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Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for April 29, 2022

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 Commercial Marketers Committee Meets on News of USDA FSIS Listening Session on Amenable

The Commercial Marketers Committee met earlier this week to discuss the recently announced Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Listening Session on making bison an amenable species. The date for the listening session has not been finalized but is tentatively slated for the second week of June in Boulder, CO.

Under current federal guidelines, bison are a non-amenable species. While some state slaughter plants operate under the “equal to federal inspection”, many do not, leaving a gap for producers or processors wanting to sell bison meat interstate.

The workaround involves paying for voluntary inspection from FSIS, which then allows meat to sell commercially or intrastate. The processor or producer pays for this service, and, in some settings, it can add up to a substantial amount. Between the lack of inspected plants that are willing or able to process bison and the high cost of voluntary inspection, this issue has been an ongoing topic in the bison community for many years.

Newly appointed committee chair, Dick Gehring, led the discussion, seeking out the group’s feedback on the amenable question overall. “Amenable impacts all of our people,

including marketers, processors, feed yards, producers, and cow-calf operators. My concern is that the upfront cost savings could hide some bigger issues potentially coming out of going amenable," he noted.

While there are pros and cons to bison becoming an amenable species under federal guidelines, committee members expressed concerns about the unknown. Getting lost in the crowd because we are a small sector, operational charges, and even the potential loss of options when handling live animals at a processing facility are all valid concerns.

While inspection and testing costs were discussed and raised concerns, field slaughter was mentioned, which could also prove problematic, given the regulatory aspects of the process should bison become amenable.

The committee is compiling a series of questions that could be posed to FSIS before the listening session and will continue to further this discussion prior to that happening.

We will keep NBA members informed as the situation warrants. If members have any input on this topic, you are encouraged to contact your regional representative on the board of directors to share your thoughts. The regional representatives will share that input with the committee.

National Park Service Again Encourages Bison Producers to Participate in M. Bovis Survey

The National Park Service again this week encouraged NBA members to file claims with their local Farm Service Agency agents if they have experienced losses due to Mycoplasma Bovis. They also encourage all producers to participate in a survey that they are currently conducting regarding the disease:

Mycoplasma Bovis is an emerging disease threat in bison and buffalo herds that can cause significant mortality and decreased reproduction in affected herds. Several herds were affected for the first time in 2021, with many experiencing significant mortality, but information on the source of the new infections and risk to other bison herds is not currently known. In order to try to identify the source, causes, and impacts of Mycoplasma bovis disease in bison, we are trying to collect information on the extent of the disease, conditions when the disease appeared, and compare differences between affected herds and unaffected herds.

Whether or not your herd has experienced disease, your information will help us to understand how new herds become infected and what we can do to prevent or stop the disease. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete, is completely voluntary, and no identifying information will be collected. Any information you choose to provide will be kept confidential and used to develop recommendations to help protect bison and buffalo conservation and production.

Please consider filling out this short survey to help us protect bison and buffalo health: <https://forms.office.com/g/4qQ9LcgwBP>.

Early Bird International Bison Convention Registration Ends on Saturday!

Don't forget to get your IBC's Early Bird tickets before prices increase on May 1 at 12:00 AM.

- Full Conference Registration*: \$350.00 (Early Bird price until April 30, 2022); \$420.00 (Starting May 1, 2022)
- Full Conference Family Registration*: \$850.00 - Ticket includes admission for three persons (16+) in the same family



Includes access to all convention sessions and Tuesday reception, Wednesday Banquet and Thursday Banquet

All those registered by April 30 are still going to be entered to win a \$500 package from Granted Sweater!

Register at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/international-bison-convention-2022-registration-126340121705>.

More Exciting 2022 IBC Opportunities!

Invitation to Participate in the International Bison Convention 2022 Poster Session and Competition

Are you involved in a project that has application or benefit to ranches or wild bison? If the answer is YES, join the International Bison Convention (IBC) Poster Session and Competition on July 14, 2022. Taking place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, the 2022 IBC will be a great place to highlight bison research done across North America and the world.

To Participate: Please apply including an abstract no longer than 300 words by May 31, 2022. Abstracts are subject to review based on certain criteria. Not every application may be accepted. Please forward this invitation to anyone else that you feel would be interested.

For more details and to apply, visit our website at <https://bisonconvention2022.com/poster-session/>

Becoming an Exhibitor at the IBC 2022 Trade Show

IBC 2022 attracts leading bison businesses, organizations, and bison enthusiasts. Both Indoor and outdoor exhibitions are open from July 12-15. We invite you to connect with this audience by becoming an exhibitor to network with the North American bison community. It is a great time to create new relationships and turn them into supporters and promoters of your organization or company.

Contact Thao at tpham@onpurpose.ca, the Trade Show Coordinator for more details.

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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Baby Boom: Bison Calf, Pair of Eaglets Are Chicago Region's Newest Residents

(From WTTW - PBS)

Whether the weather cooperates or not, spring has sprung and one of the surest signs of the season is the appearance of baby wildlife.

A couple of recent births highlight the success of restoration and conservation efforts in Illinois.

The newcomers include a bison calf born at Nachusa Grasslands, 100 miles west of Chicago, where a small herd was introduced in 2014. Bison once freely roamed the Midwest and are now found in the wild at a handful of preserves in Illinois and Indiana as part of prairie ecosystem restoration projects.

Will County forest preserves staff is celebrating a second successful nesting season for a pair of bald eagles, with two eaglets spotted in mid-April.

Eagle offspring can be difficult to confirm initially — because the birds' nests are so large and deep, eaglets heads barely reach the top, according to the forest preserve. A second nest is being monitored for signs of hatching.

To protect the eagles, the forest preserve does not disclose the locations of the nests.

Read [more](#).

Watch: Yellowstone bison has no patience for law-breaking tourist

(From USA Today)

Sneaking up to a bison in Yellowstone National Park is asking for trouble on multiple levels. It could lead to serious injury or death, for example, and it's illegal.

Thankfully, the man in the accompanying images and video link was not injured after walking to within inches of a bison on a trail, prompting a threatening response from the massive animal.

It's not clear why the man would so foolishly risk his safety, but it seems as though he hoped to persuade the bison to make way for him and his wife.

Sean Swetter, who last week posted the footage to the Facebook group page, "Yellowstone National Park: Invasion of the Idiots!," explained in his description: "Not joking either, his wife asked for my bear spray to get the bison away from the trail so

they could get back to their car.”

Watch at <https://ftw.usatoday.com/2022/04/watch-yellowstone-bison-has-no-patience-for-law-breaking-tourist>.

Bison Bridge group urges participation in May 11 online meeting

(From WHBF)

The Illinois Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Transportation, will hold an online public meeting on Wednesday, May 11, to present findings and receive public comment as part of the I-80 Mississippi River Bridge study.

The public meeting will be held online from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11. Participants can register to attend the meeting by clicking [here](#) and logging in with a name and email address.

The Bison Bridge Foundation tweeted on Tuesday: “It’s crucial for the future of Bison Bridge that supporters of the project register and attend the meeting.”

In early April, the Illinois House approved a bipartisan resolution sponsored by Rep. Mike Halpin (D-Rock Island), backing the [Bison Bridge Foundation’s](#) proposal to repurpose the I-80 bridge over the Mississippi River.

The planned repurposed bridge would include a wildlife crossing on one side of the bridge and a park-like setting for bike and pedestrian traffic on the other.

Led by East Moline environmentalist Chad Pregracke (founder of Living Lands & Waters), the Bison Bridge Foundation has been meeting steadily with lawmakers, community leaders, local and regional stakeholders, engineers, and QC residents to present their proposal to repurpose the I-80 bridge.

To date, the group has collected almost 40,000 signatures of support on their website at www.bisonbridge.org.

Read [more](#).

Tribes preparing three-day Bison Range celebration

(From Yahoo News)

The appearance of new calves on the Bison Range at Moiese this spring comes with a heightened sense of joy for many as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes begin their first full season of managing the historical site since the passage of the Montana Water Rights Protection Act in 2020.

The legislation created a two-year period for transitioning management of the Bison Range from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to the CSKT, and the Tribes officially took over management in January.

In celebration of the transfer and recent improvements at the visitor center, Tribal leaders are planning three days of events at the Bison Range and Salish Kootenai College the weekend of May 20-22.

Activities include a powwow and Native games beginning at noon at the Bison Range on Friday, May 20. An opening ceremony that includes an opening prayer, honor song and honor guard kicks off festivities at 10 a.m. Friday.

vents shift to the college on Saturday with a screening of the film "In the Spirit of Ataticce" at the Johnny Arlee and Vic Charlo Theatre at 2 p.m., a community meal at 2:30 p.m., and a community celebration beginning at 4 p.m. in the Joe McDonald Health and Fitness Center.

Sunday is Community Appreciation Day at the Bison Range, with half-price day passes available.

Read [more](#).

Buffalo Zoo's last bison may soon get company

(From The Buffalo News)

For the past nine months, Wilma has been the last "buffalo" in Buffalo.

The American bison, who tips the scales at 1,059 pounds, is the last survivor among three sisters who grew up in the Buffalo Zoo. But she may not be alone too much longer – the zoo is hoping to bring back a small herd this summer with the potential acquisition of two more bison.

The zoo on Monday also began making improvements to the 30,000-square-foot bison exhibit space that runners and walkers pass on ring road. The \$500,000 project is expected to be completed in June.

"We are very excited for the zoo and for the community to get new companions for Wilma," said Lisa Smith, the zoo's chief zoological officer. "I think she is going to benefit greatly from having some company again.

"It is the national mammal for the United States, and it's certainly very important in Buffalo to have bison here at the zoo," Smith said. "We're looking forward to having a bigger herd again."

Read [more](#).

WOTUS Rule Proposal Still in Works

(From The Progressive Farmer)

ARLINGTON, Va. (DTN) -- EPA intends to put forward a proposal yet this year to rewrite definitions of waters of the U.S., an EPA official said this week during the annual meeting of the North American Agricultural Journalists in Arlington, Virginia.

All eyes are on the second challenge of the Clean Water Act by Michael and Chantell Sackett, *Sackett v EPA*, likely up for oral arguments before the Supreme Court this fall, which could determine how the law will define wetlands and whether they are jurisdictional under federal law.

Members of Congress and others have pressed the agency to hold off on releasing a proposed rewrite, pending any action by the court in the Sackett case. The court would be expected to rule sometime next spring if oral arguments are heard in either October or November this year.

Snyder said the agency had received more than 120,000 comments in response to an EPA notice of rulemaking issued in December.

Currently, EPA has returned to the pre-2015 definition of WOTUS while working on a broader rewrite.

"So, we are going through a lot of feedback at the moment, and that is going to take time," Snyder said. "I suspect it's still going to be a number of months probably before the next concrete steps, but I do still think there's an interest in trying to get this finalized this calendar year."

Read [more](#).

Senate kicks off farm bill discussion in Michigan

(From Farm Progress)

“We are deeply committed to working together to solve problems in these unprecedented times. And we will. We will move forward,” says Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., at the conclusion of the first farm bill field hearing held Friday on the campus of Michigan State.

Stabenow helped write the past two farm bills with former Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., and now will be working with new ranking member Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., who joined her Friday, to formulate where common ground can be found ahead of the farm bill expiration in September 2023.

The Senate agriculture committee has a long history of working across party lines to produce strong farm bills. The tradition of starting the process off with field hearings in the states of the chair and ranking member sets the tone for putting stakeholders first as we begin farm bill deliberations,” Boozman says. “There is simply no substitute for getting out of Washington and hearing directly from those impacted by our decisions.”

The leaders heard from two panels, each consisting of eight witnesses, to provide insight into what has worked and what needs improved upon in the next writing of the farm bill. Witnesses testified about the importance of crop insurance, a need to potentially increase USDA-backed loan rates, and ways the government through the farm bill can partner with farmers to implement conservation measures.

Read [more](#).

Higher meat prices to test consumers this summer, CoBank says

(From Meatingplace.com)

U.S. consumers' appetites will be tested again when the effects of producer price inflation hit grocery meat cases this summer, according to a new report from CoBank.

Sharply higher feed, energy and labor costs have yet to fully impact wholesale and retail meat prices, but that will soon change, said Brian Earnest, lead animal protein economist with CoBank.

"As consumers notice their dollar is not going as far as it used to, they may trade down at the meat case, with chicken being the primary beneficiary," Earnest said.

Retail meat prices will remain elevated throughout 2022, the analyst said. With combined cutout values of beef, pork and chicken climbing 22% in the first quarter, compared to a year ago, consumers are all but certain to see higher prices in the meat case, he stressed.

Beef consumption has not yet declined in response to higher prices, but willingness to pay for red meat may finally see a significant change as overall inflation dents consumers' purchasing power, he said. The U.S. broiler industry may be positioned for modest growth and strong margins as a result.

Read [more](#).

2022 MOSES Farmer Advancement Fund Application

The MOSES Farmer Advancement Fund assists historically underserved farmers and ranchers in fully participating in activities to help create and sustain their transition into farming, assisting in strengthening the future generation of farmers and ranchers.

* NOTE: These funds are NOT loans and DO NOT need to be repaid.

Eligibility:

Who is eligible to apply?

Historically underserved farmers, including BIPOC and new American farmers, beginning (farming for 10 years or less), limited resource, and Veteran farmers and ranchers.

** See here for USDA definitions of these groups.

Applicants must be farming in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, North Dakota, or South Dakota.

Eligible projects:

Examples include: Travel to trainings, attending educational events, purchasing inputs (seeds, fertilizer, breed stocks for free range chickens, ducks, honey bees, sheep and goats), small farm tools, reference materials in farm management, marketing plans to mitigate pandemic challenges, etc. For farmers that lease land, purchase of portable structures that are equipped with solar power to help in post-harvest handling and storage.

Funds available:

Farmer Advancement Funds are available in amounts ranging from \$250-\$2000. The funding pool is \$10,000 through August 31, 2022.

A second round of funding will be available September 30, 2022.

2022 Application period:

Applications are due May 31, 2022 and decisions will be announced on June 15, 2022.

Funds must be spent by August 31, 2022.

Read [more](#).



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Save the Date!

- 5/26/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 6/03/2022 - Texas Bison Association Spring Conference - TX
- 6/17/2022 - Montana Bison Association - MT
- 6/18/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Rugby, ND
- 6/23/2022 - Western Bison Association Spring meeting - UT
- 6/23/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 7/12/2022 - International Bison Conference - Saskatoon, SK
- 7/21/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 8/15/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 9/10/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Mission, SD
- 11/9/2022 - Antelope Island State Park Bison Auction - Online
- 11/14/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 12/01/2022 - Western Bison Association Meeting and Show/Sale - UT
- 1/07/2023 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Simulcast Auction - SD
- 1/18/2023 - NBA Winter Conference - CO
- 1/21/2023 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - Denver, CO
- 2/11/2-23 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Sale Simulcast Auction - SD

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

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

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