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Weekly Update



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

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NBA Weekly Update for August 7, 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.

Marketers' Roundtable to Feature Presentations on Shopper Behavior, Social Media

The Bison Direct Marketing On-Line Roundtable, set for August 31 and September 1, will include a deep dive into shoppers' behavior at farmers' markets, and how vendors can design their booths and promotional materials to draw more people into their "stores" at the market.

The Presentation, scheduled for 10 a.m. on August 31, will feature Chris Wayne and Erik Hassert of GrowNYC Farmer Assistance. Drawing on more than 40 years of institutional knowledge and experience, Farmer Assistance created a tool for measuring customer behavior at farmers markets and developed strategies to increase sales and customer satisfaction. Over the past five years Farmer Assistance has used this tool with over 50 producers and implemented strategies to successfully increase their sales at market.

The two-day webinar will also feature a presentations on Maximizing Your Social Media, conducted by Ari Adams, executive director of ShiftCon Media; Developing an On-Line Store, conducted by Sean Lenihan of Honest Bison, Inc.; and Direct Marketing as We Move through COVID-19, presented by Ben Feldman, executive director of the National Farmers' Market Coalition. Feldman is also offering a limited series of one-half hour consultations with marketers following the webinars.

Additionally, the webinar series will include an open forum for bison marketers to share information and to develop recommendations on how the NBA assist the direct marketers within our organization.

The Bison Direct Marketers' Roundtable is being underwritten the USDA's Farmers' Market Promotion Program and will be free to NBA members.

Please participate in Winter Conference Survey!

NBA members, today is the last day to participate in the NBA's Winter Conference survey. Please take just a moment to answer this 5-question, anonymous survey that will help in our decision making. Please complete the survey by midnight tonight, August 7th.

Take the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3S9HJL8>

August Recess a Prime Opportunity to Urge Lawmakers to Support Bison Aid

As federal lawmakers head home for the August recess without a final agreement on the next round of COVID-19 relief, NBA members are encouraged to connect with their Senators and Representative to urge that bison producers be included as eligible recipients in any ag assistance package.

"With the election rapidly approaching, Senators and Representatives will be holding many town hall meetings, and other events, even if just on-line," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. "This is an opportunity for our members to make their voices heard, and to strengthen our push for equitable treatment of bison producers."

Two weeks ago, the NBA sent a letter to ten U.S. Senators noting that the bison business suffered more than a 10 percent drop in produces early this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic disruption. That is the benchmark that USDA has used to qualify commodities for coverage under the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program.

The COVID Relief package now being developed by negotiators from Congress and the White House is expected to include \$20 billion for assistance to agricultural producers.

"Yes, we are a small segment of agriculture, but definitely suffering the same challenges as our neighbors raising mainstream commodities," Carter said. "That's the message that needs to be conveyed to lawmakers."

Board Nominations Due Sept. 4

Friday, September 4th is the deadline for NBA members interested in running for election in Regions I, III, V and VII to submit nominations to the NBA office. The elections will be conducted from September 11 – 30.



According to the NBA bylaws, regional directors "shall be elected by a mail in, or electronic ballot during September of each year prior to the expiration of the regions' directors' terms. If after the initial ballot, no one person in any region has more than 50% of the ballots cast, then a run-off election will occur during November, involving the two persons having the most votes cast in the September balloting. In case of a tie, a coin will be tossed to determine the winner. Only active and lifetime members residing within a region may vote in each region's election." Regional directors are eligible to serve two two-year terms.

The directors elected in September will begin serving in January 2021.

In this election cycle, directors will be elected for two-year terms from Regions I, III, V and VII.

The regions up for election for, and the states included are:

- Region I, representing AK, AZ, CA, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA. Mary Adams, the current director is eligible for re-election.
- Region III, representing MT, ND, SD. Mimi Hillenbrand of South Dakota is the current director but is term-limited and cannot seek re-election. Kevin Leier of Rugby, ND, has been nominated as a candidate for that position, as has Corissa Busse of Rapid City, SD.
- Region V, representing IL, IN, MI, MN, WI, Jeremy Allemann of Wisconsin, the current director, is eligible for re-election.
- Region VII, CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT. Brian Grubb is the current director but is term-limited and cannot seek re-election.

Nominations for candidates to serve as regional director can be submitted to the NBA at dcarter@bisoncentral.com.

NBA and National Buffalo Foundation Seeking Director of Development

The National Bison Association and the National Buffalo Foundation are seeking a Director of Development to raise funds to support research programs and outreach efforts to benefit the U.S. bison business.

The Director of Development position is responsible for planning and implementing the NBF and NBA fundraising efforts. The job includes the development and implementation of strategies for raising money from individuals, foundations, government entities, and corporations. This position is also responsible for building relationships with members of the association and cultivating their support for specific initiatives, including exhibits, education programs, and bison health studies.

Cecil Miskin, chair of the National Buffalo Foundation, noted, “The Center of Excellence for Bison Studies has tremendous potential to conduct innovative research on bison herd health, marketing and other areas important for our business. But that research will require significant funding, and we need a professional on board to help us accomplish that.”

NBA Executive Director Dave Carte added, “Our members have been incredibly generous through the years with sponsorships, donations to the Growth Fund, and other means of support. But we have not tapped the potential level of support available from foundations, federal agencies, and wealthy donors outside of our usual network. Now is the time to move in that direction.”

The Director of Development will report to the NBA executive director, but will carry out activities based on priorities developed jointly by the NBA and NBF. The full job description can be found [here](#).

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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AAFCO To Require Qualification Of The Term ‘Buffalo’

(From Pet Industry News)

As the pet food industry strives to utilize more and different novel proteins for inclusion in dog and cat foods, “buffalo” has become a popular ingredient. However, as the market grew, it rapidly became unclear as to which species of animal a given manufacturer was referring. This opened the door to potentially misleading representations as to exactly what was in a product compared to consumer expectations, an issue which the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) recently moved to remedy.

From a United States perspective, mention of the word “buffalo” in a product name or ingredient list is most likely to bring visions of Bison bison, the large ungulate once numerous and widely dispersed across the North American prairies. While perhaps more accurately identified as “bison,” the term “buffalo” is considered a perfectly acceptable synonym if not the much more common term for this species as evidenced by its prominent use in the American lexicon. After all, the song “Home on the Range” reads “give me a home where the buffalo roam,” not “where the bison roam.” It is obvious as to the intended root of the names Buffalo Bill Cody and the city of Buffalo, New York. The “buffalo nickel” (an old U.S. five-cent coin) is so named by its depiction of Bison bison on one side. Given these facts, it’s likely that most U.S. consumers would reasonably expect a “buffalo”-containing pet food to be comprised of bison-derived ingredients.

Elsewhere in the world, though, a “buffalo” can be one of a number of species, arguably including the Cape buffalo from Africa but most commonly referring to the domestic water buffalo from Asia (*Bubalus bubalis*). In fact, it was argued that because bison are technically unrelated to buffalo taxonomically, it was false and misleading to refer to bison as such. Rather, it was asserted that the term should be rightfully limited to those species that fit the proper taxonomic classification.

After considerable discussion and debate that included proponents of both sides, AAFCO concluded that all uses of the term “buffalo” must be further qualified so that it is always clear to the consumer as to what is being purchased. Various means of implementing this interpretation were considered, including the promulgation of new regulations, establishment of new animal feed ingredient definitions and issuance of a new Statement of Uniform Interpretation and Policy. In the end, though, new official feed terms to distinguish the two major species were considered the most expedient and efficient means to accomplish this goal.

Read more [here](#).

Farm Sees High Demand For Bison Meat

(From WCIA.com)

MONTICELLO, Ill. (WCIA) — Early in the pandemic meat shortages impacted the way a lot of people shop for food.

That has led more people to two brothers at Lieb Farms who raise and sell bison meat. They say they have never seen so many people interested.

“They always want to know where their meat comes from,” says Jake Lieb. “There’s always been an appreciation for homegrown, local production of food. Since COVID came along there was a meat shortage in stores for a while. Which I think prompted some people to look elsewhere.”

Lieb Farms has had a bison herd in Piatt County since 2000. This year has been the most demand they have ever seen. So much that they have even had to turn some people away.

“I hate to do that but we just haven’t been able to keep a supply in because our demand is just overwhelming,” says Lieb.

The farm has been sold out for over a month, but they are hoping to have more in stock within a week. The farm only houses around 50 bison. They hope the new demand and interest sticks around, but for now they are not looking to expand.

“I think as of right now we’re going to stick to the number of animals we have,” says Josh Lieb. “As my boys, and Jake’s going to have a boy in the fall, as they get older and start taking interest in it and they want to do it then more power to them. If they want to expand the herd.”

Another reason why more people are buying bison meat is the price of ground beef has gone up. Now bison does not seem so expensive.

Read more [here](#).

Move to Palmer Lake was key to Black Forest Bison surviving COVID-19 economic impact

(From The Colorado Springs Gazette)

Every few years, it seems Black Forest Bison makes a monumental step in the development of its operation. It’s latest step two years ago may have saved it from COVID-19 disaster.

For years, Black Forest Bison has had a retail store near Woodmen and Academy Boulevard in Colorado Springs. As overhead and operational costs grew, owner Peter Popp made the easy decision in 2017 to focus business to online efforts, and moved the store to 615 S. County Line Road, Unit M, Palmer Lake.

Without that choice to increase online sales and institute more efficient operations and a much smaller staff, Popp said he could only imagine what would have happened to Black Forest Bison’s retail outfit when pandemic stay-at-home measures went into effect earlier this year.

Black Forest Bison originally started in the Black Forest area, presently manufactures grass-fed bison jerky. Some of the jerky products have been winning awards since 2005. These accolades include Grand Champion winner from the National Bison Association (2005) and First and Second Place in the Fiery Foods Challenge of Fort Worth, Texas (2007).

The company old family recipes that call for organic spices and a blend of real hickory and maple wood chips from Wisconsin.

There are no antibiotics, hormones or steroids in Black Forest Bison products, which come from pasture-raised buffalo without feedlots or corn or grain based feed

Read more [here](#).

Woman Gored By Bison At Arbuckle Wilderness

(From KXII.com)

DAVIS, Okla. (KXII) - Employees at Arbuckle Wilderness in Davis say a woman left the park in an ambulance on Monday after being gored by a bison.

The park manager says the bison stuck its head inside the woman's car, and her hand snagged on a horn when she tried to push it out.

The woman's name and condition have not been released, but she did need stitches. The National Park Service says bison are unpredictable and may look peaceful but could turn at any moment without warning.

[Source.](#)

“InterTribal Buffalo Council Ships 40 Yellowstone Buffalo to 16 Native Nations in First Transfer of Its Kind”

(From InterTribal Buffalo Council)

This August, the InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) will transfer 40 Yellowstone buffalo to 16 Native American Tribes in nine states in partnership with the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes. These transfers will help develop and sustain Tribally-managed buffalo herds while preserving the unique genetics and lineage of the largest and continuously free-roaming buffalo herd (also known as American or plains bison).

These transfers are a victory of Native American Tribes which represents the culmination of nearly 30 years of advocacy by ITBC (formerly the InterTribal Bison Cooperative) on behalf of its Member Tribes to prevent the needless slaughter of Yellowstone buffalo.

Through the implementation of a quarantine program, buffalo are captured at the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park during the winter months. Those that test negative for the disease brucellosis may enter a quarantine protocol which varies by age and sex, and which ends with their transfer to the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes in Montana to complete post-assurance testing. After a final negative test result, they are declared brucellosis-free by the state of Montana and the US Department of Agriculture and are cleared for travel.

Yellowstone buffalo represent an important population of the National Mammal. Buffalo once numbered in the tens of millions across North America until their decimation through hunting, disease, and use as a political and military tool to subjugate Native Americans. Many Native American Tribes have been working to restore buffalo across the United States, where they now number in the tens of thousands on Tribal lands.

The buffalo managed by Yellowstone National Park have never been interbred with cattle and will be used to help increase the long-term health of many populations across Tribal lands. The fight to protect Yellowstone buffalo is significant to many Native Americans who disagree with management strategies which have led to the slaughter of more than 10,000 Yellowstone buffalo since the early 1990's.

ITBC has advocated to stop the slaughter of Yellowstone buffalo since its formation in 1992, when conflict surrounding their growing population escalated between the National Park Service, the state of Montana, and the US Department of Agriculture. In 1994, ITBC presented the first quarantine proposal to Yellowstone National Park, with both the Choctaw Nation and Fort Belknap Tribes offering land and resources to support the development of quarantine facilities. Quarantine has been well-supported by the public throughout the last 25 years, but did not come to fruition until 2018, when the quarantine facility built by the Fort Peck Tribes (and funded in part by ITBC) was approved for use in post-quarantine assurance testing. ITBC commends the Fort Peck Tribes for their willingness to develop a quarantine facility and undertake assurance testing on behalf of restoration efforts for all Tribes. Since 2018, quarantine operations have saved over 200 Yellowstone buffalo from slaughter.

Ervin Carlson, ITBC's President for the past 17 years stated, "ITBC appreciates the efforts of the state of Montana in supporting quarantine operations and is deeply grateful to the US Department of Agriculture, Yellowstone National Park and to the Fort Peck Tribes for their dedicated partnership in accomplishing this mission. Finally, this moment would not be possible without our Member Tribes' years of participation, support, and tireless work to ensure that buffalo and Native people are reunited to restore their land, culture, and ancient relationship across North America."

Bison Are Roaming In Virginia

(From RFDTV)

Bison are roaming around Virginia farm and they are providing a leaner, sweeter meat for consumers.

Bison were almost hunted to extinction in the 1800s because of their meat and hides, but they have been slowly rebuilding numbers, both in the wild and at farms.

One of those farms is Melrose Bison in Campbell County, Virginia. Mark Morris has been building his herd for 20 years and he said that it didn't take much time to discover bison are true wild animals.

"The main thing is keeping them very calm because they are incredible athletes. They can go 0 to 40 miles per hour in an instant," he said. "A full grown bull can clear a 6 foot fence in one step. I describe them as a deer on steroids."

All of Morris' equipment is heavy duty because a mature bison can weigh up to one ton. Morris says bison is a good niche market, he sells direct to consumer, to local restaurants and at farmers' markets.

"I've got regular customers that buy every week and that's the main meat they buy, they continually rave about it," he said. "And I can understand why, it's a fantastic meat."

Source

2.1 Million Acres of Grassland Habitat Lost in North American Great Plains in One Year

(From World Wildlife Fund)

BOZEMAN, MONT. - Approximately 2.1 million acres of intact grassland habitat in the U.S. and Canadian Great Plains were plowed under for row-crop production in 2018, according to World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) [2020 Plowprint Report](#). The report finds that a nearly equal amount—2 million acres—was transitioned from row-crop production to perennial cover, through grassland restoration projects, the planting of perennial forage species such as alfalfa, or natural processes. While the increase in perennial cover is an encouraging trend, these lands are not a replacement for intact grasslands and can take decades to approximate the environmental value of undisturbed native habitat.

"The Great Plains, home to iconic species, Native nations, and rural communities, is an ecosystem in which nature is essential to culture and livelihoods," said Martha Kauffman, managing director of WWF's Northern Great Plains program. "A healthy prairie provides clean water, stores carbon, supports wildlife, and provides livelihoods for communities; and yet since 2014 we've been losing them at an average rate of four football fields per minute. Restoration projects are our best tool for repairing disturbed grasslands, but there is no real substitute for landowners, the private sector, and government working together to keep healthy grasslands from falling under the plow."

In the Northern Great Plains (NGP) region alone, approximately 550,000 acres were tilled and 440,000 returned to perennial cover. Wheat production was the greatest driver of grasslands loss within the NGP, occupying 41 percent of newly-tilled land. Other drivers include corn at nine percent and soy at seven percent.

Accompanying the *2020 Plowprint Report* is a new interactive online tool that allows users

to select regions of interest within the Great Plains and identify the acres of intact grassland, how much grassland has been converted to row-crop agriculture, and how much previously converted land has returned to perennial cover. This first-of-its-kind tool for tracking cumulative grassland loss incorporates data from 2009 onward and will allow anyone to monitor the status of one of North America's most critical ecosystems. The tool can be accessed at <https://www.worldwildlife.org/projects/plowprint-report>.

CFAP payments slowing; 43% paid so far

(From Brownfield News)

The latest report on the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) shows payments are slowing and only 43 percent of the allotted funds have been paid out so far.

Only 267 million dollars in CFAP support was delivered last week, bringing the total dollars distributed to about six-point-eight billion dollars. Of that amount, cattle producers have received about three billion, milk producers one-point-three billion, corn growers one-point-two billion and hog farmers 430 million.

Iowa continues to lead all other states with 700 million dollars in payments, followed by Nebraska at 500 million, Minnesota at 435 million and Wisconsin at 390 million. Sign-up for CFAP closes on August 28th.

[Source.](#)

Daybreak August 5: USDA prepared to roll over unused CFAP

(From Agri-Pulse)

USDA budgeted \$16 billion for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program and hasn't paid out anywhere close to that amount yet. But USDA says in a statement to *Agri-Pulse* the department will save any unused funds to help provide farmer assistance during the "remainder of 2020 and into 2021."

As of Monday, USDA had distributed \$6.8 billion in CFAP payments. The signup deadline is Aug. 28.

The statement says USDA used conservative assumes in developing the program to "make sure we were able to cover COVID-19 impacts in all production agriculture sectors and focused on only the first quarter and a small portion of the second quarter." Also, the fact that many commodities eligible for the program aren't covered by other farm programs added complexity to payment estimates, the statement said.

"USDA continues to do vast outreach to farmers and ranchers of all sizes and from all sectors of production agriculture to educate and promote CFAP sign up," the statement said.

By the way: USDA also tells *Agri-Pulse* the department now has \$18 billion available in its Commodity Credit Corp. account, including \$14 billion provided by the CARES Act, enacted in March. The CCC account had \$3.5 billion available at the end of June.

Read more [here](#).

Farmer sentiment holds steady in July

(From Agri-Pulse)

A measurement of the state of mind in farm country showed little change in July and remains far lower than levels observed prior to the pandemic.

The July reading of the Ag Economy Barometer, a monthly indicator of farmer sentiment conducted by Purdue University and the CME Group, was 118, a drop of about 30% from the record highs the indicator [observed in February](#), but a little over 18% higher than the

sharp drop [reported in April](#). Producers also reported an improved view of current conditions, but a slightly more pessimistic opinion of future expectations.

Some indicators also show producer concern about the coronavirus is slipping. In March, 74% of the survey's respondents said they were "fairly worried" or "very worried" about the impact of the coronavirus on their farm's profitability. In July, that figure dropped to 61%, with almost all of the change coming from a drop in producers being "very worried."

However, about two-thirds of respondents say Congress "needs to pass another bill to provide economic support to farmers as a result of the pandemic," this month's report noted.

The survey was conducted by phone July 20-24 and included responses from 400 producers.

Read more [here](#).

COVID-19 Economic Implications for Agriculture, Food, and Rural America

(From USDA ERS)

USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) has posted a topic page that highlights ERS research and data specifically produced to help interpret and understand the [emerging vulnerabilities and impacts](#) for agriculture, food, and rural America resulting from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

ERS' research program considers links in the farm-to-consumer supply chain that may be affected by the pandemic, including farms, processors, handlers, retail outlets, and trade. ERS also examines the economic impacts of the pandemic on consumers, food assistance program participants, residents of rural America, and farmers.

The page will be updated as more information becomes available.

Read more [here](#).

Minnesota Emerging Farmer Microloan Program Doubles Maximum Loan

The Pilot Agricultural Microloan Program from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Rural Finance Authority (RFA) is [doubling the maximum amount that emerging farmers can borrow](#), to \$20,000.

Loan funds can be used for working capital (annual costs such as seed, feed, fertilizer, land rent) or equipment and other farm asset purchases with a common useful life of 10 years or less.

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible: be a resident of Minnesota, be a member of a Protected Group or a qualified non-citizen as defined under Minnesota statutes, use the funds toward production and marketing of specialty crops or eligible livestock, and demonstrate an ability to repay the loan.

Read more [here](#).

USDA, FDA Offer Glimpse Into Regulation Of Cell-Cultured Meat

(From Meatingplace.com)

USDA and FDA officials have provided more details on their joint approach to overseeing the safety, monitoring and labeling of food products developed from the cells of animals

and fish.

The agencies recently held a [webinar](#) that outlined their intention to develop standards for cell-based proteins for human consumption originating from fish and livestock or poultry.

Current plans call for FDA to oversee cell culture harvesting, tissue collection and appropriate inspections of laboratories while sharing all of the information gathered throughout the process with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). FSIS is expected to address post-harvesting conditions, including the required pre-approval and verification for labeling of cell-cultured products, the agencies said.

All labels will require FSIS pre-approval, and the agency will conduct enforcement actions as needed. No timetable for the launch of the procedures was announced during the webinar, but the joint proposals for labeling standards will be available for public comment before they are formally adopted.



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Save the Date!

- 08/31 - 09/01/2020 - NBA Direct Marketing Webinar Series - ZOOM.US
- 10/12/2020 - South Dakota Ranch Tours - Vivian, Wood & Mission, SD
- 10/17/2020 - Texas Bison Association Fall Meeting/Ranch Tour - Bryan, TX
- 11/21/2020 - Coyote Trail Buffalo Annual Production Auction - Onaka, SD
- 12/04/2020 - Western Bison Association Meeting and Show/Sale - Ogden, UT
- 12/8/2020 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Consignment Auction - Sturgis, SD
- 12/19/2020 - North Dakota Buffalo Assn. Simulcast Auction - Mandan, ND
- 1/08/2021 - Montana Bison Assn. Winter Conference - Great Falls, MT
- 1/9/2021 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Auction - Rapid City, SD
- 1/20/2021 - National Bison Association Winter Conference - Denver, CO
- 1/23/2021 - National Bison Association Gold Trophy Show/Sale - Denver, CO
- 2/6/2020 - DTBA Black Hills Buffalo Classic Simulcast Auction - Rapid City, SD
- 6/27/2021 - National Bison Assn. 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 and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

Click Here for NBA Calendar of Events

