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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 28, 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.

NBA Files Section 32 Request

The National Bison Association yesterday formally filed a request with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service to approve a \$17 million purchase of bison meat under the Section 32 commodity purchase program.

In a letter accompanying the request to USDA, NBA President Donnis Baggett and Executive Director Dave Carter wrote, "(T)he U.S. bison business faces a precarious economic outlook because of the combined impact of an unanticipated supply of harvest-ready animals, the disruption created by COVID-19, and an encroaching drought across the heart of the bison production territory. These factors threaten to undermine the economic stability of our business that has been built over the past two decades." Section 32, which was first authorized under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935, authorizes USDA to support prices of commodities in surplus by purchasing them in the marketplace, and also authorizes USDA to distribute commodities domestically. Funds used under section 32 are designed to support agricultural markets.

USDA only approves Section 32 requests upon determination that conditions warrant a purchase of products from the sector applying for the assistance. The NBA on Thursday submitted a comprehensive overview of the economic challenges facing the bison business, which can be accessed [here](#).

Direct Marketers' Roundtable Set for Monday and Tuesday - Register Now

If you are involved in direct marketing of bison meat and related products through farmers' markets, on-line stores, son-farm outlets, and other farmer-to-consumer channels, you'll want to pick up information offered during the two-day Bison Direct Marketers' Roundtable scheduled August 31 and September 1.

All participants must register in advance.

Ari Adams, CEO of Shiftcon Media, the largest annual gathering of eco-wellness social influencers in the U.S., will conduct a session on Monday, August 31 on how bison marketers can partner with bloggers and other social media outlets to promote the attributes of deliciously healthy bison. Participants in Shiftcon's annual gathering include many of the top bloggers and social media experts with the field of health and wellness.

Prior to Adams' presentation, Chris Wayne and Erik Hasset of GrowNYC Farmer Assistance will present tools that vendors can use at farmers' markets to increase customer traffic and sales.

Monday's session will run from 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. To register, click here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RMVfrp6RRXSHQZDgt9ju3Q

On Tuesday, September 1, Sean Lenihan of The Honest Bison, will cover steps and strategies to developing a successful on-line store. Lenihan has developed a successful on-line bison marketing company over the past eight years. Drawing upon his experience as a marketing director for some of America's largest companies, he has developed an on-line store that continues to grow each month.

Then, National Farmers Market Coalition Executive Director Ben Feldman will facilitate a discussion regarding priorities and needs of farm-direct marketers. The day will conclude with an open discussion regarding lessons learned under the past four years of the farmers' market promotional activities funded through USDA's Farmers' Market Promotion Program.

The Tuesday session will run from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. To register, click here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4hIZ4YC1QTeQX_O_CMi3zw

The Little Industry that could

(NBA Blog by Ken Klemm)

I think I can, I think I can. I think I can, I think I can. I know I can, I know I can! So goes the signature lines from the classic children's storybook, *The Little Engine That Could*.

We in the bison industry are a LOT like that Little Engine. We are ridiculously small compared to our ginormous peers. For instance, each business day in the U.S. about 125,000 cattle are processed under USDA inspection, whereas the bison industry processes only about 220 head per day. That's .00176% as much as the beef business! Our little industry, unlike the beef industry, has no mandatory check-off program that brings in tens of millions of dollars for marketing, yet has somehow managed to get our product into virtually every major grocery chain and thousands of small chains and independent stores in every State in the Union, including the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

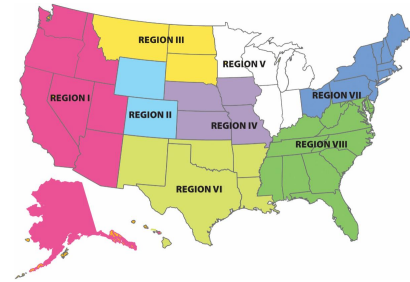
Yet, in the face of an economy-crushing pandemic that has decimated the restaurant industry, where the lions share of our high-end steak cuts were marketed, we have somehow managed to still process and market about the same number of animals on a monthly basis. Sure, prices are much lower than pre-pandemic, but we are making it happen. Somehow, this Little Engine just keeps chugging along and making progress, whereas other industries of much, much larger size have pulled off to the side-tracks and

are in need of major repairs.

Read more here. <https://bisoncentral.com/the-little-industry-that-could/>

Next Friday the Deadline for Board Nominations

Friday, September 4 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, and Corissa Busse of Rapid City, SD have been nominated as candidates for that position.
- 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. Carrie Starr of Thornville, OH has been nominated as a candidate for the position.

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

Correction - NBA Participates in Mexico Bison Restoration Webinar

Please note, this article in last week's Weekly Update contained some errors due to the webinar being in Spanish with portions translated to English resulting in some information being lost in translation.

Wildlife Conservation Society's, and NBA member, Laura Paulson organized the meeting in coordination with the National Bison Recovery Working Group for Mexico. Profauna, a Mexican conservation organization involved in bison restoration efforts in Mexico, is currently conducting a national census of bison with support from Wildlife Conservation Society. To date, Profauna has documented over 1,500 head. The survey is being conducted mainly by telephone due to COVID. The objectives of the national census are multiple and include utilizing the results to review the status of the Mexican Red List (Nom 059).

There is no intention to convince the Mexican government that bison are not endangered. It is possible that the survey will show higher numbers than what endangered species listing entails and thus their Red List (endangered) status may end up being modified as a result, which could ultimately have benefits for producers because it would ease some commercial regulations.

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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Business booming for Monticello bison farm

(From The Champaign/Urbana News Gazette)

MONTICELLO — It started out as a hobby when Terry Lieb bought a bison in 2000, a way to look out on the pasture on his farm and take a look back in time, when millions of bison roamed the American plains.

As the herd grew, it eventually became a business for Lieb Farms.

After Terry Lieb died in 2015, his sons took over both the business and the passion for conservation. Now, 45 to 55 bison graze their fields at a given time, and the Liebs try to keep the animals as close to their native state as possible.

“They’re natural as they were 200 years ago. We really don’t mess with them too much,” said Jake Lieb, who runs the farm with his brother, Josh. “And that’s kind of the creed of the bison producer. We don’t artificially inseminate. We don’t choose the winners and losers. The big bull does the breeding. It’s a natural process. We don’t pick the ones that are docile, that don’t have an attitude. We want to keep them as natural as possible.”

Meat in demand

While the Liebs don’t necessarily raise bison for the money, business has never been better.

Due to closures to meat packing plants, protein became more expensive and difficult to come by. Customers started flocking to Lieb Farms for their meat, which usually costs more than beef but was suddenly priced competitively.

“(The shortage) definitely got people looking elsewhere to source the meat and open their eyes up,” Jake Lieb said. “I’m sure people started googling on-farm meat sales and things like that and found our bison farm. We’ve been selling the hell out of it. I can’t keep it in the freezer.

Read [more](#).

Will Travel for Bison - Graduate student takes cross-country road trip for research

(From Texas A&M)

In the summer and winter of 2017, Jeff Martin, Ph.D. packed up his Subaru and hit the open road, traveling 19,000 miles from Texas to Saskatchewan, Canada to capture heat flux of bison using thermal imaging technology. Using images of hundreds of animals of multiple ages, Martin was able to record and track the growth of bison from 19 different herds over multiple growing seasons for his dissertation.

Martin recently graduated from the Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences program. He worked with Perry Barboza, Ph.D. as a [Boone and Crockett Fellow](#). Over the past four years of his doctoral program, Martin has researched drivers of body size change in bison, through funding from the [Boone and Crockett Club](#) endowment at Texas A&M and [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#).

Treading in familiar territory

Martin's interest in bison began long before he started his doctoral program. Growing up on a bison ranch, he learned a thing or two about the species that continues to pique his interest still today.

"I've become familiar with the animal over the last 21 years and I've worked with them all over the country—from Saskatchewan to Texas to Wisconsin, New Mexico and California," Martin said. "I've always had an interest in bison and how to manage them better, which is really what led me to where I am now."

An active member of the [National Bison Association](#), Martin said he spent his time at the national conference listening to the needs and problems being voiced by the bison producers, public land managers and NGOs around him.

These conversations provided him with lasting industry connections, like Donnis Baggett, past president of the Texas Bison Association and current president of the National Bison Association.

"It was exciting to see a brilliant young scientist so passionate about the study of bison," Baggett said.

Read [more](#).

USMEF Hosts Educational Webinars For U.S. Red Meat Exporters

(From U.S. Meat Export Federation)

The U.S. Meat Export Federation is conducting monthly, web-based educational seminars for staff of its member companies, providing instructions for properly documenting and executing shipments of U.S. pork, beef and lamb to international destinations. Travis Arp, USMEF senior director of export services, says while most of USMEF's daily contact with these companies is at the sales executive level, the webinars have attracted broader attendance from members who specialize in areas such as documentation and logistics.

"Our department works a lot with packers and traders and cold storage, specifically at the sales level, but we saw this as an opportunity to work with folks who might be involved in export documentation, logistics, and those aspects of the export business, and provide additional training for those employees on export regulations, customs clearance requirements, and all of the information that's necessary to successfully prepare an export shipment to anywhere around the world," Arp says.

The series began with an "Export 101" session, explaining the basics of preparing export shipments and highlighting common errors that can cause products to be delayed or rejected. This was followed by a session focusing specifically on China, which included a review of China's import requirements and the market access changes achieved through

the U.S.-China "phase one" economic and trade agreement.

USMEF Director of Export Services Cheyenne McEndaffer led the most recent webinar, which focused on exporting to Mexico. Speakers from USMEF and the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service identified several issues that can cause shipments to be detained at the border, including failure to comply with Mexico's complex labeling requirements.

Read [more](#).

Sheriff Investigating Report Of Loose Bison Being Shot

(From NTV.com)

The Phelps County Sheriff said his department is now investigating the possibility that someone has shot one of the bison that escaped from Valley View Feeders. Authorities said the animals are considered livestock and you could be charged with a felony if you decide to hunt them.

Pictures of a man holding a gun near a dead bison have been circulating around social media. One post said, "Well 1 out of 125 won't be roaming Phelps County Nebraska anymore." Another said, "Tatonka down 2020 central Nebraska open range no high fences here."

Sheriff Gene Samuelson said Valley View Feeders brought in a company who specializes in handling the animals on Thursday.

"It is important that citizens of Phelps and possible other counties let this company do what they were hired to do," said Samuelson in a statement. "They will not need any assistance, so please refrain from forming search parties and taking any action. I understand the farmer has concerns about crop damage but let's let insurance companies hash those issues or other means, not to grab firearms and take action."

[Around 120 bison have been roaming around Phelps County since Tuesday night.](#) Some have been hit by vehicles, according to the sheriff's office.

Read more [here](#).

Cherokee Nation Brings In Yellowstone Bison To Boost Herd Genetics

(From the Tulsa World)

Two young bison bulls from Yellowstone National Park joined the Cherokee Nation's herd in Delaware County this week.

They are expected to help bring the herd one step closer to supporting sustained production of bison steaks and burgers for Cherokee elders.

Awarded to the Cherokee operation through a partnership with the InterTribal Buffalo Council, headquartered in Rapid City, South Dakota, the bison are intended to boost genetic diversity and productivity of the herd, according to Cherokee Nation Deputy Chief Bryan Warner.

"It's something Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. and I talked about at the beginning of our term," he said. "There were some things we wanted to change, and part of that is getting more genetic diversity in the herd."

He emphasized that the 180 bison that roam 1,000 acres near Kenwood are healthy but that, not unlike other livestock operations, good bison genetics can build a more robust herd that grows faster.

"It's nothing that would look wrong to a layman," he said.

An example is that someone who knows about bison might look at a cow in the herd and think it looks like a 1½- or 2-year-old, but it's actually a 3-year-old.

"A lot of that has to do with genetics," he said.

Read more and watch video [here](#).

Bison themed gift shop opens in Shady Cove, and it sells bison meat

(From KOTI – NBC [OR])

SHADY COVE, Ore. — Fans of buffalo, or rather, bison burgers, will be happy to know a new store opened this weekend in Shady Cove.

The owner of the Bison Junction, Lori Moore, says the idea for the business came around 3 years ago.

Moore also owns Wild Oasis Bison Ranch in Eagle Point and says she wanted to sell bison meat closer to town.

"We decided to do a lease on anywhere and it ended up here, and it turned into a bison gift shop with meat for sale," said Moore.

If interested in checking out the shop, it's open 7 days a week.

You can also visit bisonjunction.com for more information.

Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team Deployed To Jefferson County To Support Laura Recovery

(From Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences)

Fifteen members of the Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team (VET) and six Texas A&M AgriLife agents will be serving residents affected by Hurricane Laura, which is projected to make landfall along the Texas coast.

Team members will leave Bryan-College Station on the morning of Thursday, Aug. 27 to Jefferson County, Texas, where they have been asked to provide veterinary medical support to animals injured during the storm.

The support request was made by Jefferson County and was approved by the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

Hurricanes are among the threats that the VET plans for frequently, and while each hurricane presents unique challenges, VET director Dr. Wesley Bissett said there are some commonalities to how animals react in these situations.

"The reality is that virtually all disasters impact animals," Bissett said. "Traumatic injuries and other medical issues resulting from flood waters or storm surges are what we expect to see most with hurricanes. There also are always issues associated with the stress of what the animals will go through.

"The State of Texas, under the guidance of the Texas Division of Emergency Management and Texas Animal Health Commission, has developed a robust emergency support system, as we all recognize that we must provide for the entire family, including pets, while also protecting the health and well-being of agricultural animals," he said.

Read [more](#).

Benefits of Low-Stress Livestock Handling - Experts say that stress can also have an impact on animals, such as livestock

(From KBTX.com)

BRYAN, Texas (KBTX) - Any doctor will tell you that reducing the amount of stress is your life is beneficial to your health, and it's really not any different for animals that you're responsible for taking care of, and that includes livestock. Ron Gill is a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension professor and livestock specialist.

"Stress is a huge drain on energy. And so if they're stressed they start creating hormone shifts. Cortisol levels go up. All that requires energy to manage that fear factor and adrenaline release and those kinds of things. So energy is pulled away from other systems."

Gill says that the immune system in particular is a big user of energy.

"So if we stress cattle and the immune system is probably the biggest drain on energy reserves. So if we do anything from a stress standpoint and handling being part of that, we can weaken their immune system because they don't have enough energy to draw. We see the same thing if we start increasing cortisol levels in the blood stream we can actually decrease the reproductive performance of cattle in an artificial insemination program."

Gill adds that meat quality can also be affected.

Read [more](#).

Missouri Small Business and Family-Owned Farm Grant Program

Missouri's [Small Business and Family-Owned Farm Grant Program](#), funded by the CARES Act, provides grants to small businesses and family-owned farms for reimbursement of costs of business interruption caused by required closures and other expenses incurred in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency. A total of \$7.5 million is available for family-owned farms and family farm corporations.

The individual grant amounts are initially limited to \$50,000, but the Department of Economic Development reserves the right to grant over \$50,000 to a recipient if additional funds remain on October 15, 2020.

Generally, eligible costs will be those that are significantly different from planned operational costs and directly related to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Applications are due by August 31, 2020.

Read [more](#).

Missouri Meat and Poultry Processing Grant Program

The [Missouri Meat and Poultry Processing Grant Program](#) was created to support Missouri meat and poultry processing facilities to address supply chain disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. CARES Act funding of \$20 million is available in a three-tiered system intended to incentivize facilities to increase livestock or poultry slaughter and processing, and to become an inspected or exempted facility in the near term.

Generally, projects should aim to improve food supply resilience through increasing livestock or poultry slaughter, expanding meat or poultry processing capacity, or promoting worker safety as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Federally inspected, state inspected, and custom exempt slaughter and processing facilities that employ fewer than 200 employees are eligible to apply. Maximum grants range from \$20,000 for custom operations to \$100,000 for federally inspected operations.

Applications are due by August 31, 2020.

Read [more](#).



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Save the Date!

- 08/31 - 09/01/2020 - NBA Direct Marketing Webinar Series - ZOOM.US
- 09/12/2020 - South Dakota Ranch Tours - Vivian, Wood & Mission, SD
- 10/17/2020 - Texas Bison Association Fall Meeting/Ranch Tour - Bryan, TX
- 11/07/2020 - 55th Annual Custer State Park Fall Classic Bison Auction - Custer, SD
- 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. Meeting/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.

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