

Webcast Bison Auction!

NORTH DAKOTA BUFFALO ASSOCIATION

Saturday, December 19, 2020

6:00 pm CT

Live internet bidding only



Jud Seaman - Auctioneer
(605) 390-1419



Expecting 300+ Head in All Classes

Photos, videos and information will be updated soon.

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The National Bison Association (NBA) Weekly Update is an exclusive service for NBA members.

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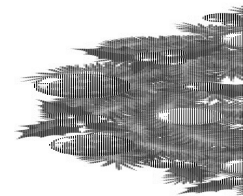
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NBA Weekly Update for December 18, 2020

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.

Note from the NBA

All of us at the NBA hope that everyone is taking an opportunity to enjoy this Holiday season as we close out 2020 and prepare for a Happy New Year.



Look for final issued of Weekly Update for 2020 on Christmas Eve next week. The NBA staff will be working reduced hours during the week between Christmas and New Years so that we can enjoy time with our families. We'll be back to our normal publication schedule on Friday, January 8th.

NBA Board Sets 2021 Road Map in Planning Session

Bleary-eyed and exhausted after an eight-hour, in-depth virtual meeting yesterday, the National Bison Association Board of Directors and staff forged the framework for a strategic plan to build profitable markets, continue public policy leadership, and to expand the association's resource base through the continuing headwinds anticipated in 2021.

Following an extensive discussion of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the bison business and the National Bison Association, the board identified three overall goals for 2021:

1. Develop a Resilient business model that expands the stability, strength, and profitability of the Association and the North American bison industry.
2. Continue to build the ability of the National Bison Association to direct public policy to benefit bison producers in all aspects of the business.
3. Capitalize upon the opportunities to continue to introduce bison meat and related products to the public in the United States and around the world.

During next few weeks, the NBA staff will develop a work plan to achieve those goals over the next 12 months.

Donnis Baggett, president of the NBA, said afterward, "The Year 2020 threw us more than a curve-ball; it threw an ax at the head of our business. We pivoted quickly to get through the past year, and to provide leadership to help our members get through this challenge. Our Thursday meeting provided us a chance to step back and regain the offensive position to help bison producers regain solid footing to step forward and continue to build our business."

Light Up Giving Tree with Support for NBA

Dear NBA Members,

Looking for a great cause for a year-end contribution? Look no further! Like many worthy organizations, the National Bison Association is scrambling to deal with the economic fallout of the coronavirus crisis. A bison-friendly elf suggested a "giving tree" might be appropriate, so here's our pitch:

You know all the good things the NBA does on a modest budget — lobbying successfully for bison producers to be included in coronavirus aid programs, for example. Developing top-notch training programs for producers on everything from herd health management to gate-to-plate marketing. Paving the way for bison meat exports. Helping processors deal with the complexities of government regulations. And ALWAYS promoting healthful, delicious bison meat and the environmentally regenerative qualities of our national mammal.

The list goes on: Staging informative and enjoyable winter and summer conferences. Helping found the Bison Center for Excellence to facilitate bison research. Operating the North American Bison Registry. And so much more.

It all costs money, and operating funds are tight with 2021 on the doorstep. If you or your company is in a position to help, we hope you'll do so.

It's simple to contribute, just send an email with your pledged amount to our bookkeeper, Barb Dowdy, at barb@bisoncentral.com. Or, you can call the office at 303 292-2833 x103 and Barb will record your contribution.

Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,
Donnis Baggett
NBA President



USDA's Livestock and Grain Reporting Service today issued its inaugural annual bison weaned calving report as a part of a complete update to the format of the agency's monthly bison reports.

The calving report was developed at the request of the National Bison Association as a tool that will provide marketers with a tool to gauge the forthcoming supply of finished bison, and to adjust the processing and sales plans accordingly. In the calving report, ranchers provide information on the number of light and heavy bull and heifer calves weaned each fall, compared to previous years. The initial report lists data for 2019 and 2018.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, noted, "This report won't provide an absolute number on the calves weaned each year, but will provide important trend lines that can help everyone in our business make forward-looking plans."

The report, below, can be accessed here.

https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/AMS_2827.pdf.

USDA National Monthly Bison Report
Agricultural Marketing Service
Livestock, Poultry, and Grain Market News
December 18, 2020
For the Month of: **Nov**

Email us with accessibility issues with this report.

For the Month of November, prices of bison cuts trended steady to slightly higher compared to October. Pounds of bison were steady to slightly lower. Canadian bison imports were 8 percent lower and Actual Slaughter numbers were 1 percent lower over October totals.

Livestock Slaughter		Canadian Live Imports						Livestock Weaned Calves *			
Actual Slaughter Numbers in Federally Inspected Plants *		Canadian Live Imports to U.S.									
Weekending	Head Count	Feeder		Slaughter		Breeding/Genetic		Bulls		Heifers	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	under 400 lbs	over 400 lbs	under 400 lbs	over 400 lbs
W/E 11/07/20	1279			299	167			2020			
W/E 11/14/20	1224			380	128			2019	2835	3601	
W/E 11/21/20	1452			209	98			2018	3469	5023	
W/E 11/28/20	928			222	147						
Monthly Total	4879							2020			
YTD	67481	2882	2281	10871	6789	88	841	2019	4018	4284	

* Not necessarily inspected
Source: USDA, APHIS

Bison Carcasses						
Grain Fed						
FOB Plant - (\$/CWT)	Head	Carc. Wt.	Price Range	Weighted Avg	Previous Month	Previous Year
Young Bulls*	2386	600	300.00 - 444.00	293.03	294.58	430.59
Young Heifers*	881	585	348.00 - 457.00	396.84	376.67	396.18
Aged Bulls*	21	1100	320.00 - 340.00	336.19	334.74	336.81
Aged Cows*	565	520	280.00 - 354.00	325.24	311.64	339.92
Total	3853					

* Animals under the age of 18 months are classified as young, while animals older than 18 months are considered part of the aged classification.

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2021 Winter Conference Registration Open!

[Registration is now open](#) for the 2021 Winter Conference, February 19 – 20, in Rapid City, South Dakota, in conjunction with the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association. Please mark your calendars for this information packed two-day event, which will conclude with the first ever, simulcast video-Gold Trophy Show and Sale! Attend in person, or take advantage of our virtual option.

The abbreviated conference will include a virtual streaming for members who want to participate, but who do not want to attend in person. For those attending in person, proper safety measures will be in place including recommended guidelines from the CDC and the South Dakota Department of Health. If forced the cancel, registration would be fully refundable.

The [Ramkota Hotel of Rapid City](#) will be hosting the conference and have rooms available to attendees at the very reasonable rate of \$75/night – double occupancy. The booking web link below is good for the dates blocked only. If you want to arrive early or stay longer, you will need to call the hotel directly to book at 605-343-8550, and ask for the Nation Bison Association block – https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.42048.html?groupId=5U2NC6B6

Please register [here](#) no later than January 20, 2021.



**2021 WINTER
CONFERENCE
FEB. 19 - 20, 2021
RAMKOTA HOTEL
RAPID CITY, SD**

**YOUR CHOICE:
IN-PERSON OR
VIRTUAL**

We give you the option to attend the conference in-person, or remotely via our livestreamed conference, via the Zoom platform.

HOTEL INFO

Please reserve your lodging by contacting the Ramkota Inn in Rapid City, SD directly at 605-343-8550, and request the NBA room block; \$75/night

QUESTIONS?

Please visit bisoncentral.com/winter-conference/, email jim@bisoncentral.com, or call (303) 292-2833.

FINAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH

- 8 am - Registration Open
- 9:30 - Conference Welcome & Legislative Update
- 10:00 - Bison Marketing Success in 2020 - Panel
- 11:15 - Drs. Kristi Cammack and Jeff Martin - The Center of Excellence for Bison Studies at SDSU
- Noon - Lunch
- 1 pm - Dr. Brad Johnson, Ruminant Nutritionist - Basics of diet formulation in bison production
- 3:00 - Bison Mentor Session - Panel
- 5:30 - Social, Dinner and Benefit Auction

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH

- 8 am - Registration Open
- 8:00 - GTSS Consignors Meeting
- 9:00 - Kevin Leier, Heartland Bison Ranch - Managing the "Young Guns" through M. Bovis
- 10:30 - Processing Challenges and Solutions: Elizabeth Thistlethwaite, Chris Roper and Kristopher Kelley
- 11:30 - Lunch
- 12:30 - Visit the bison - Central States Fairgrounds
- 2:00 - Dusty Oedekoven, DVM - SD State Vet.
- 3:00 - DTBA General Membership Meeting
- 4:00 - NBA General Membership Meeting
- 5:00 - DTBA/NBA Awards Dinner
- 6:00 - NBA Gold Trophy and DTBA Girlz Going Wild Simulcast Bison Auction at the Ramkota Hotel

REGISTRATION:

- In-person - \$150 (includes meals)
- Virtual - \$50
- Extra Dinner Tickets - \$60
- Kids' Meal Pass - \$60
- Exhibitor Booth - \$150

Please register online at bisoncentral.com/winter-conference/, or by calling (303) 292-2833 by January 20, 2021

Gold Trophy Show and Sale Still Taking Consignments

Take a look at the latest [sale results](#), and consider [consigning](#) your superior breeding stock to the Gold Trophy Show and Sale! Classes are starting to fill, so please consign soon, particularly in the yearling bull and two year-old bull classes, which are capped - see below for details.

The 2021 annual GTSS will be held at the Central States Fairgrounds in Rapid City, SD, in conjunction with Dakota Territory Buffalo Association's (DTBA) performance-tested Girlz Going Wild yearling heifer auction. Consigned animals would be transported to the fairgrounds on February 18, judged on February 19, and sold on February 20th via simulcast auction at the Ramkota Inn, Rapid City. Get all the details and consign online here.

ENTRY DEADLINE: January 20, 2021. Entries for Live Animal must be paid online – www.bisoncentral.com/gold-trophy-show-and-sale postmarked, emailed to jim@bisoncentral.com, or faxed to the NBA office at (303) 845-9081 by this date.

CLASSES/ENTRIES AS OF 12.18.20:

Two Year Old Bulls - 7

Yearling Bulls - 12

Bull Calves - 4

Two Year Old Bred Heifers - 2

Pen of 2 – Two Year Old Bred Heifers - 1 pen

Heifer Calves -

Pen of 5 Heifer Calves - 1 pen

ENTRY FEES: All fees, in US funds, must be paid with the entry. Fees are not refundable, unless the animal is not allowed in the show due to space limitations or class cancellations. Consign online [here](#).

Single Calf Entries, per head – \$75

Individual yearlings and 2 year olds – \$100

Pen of 2 Two-Year Old Bred Heifers – \$175

Pen of Five Heifer Calves – \$300

Space is limited so please consign early, or by January 20, 2021 the latest.

ELIGIBILITY: Consignors must be a current Life, Active, or Junior member of the National Bison to enter animals in the Gold Trophy Show and Sale (GTSS). Buyers need not be members of either associations.

ENTRY LIMITS: Consignors are limited to two entries per class in both live and market classes, with the exception of the live, single calf classes, where each consignor may have up to three entries per class. The pen of 5 heifer calves class is limited to one entry per consignor. There is a class limit of 20 yearling bulls and 14 two-year old bulls in which one can consign two animals per class, but the 2nd animal will be on a waiting list until the consignment deadline, and then added until the class is full, and will be added on a first come first serve basis. Entries may be reduced at the discretion of the GTSS Committee Chairperson(s) if class sizes become an issue due to pen space. The NBA reserves the right to cancel any class with less than three entries after the entry deadline. If a class is cancelled or entry numbers are reduced, affected consignors will have entry fees refunded.

COMMISSION: A 10% commission is taken off of the live animal sale price, with 9% going to the NBA's general account and 1% contributed to the NBA's Growth Fund program to support promotional efforts in the bison industry.

EAR TAGS: GTSS ear tags will be mailed as soon as possible after consignments are received. They are to be placed in the animal's left ear. All other ear tags must be removed, except permanent metal ID tags, EID or RFID tags, NABR (North American Bison Registry) tags, Source Verification (SVP) tags and trichomoniasis tags. One show tag plus any government issued tags.

LOAD IN/OUT: The loading facilities are located at 800 San Francisco St, Rapid City, SD 57701. Visit <https://www.centralstatesfair.com/p/fair-facts/event-map> for directions and other details. Unloading times are Thursday, February 18 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please be in line by 4:00 p.m. Load out times are Sunday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 PM.

QUESTIONS?: Please send along any questions to jim@bisoncentral.com, or call 303-292-2833

Bulls Lower, Heifers Higher in November Wholesale Bison Report

Dress young bull carcasses were slightly lower in November but dressed heifer carcasses

higher in the latest wholesale monthly bison price report released by USDA's Livestock and Grain Market News Service.

Dress bull carcasses averaged \$393.03/cwt., which was \$1.55/cwt. lower than in October and \$37.56/cwt. Lower than the previous November. Heifer carcasses averaged \$386.84/cwt. Which was \$10.17 higher than in November but still \$8.34/cwt. Lower than the previous November. Older bulls and cows were higher than the previous month.

Year-to-date processing of 58,562 head under federal inspection was 15 percent higher than the previous period in 2019, and the highest level on record.

The newly designed price report can be accessed here.

https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/AMS_2827.pdf

The NBA's five-year price tracking can be found in the members section of www.bisoncentral.com or by clicking [here](#).

USDA Meets with Marketers to Discuss Section 32 Rollout

Officials from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service held a conference call with U.S. commercial bison marketers earlier this week to begin developing the logistical framework for the Section 32 Purchase program of \$17 million in bison meat that was formally approved two weeks ago.

Discussion during the call covered a variety of topics, regarding the specifications, audit requirements, packaging, and the process that will be utilized to solicit bids from processors. The AMS officials stress that they want to work with the processors to make the program as workable as possible within USDA's regulatory requirements.

Details of the program will be announced in the coming weeks.

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.



Matriarch Madness
Over 250 Head of Bred Females in 3 Auctions!
January 2 - Prairie Legends Bison Webcast - 3 pm MST
January 4 - Wolf Springs Ranch & Guests Simulcast - 10 am MST
January 9 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Bison Simulcast - 6 pm MST

Jud Seaman - Auctioneer
(605) 390-1419

Quality
AUCTION SERVICES, INC.

Photos, videos and information will be updated soon.
Register to bid now at www.qas.hibid.com

Wild Bison Return to Colorado's Great Plains

(From CPR.org)

Ten bison now roam in their new home on the range in southeastern Colorado.

Seven adult females, two adult males and a male calf were part of [Colorado State](#)

[University's research herd](#) bred to conserve the genetics of North America's original bison. These animals are genetically pure descendants of the 30 million north American bison that were nearly hunted to extinction more than a century ago.

The ten transferred bison are now on the 25,000 acre [Heartland Ranch Nature Preserve](#) in Bent County. It's part of the [Southern Plains Land Trust's](#) six prairie wildlife refuges.

The trust's executive director, Nicole Rosmarino, said bison are a keystone species that help shape and restore the shortgrass prairie ecosystem.

"They're very mobile, so they create a mosaic of less grazed areas and more grazed areas," she said. "They also maintain grasslands by knocking out trees and shrubs. They take dust baths, which, because they're massive beasts, create depressions in the earth, which can give rise to seasonal ponds. When the rains come, [that] benefits wildflowers, butterflies and spadefoot toads."

Rosmarino said the refuge is one of the best remaining intact shortgrass prairie habitats in the southern plains.

"It's not flat. These are rolling grasslands, with a lot of topography, and therefore a lot of different microhabitats," she said.

Read [more](#).

Hope and Peace: Bison Return to The Rosebud Reservation

(From Monangabay.com)

The bison circled four times around the holding pen, before the lead animals took them into the 3,400-hectare (8,500-acre) pasture, their new home on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in the U.S. state of South Dakota. The thunder of 400 hooves as they crossed through the gate gave way to the whirl of cameras and ululations from the crowd, perhaps 20 people gathered to see the return of the bison.

Out in their new pasture, the animals loped, moving in unison as if one organism. Then, they slowed and wheeled to the left against a backdrop of a few lonely trees on a blanket of tan grass stretching to distant hills. They seem to fit into the landscape, as if they'd always been there and always would be.

It was land where their ancestors had run for thousands of years, where they had been central to the success of the Great Plains' nations, anchoring their cultures, prescribing their movements, and filling their bellies.

"Bringing them home. That's what it meant," said Monica Terkildsen, a member of the Oglala Lakota and WWF's tribal liaison on the neighboring Pine Ridge Reservation, who was at the Oct. 30 release.

"You just have a peaceful feeling," Terkildsen said. "That means that you don't have to worry about hunger, you don't have to worry about inadequate housing ... all these worries that come with oppression and poverty."

Read more [here](#)

Thune, Merkley, Collins, and King Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Support America's Small Food Processors

(US Senate Release)

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) today introduced the Strengthening Local Processing Act, bipartisan legislation that would provide much-needed federal support to America's small meat and poultry processors and

help strengthen and streamline their operations. The legislation would give small food processors more access to information that is critical to food safety planning, allow more inspector-approved meat products to be sold across state lines, and funnel federal dollars toward training, education, and technical assistance grants. Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Angus King (I-Maine) are original co-sponsors of this legislation.

“The pandemic has created significant challenges to our nation’s food supply chain, especially when it comes to meat processing capacity,” said Thune. “South Dakota’s producers work hard to raise high-quality livestock, and we need to invest in expanding processing capacity to help meet consumer demand for their products. I’m proud to introduce this bipartisan legislation to support small meatpackers and to create additional marketing options for livestock producers.”

“Dedicated workers across our food supply chains in every corner of our country work hard to ensure that when we go to our local grocery stores, there will be plenty of food on the shelves for our families,” said Merkley. “But now—as the coronavirus pandemic continues to upend every aspect of our economy—our food processors, especially small plants that have been hit particularly hard, need help. This bipartisan bill would help provide these plants with valuable support, while also strengthening our food safety inspections and cutting red tape.”

“The supply chain disruptions and restaurant closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have placed increasing financial pressure on Maine’s rural farming communities, including our small farms that raise livestock,” said Collins. “This bipartisan bill would provide some relief by clearing unnecessary, bureaucratic hurdles, which would ensure that the livestock raised in Maine can also be processed right here in our state by local, family-owned food processors and butchers.”

“Maine’s small family farms and meat and poultry processors are key building blocks of communities across our state, providing healthy, locally raised meat for their neighbors and making important contributions to the local economy,” said King. “I’m proud to work with Senators Thune and Merkley to empower small processors to do their jobs and grow their businesses. It’s our hope that this legislation will act as a helping hand in these difficult times by directing resources and investments to where they can do much good and bolster local economies around the country.”

The Strengthening Local Processing Act would require the Food Safety Inspection Service to establish a searchable database of peer-reviewed, publicly available studies to establish and maintain Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans. This step would help small food processors develop their own HACCP plans and help expedite the HACCP approval process.

To incentivize more states to establish meat and poultry inspection programs—which small food processors need to approve their products—the legislation would increase the federal government’s cost-share for the programs from 50 percent to 65 percent. The bill would also allow state-inspected meat facilities to operate as federal inspection facilities, allowing more small and local processors to ship their products to other states and countries.

Lastly, the Strengthening Local Processing Act would create a grant program to support small plants by providing reimbursement grants to help cover costs associated with meeting state or federal inspection guidelines, expanding infrastructure to establish or increase harvest and processing capacity, and adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic and future market needs.

To meet education and training needs in the processing industry, the bill would also establish training grants to support and train small plant operators, small plant employees, and the next generation of meat processors and butchers. And \$10 million would be authorized in discretionary funding for higher education training and processor career training.

A summary of the Strengthening Local Processing Act can be found [here](#). Full text of the legislation is available [here](#).

FSIS To Propose New Rules On 'No Nitrite/Nitrate,' 'Uncured' Claims

(From Meatingplace.com)

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has agreed to propose rule changes in response to a petition from the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Consumer Reports seeking clarification on how processors label processed meats containing nitrates or nitrites.

In their [petition](#), the consumer advocacy groups take issue with current rules that allow processors using celery salt or other non-synthetic "natural" sources of nitrates or nitrites to use the claims "No Nitrate or Nitrite Added" or "Uncured" on product labels with a disclaimer that states "Except those naturally occurring in celery powder."

FSIS regulations, meanwhile, prohibit processors from making such claims when using synthetic sources of nitrates or nitrites.

But the petitioners argue that nitrates and nitrites — whether they are synthetic or non-synthetic — are potentially harmful; therefore, consumers are being misled by the current labeling protocol. The petitioners want FSIS to require processors to disclose the use of nitrates or nitrites on the front of packaging, as well as describe their function on the ingredients list.

In response, USDA wrote a [letter](#) to CSPI late last week, informing the groups that the agency plans to conduct rulemaking to propose banning the claims "No Nitrate or Nitrite Added" and "Uncured" on products that have been processed using any source of nitrates or nitrites.

FSIS also intends to approve non-synthetic sources of nitrates or nitrites as curing agents.

However, rather than requiring disclosure statements about the use of nitrate or nitrites on labels of meat and poultry products, as requested in the petition, FSIS intends to propose to amend and clarify its meat and poultry labeling regulations to establish new definitions for "Cured" and "Uncured."

The basis for these proposed changes would be discussed in detail in the proposed rule, tentatively scheduled for publication in May 2021, the agency said.

APHIS Administrator Announces Agency Leadership Changes

(From USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Bulletin)

Dear APHIS Stakeholders:

Continuity of leadership is extremely important to me-APHIS provides vital services in every State, multiple territories and countless countries around the world and it's essential we have a team of strong leaders directing the vital work of our Agency.

For this reason, I've moved quickly to identify exceptional leaders from within our ranks to help carry out the broad and diverse mission of this Agency that I'm so proud to lead. I want to share a number of changes in important APHIS leadership positions with you. Dr. Alan Dowdy, Associate Deputy Administrator for Policy Management in Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ), is retiring after a long and dedicated Federal career. Dr. Matt Royer, currently PPQ's Associate Deputy Administrator for Field Operations, will succeed Alan as PPQ's Associate Deputy Administrator for Policy Management in PPQ.

Mr. Steve Bennett, who right now is Executive Director of our Emergency Management, Safety, and Security Division (EMSSD) and Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES), will move to Veterinary Services as one of the program's Associate Deputy Administrators.

Mr. Ibrahim Shaqir, currently Biotechnology Regulatory Services' (BRS) Associate Deputy Administrator, will move to PPQ as their Associate Deputy Administrator for Trade.

Ms. Jessica Mahalingappa, currently International Services' (IS) Associate Deputy Administrator, will join BRS as their Associate Deputy Administrator.

Ms. Valerie Defeo, a recent Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program (CDP) graduate who works in PPQ, will become IS' Associate Deputy Administrator.

Mr. Darya Chehrezad, currently a Senior Foreign Service Officer in Mexico, will begin a domestic rotation as Associate Deputy Administrator for Trade and Capacity Building in IS.

Mr. Doug Nash, Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services' (MRPBS) Deputy Administrator, is also retiring. Mr. Robert Huttenlocker will return to APHIS from USDA's Office of the Inspector General as MRPBS' Deputy Administrator, a role he previously held in 2017.

I want to thank each of these leaders for their dedication to APHIS and their willingness to take on these new roles. I hope you'll have the chance to meet them in the coming months.

Kevin Shea
APHIS Administrator

[Source.](#)

Landmark study to tap USDA farmer data to assess conservation practices

(From Agri-Pulse)

As President-elect Joe Biden promises to ramp up federal efforts to promote climate-friendly farming practices, the Agriculture Department is quietly taking some steps that could lead to new incentives for farmers to take measures such as skipping fall fertilizer applications, planting cover crops and reducing tillage.

USDA recently signed a landmark agreement with university researchers and the Meridian Institute, the host organization for the AGree Economic and Environmental Risk Coalition, to use the massive amount of private farmer data collected by USDA to study the impact of conservation practices in six Midwest states during 2019.

The study, which will be the first of its kind using USDA's farm records, is intended to assess how the use of cover crops and conservation tillage affected whether fields could be planted that year, when they could be planted and what impact the practices had on crop yields. A key goal of the study, according to [an AGree summary](#): *Determine if there is a basis for anecdotal reports that farmers who implemented conservation practices reduced their prevent-plant risk or were able to plant earlier than growers who were using conventional practices.*

The study will require marrying records from three different USDA agencies — Risk Management Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency — with detailed weather data compiled by the PRISM Climate Group at Oregon State University.

University of Illinois economist Bruce Sherrick, who will lead a team of data scientists, economists and agronomists in analyzing the USDA data, said research like this using the department's extensive records could eventually be used both to improve crop insurance as well as conservation records and show farmers they can use their own data to improve their practices.

"This is an incredibly powerful, hopefully forward-looking effort," Sherrick said.

Read [more](#).

Genetically altered pigs approved for food, potential medical use

(From Agri-pulse)

The Food and Drug Administration has for the first time approved an intentional genomic alteration, or IGA, in animals that can be used for both food and human therapeutics.

The IGA is in what are called GalSafe pigs, bred to eliminate alpha-gal sugar on the surface of the pigs' cells. "People with Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) may have mild to severe allergic reactions to alpha-gal sugar found in red meat," such as beef, pork and lamb, FDA said.

"The first-ever approval of an animal biotechnology product for both food and as a potential source for biomedical uses represents a tremendous milestone for scientific innovation," FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn said on a conference call Monday.

Developed by Virginia-based company Revivicor, the GalSafe pigs "may potentially provide a source of porcine-based materials to produce human medical products that are free of detectable alpha-gal sugar," FDA [said](#).

For example, the pigs "could potentially be used as a source of medical products, such as the blood-thinning drug heparin, free of detectable alpha-gal sugar," FDA said. "Tissues and organs from GalSafe pigs could potentially address the issue of immune rejection in patients receiving [xenotransplants](#), as alpha-gal sugar is believed to be a cause of rejection in patients."

Xenotransplantation "is any procedure that involves the transplantation, implantation or infusion into a human recipient of either live cells, tissues, or organs from a nonhuman animal source, or human body fluids, cells, tissues or organs that have had ex vivo contact with live nonhuman animal cells, tissues or organs," FDA says on its website.

"The development of xenotransplantation is, in part, driven by the fact that the demand for human organs for clinical transplantation far exceeds the supply."

Read [more](#).

Biden taps leaders for EPA, Interior

(From Agri-Pulse)

President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday chose Michael Regan, head of North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality, to run the Environmental Protection Agency and Rep. Deb Haaland of New Mexico to be Interior Secretary.

In [a tweet](#), the Biden transition organization said Regan and Haaland were part of a climate policy team that would "play a major role in supporting the communities most affected by climate change, while empowering the young people whose futures are most at stake. We all have a stake in this fight. And our administration will be ready to meet the moment."

Both selections would further diversify Biden's Cabinet. Regan would be the first Black man to be EPA administrator, while Haaland would be the first Native American to head the agency that oversees about one-fifth of the land in the United States, as well as the first Indigenous person in a presidential cabinet.

Regan comes to the job with 18 years' experience at the Environmental Defense Fund and EPA. His focus at EDF was mostly on climate change issues. At EPA, he worked on air issues, ending his tenure there as a national program manager for program design in the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards.

[Regan](#) emerged as a frontrunner late in the process after environmental justice advocates objected to choosing California Air Resources Board Chair Mary Nichols, who was widely seen as a natural fit for the job.

Shortly after taking the state job, Regan settled environmental justice complaints that the department had previously failed to adequately regulate North Carolina hog operations. [The settlements resulted in new processes](#) for monitoring farms and investigating complaints.

Read [more](#).

New Guide Available on Budget Analysis for Conservation Agriculture

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and researchers in conservation agriculture have released a new publication, [A Practitioner's Guide to Conducting Budget Analyses for Conservation Agriculture](#).

The guide is designed to support other researchers, academics, conservation nonprofits, and any organizations interested in measuring the farm financial outcomes of agricultural conservation practices.

The guide is informed by a thorough review of 33 farm budget case studies and five multi-farm analyses that examined conservation adoption, in addition to input from leading experts on conservation agriculture and farm financial management. The 31-page guide is available free online.

Read [more](#).

USDA Announces Increase to Certain Incentive Payments for Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

(From USDA Farm Service Agency Bulletin)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is increasing incentive payments for practices installed on land enrolled in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is upping the Practice Incentive Payment for installing practices, from 5 percent to 20 percent. Additionally, producers will receive a 10 percent incentive payment for water quality practices on land enrolled in CRP's continuous signup. FSA administers CRP on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation.

"The Conservation Reserve Program provides agricultural producers and landowners with a tool to conserve natural resources on their land that is less suitable for farming," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. "We offer a number of CRP initiatives, including continuous CRP, which greatly benefits natural resources like water. Increasing the incentive payment gives farmers even more reason to participate in continuous CRP, one of our nation's largest conservation endeavors."

Under continuous CRP, producers can enroll environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices with signup available at any time. FSA automatically accepts offers provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the number of acres FSA is allowed to enroll in CRP, which was set by the 2018 Farm Bill.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended primarily to control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. The program marks its 35-year anniversary this month.

Read more [here](#).



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- 1/04/2021 - Wolf Springs Ranch & Guests Auction - CO
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- 1/25/2021 - Clearwater Ranch Online Only Auction - OK
- 2/19/2021 - NBA - DTBA Joint Winter Conference - Rapid City, SD/Online
- 2/20/2021 - NBA GTSS & DTBA Girlz Going Wild Auction - Rapid City, SD/Online
- 2/22/2021 - TNC Smoky Valley & Tallgrass Prairie Online Auctions - KS
- 2/27/2021 - Beltway Bison Consignment Auction - PA
- 03/11/2021 - Eastern Bison Association Annual Winter Conference & Sale - PA
- 3/20/2021 - Missouri Bison Association Spring Sale - MO
- 4/09/2021 - Minnesota Bison Association's Annual Education Conference - MN
- 6/27/2021 - National Bison Assn. Summer Conference - Cheyenne, WY

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