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Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for February 10, 2023

The Weekly Update is a service designed to provide National Bison Association members with news and information affecting bison production and marketing. Many items in the Weekly Update are reprinted from outside sources. The content of those articles does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the National Bison Association. The articles are reproduced here only as a means to keep our membership informed as much as possible of all information and opinions relating to bison that is circulating publicly.

Congress in Full Swing

When NBA members went to Washington, D.C., last fall the asks were simple: include bison in the farm bill, label bison accurately, support local meat processing, and support bison on tribal lands.

In the last two weeks we have called on membership to encourage senate support for two bills: Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act, and the Local Meat Processing Act. Thank you for your great outpouring of support. Both bills have now been introduced in the Senate, and have been moved on to their respective subcommittees. This means bison legislative goals are at least on the board - and NBA staff will do our best to keep you updated on how to encourage things to keep on moving all the way to the finish line!

This week, Senator Thune introduced the Strengthening Local Processing Act, which would provide support to America's small meat and poultry processors and help strengthen and streamline their operations. I've attached a summary of the bill, and here's a link to the press release: [Thune, Brown, Pingree, Baird Reintroduce Bipartisan](#)

Bull Carcass Prices Up, Heifer Prices Down in Year End Price Report

Based on recent live auction results, quality is being rewarded at this year's sales and breeding animals are overall bringing good money. Click [here](#) for the most up-to-date data on bison auctions from around the country- a valuable resource available to all Active and Life Members.

Based on the December bison carcass price report, the most recent data available from the US Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Marketing Service, young bison bulls brought an average of \$3.87/lb., an increase of \$.08 over the previous month and nine cents less than the previous year. Young heifers brought two cents less per pound than the previous month and 17 cents less per pound than the previous year.

Click [here](#) for the full report. USDA Market News provides unbiased, timely, and accurate market information on hundreds of agricultural commodities and their related products, free-of-charge to everyone. Our premier data gives a representative picture of commodity markets and promotes market transparency and fairness.

NBA Working with USDA AMS to Improve Price Report

At the NBA Winter Conference Commercial Marketers meeting, the reporters of the monthly bison price report, Amber Sisco and Sierra Pillmore, were in attendance. A portion of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion on how we, as an industry, can improve marketer participation and, in turn, the accuracy of the bison market.

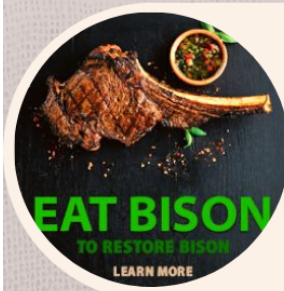
The NBA had invited Amber and Sierra, who ended staying for the whole NBA conference, after our September legislative fly-in, where we discussed the topic then and continue to collaborate on improving the report.

Currently, marketers are participating in a survey on how AMS could potentially change the data collected and how it's presented as well as questions on how the report could be used to determine federal indemnification values. Marketers have until February 26th to complete the survey.

Said NBA Executive Director, Jim Matheson, "We sure appreciate USDA AMS's dedication to our market data. Given the relatively very small size of our industry in the American livestock sector, we get some very good support from folks like Amber and Sierra. I'm confident that we'll improve both participation among marketers, and the accuracy of the data being collected. One important thing to note is the inclusion of direct marketers in addition to commercial marketers, in the survey participants. We need to get everyone's input as it's the sole price report available to our industry."

NBA GROWTH FUND

*Support Bison
Consumer
Outreach!*



1. How the Growth Fund Works

The NBA Growth Fund raises important funds that support the efforts of the NBA's outreach to consumers and the general promotion of bison to the public. The concept is for producers to donate \$1/head of bison processed annually, matched by the processor.

2. How are the funds used?

Growth Fund dollars are used in a variety of ways to maximize consumer outreach and education. The fund has supported NBA consumer-facing promotional efforts that range from food sport competitions to National Bison Day celebrations, as well as virtual promotional campaigns.



3. Why should you contribute?

The Growth Fund brought in \$57,000 in 2022 despite having processed over 80,000 head of bison in the U.S. last year. That amount represents just over 70% of processed bison, and does not include bison sold in the live market. The more we collectively contribute, the more consumers we can educate.

4. What else has it supported?

In 2022 the Growth Fund supported our *Eat Bison to Restore Bison* Google Ads campaign, it made bison the sponsored main ingredient at the World Food Championships and Q BBQ Fest Series, as well as our presence at the FFA National Convention and much more!



5. Is this a Check-Off program?

No! Unlike commodity "Check-Off" programs, the NBA Growth Fund is a voluntary fund that, in turn, is not regulated like those federally mandated programs. As such, we can spend those dollars how we, as bison stakeholders, see best.

Two Easy Ways to Contribute!

<https://bisoncentral.com/product/nba-growth-fund-program/>

1. Contribute online at <https://bisoncentral.com/product/nba-growth-fund-program/>

2. The NBA can invoice you on an annual, bi-annual or quarterly basis, based on head processed. Simply email

Editor's Note: The following news stories were distributed by organizations not affiliated with the National Bison Association. They may not reflect the opinions or the positions held by the NBA on matters such as genetic integrity, animal management, and other issues.

112 Yellowstone bison transferred to Fort Peck Tribes

From East Idaho News

MAMMOTH HOT SPRINGS, WY – During the week of Jan. 10, the National Park Service (NPS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) completed the transfer of 112 Yellowstone bison to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Poplar, Montana. The movement of these animals constitutes the single largest transfer to date under the park's Bison Conservation Transfer Program. The program has led to the largest relocation of live Yellowstone bison to American Indian Tribes in history.

Since 2019, a total of 294 bison have been transferred from Yellowstone to the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes at Fort Peck. Approximately 170 of those bison have then been further distributed to 23 Tribes across 12 states in partnership with the InterTribal Buffalo Council.

The bison transferred last month were a large family group of seven males, 53 females and 52 calves. All completed Phases I & II of the brucellosis quarantine protocol at Yellowstone National Park and the APHIS facilities and will finish assurance testing (Phase III) at Fort Peck (see information below for details about the protocol).

This transfer is the result of many partners working together: the NPS/Department of the Interior, Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, APHIS/United States Department of Agriculture, the State of Montana, InterTribal Buffalo Council, Yellowstone Forever, Defenders of Wildlife and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

Yellowstone National Park partnered recently with Yellowstone Forever and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition to more than double the capacity of the facility within the park. The park and APHIS intend to enter 250 new animals into the program this winter.

[Click to read more.](#)

When is buffalo not bison? When it's water buffalo. Here's why food labels need to change

From KXNET CBS

(KXNET) Labeling confusion can lead some consumers to buy buffalo they think is bison, but is actually made up of water buffalo.

If that seems a bit confusing at first glance, then you've hit upon the reason Republican North Dakota Senator John Hoeven and Democrat Colorado Senator Michael Bennet have reintroduced bipartisan legislation to strengthen the labeling of U.S. bison products and prevent water buffalo products from being deceptively labeled as buffalo.

The "Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act" give the Food and Drug Administration the authority to make sure products with water buffalo are marketed as "water buffalo." Right now, water buffalo can be label as just "buffalo" on meat packages.

This will help ensure consumers aren't misled into believing the product contains bison, which is commonly referred to as buffalo in the United States. Bison products would continue to be labeled as "bison" or "buffalo."

"Accurate labeling of bison products is not only good for consumers, but good for producers as well, and this legislation promotes transparency by ensuring products are properly labeled," said Hoeven.

"Colorado's bison producers work hard to grow their markets and deliver high-quality meat. Misleading labeling undermines their efforts and deceives consumers," added Bennet.

[Click to read more.](#)

Drawing Board's chili melds beans, bison, peppers for a hearty kick

From The St. Louis Post Dispatch

Q • The bison chili I had recently at the Drawing Board is one for the books. It's meaty not just from the bison, but from the beans. The flavor is complex with just enough heat I didn't feel I had to add hot sauce — something I usually do. Would love the recipe. — Bill Lamberton, Princeton Heights

A • The bison chili at the Drawing Board is a popular winter offering at the lively bar and restaurant for good reasons. Chef AJ Wamser layers flavors and textures in this two-bean chili with a two-alarm heat customers love. He begins by soaking dried kidney beans in one pot and dried black beans in another and keeps them separate during the cooking process to allow for their varying cook times.

He builds flavor by reconstituting fruity Guijiallo chilis he blends to make a lovely bright red chili base. His mixes ground bison with chopped Anaheim, poblano and yellow bell peppers as well as carrots and onion with lots of freshly smashed garlic cloves and a bevy of spices. He deepens the flavor with a demi-glace and adds a hit of umami with tomato paste. In other words, he takes no short cuts with his signature chili.

"I wanted to do a good different chili for the colder months. Venison chili's been done a lot, lamb isn't as readily available right now, and bison has great flavor and texture," he says.

[Click to read more.](#)

Bison roam where they aren't wanted. Is year-round hunting the answer?

From The Salt Lake Tribune

The American bison may be the iconic big game species of the American West, but they don't belong on Utah's West Tavaputs Plateau.

Brought back from near extinction last century and officially designated the national mammal, they now occupy special management areas in Utah, such as the Henry Mountains, Antelope Island and the Book Cliffs. But one thing about buffalo, they roam.

In recent years, bison have increasingly wandered off the Ute Indian Tribe's reservation lands on the East Tavaputs Plateau, crossing the Green River onto private and public lands used for livestock grazing.

This poses a big problem for ranchers and landowners, according to Rep. Christine Watkins, R-Price.

"These bison are not supposed to be there. They belong on the other side of mountains to the east. When they see the buffalo eating their grazing lands, they don't like that," Watkins told House colleagues last week. She predicted the big animals will eventually reach U.S. Highway 6 in Emery County, where they could create significant traffic hazards.

Her remedy is HB222, which would allow year-round hunting of bison outside designated management areas.

"Buffalo are smart," she said. "If they are there and one of their kind is killed, they know that is not a place they want to be and they won't go back."

[Click to read more.](#)

This Week In Nature: Bison Are Making Nights Brighter on the Illinois Prairie. Guess Who's Not Happy

From WTTW

Herds of bison have been reintroduced to great fanfare at several eco-restoration sites in the Midwest.

You know who's not jumping for joy? Mice.

New research published in the journal *Ecology* focused on the herd at Nachusa Grasslands in Franklin Grove, Ill., and discovered an unexpected consequence of the bison's presence. Namely, that it leaves smaller mammals like mice and voles with nowhere to hide.

As the bison chow on prairie vegetation, which is beneficial for prairie plant ecosystems, they are letting in more light — not just during the day but also at night. And night is when prey species like mice prefer to come out and eat, under the relative safety of darkness.

The study, carried out by Northern Illinois University Professor Holly Jones' lab, showed that less vegetative cover equals more moonlight. And more moonlight markedly decreased the movement of mice.

Deer mice were four times more active outside the bison unit, where plants are denser, during nights with peak moonlight, according to the research.

"These megaherbivores thus create a big change from the perspective of small mammals," Jones said.

[Click to read more.](#)

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) applauds the introduction of this bipartisan, comprehensive bill to support small processing plants

Washington, DC, February 8, 2023 – Tomorrow, Senator John Thune (R-SD), Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME), and Representative Jim Baird (R-IN) plan to reintroduce the Strengthening Local Processing Act (SLPA) in both the House and Senate. SLPA is a comprehensive bill that promotes competitive agricultural markets and invests in economic development by addressing acute livestock supply chain issues, supporting small meat and poultry processing plants, and promoting training programs that will bolster the resilience of communities and their food systems.

“NSAC applauds Senators Thune and Brown and Representatives Pingree and Baird for leading the way on this bill, which will address real needs for small processing plants and the producers they serve, and foster a stronger sustainable livestock sector overall. NSAC and small processors across the country are pleased to see the introduction of this bill, which reflects key priorities identified by our Coalition members and partners engaged in the regional processing sector,” said Connor Kippe, NSAC policy specialist.

SLPA will help catalyze a much needed expansion of choice for consumers, workers, farmers, and USDA. Earlier this year, reporting surfaced that the market share of JBS and other major packers has made it impossible for USDA to consider breaking ties with them – despite significant concerns raised over JBS’ parent company’s ethics and integrity – without adversely impacting taxpayers. Now more than ever, there is a need to build greater capacity among independent processors to meet the demand for regionally-produced meat and expand government procurement options.

The bill includes support for small plants’ compliance with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans; increased cost share for state meat and poultry inspection programs; increased cost share and expansion of the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program; a grant program to expand small plants, including small and very small federally inspected plants; and an education and training grant program.

[Source.](#)

Thune, Brown, Pingree, Baird Reintroduce Bipartisan Legislation to Expand and Strengthen Local Meat Processing Capabilities

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and U.S. Reps. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine) and Jim Baird (R-Ind.) plan to reintroduce the Strengthening Local Processing Act. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation, which will be formally reintroduced tomorrow, would provide support to America’s small meat and poultry processors and help strengthen and streamline their operations. The bill would also give small meat processors more access to information that is critical to food safety planning, allow for more inspector-approved meat products to be sold across state lines, and funnel federal dollars toward training, education, and technical assistance grants.

“South Dakota’s producers work hard to raise high-quality livestock, and it is imperative that we invest in expanding processing capacity to help them meet consumer demands,” said Thune. “My bill would support small meat and poultry processors’ operations and provide more local marketing opportunities for livestock producers.”

“If we’re serious about fighting consolidation in the livestock sector, we need to invest in Ohio’s small processors that will help create jobs in their community making our supply chain more resilient and bring down prices,” said Brown. “This legislation will bolster local

production while providing education and training assistance to support the next generation of local processors across Ohio.”

“One of the top concerns I hear about from livestock producers in my district is how difficult it is to access USDA processing facilities,” said Pingree. “Their livelihoods depend on having somewhere to take their animals, but under the current system, their options are severely limited. Chefs, retailers, and consumers want to buy locally raised meat, and they’re frustrated by how difficult it’s become to get it. My Strengthening Local Processing Act will increase processing, enhance opportunities for local producers, and help small slaughterhouses and butchers grow their businesses – delivering the quality, locally-raised meat and poultry consumers expect at the store.”

Thune, who has helped write four farm bills throughout his time in Congress, will continue introducing farm bill proposals ahead of the current bill’s expiration, which is set for September 2023.

[Read more.](#)

Apply Now for Armed to Farm Veteran Training in Idaho

From NCAT

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) is teaming up with the University of Idaho Extension and Idaho Farmer Veteran Coalition to bring NCAT’s Armed to Farm training to Idaho for the first time. Veterans who want to attend the week-long training can apply online now.

Armed to Farm allows veterans and their spouses to experience sustainable, profitable small-scale farming enterprises and explore career opportunities in agriculture. At Armed to Farm, participants learn about business planning, budgeting, recordkeeping, marketing, USDA programs, livestock production, fruit and vegetable production, and more. Participants gain a strong foundation in the basic principles of operating a sustainable farm. In addition, Armed to Farm attendees join a nationwide network of supportive farmer-veterans and agricultural advisors.

Armed to Farm trainings include an engaging blend of farm tours, hands-on activities, and interactive classroom instruction. NCAT Sustainable Agriculture specialists will lead the training sessions. Speakers will include staff from USDA agencies and University of Idaho Extension. Experienced crop and livestock producers will provide additional instruction. Applications are available and are due by March 17, 2023.

This training is for veterans in the Northwest, with preference given to those in Idaho. The number of participants will be limited. NCAT will notify selected participants by March 24. A spouse or farm partner is welcome to attend with a veteran but must submit a separate application.

Armed to Farm will take place April 24-28 at the University of Idaho Sandpoint Organic Agriculture Center in Sandpoint, Idaho. Participants will attend classroom sessions and travel to local farms for hands-on learning experiences.

The event is free for those chosen to attend; lodging, transportation to local farms, and most meals scholarships are available through a partnership with Ranchin' Vets.

[Read more.](#)

Elk checked for brucellosis test negative [MT]

From NBCMontana.com

MISSOULA, Mont. - Elk that were captured in the Pioneer Mountains as part of a targeted elk brucellosis surveillance project tested negative for the disease.

Wildlife officials tested 149 samples of blood from the captured elk.

All results were negative.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks released the following information:

As part of a multi-year Targeted Elk Brucellosis Surveillance Project, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) staff recently captured elk in the Pioneer Mountains northwest of Dillon.

All 149 blood samples collected from captured elk tested negative for brucellosis.

Capture operations were conducted in January along the eastern front of the Pioneer Mountains. A few elk were also captured south of Montana Highway 278 east of Bannack. Thirty elk were outfitted with GPS collars that will be active for one year to help wildlife managers better understand their seasonal ranges, migration routes and potential mixing with other elk herds.

[Click to read more.](#)

Wisconsin offers processor grants to improve state industry

From Meatingplace

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) opened an application window for meat processors to apply for grants, according to a release from the agency.

DATCP will accept applications through March 17, with grant application materials available online.

The program is designed to improve the state's meat industry and improve the long-term viability of the state's livestock industry, the release said.

The grants, which were included in Governor Tony Evers' 2021-23 biennial budget, will go to applicants that operate or intend to operate a DATCP or U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) licensed meat processing establishment in Wisconsin and be engaged in livestock harvest or processing.

The funding can be used for operating expenses directly related to the grant project, including expenses for engineering, architectural design, construction, food safety consultation, equipment, and equipment installation. Grants will be worth up to \$50,000 for projects that are up to two years in duration and help expand capacity or increase throughput. Processors are required to provide a 100% match of the grant amount. Last year, the state dished out \$10 million in grants to 91 meat processing companies through the state government's Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency program.

[Source.](#)

Worldwide demand propels beef exports to record 2022

From Meatingplace

U.S. beef exports set records for both volume and value in 2022, according to USDA data compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

At 1.47 million metric tons (mt), beef exports were up 2% over 2021, the previous record. Export value, meanwhile, increased 10% year-over-year to \$11.68 billion, which is

nearly 40% above the previous five-year average.

Driving 2022's numbers were numerous markets, which themselves imported record amounts of U.S. beef: South Korea, China/Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore, Colombia, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

"2022 was a ground-breaking year for U.S. beef's international presence, with global demand stronger than I've seen in all my years in the industry," said USMEF President and CEO Dan Halstrom.

[Source.](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture Announces Key Staff Appointments

From USDA Press Release No. 0026.23

WASHINGTON, February 2, 2023 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the names of individuals who will hold senior staff positions in Washington, D.C. Regina Black has been promoted to Senior Advisor for Trade and National Security in the Office of the Secretary.

Black has served as Chief of Staff for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs since August 2021. Before joining the Department, she was the Director of the Executive Office at the U.S. Dairy Export Council. Black previously served in the Obama Administration at USDA in various roles, including Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary and Acting Deputy Chief of Staff for the Foreign Agricultural Service. Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, she has her bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University and a master's degree in International Relations and Economics from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Silvia Fabela has been appointed Senior Advisor for the Office of the Secretary. Fabela comes to USDA from Local Progress, where she served as Program Director. In this role, Fabela supervised and managed the Policy and Program team and oversaw member education and mobilization on a broad array of issues including economic justice, public safety, immigrant protections, housing and more. Previously, she held roles at Center for Popular Democracy, AFL-CIO and United Food & Commercial Workers Union (UFCW). Silvia holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Monmouth College.

Also: Jason Lumia has been appointed Chief of Staff for the Rural Utilities Service; Malikha Daniels has been appointed Legislative Advisor for the Office of Congressional Relations; Clare Sierawski has been appointed Senior Energy Counselor in the Office of the Under Secretary for Rural Development.

[Read More.](#)

Request for Proposals for Farmers for Soil Health

The submission deadline for full proposals is February 28, 2023.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, in partnership with the Farmers for Soil Health collaboration, anticipates awarding competitive grants to accelerate the voluntary adoption of cover crops on corn and soybean farms in 20 states.

NCAT is a partner in this project. The program is expected to award approximately \$15 million in grants in 2023. Applicants should propose state-level or multi-state programs to support Farmers for Soil Health in one or more of the 20 eligible states.

Grantees are limited to state corn, soy, or pork commodity affiliate organizations or their designated partners.

[Learn more.](#)

farm crisis center

Even in the best of times, farming can be an incredibly high-stress occupation. Unpredictable weather, crop disease, volatile markets, heavy workloads, and social isolation are just a handful of the challenges that farmers may face.

These conditions force many family farmers and ranchers to make tough financial decisions that will impact their families, communities, and the entire country.

National Farmers Union compiled resources to help farmers through stressful times. Find them at:

<https://farmcrisis.nfu.org/>

National Suicide Hotline - 800-273-TALK (8255)



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Save the Date!

- 2/11/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction, Grande Prairie, AB - Online
- 2/24/2023 - Beltway Bison Consignment Auction - PA

- 2/25/2023 - MBA Great Spirit - Brandon, MB
- 3/04/2023 - RMBA Spring Conference - Fort Collins, CO
- 3/09/2023 - Eastern Bison Association Winter Conference and Auction - PA
- 3/10/2023 - BPA Wildrose - Camrose, AB
- 3/11/2023 - Route 66 Bison Roundup Show & Sale - MO
- 3/11/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction, Camrose, AB - online
- 3/11/2023 - Irish Creek Bull Sale - Camrose, AB
- 3/25/2023 - SBA Cream of the Crop - Yorkton, SK
- 3/31/2023 - Minnesota Bison Association Spring Education Conference - MN
- 3/30/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction - Online
- 4/27/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction - Online

Please visit <https://bisoncentral.com/calendar/> for details and more up-to-date events. If you have a bison event coming up that's not listed, please send the details to jim@bisoncentral.com and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

Click Here for NBA Calendar of Events

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