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## Weekly Update



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### *NBA Weekly Update for March 24, 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.*

## Help Recruit House Sponsorship for Truth in Buffalo Labeling Bill

The Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act has been successfully introduced in the Senate, but still needs a companion bill introduced in the House.

NBA members can help build support for the Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act by recruiting sponsorship in the U.S. House. See the proposed legislation here.

This legislation would prevent water buffalo products from being deceptively labeled as buffalo, which misleads consumers and negatively impacts the U.S. bison industry. The bipartisan bill provides the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with the authority to ensure that products with water buffalo are marketed as "water buffalo" so consumers aren't misled to believe the product contains bison. Bison products would continue to be labeled as "bison" or "buffalo".

The need for legislation is prompted by the importation of water buffalo meat into the United States, which in the past has been labeled and marketed in a manner that leads consumers to believe they are buying North American bison.

The proposed legislation was reintroduced in the 118th Congress in January by sponsors U.S. Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO). We need to recruit members from the House of Representatives to sponsor this legislation.

Click [here](#) to find the appropriate contact information for your Representatives, and if you cannot find it, please email NBA executive director, Jim Matheson, at [jim@bisoncentral.com](mailto:jim@bisoncentral.com), and he will provide it.

Sample Communication to your Representative:

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to request that you sponsor the Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act, introduced by Sens. John Hoeven and Michael Bennet in 118th Congress in January.

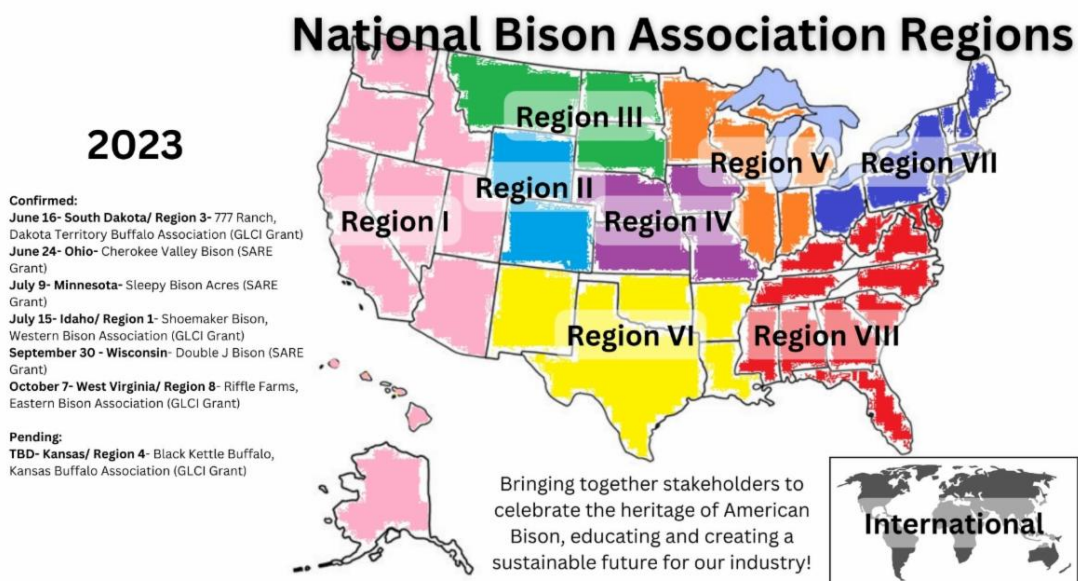
I am a bison producer from (your city/state...briefly describe your operation). Bison producers have worked hard over the past two decades to connect with customers across the country focusing on the quality of bison meat, and the ecological attributes of American bison. Now, the integrity of our marketplace is being undermined by deceptively labeled water buffalo products coming into the U.S. marketplace.

The proposed legislation would require that any water buffalo food products in the U.S. marketplace be properly labeled as "water buffalo." This simple change will stop these deceptive practices, and still provide consumers with the confidence that they are getting what they pay for.

If you are willing to sponsor this bill, please reach out to National Bison Association executive director, Jim Matheson, at [jim@bisoncentral.com](mailto:jim@bisoncentral.com).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
(Your Name)



## NBA Begins Summer Event Planning

The National Bison Association is actively planning its seven (!) summer and fall regional conferences with planning calls planned over the coming weeks as we finalize agendas, lodging, menus, etc. Keep an eye on <https://bisoncentral.com/nba-conferences/> for updates.

Each event will have a unique agenda and feature expert speakers addressing pertinent regional bison topics, which we're developing with the local host ranch and respective state or regional bison association.

See the dates above, mark your calendars and plan to join the NBA in your neck of the woods!

## National Ag Day Celebrated

This past Tuesday National Ag Day was celebrated.

Thank you to all the Bison Ranchers and Farmers across the nation!



"American farms remind us of the beauty and generosity of our Nation. They feed the country and the world, and with each new planting season, they embody that most American of things — possibilities. On National Agriculture Day, we celebrate all the farmers, farmworkers, ranchers, fishers, foresters, and other agricultural workers who do so much to make our Nation strong, fuel our economy, and steward our lands. America owes them. There is a common spirit across America's agricultural community: a respect for tradition, a drive to innovate, and a commitment to never giving up — even when the going gets tough."

[Click for press release.](#)

The National Bison Association connects with producers and consumers alike across multiple social media platforms. Check us out at <https://www.facebook.com/nationalbison>! Make sure you "like" the NBA and share the great content across your feeds.

**Instagram:** @nationalbison

**LinkedIn:** National Bison Association

**YouTube:** @nationalbisonassociation3992

**Facebook:** @nationalbison

Join the Official National Bison Association Members Group- just Facebook message Lydia Whitman or Jim Matheson to get added.

The National Bison Association is a collection of people from all walks of life, with all sorts of connections to bison. There are members from all 50 states, quite a few Canadians, and a smattering of members from Mexico to Australia.

I had the opportunity to catch up with some of the Iowa members this month. If you caught the last Minnesota Bison Association Insider Podcast- you heard from Bethany with Sunset Hills Bison Ranch. She's the real deal! Her vacation rental cabin next to the bison herd was so cozy, and the bison steaks were delicious! I want to come back when it is warmer and stay in one of the Conestoga wagons and try out the cowboy hot tub.

The Dreesman Buffalo Ranch, just up the road, sells some of the best bison meat sticks and a meat spread called braunschwieger that I have in my fridge waiting for me to try it! The Dreesman family treated me to a showstopper bison chili, and some good kitchen table coffee chat time.

All of this said- I want to highlight that the National Bison Association has a special something- a really diverse membership that belong because they love bison. There is a connection to the animal, the land, and the communities they are a part of. I look forward to continue to exploring the places where bison roam, and sharing a good cup of coffee and conversation with the amazing people that care for them.  
Lydia, Program Manager

## **Truth in Buffalo Labeling House Sponsors Still Needed**

Aan join forces and work towards getting some legislation moving forward by emailing them at [jim@bisoncentral.com](mailto:jim@bisoncentral.com), or [lydia@bisoncentral.com](mailto:lydia@bisoncentral.com).



***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.***

## **Field Slaughter Considered More Humane Option for Bison**

From Lancaster Farming

"Bison are particularly impacted by stress because they were never domesticated. So like any wild animal, they spook easily," said Jim Matheson, executive director of the National Bison Association.

Most bison are still killed and processed at slaughterhouses. But stress - induced by getting on a strange trailer or being separated from herd mates - can elevate cortisol levels, reducing the tenderness of the meat.



Usually field slaughter is conducted in a pasture on the farm, where the bison are comfortable.

To get started, a farmer has the meat processor request inspection for the process through the regional field office of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The Northeast is split between the Philadelphia and Raleigh, North Carolina, districts.

Among other things, the inspector will check the condition of the pasture where the farmer wants the bison killed.

"Is it reasonable enough that that animal is not going to become so soiled that it becomes a food safety issue?" said Gabby Eddings, a veterinary medical officer at FSIS.

Eddings spoke at the Eastern Bison Association's annual meeting March 10 at the Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg Hershey.

[Read more here.](#)

## **Issued Solicitation for Bison Products**

From Agricultural Marketing Service

The Agricultural Marketing Service has issued Solicitation 2000009194, 12-3J14-23-B-0288 for the procurement of Bison Products.

This comes out of requests from tribal groups to update spec revisions to include 2 lb. diced bison meat. This hopefully is received by commercial marketers with interest so bison gets to the table through this solicitation program.

[Read more here.](#)

## **Tribal Bison Harvest Continues to Climb to New High North of Yellowstone National Park**

From Billings Gazette

In the past two weeks, tribal hunters have killed an additional 131 Yellowstone National Park bison in the Gardiner Basin, according to the most recent Interagency Bison Management Plan report.

A total of about 878 bison have been killed by native hunters in what's been the deadliest season since tribal treaty rights to hunt bison were recognized by the state of Montana in 2005-06.

The 2016-17 season had set the previous high mark for bison kills by tribal members at 440 animals.

When tribal kills are added to animals that were wounded and had to be shot by officials and 75 state-licensed hunters who filled their tags, the total hunter kill so far this winter has been more than 1,060 bison.

The park's total bison population this fall was estimated at around 6,000 animals.

The high number of hunter kills drew criticism from Jaedin Medicine Elk, a Northern Cheyenne tribal member and cofounder of the bison advocacy group Roam Free Nation.

"When there's 30 hunters there from 10 different tribes, it turns into a competition to see who can get a buffalo, causing hunters to start firing into family groups hoping they kill a buffalo," he said in a statement. "It seems the new 'relationship' is hunting them to near-extinction because our treaty rights are more important than the well-being of a strong buffalo population."

[Read more.](#)

## **Bill passes to pay Montana ranchers more for livestock disease loss**

From The Montana Standard

Montana ranchers will now have a state-level fund to support livestock losses to certain diseases.

House Bill 51, sponsored by Rep. Joe Read, R-Polson, sets aside \$10,000 a year for the Department of Livestock to pay ranchers indemnity for animals lost to disease. The fund is capped at \$100,000 and paid for by livestock head fees.

Gov. Greg Gianforte signed the bill into law last week.

The Department of Livestock requested the bill, saying it's needed to update outdated language, ease the burden of regulatory testing for producers, and reimburse for disease that's not indemnified federally.

Read the full article here: [tinyurl.com/mu96d6y2](https://tinyurl.com/mu96d6y2)

## **U.S. 2023 Winter Season Wraps With Varying Record Conditions**

From USDA

The Natural Resources Conservation Service produces this weekly report using data and products from the [National Water and Climate Center](#) and other agencies. The report focuses on seasonal snowpack, precipitation, temperature, and drought conditions in the U.S.

California has experienced consistent extreme winter weather this season, as other locations in the U.S. have dealt with their own unusual winter conditions. The graphic above on the left displays the daily departure from normal temperatures (Fahrenheit) measured so far this month in Bismarck, North Dakota. March 3 was the only day throughout the month to date with an above-normal high temperature for the area.

According to the National Weather Service, Bismarck has received 95 inches of snowfall for the season as of March 22, and is on track to be among the top three snowiest seasons since record keeping began in the late 1800s. The mountains of the southwestern U.S. are measuring record-breaking amounts of snowpack as of March 23. Conversely, some Northeastern states have experienced a record warm winter accompanied with below-normal amounts of snow received for the season.

[Read more here.](#)

## **South Dakota agriculture industry among nation's leaders in cow, calf, bison and lamb production**

From DRG News

It's National Ag Week and today (March 21, 2023) is National Ag Day.

According to data from the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the state ranks fifth in the nation for both the number of beef cows and the number of calves raised.

[Read more here.](#)

## **USDA Extends Comment Period on APHIS's Traceability Regulations Proposal**

From Drovers

The comment period on a proposal to amend the animal disease traceability regulations and require electronic identification for interstate movement of certain cattle and bison has been extended 30 days, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced late last week.

According to the release, the proposal, originally announced Jan. 18 of this year, will "strengthen animal disease traceability regulations" and will require official eartags to be visually and electronically readable for interstate movement of certain cattle and bison, as well as revise and clarify record requirements, including the requirement of official identification device distribution records to be entered into Tribal, State and Federal database and be made available to APHIS upon request.

Additionally, changes have been made to a prior APHIS plan, with the agency now using the term electronic identification (EID) tags instead of radio frequency identification (RFID) tags. APHIS said that is to accommodate the potential for future technologies other than RFID relative to the tags.

[Read more here.](#)

## **Feds allocate \$2 million to Oregon farmers and ranchers for bison, yak products and more**

From Oregon Capital Chronicle

The federal government has allocated more than \$2 million to Oregon farmers and ranchers in seven counties to expand marketing and sales of various items, including of bison meat and yak products.

Oregon's U.S. senators, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, announced the funding on Wednesday. The \$2.1 million in grants are part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's value-added product program, which is designed to help producers develop new products and gives a priority to new or beginning farmers and ranchers, small and medium-sized operations, those who are socially disadvantaged, cooperatives and some family farms. The USDA allocates \$31 million through the program each fiscal year, giving each project a maximum of \$250,000.

"Oregon producers competed well for a good share of those monies," Jill Rees, deputy state director of the USDA's Rural Development office in Oregon. The \$2.1 million for Oregon is divided among 11 projects in Clackamas, Deschutes, Jackson, Lane, Multnomah, Polk and Wallowa counties:

- Zena Forest, a farm in Rickreall, Oregon, won \$249,592 to expand its marketing and processing of raw logs into engineered flooring.
- Stangel Livestock, a family farm in Enterprise, is getting \$250,000 to expand the marketing and sales of grass-fed bison meat and related bison products.
- Scenic Fruit Company, a farm in Gresham, won \$72,000 to work with Oregon State University Food Innovation Center on a feasibility study and to market a blueberry dessert topping.
- Firebird Farms in Ashland is receiving a \$234,895 grant to expand the production, capacity, and marketing of Tibetan yak fiber goods including skulls, hides, and down fiber.
- Wild Oasis Bison Ranch, a farm in Eagle Point, won \$250,000 to expand the marketing and sales of its bison cuts.

[Read More.](#)

## **'Control your buffalo': Woman says rapper Rick Ross' pet bison wandered onto her property**

By KCRA

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. (Video above: WSB via CNN) —

Rick Ross thanked his neighbors for helping return his buffaloes after they wandered off his property in Fayetteville, Georgia.

The buffaloes were first seen strolling around Fayette County on March 13, according to a Facebook post from the sheriff's office. A spokesperson for the sheriff's office confirmed that the buffaloes belonged to Ross and were safely returned to his property.

The rapper uses social media to document life on his ranch, nicknamed "The Promise Land," where he keeps horses, cows, and buffaloes. So he posted several Instagram stories on his verified account addressing the hairy situation.

"I always return stray animals," he said in a Sunday Instagram story. "Make sure you always put a collar on your animals, and mine don't have a collar 'cause you know it's mine."

"So when you see my buffalo, give it a carrot, give it an apple," he went on. "They so kind, they so peaceful. Thank you everybody for watching, thank you everybody for making sure all my animals got back into the Promise Land."

"All my neighbors in Fayetteville, y'all the best," the rapper added.

[Source.](#)

## **Scientists want to clone an extinct bison unearthed from Siberian permafrost. Experts are skeptical.**

From Live Science

Researchers in Russia recently completed a necropsy, or animal autopsy, on a stunningly intact extinct bison that was unearthed from Siberian permafrost. The tissues recovered during the dissection are so well preserved, the team believes the long-dead specimen could be cloned.

But one expert told Live Science that it is a long shot.



The mummified creature, which belongs to an unknown species of extinct bison, was discovered at the Khaastaakh locality in the Verkhoyansk region of Russia in summer 2022 and donated to the Mammoth Museum Laboratory of North-Eastern Federal University (NEFU) in Yakutsk. Preliminary investigations revealed that the bison was a juvenile of unknown sex that was between 1 and 2 years old when it died. Scientists don't know yet when the bison lived, but similar specimens found in 2009 and 2010 dated to between 8,000 and 9,000 years ago, NEFU researchers wrote in a statement.

[Read more.](#)

## **USDA Collecting Responses for 2022 Census of Agriculture**

From USDA Gov Delivery

The Census of Agriculture allows producers to tell the story of U.S. agriculture and it's not too late to respond. Since data collection began last fall, over 1 million ag census recipients across the country have returned their questionnaires. USDA will continue to collect completed 2022 ag census forms through the spring to ensure all producers have the chance to be represented in widely used census data. Producers can respond online at [agcounts.usda.gov](https://agcounts.usda.gov) or by mail.

Census data informs decisions about policy, farm and conservation programs, infrastructure and rural development, research, education, and more. The stronger the response, the stronger the data. For America's farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future, and their opportunity.

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is continuing to contact producers via mail and telephone to collect information. If you are a producer who has already submitted your 2022 Census of Agriculture, thank you. You may disregard any additional ag census letters and forms.

Whether producers responded online or by mail, they can verify their reports were received by going to [agcounts.usda.gov](https://agcounts.usda.gov), entering their survey codes, and checking the submitted date under the status column of the My Surveys tab. The status update is not always immediate and can take a few minutes up to several days, especially if the questionnaire was returned by mail.

# 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!***

- 3/25/2023 - SBA Cream of the Crop - Yorkton, SK
- 3/27/2023 - Diamond 4D Bison Webcast Auction - MT
- 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
- 6/10/2023 - Texas Bison Assn. Spring Conference - Waco, TX
- 6/17/2023 - Montana Bison Association Summer Meeting - MT
- 6/17/2023 - NBA Regional Conference - Rapid City, SD
- 6/24/2023 - NBA Regenerative Ranching Field Day - Thornville, OH
- 7/09/2023 - NBA Regenerative Ranching Field Day - Sleepy Eye, MN
- 7/15/2023 - NBA Regional Conference - New Plymouth, ID

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](mailto: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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