing Hope Globally field sign to spread the word about your Growing Project? Growing Hope can provide you with a logo sign if you are interested.

### Other possible Committees:

- Education and Events Committee: Plans and manages the Farm Day and other community events to raise awareness of hunger or the importance of agriculture, etc.
- Farming Committee: With larger projects, assigning a dedicated team to work with farmers might make sense.