

# Online Only Bison Auction

**SHAPE RANCH • CARRIZO, TX**

**Monday, March 9 • 10 A.M. CST • Bidding open NOW!**

**Over 100 Head of Mature Cows, Two Year Old Heifers,  
Three & Four Year Old Bulls, Bull & Heifer Calves**



Jud Seaman - Auctioneer  
(605) 390-1419



Photos, video, description  
and registration at

[www.qas.hibid.com](http://www.qas.hibid.com)



## Weekly Update



[bisoncentral.com](http://bisoncentral.com)

303-292-2833

The National Bison Association (NBA) Weekly Update is an exclusive service for NBA members.

Reprint is encouraged and permission is granted when the following credit appears:  
©National Bison Association; Westminister, CO

---

### *NBA Weekly Update for February 28, 2020*

---

*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.*

---

### **NBA Starts to Plan 2020 Summer Conference**

The NBA summer conference planning committee met this week via teleconference to start planning the annual event scheduled for June 21 – 23 in Cheyenne, WY in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Bison Association. The host hotel, Little America - <https://cheyenne.littleamerica.com/> - has rooms available at the discounted rate of \$122/night. Reserve your lodging by calling the hotel directly at 800-235-6396 and requesting the National Bison Association room block.

While the agenda is in its beginning stages, the committee has a great couple of days planned. Responding to feedback from past conference attendees, the group is trimming the conference back by half a day, offering a two-day conference that will allow busy members to tend to their farms and ranches. For those not in a rush to get home, Cheyenne offers an excellent jumping off point for a variety of western summer adventures and bison tours for an unforgettable family vacation.

The tentative agenda plans for an optional Sunday evening reception and dinner at an offsite attraction, Monday will see our ranch/herd tours with Tuesday being dedicated to conference presentations at the host hotel and the conference wrapping up Tuesday evening, June 23rd, after our banquet dinner and benefit auction.

Please mark your calendars for this great event and don't miss out on the summer's biggest bison get together. For travel planning, please note, conference programming will technically begin on Monday, June 22nd. June 21st is a travel day with a welcome reception planned for that evening.

More information will be available [here](#).

---

## **NBA Members Targeted in Purchasing Scam**

The National Bison Association this week issued a special alert for members to be vigilant in monitoring for attempted scams after placing ads on the NBA's Trading Board site.

The association was contacted within the past ten days by two members advertising live animals, and who were subject to attempted scamming efforts. In both instances, the "purchaser" sent fraudulent checks for the purchase of animals. In one instance, the individual contacted the seller with a request to wire funds to pay for a driver to haul the animals.

Both of the members placing the ads on the Trading Board were sufficiently suspicious to halt the scam before delivering animals or wiring funds.

After sending out a special email alert to members, the NBA office was contacted by additional members who had thwarted similar scam attempts. In addition, several members have received bogus emails supposedly from NBA President Donnis Baggett requesting donations to purchase gift cards.

"As more of our communication and commerce moves on-line, scammers are working overtime to figure out ways to bilk people in cyberspace," said NBA Assistant Director, Jim Matheson. "The scam attempts we are experiencing are only an outgrowth of activity on Craigslist and other online forums."

The following is an overview of tips to avoid the buyer scam as provided by an NBA member who's also a sheriff:

Overview of the scam:

- Seller posts items for sale online.
- Buyer will generally offer full price upfront as they do not want to haggle on price.
- Buyer will usually offer to send cashier's check in advance, most of the time with extra money to pay a shipper (not always) or extra money to pay you to ship sale items yourself without ever discussing shipping.
- Usually buyer does not want to talk live, attempting to do all business through text or email as to conceal accents.
- Buyer generally sends a very real looking cashier's check (which by definition means the funds are guaranteed), but while it looks real and your bank will take it, it is really a false or bad check drawn on a fake account, an old account that no longer exists, or on a bank account that does not have sufficient funds.
- Buyer wants seller to take the money and generally buyer wants product picked up or delivered right away before your bank has the 3-10 days it will take to find out the check is fake or bad.
- Many times the buyer will send a transporter and ask you to pay the transporter with the so called extra money they sent you.
- This is costing you double as you lose your product on the fake check and you pay cash to the transporter who may or may not be in on the scam as well.
- Sometimes the transporter is just a transporter and since you are paying them to take your product/animals there is no crime in them taking your product/animals unless they are intentionally a part of the actual buyers scam and know that they are.
- This part is what makes it difficult to catch the real criminal here as the transporter is generally not involved.
- When the transporter delivers to some destination, generally that person pays the so called buyer, and that's how they ultimately get paid while you lose your product.
- This is the most common scam inside of Craigslist and has extended out, as it is amazingly successful.

Tips to avoid this:

- Work with reputable people you know or get references on buyers.
- See if they are members of NBA or regional/state bison associations.
- If they claim they are starting out, ask them about their operation.
- Insist on talking live.
- If they are pushy and want to get the deal done right now, be prepared that is a BIG tactic to be pushy in text and email and if you get them on the phone they will push to close the deal, and you will want to do the deal as they are meeting your every price demand.
- Get a bank certified check and call the bank to verify payment.

Verify the funds are in your account fully, and your bank agenda yes they will not take those funds back in writing for any reason, before shipping animals to anyone you do not know or cannot verify through people you do know.

---

## **RMBA President John Graves Steps Down As Ralphie Program Manager**

John Graves, president of the Rocky Mountain Bison Association and Yards Manager for the NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale, stepped down this week from a 14-year run as a handler and manager of college football's perennial "most popular" mascot, the University of Colorado's Ralphie.

Graves said that he was stepping down because he and his wife, Jennifer, plan to pursue a career in bison ranching, and that CU is now making the Ralphie Manager post a full-time position.

In a letter posted on his personal social media, Graves said, "The Handlers are what makes the Ralphie Program so great. As a former handler and coach, I will always remember and admire the passion, effort and dedication they showed every day. Seeing their faces after their very first run with Ralphie was always magical."

"It was very humbling and made for very proud moments, watching them safely run with Ralphie all these years. I will never forget them," Graves added.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, noted, "Ralphie is one of the greatest ambassadors for bison across the country. John has done an incredible job working with her and her handlers to assure that that fans in the stands, and people watching on television, experience the power, mystic and majesty of our national mammal."

---

## **Sen. Tester Joins as Co-Sponsor of Truth in Labeling Bill**

U.S. Sen. John Tester (D-MT) this week officially signed on as a co-sponsor of the Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act. Tester joins U.S. Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Mike Braun (R-IN) and Tina Smith (D-MN) in sponsoring the legislation to eliminate the deceptive labeling of water buffalo meat and food ingredients in the United States.

"As one of the few working farmers in the U.S. Senate, his support for our initiative is a strong legislative effort," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association.

Carter and NBA President, Donnis Baggett, are scheduled to be in Washington, D.C. March 9-10 to call upon key members of the U.S. Senate and House to solicit additional support for the Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act.

---

## **Average Wholesale Prices Dip in January**

The average wholesale prices paid for dress bison young bull and heifer carcasses slipped in January, although the decline is attributed to a drop in price reported at the top end of

the average, according to the latest monthly wholesale bison price report issued by USDA's Grain and Livestock Market Reporting Service.

Dressed young bull carcasses averaged \$415.16/cwt in January, which was \$18.71/cwt lower than in December, and \$38.33/cwt. lower than the previous January. However, the top price paid in January was \$505.00/cwt., which was a \$045.00/cwt. lower than in December.

Similarly, the average price paid for a dressed heifer carcass in January was \$390.24/cwt., which was \$11.85/cwt. lower than in December and \$66.15/cwt. lower than in January 2019. However, the highest prices reported for heifer carcasses also dropped by \$045.00/cwt. between December and January, while the lowest price increased by \$005.00/cwt.

According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, 5,360 head were processed under federal inspection during the first five weeks of 2020. That is 249 more than during the similar period in 2019, and the highest number processed on record to start the year.

The USDA's monthly wholesale bison price report can be found [here](#).

The National Bison Association's five-year tracing report can be found in the members' section at [www.bisoncentral.com](http://www.bisoncentral.com)

---

## FDA Reopens Comment Period on Food Standards of Identity

The federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) decision earlier this week to reopen the comment period on a 2005 proposed rule on Standards of Identity in food labeling provides bison ranchers, marketers and supporters with an opportunity to push for a regulatory change to address deceptively labeled water buffalo products in the United States.

NBA Executive Director, Dave Carter, explained, "The FDA published a request for public comments in 2005 to address deceptive labeling practices, but never acted upon the comments received because of a lack of agency resources."

"Now, 15 years later, they are re-opening the comment period, and asking people to weigh in on 13 specific questions," Carter added.

This provides the people in the bison business the opportunity to push aggressively to clear up the problem of deceptive labeling. And, recognizing that the regulatory process could take another 15 years, input received during this comment period can help build the momentum for passage of the Truth in Buffalo labeling Bill in the U.S. Senate and House.

Comments will be accepted until April 21, 2020.

Full proposed rule [here](#).



## Winter Bison World Magazine Available Online

One of the perks of NBA membership is access to the Bison World magazine before the printed copies arrive in the mail! Production on the Winter issue has wrapped up and it is now available on the website at: <https://bisoncentral.com/publication/bison-world-magazine/>.

You will need to log in to the member area to access the magazine.

The flipbook version of the magazine can be viewed right on your computer. Handy links allow you to open it into a new window, make it larger, magnify certain features and even print pages if desired. The realistic page turning sounds make it

feel like you are reading the printed version of the magazine.

The hard copy magazine is currently being printed and will mail shortly.

---

***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.***

---

# MISSOURI BISON ASSOCIATION



## 21ST ANNUAL SPRING SHOW & SALE

Saturday, **March 21th, 2020** – 11:00 AM

Mo-Kan Livestock Market, Butler, MO

Dinner & Fun Auction: March 20th,  
Sale Barn Cafe, 6pm

To Consign, Call:  
Carol Morris: **660-998-0990** or  
Peter Kohl: **816-585-4779**



---

## Secretary Perdue Announces New FSIS Leadership

*(From USDA)*

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced the appointment of Paul Kiecker to serve as Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Mr. Kiecker will be assuming the role following the departure of Administrator Carmen Rottenberg, who is departing federal service after a career spanning two decades.

"Ensuring the safety of America's food supply is USDA's most important responsibility, and one that Carmen carried out with dedication and vision. I know she will continue her passion for food safety in the private sector," said Secretary Perdue. "Carmen is a true public servant and ushered in an era of modernization at the Food Safety and Inspection Service. This mission and drive will continue and advance with Paul Kiecker in his new leadership role. USDA's food safety team is the best in the world and works tirelessly to safeguard the food we serve our families every single day."

Carmen Rottenberg served as Administrator since May of 2018 but led the agency since August of 2017. As Administrator, Rottenberg spearheaded efforts to modernize the agency and implemented several key initiatives to target foodborne illness. Through her leadership and oversight, an unprecedented level of collaboration was achieved with federal, state and municipal agencies and other stakeholders.

"My colleagues in FSIS are among the best and brightest in federal government, and I am confident that the Agency will continue to "do right and feed everyone," long after my last day in this office," Carmen Rottenberg said. "Each and every day our FSIS team displays unparalleled commitment to decision making that is both protective of public health and supportable by science and data. They are public servants in the truest form of the term. It's been a thrill and absolute joy to work with Secretary Perdue and this USDA team, and I'm so proud of all we have accomplished."

"I am thankful to have had the opportunity to work so closely with Carmen over the past year," said Deputy Under Secretary Mindy Brashears. "Her leadership and food safety expertise will be greatly missed within the Department, but I am excited to see her

succeed in her new ventures ahead. As we move ahead into 2020, I am confident in the direction of the agency as we have experienced senior staff who are ready to step into new leadership roles.”

Paul Kiecker was named Deputy Administrator for the FSIS in May of 2018 and served as the Agency’s Acting Administrator until January of 2019. Throughout his 30 years with FSIS, he has been committed to a strong public health vision that has guided him to overcome obstacles, identify opportunities for improvement, manage resources efficiently, and achieve food safety objectives to prevent foodborne illness.

Since joining FSIS in 1988 as a food inspector, Kiecker has served in a number of roles at the agency, including Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Field Operations. He came to Washington, D.C. to serve as Executive Associate for Regulatory Operations, after serving as the District Manager in Springdale, AR and Madison, WI, as well as Deputy District Manager in Madison, WI. Kiecker’s experience with FSIS also includes work with the Office of Investigation, Enforcement, and Audit, where he has served as a Compliance Investigator and as Supervisory Compliance Officer.

---

## **Historic \$4M Gift Establishes Canadian Bison Operation**

*(From lakelandcollege.ca)*

Armin and Rita Mueller, owners of Canadian Rangeland Bison and Elk, are donating \$4 million to Lakeland College to purchase land and establish a bison herd at the college.

The gift will strengthen Lakeland’s two-year animal science technology program at the Vermilion campus and provide more student-managed learning opportunities for people in the program’s livestock major. With the addition of a bison herd, Lakeland will become the only post-secondary institution in Canada where students, with mentorship from faculty, manage commercial-sized bison, beef, crop, dairy, and sheep enterprises.

The donation also opens doors for Lakeland to participate in bison research projects with organizations such as the Canadian Bison Association, as well as other post-secondary institutions and industry partners.

Originally from Switzerland, Armin and Rita have lived near Bentley, Alta., for 40 years. They ran a successful dairy for 20 years and then transitioned to the bison industry in 2000. “I’ve had a lifelong fascination with bison. I love everything about them,” says Armin.

The Muellers’ belief in the importance of post-secondary education, combined with their interest in investing in the bison industry, resulted in their donation to Lakeland. Armin hopes having a herd and a bison production course at Lakeland will encourage more students to raise bison.

“For the students to learn more about bison and gain hands-on experience is going to be fascinating for them,” he says. “It would be great if 10, 20 or 30 years down the road, we see a lot more bison in the fields again.”

Dr. Alice Wainwright-Stewart, Lakeland College’s president and CEO, thanked the Muellers for their historic gift.

“We’re honoured that Armin and Rita have chosen to support Lakeland College and our students with this donation to Leading. Learning. The Lakeland Campaign. It’s the largest single gift Lakeland has ever received,” says Wainwright-Stewart. “I admire Armin’s passion for the bison industry and dedication to sustainable agricultural practices. I know Lakeland and our students will benefit from this visionary investment for years to come.”

In addition to providing animal science technology students with exposure to another livestock species, the Muellers’ donation allows Lakeland to expand its training in sustainable range and forage management.

Lakeland is currently celebrating the 30th anniversary of its Student-Managed Farm – Powered by New Holland (SMF). During the second year of the animal science technology program, students apply the theory they learn in class to the management of a purebred

beef, commercial beef, dairy, sheep, equine or livestock research SMF unit. Because of the support from the Muellers, a new unit will be created that will incorporate bison into the SMF model.

---

## **South Dakota Bison Rancher Elected to National Board**

*(From farmprogress.com)*

Chad Kremer, Custer, S.D., was recently elected as the National Bison Association's new director at large. Kremer is the bison herd manager at Custer State Park. He and his wife, Suzi, also own and operate Kremer Buffalo Co. near Keystone, S.D.

Donnis Baggett, Bryan, Texas, was elected as the NBA's new president for the coming year. Baggett and his wife, Beverly Brown, own and operate Lucky B Bison Ranch. He replaces Dick Gehring of Moundridge, Kan., who will serve as immediate past president under the association's term-limit policy.

Alan Douglas, Atherton, Calif., was elected vice president. Douglas's bison ranching operation is in eastern Oregon.

Joe Graham, Marlow, Okla., was elected as secretary treasurer.

---

## **The Problem Of Precedent: National Bison Range Transfer Sparks Opposition And Concern**

*(From the Bozeman Daily Chronicle)*

A proposal by U.S. Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) to convey the National Bison Range to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes has generated a mixture of excitement, concern, and outright opposition in Montana.

The provision, included in a broader bill settling the historic water rights claims of the CSKT, would restore the 18,800-acre range to federal trust ownership on behalf of the CSKT and transfer management of the range from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the tribes. According to CSKT tribal attorney Brian Upton, the return of the bison range to the tribes was first pitched by FWS several years ago following a number of unsuccessful attempts to re-establish a co-management agreement — a history Upton described as “difficult and a bit of a roller coaster.”

“That’s certainly not anything we had asked for before the service raised it,” Upton said of the conveyance. “But it’s clearly an elegant solution to everything, and all it does is restore the bison range to its status before the federal government took it from the tribes.”

FWS had abandoned the idea in April 2017 at the behest of then-Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who cited his commitment to not transfer or sell federal land. But nearly two dozen tribal and conservation organizations have since rallied behind a push for bison range restoration legislation, arguing that such a move would correct a century-old injustice and enhance the cultural and ecological significance of the roughly 300 bison that roam the range. John Todd, deputy director of the Montana Wilderness Association, told Montana Free Press that his organization’s support for Daines’ proposal is grounded in awareness that contemporary public access to public lands is a direct result of the forced removal of tribal peoples throughout the West.

Read more [here](#).

---

## **Minor League Baseball Team Comes Up With Greatest, Most Dangerous Promotion Ever**

*(From SBNation.com)*

Minor League Baseball has officially gone too far. The latest, weird promotion to come from the sport is for fans to bring a live fish and live bison to a game. If you do, you get

free tickets for life.

Yes, they want you to walk up to their stadium in Great Falls, Montana, with a fish in one hand and a bison in another.

Not only is this just bonkers and possibly extremely dangerous and harmful, I don't even understand how one would pull it off. So, I asked my colleagues at SB Nation how they'd do it.

Money talks

It's simple, really. You take a pickup truck, a livestock trailer, and you go and borrow a baby bison from a ranch and bring it, along with a goldfish in a bag that you purchased from a pet store, to the stadium. If you can't borrow one, then buy it.

It's much easier to find bison in a ready-to-cook form in Great Falls, but there is a bison ranch just about 90 minutes (87.8 miles) away from the Great Falls Voyagers in a town called White Sulphur Springs. At the Broken Willow Bison Ranch, you can get a buffalo for a variety of reasons such as for meat, breeding stock, or even for training cutting horses (you can also hunt them or buy meat there, but those won't help you with this contest).

Read more [here](#).

---

## Montana's Great Prairie Experiment

*(From Montana Free Press)*

During the four hours Dale Veseth and I spent on his ranch south of Malta last July, we saw two mule deer, countless songbirds, four long-billed curlews, a huge golden eagle, but zero cattle. Some rancher, you might think. Veseth, though, runs about 1,900 head of cattle on 27,800 acres. He keeps them clustered into four herds, which he revolves every 10 days or so among 90 pastures. At any given time, about 95 percent of Veseth's spread doesn't have a cow on it.

Veseth, 57, is an amiable guy with a shiny dome and a rich, brown mustache. Conversation with him is peppered with an odd formality; he answers a lot of questions by starting, "Well, my comment on that would be...". A molassesey voice suggests an upbringing farther south, but Dale's a Montana lifer. His grandfather started buying up parcels here in the '20s, lost them all during the Depression, and then rebuilt the ranch bit by bit.

Veseth considered a career in academia — he has a master's degree in animal science from Montana State University — but came back to the ranch in the 1990s. He's glad he did, and I am, too, because he's too much of a polymath to be cooped up in a lab studying one thing for the rest of his life. Over the course of my visit, Veseth showed me how to differentiate big sage, silver sage, and sagewort, and explained which grazing regimes are most conducive to each type. He spotted curlews from an impressive distance, and spoke for an unbroken eight minutes about invasive species like cheatgrass and Japanese brome. At one point, he gave me a handwritten compendium of 26 rangeland ecology books (Dale's Reading List: Conservation 2016) complete with short summaries of each.

Dale and his wife, Janet, are intensely curious about the land they operate. Soil carbon content amounts to dinnertime talk. Three conservation groups conduct bird surveys on their land — that's how Dale knows that curlews on the ranch usually overwinter in Sonora, Mexico, and return in mid-April. Janet produced a list of the 27 bird species a surveyor saw or heard during a recent visit, and was visibly excited about the "suite of grassland birds" found on their property. "It's been a good year for lark bunting," she said.

Read more [here](#).

---

## Hundreds of Bison Migrating Out of Yellowstone to be Hunted



## **Down Under Government-Sponsored Slaughter**

*(From Newsweek)*

Bison have started to migrate out of Yellowstone National Park and into southwestern Montana where they could be the target of hunters attempting to reduce the herds' population size by up to 900.

Yellowstone spokeswoman Morgan Warthin told the Associated Press the bison have moved into the Gardiner basin as part of their yearly migration. Outside the confines of the park, Yellowstone states, they may be captured and taken to slaughter at the Stephen's Creek Facility.

The hunt is part of a policy to regulate the population of bison in Yellowstone, which is the only spot in the contiguous U.S. housing free-ranging bison since the prehistoric era. Officials say if the numbers get too high individual bison would not have enough space to roam and risk overgrazing the park.

As of August, the park was home to some 4,800 bison, which park officials describe as healthy. According to Yellowstone, numbers are increasing between 10 and 17 percent each year.

Yellowstone has already said they plan to remove 600 to 900 animals this winter, using a combination of methods: capture and slaughter, hunting and quarantining. This is higher than the 460 culled last year.

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks regional supervisor Mark Deleray told the AP the migration has arrived late this year and that Native American tribes with treaty rights in the area have killed more than 50 in hunts this year.

Read more [here](#).

---

## **Wild Bison Set To Be Tested For TB Using New Blood Test**

*(From The East Anglian Daily Times)*

Canadian scientists are set to try out a new test for a devastating cattle disease - developed by a Suffolk company - on the country's wild bison population.

The new study will evaluate the potential of PBD Biotech's Actiphage blood test to help improve detection and management of bovine TB in the herds.

The diagnostics firm, based at Thurston, near Bury St Edmunds, has developed a test which it says can detect even very low levels of mycobacteria - the bacteria that causes TB - from a blood or milk sample.

While a successful Canadian bovine TB control program has been in place since 1924, bison herds in Wood Buffalo National Park - which straddles the Alberta-Northwest Territories border - include TB-infected animals.

The Actiphage test has been successfully tried out in humans and 20 species of animals, but never before in wild bison.

Volker Gerdts, director of the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-International Vaccine Centre (VIDO-InterVac), said: "Detecting tuberculosis in livestock and wild animals is an issue worldwide, and this trial will provide scientific data that has the potential to improve detection and control of a disease that can be devastating to the agricultural industry."

Read more [here](#).

---

## **The Bison Are Back ... And They've Brought Beer**

*(From The Landmark)*

UTLAND — Under a brilliant blue winter sky with temperatures lingering around 10 degrees, Alta Vista Farm looks postcard perfect: Red barns contrasting against snow-dusted fields where shaggy-coated bison breathe out light swirls of steam.

The Hillside Road landmark has lived through several incarnations. It was a dairy farm since the 1700s, and then the Mann family, who held the farm since the 1950s, produced beef. Later on, they chose to focus solely on the lean bison meat that appealed to health conscious consumers.

Today, in the largest barn on the property, farm owner Kevin Jarvi has started a craft brewery that specializes in ales. Since the stainless steel vats used to make the ale are located in the barn's original milking room, Jarvi has named the venture Milk Room Brewing Company.

The ale is in the hands of experienced brewer Chris Courtney, who has been working in the field for more than two decades. He has been with Worcester's Wormtown Brewery, Berkshire Brewing Company in South Deerfield, Rapsallion Brewery in Sturbridge, and Stone Cow Brewery in Barre.

"He's great at startups, so it worked out perfectly for me that he was available," said Jarvis.

While new to brewing beer, Jarvi has long been familiar with the farm that he and his wife, Ann, bought three years ago. He grew up just down the street and worked summers haying at Alta Vista.

"We have pictures of me when I was 17 years old with the bison," he said.

That summer job provided him with experience using farm equipment and learning how a farm runs, the perfect preparation for returning bison to the property for the first time in years.

Work on the brewery started more than a year ago, with Jarvi obtaining state and federal licenses and remodeling the 250-year-old barn with the help of family and friends.

Read more [here](#).

---

## **Grant Funding Available For Producers Looking To Diversify Their Operations**

Agricultural producers interested in diversifying and taking on a new element to their operation are encouraged to apply for a Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

USDA Rural Development has \$37 million in grant funding available for this program in 2020. Individuals and groups of producers can apply for grants up to \$75,000 for planning, and \$250,000 for implementation and working capital.

The VAPG program was created to assist producers of raw agricultural products with creating minimally-processed goods, such as making cheese from milk or jam from raw berries. To qualify, the physical state of the raw product must change in a way that enhances the market value of the finished product.

Eligible entities include individual independent land owners, groups of agriculture producers, majority-controlled producer-based business ventures, and farmer or rancher cooperatives.

Assisting with diversification since 2000, VAPG is one of the only grant programs offering assistance to producers in diversifying their operations and helping producers strengthen their business model while also lowering their reliance on volatile commodity markets.

The grant application period is open online until March 5 and until March 10 for paper and in-person applicants. Questions about the program should be directed to the applicant's state USDA Rural Development office. State office information can be found [here](#).

---

## **Why You Can't Ignore The Sustainability Chatter Any Longer**

*(From Beef Magazine)*

The conversation about sustainability is dominating discussions in agriculture and the livestock industry due to the false narrative spread to consumers that cows are worse for the environment than cars. Inaccurate research models have beef consumers believing cattle emit 18% of the manmade greenhouse gases into the environment and have consumers calling for changes in livestock production and reduction of beef cattle numbers.

"The sustainability challenge we are facing today might be the greatest of our time," Kim Stackhouse-Lawson, Ph.D., of JBS USA, explained to cattle producers at a recent Feedlot Forum hosted by Iowa Cattlemen's Association and Iowa State University Extension. JBS USA, part of the global food giant JBS, processes more than 30 billion pounds of product, with its North American beef units, consisting of nine facilities with a capacity of 27,000 head per day, harvest 22% of the U.S. market share of beef.

The challenge, Stackhouse-Lawson says, "is we have to do more with less." However, realizing agriculture has been focused on doing more with less and continues along this path, consumers are still grappling with the concept of beef not being a sustainable option for the environment and the carbon footprint. With the world population expected to reach 8.5 billion people by 2030 and an additional 1.2 billion just two decades later, agriculture is striving to meet this challenge, but is being met with resistance in doing so.

"What is different today is, we are being asked to produce food more efficiently to feed the growing world and being asked to do so with less technology." The result creates an interesting dichotomy for food animal agriculture. This mixed message enhances the complexity of sustainability and is creating the conversation of today with the industry's consumers.

"Beef has done a tremendous job in meeting demand with a more efficient production system and reaching out to the changing consumer," she says. "Consumers are demonstrating they want to eat meat, but we are also seeing more and more diversification away from meat offerings with nearly 40% of consumers having a meatless meal once a week."

Read more [here](#).

---

## **General Mills, Danone Dig Deeper Into Regenerative Agriculture With Incentives, Funding**

*(From GreenBiz)*

The cause of regenerative agriculture is being trumpeted by many of the world's largest food companies. Two of the most vocal champions of this movement, General Mills and Danone North America — both of which have set specific targets — in recent weeks extended their support to farmers in their supply chains that are picking up these practices.

Such initiatives, which include a new pilot growing program from General Mills in Kansas and two financing programs from Danone, will be necessary to help farmers weather the lengthy, three-year time period it takes to transition their operations to new cover crops and tilling practices that promote healthier soil.

"That's how long it takes to start seeing improvements as you go down this regenerative path," said Steve Rosenzweig, soil scientist for General Mills. "That's the time it takes to have that realization. This is where they need the support."

First oats, now wheat

General Mills has committed to advancing regenerative practices on at least 1 million acres of land by 2030, one component of its corporate commitment to reducing absolute greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 28 percent across its value chain by 2025. General Mills doesn't disclose what percentage of the total land it influences represents, but 1 million acres is roughly the size of the Grand Canyon. It's a small fraction of the approximately 915 million acres (PDF) used for farming across the United States.

One of the first steps toward that goal came in the form of a pilot program on 50,000 acres with 45 oat farmers in North Dakota and the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. General Mills, the company behind the Cheerios and Nature Valley brand, is one of the largest purchasers of oats in the food industry.

In January, General Mills added a second effort that focuses on a vitally important ingredient for its Gold Medal flour and Pillsbury product lines, wheat. It includes 24 wheat farmers with operations in and around a 650,000-acre watershed in Kansas that serves more than 400,000 residents in Wichita.

This project was more opportunistic than the original one: it's part of an initiative by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to improve water quality, and the connection was made by Understanding Ag, a consulting organization that advises farmers on regenerative management plans. The farmers for this pilot were selected in collaboration with some of General Mills' key suppliers, including Archer Daniels Midland. Read more [here](#).



**REACH THE WHOLE HERD!**

WITH A WEEKLY UPDATE BANNER AD  
JUST \$50/WEEK FOR THIS SPOT  
CONTACT [KAREN@BISONCENTRAL.COM](mailto:karen@bisoncentral.com) TO RESERVE



### ***Save the Date!***

- 3/05/2020 - Eastern Bison Association Annual Sale and Conference - PA
- 03/06/2020 - Denver Mountain Parks Genesee Bison Auction - CO
- 3/07/2020 - Rocky Mountain Bison Association Spring Conference - CO
- 3/21/2020 - Missouri Bison Association Spring Sale - MO
- 3/27/2020 - Illinois/Indiana Bison Association Meeting - IL
- 04/03/2020 - Minnesota Bison Association's Education Conference
- 05/15/2020 - Texas Bison Association Spring Meeting - TX
- 06/21 - 06/23/2020 - National Bison Summer Conference - Cheyenne, WY

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**

