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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 December 24, 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.

Happy Holidays from the NBA

As we prepare for the clock to turn to the new year ahead, the officers, board and staff of the National Bison Association want to extend the warmest wishes to all members for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope this update arrives as you are settling in to enjoy time with family and friends.



As a note, the NBA offices will be closed next week so that the staff can enjoy some time with our families before we plunge into the final weeks of preparation for our 2022 winter conference. We'll be checking our messages next week, but please understand if we don't respond directly until January 3rd.

Support the NBA with a Year End Gift to the Growth Fund

Your donation will go to supporting the educational programs, virtual content, marketing and outreach at the NBA.

DONATE TODAY

Because of the amazing support of our members, we are able to take big, bold steps for the priorities we need to tackle now — like drought relief for ranchers and access to research on animal health concerns effecting our industry.

Every dollar that has been raised will go towards protecting and strengthening our community so that we can celebrate the heritage of American bison and to create a sustainable future for our industry.

Please consider donating today!



Thank You 2022 NBA Winter Conference Sponsors!



Register Now for Winter Conference

The National Bison Association's 27th annual winter conference is rapidly approaching, with an agenda filled with educational presentations, informative speakers, and valuable networking opportunities.

With the theme, "Foraging Ahead," the 2022 conference is intended to provide attendees with information and resources to help navigate through the challenging conditions now impacting bison producers across the country.

Please register quickly and securely [here](#), or call the office at (303)292-2833 to register by phone. Please note, you can register guests at the member rate and conference meals are included with your conference registration. See below for some of the key highlights of our 2022 conference.

Questions? Please send to jim@bisoncentral.com and we hope to see you next month in Denver!

Wednesday - January 19th:

4:00 pm - Foundation Welcome Reception and Whiskey Tasting

Thursday - January 20th

8:00 am - NBA Bison Mentor's Session

8:30 am - How to Engage with Science - Dr. Rachel Short - Texas A&M University

9:30 am - Bison Public Relations 101 - Matt Skoglund - North Bridger Bison

11:00 am – Indigenous Cooking Demo with Tocabe Restaurant

Noon - Lunch sponsored by North American Bison, LLC

1:30 pm - Introducing the Turner Institute of Ecoagriculture - Carter Kruse - TEI

2:00 pm - A Strategy for Managing Mycoplasma in the Feed Yard - Tyrell Anderson - TEI

3:15 pm - Bison Marketer's Panel - TBD

4:45 pm - Wildlife Conservation Society Update - Cristina Mormorunni - WCS

5:30 pm - American Bison Society Reception

6:00 pm - Benefit Auction Dinner (Don't forget your Benefit Auction items!)

Friday - January 21st

9:00 am - NBA/RMBA Junior Judging Competition at the NWSS Yards

9:00 am - NBA Officer Elections

10:00 am - NBA General Membership Meeting

Noon - Bison Burger Lunch at the NWSS Yards

1:00 pm - Del Hensel Bison Handling Facility Ribbon Cutting at the NWSS Yards

1:15 pm - GTSS Buffalero Q&A and Buyer's Reception at the NWSS Yards

2:30 pm - GTSS Awards Ceremony at the NWSS Sale Barn

6:00 pm - Friday Banquet Dinner

Saturday, January 22nd

8:30 am - GTSS Judges Comments at the NWSS Sale Barn

10:00 am - Gold Trophy Sale at the NWSS Sale Barn

NBA Monitoring COVID Developments, Will Keep Members Informed of Any Denver Restrictions

With the emergence of the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus, the NBA is closely monitoring developments regarding public safety, as well as potential mandates that may be in place in Denver during the NBA Winter Conference in January.

With that in mind, NBA President Donnis Baggett and Executive Director Dave Carter sent the following e-message to all NBA membership this week:

Dear NBA Member,

We're looking forward to gathering again in Denver for the 27th annual [National Bison Association Winter Conference](#) Jan. 19-22. Because of the current COVID situation, some members are asking, "What will be the requirements and restrictions regarding mask wearing and social distancing?" Our honest answer is that we can't yet say. But at this juncture, here's some context:

Colorado's governor has been resistant to statewide mask mandates since the onset of COVID and has stated his preference for each county or municipality to make these decisions locally. At the request of Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, the City and County of Denver (they operate as a single entity) instituted a mask mandate that's scheduled to expire on January 3, three weeks prior to our winter conference.

Other than the mask requirement, there are no current social distancing mandates for convention events. COVID cases and deaths in Colorado have trended slightly lower in recent weeks, and so far, there has been no indication that the mask mandate will be extended. In addition, the mayor wants to avoid mandates during the National Western Stock Show, which is vitally important to the local economy. All that said, the spread of the omicron variant of COVID has folks wondering what might lie ahead.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and will keep the NBA family informed of any developments that might impact our winter conference. In the meantime, we wish you a happy holiday season, and hope that you have an opportunity to enjoy this special time with friends and family.

We deeply appreciate all you do for our association. We look forward to seeing you in Denver!

Warmest regards,
Donnis Baggett, President
Dave Carter, Executive Director

92 Quality Animals consigned for 2022 Gold Trophy Show

Nearly 100 head of North America's top bison have been consigned for the annual Gold Trophy Show and Sale, slated to be held in the newly renovated facilities at the National Western Stock Show in Denver this January 19-22, 2022.

Consignments entered as of the deadline this week are:

Females:

- 2-Year-Old Bred – 9 head
- Pen of 2 – 2-Year-Old Bred Heifers – 2 pens
- Yearling Heifers – 9 head
- Ranch Ready Pen of 5 Yearling Heifers – 1 pen
- Pen of 5 Heifer Calves – 5 pens
- Heifer Calves – 11 head

Males:

- Two-Year-Old Bull (Capped at 14 head) – 8 head
- Yearling Bull (Capped at 20 head) – 8 head
- Bull Calf – 14 head

Bison brought to Denver this year will be housed in the all-new dedicated bison pens at the National Western Stock Show, and the sale on January 22 will take place in the new Sale arena. In a change from tradition, the GTSS awards ceremony will be conducted Friday afternoon, January 21st, in the new arena.

The awards ceremony will follow the formal dedication of the new bison handling facilities, named in honor of bison association pioneer and National Buffalo Hall of Fame inductee Del Hensel.

The annual GTSS auction will take place on Saturday, January 22nd. Bid live in person or online at <https://www.cci.live/> at 10 am MT on Saturday, January 22nd.

Once again, Buffaloheard Productions will be producing a full color catalog for the event with advertising space available for anyone interested. Advertising does not necessarily have to be associated with the GTSS and presents a great opportunity to reach an engaged audience! Advertisements can be full color or black/white and pricing and availability are shown [here](#).

The catalog will be available to attendees at the NBA Winter Conference as well as the live Gold Trophy Show and Sale. Additionally, it will be posted online on the NBA website for viewing and downloading in advance of the conference and auction. Advertisements are sold on a first come, first serve basis. Please contact Karen at (605) 381-3738 or

buffheard@gmail.com to discuss your options.

Per the [GTSS Rules and Regulations](#), “The NBA acts only as an agent and assumes no responsibility in the event of injury or death to any animal or for any discrepancy between the buyer and the consignor.”

Get all the details at <https://bisoncentral.com/gold-trophy-show-and-sale/>.

Producers Urged to File *Mycoplasma* Claims with FSA

Officials from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) this week repeated their request for bison ranchers to submit their losses from *Mycoplasma bovis* to the agency’s local offices in order to document the extent of the impact throughout the bison business.

“We ask that, as you continue to hear from producers, please encourage them to notify their local FSA offices (either by email or by phone, followed up with an email) of any and all losses as soon as possible,” FSA policy advisor Riya Mehta wrote the NBA on Thursday.

In November, leadership at USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) responded to a request from National Bison Association to find a new path for relief for bison producers affected by *Mycoplasma* infection and mortality. In previous years, the FSA considered *Mycoplasma* to be a secondary infection in bison, which prevented producers from qualifying for reimbursement for death losses under the agency’s Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). FSA is working now to reconsider that decision. At the FSA’s request, the Center of Excellence for Bison Studies (Bison COE) at SDSU is providing aggregated data to inform that decision.

FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux told NBA Executive Director Dave Carter this week that the agency is looking at the program requirements for LIP, and for the Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP), in hopes that coverage can be provided for impacted producers. Ducheneaux urged impacted livestock producers to immediately notify their local FSA office (either by email, or by phone followed up with an email) of death losses incurred because of *Mycoplasma*. That will provide the agency with important evidence documenting the extent of the losses within the bison industry.

“For now, please encourage any of your producers to notify their local FSA office of any and all losses as soon as possible and keep them updated as to further losses they may sustain and ask for an ELAP application,” he said. Also, if there is overlap of *Mycoplasma* losses with drought, the USDA requests that that be documented as well to assist with ELAP. Drought conditions for your area over the past year can be determined using the comparison Drought Monitor online tool:

<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Maps/ComparisonSlider.aspx>.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, said, “Documenting the extent of *Mycoplasma* losses is an important step in demonstrating the severity of this disease in bison herds. That’s why it is important for producers to file their losses with their local FSA office.”

NBA Photo Contest Seeking Bison Shutterbugs

The National Bison Association’s annual photo contest is back, thanks to a sponsorship from the Texas Bison Association.

The 2022 contest will feature adult and youth categories.

The adult contest is open to all members 18 years of age or older. This year’s contest will feature cash awards for the top three spots – 1st place – \$200, 2nd place – \$100, 3rd place – \$75 and will be featured in Bison World Magazine. See rules and entry form at bisoncentral.com/winter-conference/. Please submit entry (one photo per entry) by the January 8th deadline.

There will also be a Youth photo contest available in three classes: Grades 5-6, 7-9, and 10-12. This year's contest will feature cash awards for the top three spots – 1st place – \$100, 2nd place – \$75, 3rd place – \$50 and will be featured in Bison World Magazine. See rules and entry form at bisoncentral.com/winter-conference/. Please submit entry (one photo per entry) by the January 8th deadline.

NBA Junior Judging Event Announced – Honors Larry Higgins

The National Bison Association Junior Judging Program, now renamed as the Larry Higgins Bison Junior Judging Contest, is set for Friday, January 21st, at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

This free, annual event is open to individuals between 8 - 21 years of age, who are academically eligible (i.e. passing all classes). Participants judge four classes of bison and provide oral reasons on one class, as selected by the judges. Everyone participates individually and is eligible to earn a scholarship. Additional recognition is provided for the top three registered teams and the top three junior participants (12 years of age or younger).

The annual event returns with a total of \$3,200 in scholarship money for the top three contestants. Register ahead of time here: [The Larry Higgins Bison Junior Judging Contest - Rocky Mountain Bison Association \(bisonranchers.com\)](http://TheLarryHigginsBisonJuniorJudgingContest-RockyMountainBisonAssociation(bisonranchers.com))

The annual Junior Judging contest was renamed this year for Larry Higgins, longtime champion and promoter of bison who died of cancer in early 2021. Larry shared his knowledge and passion for bison with everyone, including children. In 2008, his son Josiah was the first person to join the NBA as a junior member. Larry saw the value of getting kids, including his own, involved in the industry at a young age. The National Bison Association launched the Junior Judging Contest in 2008 and it wasn't long before Larry volunteered to help. RMBA now partners with the NBA to run the competition. Unfortunately, Larry passed away in 2021. That same year, the event's name was officially changed to The Larry Higgins Bison Junior Judging Contest to memorialize Larry's impact on the bison community.

Special thanks to scholarship sponsors, the National Buffalo Foundation, the Rocky Mountain Bison Association, and Rocky Mountain Natural Meats.

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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56 Park Bison Transferred to Tribal Lands

(From the Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Fifty-six Yellowstone bison have been sent to the Yakama Nation's lands in Washington and the Modoc Nation's lands in Oklahoma.

It's the first time that two large, intact families of bison have been transported to tribal lands through the Bison Conservation Transfer Program — a concerted effort by tribal, state, federal and nonprofit partners to divert more disease-free Yellowstone bison away from slaughter.

"Bison are incredibly social animals, so one of the key goals of this program is to maintain these social structures once they arrive at their new home," said Chamois Andersen, senior Rockies and Plains representative for Defenders of Wildlife, in a news release. "We are honored to partner with the Fort Peck Tribes and ITBC in this important work to bring bison back to the tribes."

Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service did a final round of brucellosis testing on the 56 bison at the Fort Peck Tribes' quarantine facility. The results all came up negative, and the animals were cleared to be shipped to tribal lands.

Troy Heinert, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota and the executive director of the InterTribal Buffalo Council, was at last week's transfer. He helped to sort the animals by age and demographic, then load them onto trucks.

Read more [here](#).

Fencing Program Helps Build Tolerance for Roaming Bison

(From the Billings Gazette)

Keeping bison separated from homeowners can help increase tolerance for the big, shaggy mammals.

To that end, four conservation groups have worked together for 10 years to help offset the cost of bison-proof fencing in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. So far, the groups have facilitated the construction of fences on 55 properties, an investment of more than \$50,000 in coexistence.

"As bison return to portions of their historic range, simple solutions like putting up a fence can help avoid unnecessary conflicts and go a long way in helping communities accept these animals' presence on the landscape," said Shana Drimal, wildlife program associate for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. "A small investment up front can ensure successful coexistence with bison and peace of mind for landowners for years to come."

The Yellowstone Bison Coexistence Program began in 2011 as a way to increase tolerance for wild bison so they may one day be managed like other wildlife in Montana when roaming outside of Yellowstone National Park.

Through this program, participating landowners have received technical assistance and a 50% reimbursement — up to \$1,000 — to construct fencing to keep bison out of gardens, landscaping, yards, playgrounds, or livestock pastures where they can potentially cause damage or come into conflict with people, pets or livestock.

Read more [here](#).

Will Billy the Bison Make It Home for The Holidays?

(From Patch.com)

WAUCONDA, IL — The elusive bison that has been spotted in suburbs throughout Lake

and McHenry counties may be headed home for the holidays.

The 800-pound bison, which has been referred to as Billy and Tyson by her fans on social media, was recently spotted about an eighth of a mile from the Milk & Honey Farmstead in Wauconda, co-owner Scott Comstock of Milk & Honey Farmstead told the Chicago Tribune. Comstock believes the bison is being drawn back to the farm because she misses his sister.

The bison has been wandering the area since she escaped in September.

"It happened when we were unloading the bison at the farm and she got away," Comstock told Patch earlier this month. "She went through a big swamp area, and I met up with her on the other side. And then she looked at me and started walking toward [Route] 176. I followed her and she just looked at me and said, 'See ya.'"

Read more [here](#).

USDA Distributes \$1.5 Billion to Strengthen School Meal Program

(From USDA)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is announced this week that the Biden-Harris Administration is providing up to \$1.5 billion to states and school districts to help school meal program operators deal with the challenges of supply chain disruptions brought on by the pandemic. As the administration continues to work towards Building a Better America by investing in our communities, the funding announced today will help to provide our nation's children with the nutritious foods they need to thrive.

With funding made available through USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA will provide \$1 billion for schools to purchase food for their meal programs and another \$300 million for states to purchase foods to be distributed to schools. An additional \$200 million will be used for cooperative agreements to purchase local foods for schools with a focus on buying from historically underserved producers. A state-by-state breakdown of funds can be found in [this table](#).

"USDA's school meal programs have a wide-reaching impact on the health and well-being of our nation's children," said Vilsack. "Now, more than ever, America's children need access to healthy and nutritious foods and our school nutrition professionals play a huge role in making that happen. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts have met extraordinary challenges to ensure that every child has the food needed to learn, grow and thrive. The food and funds USDA is distributing will help ensure schools have the resources they need to continue to serve our nation's schoolchildren quality food they can depend on, all while building a stronger, fairer, and more competitive food system."



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Save the Date!

- 1/1/2022 - Prairie Legends Bison Webcast Auction - Online
- 1/3/2022 - Diamond 4D Ranch Webcast Auction - MT
- 1/4/2022- Crowley Ranch Dispersal Webcast Auction - SD
- 1/6/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 1/7/2022 - Montana Bison Association Winter Conference - MT
- 1/8/2022 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Simulcast Auction - SD
- 1/19/2022 – 1/22/2022 – National Bison Association Winter Conference - CO
- 1/21/2022 - NBA/RMBA Junior Judging Event - National Western Stock Show - CO
- 1/22/2022 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - National Western Stock Show - CO
- 2/3/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 2/12/2022 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Simulcast Sale - SD
- 2/19/2022 - Dakota Territory Buffalo Association Simulcast Auction - SD
- 2/26/2022 - Beltway Bison Consignment Live Bison Auction - PA
- 2/26/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 3/05/2022 - Rocky Mountain Bison Association's Spring Conference - CO
- 3/10/2022 - Eastern Bison Association Annual Conference - PA
- 3/12/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 3/18/2022 - Minnesota Bison Association Spring Meeting - MN
- 4/21/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 5/26/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 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](https://bisoncentral.com/calendar/)

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