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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 April 8, 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 Board Charts Path for Continued Growth at Strategic Planning Session

The National Bison Association board of directors met in Denver to develop a strategic plan charting the priorities and plans for continued growth as the organization enters into a major

transitional phase with the departure of longtime Executive Director Dave Carter.

Aided by facilitator Tara Kuipers of Tara Kuipers Consulting, the board assessed the organization's strengths and successes but also sought to map out a roadmap to address the need for building additional capacity to expand the ability to connect with consumers and prospective producers, to improve the liquidity of animals and the market growth of bison meat.

"Over the past two decades, we have built significant financial reserves for the

association,” said Chad Kremer, president of the NBA. “Now, as bison producers face new challenges and opportunities, we need to invest those reserves to equip our association to continue charting new paths that will bring more people—ranchers and consumers—into the buffalo family. The NBA has matured as an organization over the past 27 years. The initial focus was production, then we transitioned towards policy and regulation. Now with changes in the marketplace, technology, interest from new producers, and bison aficionados we are again at a transition crossroads.”

Kremer went on to say “Your board, which collectively has 299+ years of experience, spent a day and a half actively strategizing the topics that were highlighted in the member surveys and from discussions directors had with members prior to the planning session. The immediate focus is on the transition to a new Executive Director and the evaluation of staffing needs and capacity. Beyond that transition, we will continue in our previous efforts in marketing, promotion, educational outreach, and production. An example of one topic of discussion was social media and how we can better utilize those platforms for marketing, education, and increasing membership. There is a tremendous opportunity there that we currently are not capturing. I would ask all members to realize that this is a living document that will offer direction for YOUR association! The success of an organization is having active and engaged members at all levels, I challenge all of you to do so.”

Matheson Named Interim Executive Director of NBA

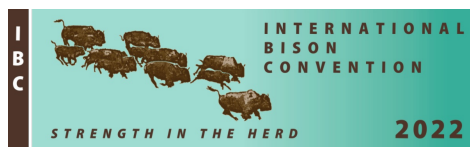
Longtime NBA Assistant Director, Jim Matheson, was named the interim NBA executive director last week by the board of directors. Matheson will serve in this position while the board develops a hiring committee to start the search for the next executive director.



“It’s an honor to serve as interim executive director of the NBA while the board searches for the next leader to fill that position, a position which I will certainly be applying for myself,” said Matheson. “Having worked in this capacity for the last 18 years, I’m eager to continue the good work that the NBA has undertaken for the last two decades while implementing exciting new programs and services that will benefit the entire membership and the bison business.”

Matheson was hired as Assistant Director in 2004 and has worked diligently as the sole full-time staffer. He has provided the membership with quality NBA conferences, bison-specific educational materials and workshops, marketing tools, production resources, member support and outreach, and IT support and has raised over \$500,000 in grant funds in his time with the NBA.

Matheson is in Hobart, IN this weekend to present at, and participate in, the Illinois/Indiana Bison Association Spring meeting.



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

Purpose: To generate enthusiasm for research applicable to bison

Are you involved in a project that has application or benefit to ranched or wild bison? If so, you are invited to present a poster about it at the International Bison Convention (IBC) July 12-15, 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.

Criteria: Poster must focus on how the research can increase the understanding of bison. Completed projects within five years of completion are welcome. Funded projects in progress that are not yet completed are also welcome.

Submission Categories:

- **Bison health:** Veterinary research, parasite control, disease research
- **Bison production:** Low stress handling, herd monitoring, pasture management, transportation, codes of practice, feeding trials, minerals and vitamin, supplements
- **Bison marketing and economics:** Grading and meat quality, cost of production, benchmarking, novel product development
- **Bison - environment, and culture:** History, cultural impacts, traditional uses, conservation, environmental impact, habitat use
- **Other:** Other topics with a clear connection to how it helps the bison industry

Eligible entrants: Students (of all ages), academics, veterinarians, industry experts, private companies and government

Competition / Judging: Only student entries will be eligible to be judged in the competition.

- It will be the choice of the applicant to be in the competition or not.
- It is open to students enrolled in Grade school or post secondary.
- Over 18 and under 18 years of age entrants, will be judged separately.
- Student entries will be invited to provide a 2–3-minute oral presentation (2-3 slides) about their poster. A 'sales pitch' to entice people to come and visit the poster. This presentation will be part of their overall assessment.
- Prizes will be in place for over and under 18 entrants. All categories of research will be combined for judging.

To Participate: Please submit an application (below) including an abstract (definition below) no longer than 300 words to poster@bisonconvention2022.com by April 30, 2022. Abstracts are subject to review based on above listed criteria. Not every application may be accepted. Please forward this invitation to anyone else that you feel would be interested.

Once accepted and invited to participate, prepare a poster about your research and bring the poster with you to the convention for display. For student entries interested in participating in the competition, please prepare a 2-3 minute oral presentation to be delivered during the convention.

'Abstract' Definition: *An abstract is a communication of restricted length (typically 300 words or less) that permits informed readers to evaluate significant contributions of a scientific study, method, or technique of teaching or extension, extension program, or research technique. Clearly stated, simple sentences with exact wording must be used to ensure clarity and brevity.*

Application to Submit a Poster to the 2022 International Bison Convention Poster Session and Competition

Submit to poster@bisonconvention2022.com by April 30, 2022

1. Name:

2. Email address:
 3. Title of Poster:
 4. Student (Yes/No; if 'No' go to Q.5):
 - a. If 'Yes' above, would you like to be entered into the student poster competition?
 - b. Is the student entry presenter over 18 or under 18 years of age?
 5. Topic category
(Highlight the appropriate category, add any explanatory notes as needed):
 - a. Bison health: Veterinary research, parasite control, disease research;
 - b. Bison production: Low stress handling, herd monitoring, pasture management, transportation, codes of practice, feeding trials, minerals and vitamin, supplements;
 - c. Bison marketing and economics: Grading and meat quality, cost of production, benchmarking, novel product development;
 - d. Bison - environment and culture: History, cultural impacts, traditional uses, conservation, environmental impact, habitat use;
 - e. Other- Other topics with a clear connection to how it helps the bison industry
 6. Abstract (max 300 words):
-

International Bison Conference Early Bird Registration Extension

(From the Canadian Bison Association)

Recognizing that COVID guidelines and travel restrictions are relaxing, we wanted to ensure you have an opportunity to get the best prices to attend the IBC 2022.

The Early Bird Registration deadline has been extended to April 30.

- 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

And for even more excitement: All those registered by April 30 will be entered to win a \$500 package from Granted Sweater (Official Canadian Wildlife Federation - Bison Sweater - GSC (grantedclothing.com))!

Get all the details and register at bisonconvention2022.com.



Editor's Note: The following news stories were distributed by organizations not affiliated with the National Bison Association. They may not reflect the opinions or the positions held by the NBA on matters such as genetic integrity, animal management, and other issues.

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National Buffalo Museum Store Sells Bison-Themed Merchandise

(From The Jamestown Sun)

Since the very early days of the National Buffalo Museum in Jamestown, it has had a museum store to sell all kinds of bison merchandise. The store, which has recently found a new manager and buyer, Pat Taylor, sells everything from hats and clothes to mugs and books.

“As a buyer, I just go through some of the vendors that Ilana (Xinos) has established over the years and also do my research looking for unique bison-themed products that will appeal to our consumers,” Taylor said.

According to the museum’s executive director, Ilana Xinos, the museum store makes up 20% of the museum’s overall revenue. Xinos said most of the sales come from in-person shoppers.

“I would say it’s overwhelmingly tourists,” Xinos said. “We have a small percentage of local customers that do come in. I would say it’s gotta be 95% tourism. Our busiest months are those months, April, May, June, July, August, and September. The tourism months, so our primary customer is a tourist.”

People do not have to pay the museum’s admission fee to shop at the store. The store is a spot for people to get some unique items outside of the normal gift shop products, Taylor said.

Read more [here](#).

CSU, Partners Provide 39 Laramie Foothills Bison To Three Native Nations

(From The Fence Post)

In their largest transfer of bison to date, on March 23 Colorado State University, the City of Fort Collins, and Larimer County shipped 39 bison from the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd to three Native American tribes in Oklahoma and Kansas.

The herd was established in 2015 using CSU’s expertise in assisted reproductive technologies – including in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, and embryo transfer – to produce bison that have the same heirloom genetics as those that have lived in and around Yellowstone National Park.

In addition to those reproduction techniques, a team led by Assistant Professor Jennifer Barfield of CSU’s Department of Biomedical Sciences incorporated methods for treating sperm and embryos to get rid of the bacteria that cause brucellosis, an infectious disease that triggers miscarriages and premature births in bison, elk, and cattle.

'Reconnect with their culture'

Barfield, the scientific lead for the herd, said the landmark shipment of bison to Native peoples is immensely rewarding.

"It feels good when your herd can contribute to larger bison conservation and restoration of bison herds to the landscape," she said. "It's great to see them go back to the Native American communities that value them and are really using the rebuilding of the bison herds to heal and reconnect with their culture."

Matt McCollum, herd coordinator, agreed.

"For me, it's been a long time coming, because this is what we've been working on for over a decade," he said. "It's the culmination of a whole lot of work. We hope it's just the beginning of a lot of potential to do some real good in the bison world."

Read [more](#).

PLC and NCBA Oppose Bison Grazing on APR in Montana

(From Drovers Magazine)

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) denounced the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposed decision on the American Prairie Reserve's (APR) request to graze bison on seven grazing allotments in Montana.

"In addition to an unacceptable disregard for animal and rangeland health, this decision fails to address the longstanding, science-based concerns raised by Montana ranchers, land managers, and conservation experts. PLC, NCBA, and our partners on the ground have consistently raised foundational flaws in the BLM's assessment, starting with the inappropriate use of an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for total conversion of these allotments. This decision poses clear threats to rangeland and riparian ecosystems and is in direct conflict with the agency's mandated responsibility to uphold multiple-use," said Executive Director of PLC and NCBA Natural Resources Kaitlynn Glover.

Bison follow significantly different grazing patterns and behaviors than cattle, and this decision would alter the grazing authorizations and season of use on six of the seven allotments under consideration. If finalized, this conversion will result in resource degradation and undermine the careful stewardship of existing grazing permittees. The BLM's decision also faces serious questions about the legality of conversion of the allotments under existing federal grazing law.

Land management decisions – especially ones that permanently alter the forage profile, soil health, and waterways of a grassland ecosystem – should be led by the expertise of people on the ground. Through continued engagement, including the submission of comments on the draft Environmental Assessment in September 2021, NCBA and PLC stand with Montana Public Lands Council and Montana Stockgrowers Association to ensure the concerns that have been raised by ranchers in Montana and across the West are not dismissed in this process.

Read [more](#).

Billy The Runaway Bison, Still On The Lam After 6 Months, Makes April Fools' Day Appearance In Hawthorn Woods

(From The Chicago Tribune)

Billy, the runaway bison who has charmed the northwest suburbs for the past six months, made a rare public appearance at a busy intersection in Hawthorn Woods just in time for — wait for it — April Fools' Day.

Margaret Slove of Round Lake said she was stopped at a red light at about 6:20 a.m. on Friday when she spotted the 950-pound social media star out for a stroll.

“Oh! Oh, my gosh!” Slove said to herself. “That’s the missing buffalo.”

The sighting placed Billy — aka Billy the Buffalo, aka Tyson the bison — about 6 miles from her home at Milk & Honey Farmstead in Wauconda, where her co-owner Scott Comstock has been trying to lure her into captivity using sweetened feed. Comstock, who could not be reached for comment, said in January that he was making good progress with the wily bovine, visiting her every day, sometimes from as close as 10 feet away.

“I’ve got to do it delicately,” Comstock said at the time. “She’s not like a cow or a domestic animal. It’s kind of fun matching wits with a bison, and trying to get her home.”

Billy became a local celebrity following her escape from captivity on Sept. 18, while she and her sister were being delivered to Milk & Honey. The two bison were purchased for breeding purposes.

Read [more](#).

Bison Bridge Proposal Gets Bi-Partisan Support From The Illinois House

(From KWQC)

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (KWQC) - Illinois lawmakers adopted a bi-partisan resolution sponsored by Representative Mike Halpin (D-Rock Island) in support of the Bison Bridge Foundation’s proposal to repurpose the Interstate 80 bridge over the Mississippi River. The proposed Bison Bridge would include a wildlife crossing on one side of the bridge and a park-like setting for foot traffic on the other.

Led by East Moline environmentalist, Chad Pregracke, the Bison Bridge Foundation has been meeting steadily with lawmakers, community leaders, local and regional stakeholders, engineers, and residents of the Quad Cities to present their proposal to repurpose the I-80 bridge. To date, the group has collected almost 40,000 signatures of support on its website at www.bisonbridge.org.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has determined the need for a new crossing to replace the existing Interstate 80 bridge which crosses the Mississippi River between Rapids City, Illinois, and LeClaire, Iowa. The I-80 River Crossing project is currently in Phase I while IDOT completes their initial study and develops proposed alternatives for the new structure. IDOT continues to provide updates on the progress of Phase I at <https://www.i80mississippibridge.com/>, a website dedicated to the project.

Before any decisions are made about a new crossing, the Illinois Department of Transportation must conduct the NEPA review process on behalf of the Federal Highways Administration. NEPA, or National Environmental Policy Act, requires federal agencies to conduct an environmental review study to determine and consider potential environmental impacts of a proposed project. The Bison Bridge team now looks to the next phase of the NEPA process to continue to attract support for their proposal. In this next phase, IDOT will conduct requisite public meetings designed to incorporate public input as early as May 2022.

Read [more](#).

USDA To Disburse Disaster Funds For Ranchers

(From Meatingpalce.com)

The USDA announced that ranchers who have approved applications through the 2021 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), which concerned forage losses due to severe drought or wildfire in 2021, will soon begin receiving emergency relief payments for the resulting increases in supplemental feed costs.

The money is being distributed through the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) [Emergency Livestock Relief Program](#) (ELRP).

The ELRP will use data from the LFP, which will allow the USDA to distribute payments within days to livestock producers. The LFP provides up to 60% of the estimated replacement feed cost when an eligible drought adversely impacts grazing lands or 50% of the monthly feed cost for the number of days the producer is prohibited from grazing the managed rangeland because of a qualifying wildfire. FSA received more than 100,000 applications totaling nearly \$670 million in payments to livestock producers under LFP for the 2021 program year.

The ELRP, by contrast, grew out of the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, which was [signed into law last September](#).

Read [more](#).

Value-Added Producer Grants

(From USDA Rural Development)

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and marketing of new products. The goals of this program are to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities and increase producer income.

You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain.

Grants are awarded through a national competition. Each fiscal year, applications are requested through a notice published in the [Federal Register](#) and through an announcement posted on [Grants.gov](#).

VAPG is part of the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) which is an umbrella program created under the 2018 Farm Bill. Producers can find other grant funding opportunities on the [LAMP web page](#).

Program Funding: Program Funding: \$19.75 million in total available funding. Of this amount, the COVID-19 relief funds constitute \$2.75 million rolled over from the FY 2021 appropriations and the other \$17 million comes from the FY 2018 Farm Bill and recovered funds.

Maximum Grant Amount: Planning Grants \$75,000; Working Capital Grants: \$250,000.

Matching Funds Requirements: The \$2.75 million in COVID-19 relief funds may include a reduced cost-share match requirement of 10 percent of the grant amount. The other available funds have a statutory cost-share match requirement of 100 percent of the grant amount.

Who may apply for this program?

Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures, as defined in the [program regulation](#), are eligible to apply for this program.

Read [more](#).

Farmers pull land out of CRP

(From Agri-Pulse)

It looks like the Conservation Reserve Program is going to take a cut in acreage this fall because of soaring commodity prices. During a call with reporters from Mexico on

Tuesday, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack provided some fresh numbers on the general signup that ended last month.

He says that only 1.8 million of the 4 million acres in expiring contracts will be re-enrolled in the program and that there will only be about 800,000 acres in new contracts. That would be a net loss of about 1.4 million general-signup acres.

"We got a few new contracts but nowhere near the number of contracts that did not re-up," Vilsack said.

Vilsack said the numbers prove there was no reason for him to open CRP to emergency cropping. "The market basically responds to signals and farmers make the decision," he said.

Keep in mind: These enrollment numbers are a blow to the administration's effort to use CRP as a tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. About 22 million acres are currently enrolled in CRP, well below the current cap of 25.5 million acres. The limit rises to 27 million acres in October.

Read [more](#).

Consumer Interpretation Of Labels May Drive Sales: USDA

(From meatingplace.com)

Consumer decisions on whether to buy certain products can be influenced by food labels — even if those labels are misinterpreted — according to new USDA research.

Food labels that, for example, describe chicken as "raised without antibiotics" or beef from "grass-fed cattle" often inform consumers of food production characteristics that consumers cannot independently verify, [the study by the USDA's Economic Research Service \(ERS\) found](#). The researchers also found that consumers may be more willing to pay more for certain products if labels feature certain attributes, such as "organically farmed" or "raised sustainably."

The study also uncovered that a consumer's willingness to pay for a label that cites "grass-fed" on beef products is more likely higher among those who believe that the label implies food safety — indicating that those consumers may not understand what the label really means.

ERS conducted three studies covering the use of labels used for chicken products raised without antibiotics, consumer preferences for foods with environmental labels, or eco-labels, and labels on beef products that specify those derived from cattle on a grass-based diet. More informative food labels can influence what consumers buy and how businesses market products, but how the labels are interpreted by consumers will require additional research, the study added.

Steakhouse Traffic Bounces Back After January Dip

(From Meatingplace.com)

While the dining sector saw customer visits slow at the start of the year due to a spike in COVID-19 omicron cases, foot traffic made an "impressive" comeback beginning in mid-February at five steakhouse chains, according to analytics firm Placer.ai.

The firm [tracked weekly visits](#) for Texas Roadhouse, LongHorn Steakhouse, The Capital Grille, Firebirds Wood Fired Grill, and Colton's Steak House & Grill, finding that all five chains registered swift growth over the four weeks starting Feb. 14, compared to 2020, despite the difficult circumstances. By the week of March 7, traffic was up between 20.1% and 51.2%, depending on the chain.

"Looking at early 2022 data confirms just how resilient these restaurants have been in the face of serious challenges," Placer.ai said.

LongHorn Steakhouse and Texas Roadhouse in particular were able to maintain overall growth patterns over the past two years despite limits on indoor service and the decline in sit-down dining nationwide. LongHorn, which refreshed its menu in 2019, finished 2021 with an 11.1% increase in average weekly visits in December, compared to two years ago, while Texas Roadhouse registered a 14.9% gain in visits.

The analytics firm predicted continued growth for both companies, along with the smaller steakhouse chains, as the omicron wave eases and the weather improves. Average weekly visits in December 2021 were up 12.4% at The Capital Grille, up 14.4% at Firebirds, and 19.2% at Colton's when compared to the same month in 2019.



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Save the Date!

- 4/08/2022 - Illinois/Indiana Bison Association Spring Meeting - IN
- 4/18/2022 - Dismal River Ranch & Todd Hofer Bison Auction - Online
- 4/21/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 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
- 7/12/2022 - International Bison Conference - Saskatoon, SK
- 7/18/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 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
- 1/18/2023 - NBA Winter Conference - CO
- 1/21/2023 - 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 and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

Click Here for NBA Calendar of Events

