

# Happy Easter



## Weekly Update



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### *NBA Weekly Update for April 10, 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.*

### **Happy Easter from the NBA!**

The National Bison Association wishes you a happy Easter Holiday and Passover to you all. In these turbulent and uncertain days, we hope you have time to appreciate family, home and the magnificent bison that we have the honor to be a part of. We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday, and thank you all for your continued support.

Please note, staff will be limited on Monday.

### **NBA Preparing a State of the Bison Business Analysis**

The National Bison Association has been working this week to develop an analysis of the economic status and outlook of the U.S. bison business as the various segments of the business work to navigate through the COVID-19 Outbreak.

The analysis is designed to be delivered to the U.S. Department of Agriculture within the next few days to provide guidance as the agency develops programs to assist the livestock sector under the recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act.

The analysis notes that the ability of policymakers to develop programs to assist the bison business is hampered by the lack of formal industry data. "Measuring those impacts is challenging because of the lack of specific market data compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The major report issued by USDA for the past 16 years has been

the monthly wholesale bison price report. While this is a valuable resource, it is inadequate in tracking the shock waves emanating from COVID-19.”

Information in the association’s analysis was gleaned from interviews NBA Executive Director Dave Carter conducted with commercial marketers, bison finishers, cow-calf operators, and farm-direct marketers. The report also included information developed through the semi-annual marketers’ survey conducted by the NBA each May and November.

Among commercial marketers, the analysis reports that impacts vary widely among companies, based in large part whether those companies are service primarily foodservice or retail accounts. Companies serving primarily restaurant customers have suffered significant losses, while those in the retail sector have seen a strong spike in demand. However, the increased demand has been almost exclusively for ground bison. The sales of middle meats have dropped dramatically.

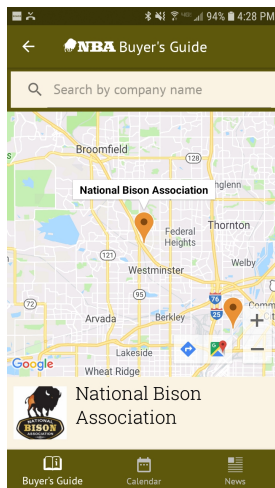
Meanwhile processors are working hard to protect the health and safety of their workforce, but are still being impacted by workers testing positive for COVID-19.

Among bison finishers, the collapse of the ethanol market has created a severe shortage in the supply of distillers grains. Several finishers report that feed costs may increase by as much as 30 percent because of that shortage.

Because the majority of the 2019 calf crop has been weaned and sold off the ranch, cow-calf producers have not faced significant disruption yet. Several ranchers interviewed in that sector are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

The challenges facing far-direct marketers largely mirrors the situation among commercial marketers. One smaller marketer reported that restaurants have grown to account for more than 60 percent of their business in recent years. Now that business has collapsed, just as the marketer was maximizing inventory in preparation for the summer season.

Carter noted, “we are trying to provide as much comprehensive information as possible for USDA. Anyone wanting to share information about the impact they are facing should drop me an email to [dcarter@bisoncentral.com](mailto:dcarter@bisoncentral.com). All information will be aggregated before being provided to USDA.”



## Put New Direct Marketing Resources to Use

Explore the NBA's many Direct-Marketing Resources today at [www.bisoncentral.com/marketing-resources/](http://www.bisoncentral.com/marketing-resources/)

As mentioned in the NBA Blog last week, COVID-19 is impacting everyone these days and the bison business is not immune. As we work through this period of uncertainty, we can learn from the bison: face into the storm, keep moving forward, and lower our metabolism. We don't have to face this challenge alone. With that said, the NBA is pleased to announce it's revamped [Online Marketing Resources](#) section available exclusively to NBA members. You will find the new webpage stocked with professionally edited images, brochures and fliers aimed wholly at consumer bison education and promotion. As restaurants and retail temporarily shutter and direct marketing comes into focus for many businesses, help bring the consumer directly to you by taking advantage of these NBA member services.

### ***Are You Listed on the Buysome Bison App?***

Are you included on the NBA's New and Improved [Buysome Bison app](#)? The new consumer-focused app replaces the NBA's Bison Finder app and links directly to members' NBA [Online Buyer's Guide](#) listing. Utilize this member service to help sell all things bison, from quarters and halves to hunts and breeding stock sales. Check your listing by logging in to your account [here](#).

## **Printed Bison-Specific Marketing Materials To Go**

Shop the [NBA's Bison Store](#) for Cost-Effective Marketing Materials.

The NBA offers cost-effective, bison-specific marketing materials that are printed on quality stock and offered at near cost to NBA members. From cookbooks to brochures to posters, the NBA has your printed point of sale materials covered. Shop the NBA Bison Store today.

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***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.***

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## **Easter, Livestreamed from a Bison Farm**

*(From the Waterford Sun Journal)*

WATERFORD — Doretta Colburn plans to shoot an Easter message for her Waterford Congregational Church parishioners standing somewhere outside on her bison farm, with the Mahoosuc Range behind her and, hopefully, the sun shining down and bison out of sight.

She and her husband have a herd of about 30 on a former dairy farm and the bison crept into the background of a recent sermon, which was “really cool watching them because they were prancing around,” but a bit distracting, Colburn said.

On any other Easter Sunday, 60 or more parishioners would have packed the church and filled it with music.

This year, robust alternate plans include Colburn’s pre-recorded outdoor sermon and music director Jane Morse pre-recording a hymn at the Keoka Lake town beach at sunrise, posted to the church’s website - <http://wccucc.com/>.

Colburn anticipates her message will be “upbeat,” embracing “all of the wonderful energy that we can get from nature.”

Going to church, gathering around a ham dinner with family or enjoying a neighborhood egg hunt are out for Easter 2020.

Pandemic concerns and stay-at-home orders are driving makeshift plans, forcing families to figure out ways to celebrate together or separately, or inspiring private reflection.

Read [more](#).

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## **Tallgrass Prairie Preserve welcomes its first bison calf of the year**

*(From Tulsa World)*

The first bison calf of the year was born at Tallgrass Prairie Preserve this week, marking a joyous start to spring in an otherwise difficult time.

Harvey Payne, a longtime lover and director emeritus of the Preserve north of Pawhuska, said he stumbled upon the quiet scene early one morning while looking for prairie chickens in the back reaches of the land.

A bison cow had two other cows with her, and the calf was still wet from birth.

“You could tell by the way he acted he was a little bull calf,” Payne said. “She licked him off a bit and kind of nudged him up, and he started frolicking around.”

“He thought he was tough,” he said, chuckling. “He thought he was really something.”

The calf is the first of the protected herd’s 500 to 600 expected to be born this spring. The birthing season usually begins in mid-March, with its peak in April, Payne said, and it should last through May.

Payne was at a distance from the animals in his car, as all grassland visitors should be, when he shot a couple pictures of the birth. After a few minutes, he said, the cow and calf wandered over the hill.

“I knew not to bother them,” Payne said. “They’re very hearty. They have been doing this for thousands of years, and they have not been doing it with human help.”

Read [more](#).

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## **Oh Give Me A Home Where The Bison Roam ...**

*(From The Fence Post)*

A fascinating regenerative energy of holistic health management is propelling a thundering herd of 400 bison to flourish across the vast eastern Colorado plains of Arapahoe County, while strengthening the root system of the plants that the animals graze.

Forty minutes east-southeast of Denver International Airport, the forward-thinking Savory Institute is making an impact at a ranch in Strasburg, Colo., and is offering the same holistic program at 47 hubs around the world, training farmers and ranchers to mimic the way that more than 40 million bison (or buffalo, as some call them) roamed across North America in the early 1800s. The bison are managed through a grazing methodology known as Holistic Planned Grazing, developed by Savory Institute founder Allan Savory, which is a process that mimics ancestral grazing patterns of wild herbivores that co-evolved with healthy grassland ecosystems.

“Similar to how bison used to roam North America in tightly bunched herds to stay safe from predators, we move our bison to create a similar effect on the land, we just do it through (16) pasture subdivisions, and herding on four-wheelers. We match the number of animals to amounts of available forage, honor the recovery rates of grasses, plan movements in line with the natural rhythms of the land, and then adapt those plans based on the changing conditions of the environment, including available precipitation. By doing so, we are regenerating the health of these grasslands and increasing soil health,” said Bobby Gill, director of communications for the Savory Institute, a non-profit organization that owns the West Bijou Bison Ranch, and is one-fourth owner of the bison herd, with three other owners.

There are usually 400 bison roaming across the West Bijou Bison Ranch. The spring calving season produces 100 of them, although herd owners then sell off about 100 bison

in the fall — yearlings or bulls — whatever is needed based on the changing conditions.

Read [more](#).

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## **National Bison Range Closes**

*(From The Missoulian)*

The National Bison Range is closed until further notice, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced Thursday.

The 18,800-acre Bison Range, located about an hour north of Missoula, draws tens of thousands of visitors each year and is sometimes called the “Crown Jewel of the National Wildlife System.” Its main attraction, a 19-mile tour road for wildlife viewing, is typically open May through October.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Fish and Wildlife Service previously closed the Bison Range’s Visitor Center and vault toilets, but a shorter tour road and day-use picnic area remained open until Thursday, when the agency announced that it would close the refuge entirely “to ensure the health and safety of our visitors and employees in light of the novel coronavirus pandemic and the large increase in visitation experienced at the refuge in recent days that was precluding effective social distancing.”

In its press release, the agency stated that this closure was supported by Gov. Steve Bullock, Lake County and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, who have recently restricted recreation on nearby tribal lands to prevent crowding and curb the spread of the virus. Glacier and Yellowstone national parks and public facilities in national forests have also been closed in recent weeks.

Read [more](#).

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## **Herd Of 4 Bison Euthanized After Escape From Preserve In Crossville**

*(From WATE - ABC)*

CROSSVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Authorities in Tennessee said four bison that escaped from a private hunting preserve were euthanized after attempts to recapture the animals failed.

The small herd broke loose from an enclosed area and had been roaming through an area in Crossville since Monday. Cumberland County Sheriff Casey Cox said off-duty Deputy Roy Kemmer had attempted to help the owner round up the animals but the bison continued to evade recapture.

After the failed attempts, the owner decided the animals should be euthanized in the interest of public safety. Cox said his department wasn’t involved in the round up and he wasn’t sure if the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency was notified or involved.

Read [more](#).

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## **Guidance for Livestock Markets Issued in Wyoming**

*(From Tri-State Livestock News)*

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA) and Wyoming Livestock Board (WLSB) released COVID-19 virus guidance for livestock markets as they are exempt from the Statewide Public Health Order Continuation on Gatherings issued by the Wyoming Department of Health on March 27, 2020.

Governor Gordon's Executive Order on March 13, 2020 declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ordered the Director of the Wyoming Department of

Health to take all appropriate and necessary actions to address threats to public health, safety, and welfare. Subsequently, the Wyoming Department of Health(WDH) issued a Statewide Public Health Order Continuation on Gatherings which forbids gatherings of more than 10 people and outlines best practices to slow the spread of the virus including maintaining six feet of space between individuals, avoiding touching faces, and covering coughs or sneezes with elbows or tissues.

Livestock auctions are exempted from the WDH order, but it is critical that livestock markets institute changes to protect their staff, sellers, and buyers. The WDA and WLSB, therefore, strongly recommend the following guidance for livestock markets.

Full [text](#).

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## **Court Permanently Bans Enforcement Of Kansas 'Ag-Gag' Law**

*(From KWCH.com)*

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) - A federal judge has blocked enforcement of provisions in a Kansas law that ban the secret filming at slaughterhouses and other livestock facilities.

U.S. District Judge Kathryn Vratil issued a permanent injunction Friday after finding in January that the state's "Ag-Gag" law unconstitutionally criminalized free speech.

The Kansas law was enacted in 1990.

It had made it a crime or anyone to take a picture or video at animal facilities without the owner's consent or to enter them under false pretenses.

[Source](#).

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## **U.K. To Field-Test Bovine TB Vaccine**

*(From Canadian Cattlemen)*

Scientists in the U.K. have developed a vaccine and effective test for bovine tuberculosis (TB), the BBC reports.

The development is sure to be welcomed by beef and dairy producers, who face devastating losses from the disease. Between October 2018 and 2019, 12,742 cows were slaughtered to combat TB in Wales alone, representing a 24 per cent increase over the previous year, the BBC reports. The U.K.'s Farm Crisis Network released a report outlining the emotional and financial toll of dealing with a positive TB test. The report noted that while more than half of farms with a positive test were under restrictions for less than a year, some had lived under restrictions for five years or more.

The U.K.'s Animal and Plant Health Agency has developed both a vaccine and a test that can differentiate between animals vaccinated for TB and infected animals, which has been a sticking point in the past. The government will be conducting field trials of the cattle vaccine and the test. Officials expect the cattle vaccine to be deployed in the next five years, the Daily Mail reports. They also plan to vaccinate more badgers in a bid to stop the disease's spread.

[Source](#).

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## **Montana Growth Through Agriculture Mini-Grants**

The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) has mini-grant funding available through its Growth Through Agriculture (GTA) Program. All projects will need to demonstrate how they expand Montana agriculture, but given the current public health situation with COVID-19, special attention will be paid to projects that strengthen and expand local food offerings, distribution, and infrastructure.

An initial review and awards will be made in April. Applications for the initial round are due by April 13, 2020.

Read [more](#).

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## **Perdue: USDA Hurrying To Distribute Farm Aid**

*(From AgriPulse)*

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue says USDA wants to provide relief from the COVID-19 crisis to eligible farm sectors “sooner rather than later,” but the department will have to wait until this summer at the earliest to distribute an additional \$14 billion in aid.

The recently enacted \$2 trillion economic stimulus bill known as the CARES Act earmarked \$9.5 billion in COVID-19 relief for livestock producers, specialty crops and local agriculture systems and provided \$14 billion more to replenish USDA’s Commodity Credit Corp. spending authority.

Asked about the \$9.5 billion, Perdue told reporters on Wednesday that USDA’s “goal is to get it done sooner rather than later, but we want it done very inclusively as well.”

He indicated that USDA also would tap an additional \$6 billion that remained in the CCC account before the \$14 billion replenishment.

“We’re meeting daily on that (COVID-19 aid package), getting data, listening to all the stakeholders within the various commodity groups, getting their ideas, talking to members on the Hill,” Perdue said.

House Agriculture Chairman Collin Peterson, who talked to Perdue on Sunday, says there should be an announcement in the next week or two about the payments. “They’re trying to do this relatively quick,” Peterson told constituents in a telephone town hall later Wednesday.

Livestock groups and the produce industry have made detailed proposals for spending the money.

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

- 5/15/2020 - Tentative - Texas Bison Association Spring Meeting - TX
- 6/7-2020 - Tentative - Montana/Western Bison Association Summer Meeting - MT
- 6/21 - 06/23/2020 - Tentative - National Bison Summer Conference - WY
- 1/20 - 1/23/2021 - National Bison Winter Conference - Denver, CO
- 1/23/2021 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - Denver, CO

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.

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[Click Here for NBA Calendar of Events](#)

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