



Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for August 20, 2021

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.

Section 32 Bison Purchase Award Announced

USA Beef Packing, L.L.C. was awarded the sole contract to sell up to 1.3 million lbs. of ground bison to the USDA under the Section 32 Surplus Removal Program. USA Beef Packing's bid calls for the company to deliver the product to more than 25 distribution centers between October 1, 2021, and January 31, 2022.

The total purchase price for the contact is \$9,827,200, with the prices per truckload ranging from \$6.89/lb. to \$7.39/lb. If the entire contact is fulfilled, the sale will bring the total amount sold under this round of Section 32 to \$16,750,000.

2021 NBA Summer Conference Presentations Now Online

Presentations from the 2021 NBA Summer Conference in Cheyenne, WY are now available for all members to view in the members' area of www.bisoncentral.com.

Thanks to a generous sponsorship from [Benjamin Lee Bison](#), the NBA was able to film the Tuesday presentations to share with members who could not make the conference, or wanted to reference the presentations again.

The drought mitigation presentation from Monday is being finalized and will be posted when editing is complete.

See these and more NBA conference presentations at <https://bisoncentral.com/publication/conference-presentations/>

NBA Develops Guide to USDA Drought Resources

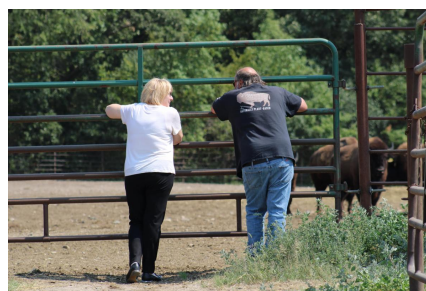
As drought conditions worsen across many of the bison-producing areas across the country, the National Bison Association has developed a handout providing information on how ranchers can access USDA drought-assistance resources.

The two-page flyer provides an overview of Livestock Forage Disaster Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, and other resources.

NBA members can download the flyer [here](#).

Rep Fischbach Meeting with MN Bison Producers

On Tuesday, August 17th, the Minnesota Bison Association met with U.S. Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach (MN-7) at the Meyer's Hidden Bison Ranch in central Minnesota.



The meeting is part of the MnBA's greater efforts to give elected officials an up close and personal look at how bison ranches operate. Congresswoman Fischbach is in her first term after defeating longtime House Ag Committee Chair, Collin Peterson.

Joining the tour was state Representative Paul Anderson, who sits on the Minnesota House Ag Committee. The Congresswoman saw firsthand how drought is impacting bison ranchers. Issues discussed throughout the meeting include drought relief for farmers and ranchers, Truth in Buffalo Labeling, and processing issues found within the bison industry.

Note: NBA members scheduling a meeting with their Congressional Representative can contact the NBA for an updated background sheet of key legislative issues.

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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A Behavioral Index for Assessing Bison Stress Level during Handling and Demographic Predictors of Stress Response

(From Taylor and Francis Online)

There are an estimated half-a-million Plains Bison (*Bison bison*) present in North America in commercial and conservation herds. Most bison are rounded up and "worked" annually for parasite control, veterinarian attention, and processing, making it important to understand the impacts of these operations.

Research indicates bison generally experience higher levels of stress than cattle during similar handling processes. However, most methods for assessing stress-level during working are invasive, increase handling time, and paradoxically increase stress levels.

We designed a behavioral index to assess bison stress level during handling and used it to evaluate various predictors of stress response in a semi-wild bison herd.

We examined how sex, age, herd of origin, previous experience, calf rearing, and body condition influenced bison stress response during working operations from 2015 to 2017. Our results indicate that stress level decreased with age and previous experience being worked through a particular facility. Additionally, herd of origin influenced stress level, indicating that stress response may have a genetic or epigenetic component.

Our study provides an easily applicable tool for monitoring bison stress levels.

Read [more](#).

'Bison Know Best'

(From Eugene Weekly)

Austin Larson, one of the three eponymous brothers of My Brothers' Farm, lives and works on a 320-acre plot near Creswell and Pleasant Hill. Although drier after the summer's heat wave, the farm is home to an array of flora — including hazelnut and apple orchards — a green riparian zone and, among other animals, herds of pigs and bison. The animals play a huge role in restoring the farm's soil quality and managing the property.

In 2013, Larson and his brothers decided to farm the land along the Coast Fork Willamette River, where they had grown up. They soon learned that 50 years of ryegrass farming left the soil acidic. "Conventional agriculture puts an emphasis on this year's crop," Larson says. "They don't really value soil health."

But Larson and his brothers saw soil health as a priority. After some research, they decided the best way to restore the farmland was through organic farming and animal grazing. The farm also uses its animals for meat. "We looked in the U.S.," Larson says, "and saw the number of cows in this country and decided that there's too many cows here." Cattle farmers largely try to emulate the grazing patterns that bison follow naturally, he says — and bison are healthier as meat.

While cows tend to spread out across their pasture, Larson says the bison will stick together and graze as a group. This allows the farm to more easily target specific areas as it focuses on soil restoration. "They move in the field the way that you would want to manipulate them to," says Becca Bauermeister, who is Larson's partner and works on My Brothers' Farm. "They'll just do it automatically as a group."

Read [more](#).

Wood Bison Herd Grows

(From KUAC FM – Alaska)

State biologists completed an annual survey of the Innoko-Yukon River wood bison population earlier this summer, and they say the results show the animals are doing well six years after a seed group of bison was released in the area. KUAC's Mary Auld reports.

Listen to the radio broadcast [here](#).

There's A Bison on The Loose in Northwestern Minnesota

(From Bring Me the News)

A bison is roaming the White Earth area in northwestern Minnesota, and people are being asked not to approach it.

A post on the [White Earth Nation Facebook page on Tuesday](#) asks people not to "approach or interact with a roaming buffalo," which was reported in the area.

If someone spots the bison, they're asked to call their local law enforcement agency and report the location where they saw the animal.

"They are doing their best to make sure the buffalo is returned safely to its home," the post said.

Bison can be dangerous when approached. [The National Park Service says](#) the animals are "unpredictable and can run three times faster than humans." It [recommends](#) you always stay more than 25 yards away from a bison.

In fact, bison have injured more people in Yellowstone National Park than any other animal, the park service said. [According to a 2000 study](#), the bison in Yellowstone are more dangerous than its bears — the study found bison had charged people 81 times over 22 years, killing two people. The park's grizzly bears had injured 30 people and killed two.

Read more [here](#).

USDA Accepting Applications to Help Cover Costs for Organic Certification

(From USDA Press Release)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that organic producers and handlers can now apply for funds to assist with the cost of receiving or maintaining organic certification. Applications for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) are due Nov. 1, 2021.

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent during the 2021 and any subsequent program year.

Producers can be reimbursed for expenses made between Oct. 1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021, including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Read [more](#).

Can Small Locker Plants Replace Lost Beef Packing Capacity?

(From Drovers)

At a recent conference of the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists there was a set of presentations entitled "Building a Resilient Food Production System in the US: What Covid-19 and other Black Swan events Exposed about Modern Food Production".

An overview of the impacts the Covid-19 shutdown had on food production and distribution showed that only 100 days separated the announcement by China to the WHO that 'a unique virus' was causing hospitalization from a 'pneumonia like disease' in January 2020 to warnings from the CEO of a major food company that the "food supply chain is breaking" in April.

The biggest problem was not the event itself, but the open-ended timeline and the unpredictability of the reaction to this event that was a shock to both supply and demand with a surge in demand and consumer stockpiling followed by decreased demand with the shutdown. A widening of the retail/wholesale spread was the result of large negative demands by packers and large positive demands by retailers, low retail meat supply and high livestock supply.

One strategy to improve supply chain resilience is to alter the current supply chain configuration, such as efforts to increase local and regional food systems, or 'shorten the supply chain' with smaller less specialized systems. The large, centralized packing industry evolved because economies of scale and efficiency are a competitive advantage resulting in 35% reduction in per-head processing costs.

Read [more](#).

U.S. Cattle Herd Contracts as Drought Persists: USDA

(From Meatingplace.com)

Cow-calf producers will remain relatively aggressive in cow culling in the second half of 2021, given expected tight forage supplies, USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) said Wednesday in its latest [Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook](#).

The report said USDA's 2021 beef production forecast was reduced by 33 million pounds from last month to 27.872 billion pounds, based primarily on lighter expected carcass weights through the second half.

The U.S. cattle herd is estimated down 1% from 2020 at 100.9 million head, and the 2021 calf crop is expected to be down slightly from last year at 35.1 million head, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) midyear cattle report. The number of beef cows is estimated 2% lower than a year earlier at 31.4 million head, but the number of dairy cows is expected to be 2% above last year's level at 9.5 million head.

According to the cattle report, producers intend to keep about 4.3 million beef heifers as beef cow replacements, 2% fewer than producers intended to keep at this time last year. Based on the number of beef cows on July 1 and beef cow slaughter in the first half of the year, ERS estimates that 13% fewer beef heifers entered the herd in first-half 2020 than a year earlier.

Western Drought Will Last into Fall or Longer

(From New York Times)

The severe drought that has gripped much of the western half of the United States in spring and summer is likely to continue at least into late fall, government forecasters said Thursday.

The outlook for September through November, prepared by meteorologists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, suggests that above-average temperatures are likely across almost all of the West, except for Washington and parts of Idaho, Montana and North Dakota.

Precipitation is expected to be below normal from the Southwest into the Rockies and the Northern Plains.

Together that spells bad news for a part of the country that is already experiencing major effects of drought, including dwindling water supplies, stunted crops, barren grazing lands and exploding wildfires.

Read [more](#).

Kansas 'ag-gag' law struck down

(From Meatingplace.com)

A Kansas law meant to restrict the activities of animal rights activists has been struck down in the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, [according to a Reuters report](#).

Called an "ag-gag" law, the Kansas Farm Animal and Field Crop and Research Facilities Protection Act intends to stop activists from going undercover at large livestock operations and, under false pretenses, documenting alleged abuses at the farms. Groups like the Animal Legal Defense Fund have, historically, infiltrated livestock operations through standard job applications, and have not disclosed their intentions upon being hired.

However, in a 2-1 decision, the 10th Circuit reaffirmed two earlier rules in Kansas City federal court that sections of the law violate free speech protections. Although Kansas had argued that the law restricted conduct (and not speech), Circuit Judge Carolyn McHugh wrote that the law does restrict what individuals can say to gain access to livestock operations, and thus does restrict speech.

McHugh added that the speech needed to access the livestock operations is too minor to cause the level of cognizable harm that, under Supreme Court measures, would allow for restrictions.

Read [more](#).

Whole Foods investigating PETA turkey abuse claims

(From Meatingplace.com)

Whole Foods Market has suspended all purchasing from Plainville Farms while it investigates allegations that turkeys were abused at farms that supply birds for the brand, a spokesperson for the grocery retailer said in an emailed statement.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) [published a video](#) over the weekend that it said showed workers mistreating turkeys at what the group said were farms raising birds for the Plainville Farms brand. PETA said its investigator worked on crews that loaded turkeys onto trucks bound for the slaughterhouse.

A Whole Foods spokesperson sent the following statement to Meatingplace:

"The mistreatment of animals captured in this video is incredibly upsetting and unacceptable. We are thoroughly investigating to ensure our stringent animal welfare standards are being upheld. We have also contacted PETA and urged them to provide any information about where this video took place that will help validate their claims so that all parties involved can truly take meaningful action. We have suspended all purchasing from Plainville Farms, pending results from this investigation."

Read [more](#).

USDA to Provide Pandemic Assistance to Livestock Producers for Animal Losses

(From USDA Press Release)

Livestock and poultry producers who suffered losses during the pandemic due to insufficient access to processing can apply for assistance for those losses and the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animals. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Vilsack announced the Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program (PLIP) in [recorded] remarks at the National Pork Industry Conference in Wisconsin Dells, WI. The announcement is part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Livestock and poultry producers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 20 through Sept. 17, 2021.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized payments to producers for losses of livestock or poultry depopulated from March 1, 2020 through December 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. PLIP payments will be based on 80% of the fair market value of the livestock and poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animal. Eligible livestock and poultry include swine, chickens and turkeys, but pork producers are expected to be the primary recipients of the

assistance.

“Throughout the pandemic, we learned very quickly the importance and vulnerability of the supply chain to our food supply,” said Agriculture Secretary Vilsack. “Many livestock producers had to make the unfortunate decision to depopulate their livestock inventory when there simply was no other option. This targeted assistance will help livestock and poultry producers that were among the hardest hit by the pandemic alleviate some financial burden from these losses.”

Read [more](#).



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Save the Date!

- 9/11/2021 - RMBA Fall Ranch Tour of Prairie Ridge Buffalo - CO
- 9/23/2021 – Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival - SD
- 9/25/2021 – BisonFest Music Festival, TX
- 10/15/2021 - Wisconsin Bison Producers Association Fall Meeting - WI
- 11/6/2021 - Custer State Park Annual Auction - SD
- 11/8/2021 - Antelope Island State Park Production Auction - UT
- 11/13/2021 - Oklahoma Bison Association Fall Auction - OK
- 11/15/2021 - TNC Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Fall Bison Auction - OK
- 11/26/2021 - Minn. Bison Association's Bison Fundamentals Workshop - MN
- 11/27/2021 - Minn. Bison Association's Legends of the Fall Bison Auction - MN
- 12/4/2021 – Kansas Bison Association Sale - KS
- 12/4/2021 - Western Bison Association Wild West Buffalo Stampede Auction - UT
- 12/7/2021 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Auction - SD
- 1/1/2022 - Prairie Legends Bison Auction - Online
- 1/8/2022 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Bison Auction - SD
- 1/19/2022 – 1/22/2022 – National Bison Association Winter Conference - CO
- 1/22/2022 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - National Western Stock Show - CO
- 2/12/2022 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Sale - SD
- 2/19/2022 – Dakota Territory Buffalo Association Sale - SD
- 3/04/2022 - RMBA's Spring Conference - Location TBD
- 7/12/2022 - International Bison Conference - Saskatoon - SK

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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