



Dear CFGA Member:

In 2014, AFGC established the Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice (CFGGA) program to recognize students within the industry possessing the fundamental skills and career goal to plan critical conservation practices and implement sound resource management of pasture, hayland and grazed cropland may be certified as such by the American Forage and Grassland Council.

Individuals certified, as a CFGGA will be taking the first step towards becoming CFGP certified. The benefits of becoming CFGP include the option to become a Technical Service Provider (TSP). AFGC has entered into a MOU with the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to establish a framework for cooperation between AFGC and NRCS so that individuals receiving certification in the CFGP program will also be considered by NRCS for certification as a Technical Service Provider. This is a valuable benefit to the certification program, the association and the forage industry.

These guidelines are designed to give you vital information as you navigate your way from interest in the program, to participation, to certification and to re-certification. These guidelines will serve as the governing rules and regulations of the Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice certification process and must be adhered to by all applicants seeking certification and those who are certified.

We hope that CFGGA members will take full advantage of their certification and feel as proud to list the designation of CFGGA by their name as we are to offer the certification to those most deserving individuals. If you should ever have questions regarding the program you may contact AFGC Headquarters at the information listed below.

Sincerely,

Tina Bowling
AFGC, Executive Director

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Guidelines and Procedures for the AFGC Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice Program

1. Statement of Policy

Certification as a Forage and Grassland Apprentice signifies that the designated individual has met the basic qualifications to be able to carry out professional work in the field with supervision, and has not been found to engage in unprofessional conduct. Persons possessing the professional credentials indicating that they aspire to plan critical conservation practices and implement sound resource management of pasture, hay land, and grazed cropland may be certified as such by the American Forage and Grassland Council. Critical conservation practices are those that address critical resource needs such as: gully, sheet, rill, and stream bank erosion; plant health and adaptation, and contaminated runoff. Such practices include but are not limited to: prescribed grazing, water supply alternatives, stream crossings, fencing, and livestock trails and walkways.

2. Eligibility

Completion of a bachelor's degree in Agronomy, Soils, Animal Science, Natural Resources, Range Science, or closely related fields is required. Enrollment in a certified educational program toward an MS or PhD degree in a field closely related to forage and grassland management is required. An applicant should have experience in the forage industry personally (on family farm), professionally (employment) or as a student (undergraduate and graduate assistant) is highly recommended. The Committee will evaluate the evidence of education and experience submitted by each applicant. The Committee may, at their discretion, accept other combinations of experience, education and grades as meeting these requirements.

The applicant must be a member of AFGC in good standing. The applicant must submit the program application, letter of intent in the forage industry, letter of recommendation from professor in the field, a current transcript and other documentation as requested.

3. Certification Requirement

Education

Completion of a bachelor's degree in Agronomy, Soils, Animal Science, Natural Resources, Range Science, or closely related fields.

Experience

Only work that is directly related to grassland resource management will be counted as experience. Qualifying experience may consist of employment in farm/ranch management, land management agencies, consulting, teaching, research, extension or technical assistance, or other types of forage and grassland management. Qualifying experience is defined as actively demonstrating professional competence in the science and practice of effectively managing and using, for human benefit, the natural resources that occur on and in association with pastureland, hay land, and grazed cropland. Also, at least one, documented course should have been taken in each of the following areas:

1. Vegetative management - use of grazing or other biological agents, chemical or mechanical methods, or fire to control competing vegetation on pastureland or hay land.
2. Animal management - grazing management systems or other practices to control livestock numbers, distribution, and timing of grazing to accomplish natural resource objectives.
3. Conservation planning on grasslands or grazing lands - development of management plans that address all critical resource needs on grazing lands, and accomplish stated resource management goals.

4. Pasture condition assessment - classifying, mapping, and interpreting the characteristics, condition, and trend of pasturelands/hay lands.
5. Economics of forage and grassland management.
6. Grassland soil management, soil quality, erosion control, and fertility management.

4. Examination

Applicants must obtain a passing score of at least 70% on the comprehensive exam covering the basic subject matter outlined in the educational requirements above. Applicants who fail the exam may retake the entire exam. Exams may be retaken more than once and the applicant may retake the exam at the next available opportunity. Once the exam is passed, the applicant will have up to 4 years to complete the experience requirement of the CFGP Program in order to continue in the program. If certification has not been completed within 4 years of passing the exam, the applicant must retake the exam.

A proctor is needed to administer the exam. Once your application is approved, AFGC will contact you regarding a proctor and exam location.

No examination will be required for re-certification if the application for recertification is received within one year of the expiration date. After a lapse of one year, the applicant will be required to take the examination and pay the initiation fee again.

If the exam is taken and not passed the initiation fee includes one exam retake for no additional fee.

There is a practice exam located at www.afgc.org to assist in preparing for the exam.

5. Exam Proctor Guidelines

Due to the nature of the Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice (CFGGA) exam, a second party must proctor it.

The proctor is responsible for the following:

- Verifying the identification of each exam taker.
- Monitoring all test takers during the exam.
- Ensuring that test takers do not use any notes, the CFGGA study materials, or other materials during the exam process.
- Initialing and dating a proctor form.

It is not the proctor's responsibility to answer questions during the test. The role of the proctor is to protect the exam's integrity, the exam taker's identity, and test authenticity.

The exam may be given in written or online format.

6. Administration

General oversight for the certification program and evaluation of applicant's credentials shall be the responsibility of the Professional Development Committee.

The Committee will review applications for certification and recertification as needed. The Committee will assess applications and recommend candidates for certification.

In assessing candidates for certification, the Professional Development Committee will review and verify information provided on application and supporting documentation. The Professional Development Committee may ask candidates to submit any additional information, which may be needed to help resolve ambiguities. Where the judgment of the Professional Development Committee differs from that of the certification candidate, the candidate will be notified promptly. Appeal procedures are set forth in these guidelines.

7. Appeals

All actions and recommendations of the Professional Development Committee may be appealed through the Committee to the Board of Directors. A decision by the Board of Directors is final.

8. Ethics /Accuracy of Submissions

Candidates for certification must take reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy of all information they submit in support of an application for certification. Any willful misrepresentation of work or educational experience may result in removal from the certification program and revocation of certification if it has already been granted.

Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentices are expected to maintain high standards of ethics related to the profession. Documented evidence of unprofessional or illegal conduct will be ground for de-certification.

9. The Certification Document

Upon certification, all candidates will receive a printed certificate attesting to completion of the program requirements.

10. Re-certification

Re-Certification is required 2 years after certification. Certifications will expire either November 30th or May 31st. It is the responsibility of the CFGA to monitor certification status. The next certification period should be submitted as an application to the CFGP program. Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice will be required to meet the minimum requirements by submitting a current transcript, letter or recommendation and updated letter of intent at the conclusion of the 2-year certification period.

11. Fees

Fees include a non-refundable, one-time initiation fee that must be paid when the application is submitted, and a renewal fee paid each biennial renewal period.

The initiation fee must be paid prior to taking the exam. The fee is non-refundable and is due each time the exam is administered, with the exception of one retake per initiation fee. Therefore, if you take the exam and do not pass and sign up to take the exam again you will not be required to pay the fee again.

A fee is required at the time of application for re-certification. Certain penalty fees will be assessed for failure to meet continuing education requirements or to make timely application for renewal of certification. A penalty fee may be assessed if all required continuing education units are not complete at the time of application.

Fees will be used for administration of the certification program, and may be adjusted as the program is developed.

For current fees please visit www.afgc.org.

FORMS APPENDIX

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Application for Certification Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice (CFGA)

Certification as a Forage and Grassland Apprentice (CFGA) signifies that the designated individual has successfully completed this application and an exam that documents his or her fundamental knowledge in planning critical conservation practices and implementing sound resource management of pasture, hay land, and grazed cropland. Candidates who wish to take the exam and be certified by the American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) must complete the Application for Certification and return it, with payment, to AFGC at the address indicated on this form.

Those who earn CFGA status are required to re-certify every two years (up to four years or two re-certification periods) by meeting continuing education requirements specified by AFGC. More information on re-certification is available online at www.afgc.org or by calling the office at 800.944.2342.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY

Date of Application: _____
Name (Mr./Ms./Mrs.): _____
Company Affiliation: _____
Title: _____
Address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____
Country (other than U.S.A.): _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

EDUCATION

College/University	Major	Degree	Year
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Education should include completion of bachelor's degree in Agronomy, Soils, Animal Science, Natural Resources, Range Science, or a closely related field.

Enrollment in a certified education program working toward an MS or PhD degree in a field closely related to forage or grassland management is required. The Committee may, at their discretion, accept other combinations of education and experience as meeting these requirements.

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

The review committee will consider only work that is directly related to grassland/forage resource management. Qualifying experience may consist of employment in farm/ranch management, land management agencies, consulting, teaching, research, extension or technical assistance, or other types of grassland/forage resource management. Work experience is not required but highly encouraged.

In the space below, please describe your professional work, starting with your current position. Provide enough detail to characterize the main activities and responsibilities (including number and type of personnel supervised) related to grassland/forage resource management. Keep the descriptions as brief as possible. Do not provide detail on work that clearly does not qualify as grassland/forage resource management experience. You may add pages where space provided is inadequate.

Current Employment

Position/Job Title: _____

Dates of Employment: From _____ To _____

Employer and Location: _____

Immediate Supervisor: _____ Telephone: _____

Percent of Time Directly Related to Grassland/Forage Management: _____

Description of Work: _____

Previous Employment

Position/Job Title: _____

Dates of Employment: From _____ To _____

Employer and Location: _____

Immediate Supervisor: _____ Telephone: _____

Percent of Time Directly Related to Grassland/Forage Management: _____

Description of Work: _____

OTHER REFERENCES

List below the names and contact information of at least two people (other than supervisors listed above) with knowledge of your performance and knowledge of the forage profession. At least one should be from outside your organization or peer group. For example, agency personnel should list a rancher or other grassland/forage user, farmers should list someone other than a farmer, and university personnel should list someone from a producer group or agency.

Contact Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address _____

Contact Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

OTHER EXPERIENCE

At least one documented training course should have been taken in each of the following areas. List training course and date completed:

Vegetative Management

Course: _____ Date Completed: _____

Animal Management

Course: _____ Date Completed: _____

Conservation Planning on Grasslands or Grazing Lands

Course: _____ Date Completed: _____

Pasture Condition Assessment

Course: _____ Date Completed: _____

Economics of Forage and Grassland Management

Course: _____ Date Completed: _____

Grassland Soil Management, Soil Quality, Erosion Control, and Fertility Management

Course: _____ Date Completed: _____

FEES/PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please return this completed form with payment to: **AFGC, PO Box 867, Berea, KY 40403**. If you have questions, please call 800.944.AFGC, fax 859.623.8694, or e-mail info@afgc.org. Fees are used to support CFGA program administration. Once your application and payment are processed the Professional Development Committee will review it. AFGC will contact you regarding the result. If your application is approved, a time, location and proctor to administer the exam will be set. Refunds are not available regardless of certification status. Membership in AFGC is not required for certification.

\$50 AFGC Student Member

Check Credit Card (circle): AMEX MC VISA Amount: \$ _____

Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Signature: _____

For office use only
Accepted on: _____ By: _____
Payment Received ___ Yes ___ No
Payment Type ___ Check ___ Credit Card



Application for Re-Certification Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice (CFGA)

Those who earn CFGA status are required to re-certify every two years by meeting program requirements specified by AFGC. Complete details are available online at www.afgc.org, or by calling the office at 800.944.2342. Please be sure that you read and understand all of the re-certification information and requirements, including program documentation and reporting form. Refunds are not available regardless of certification status.

Please type or print legibly.

Name (Mr./Ms./Mrs.): _____

Educational/Company Affiliation: _____

Title: _____

Address Line 1: _____

Address Line 2: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Country (other than U.S.A.): _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web Site: _____

Please attach the following to this application. If these are not included with this application then your application will not be processed.

1. **Current transcript**
2. **Letter of Intent from Applicant**
3. **Letter of Recommendation**

Fees/Payment Information

Please return this completed form with payment to: **AFGC, PO Box 867, Berea, KY 40403**. If you have questions, please call 800.944.AFGC, fax 859.623.8694, or e-mail info@afgc.org. Fees are used to support CFGA program administration. Once your application and payment are processed, AFGC will verify that you have met the requirements for re-certification. If the Professional Development Committee cannot document that you have met the requirements, you will be notified and provided with the opportunity to support your application.

\$25 AFGC Member

Check Credit Card (circle): AMEX MC VISA Amount: \$ _____

Card Number: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Signature: _____

For office use only

Accepted on: _____ By: _____

Payment Received ___ Yes ___ No

Payment Type ___ Check ___ Credit Card



CFGP Exam Proctor Guidelines

Please be sure to review and adhere to these guidelines.

Due to the nature of the Certified Forage and Grassland Apprentice (CFGA) exam, a second party must proctor it. AFGC personnel have the responsibility of providing the proctor with a sealed exam that will be copied and administered by the proctor.

The proctor is responsible for the following:

- Verifying the identification of each exam taker.
- Monitoring all test takers during the exam.
- Ensuring that test takers do not use any notes, the CFGA study materials, or other materials during the exam process.
- Initialing and dating a proctor form.

It is not the proctor's responsibility to answer questions during the test. The role of the proctor is to protect the exam's integrity, the exam taker's identity, and test authenticity.

Proctor's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____