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Tuesday, December 8, 2020

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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 4, 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.

USDA Approves \$17 Million Purchase of Bison Meat Agency OK's Bison Industry Request for Section 32 Program Purchase

Bison business leaders hailed today's announcement from U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) that the agency had approved the National Bison Association's request for a \$17 million purchase of ground bison under the Section 32 Surplus Removal program.

The association filed the request for the Section 32 purchase in late August, noting that market pressures created by an unanticipated large crop of harvest-ready bison in 2019 was compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The purchase of bison meat is part of a \$170 million Section 32 purchase that also included beans, butter, fluid milk and fresh grapes.

"Today's announcement helps place a foundation of stability under the bison business. That foundation will enable us to rebuild the strength and profitability that our business has enjoyed over the past decade," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association.

Carter thanked the USDA personnel who had carefully weighed the economic information submitted by the bison association. He also thanked the 12 U.S. Senators, led by Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) who weighed in with the USDA on

behalf of the bison industry request.

“Individual bison ranchers who took the time to contact their congressional offices to push for this purchase deserve a lot of the credit for making this happen,” he added.

Today’s announcement binds the agency to buy up to \$17 million in bison meat, with the actual purchases dependent upon the number of bids submitted by qualified suppliers.

While the USDA purchases will be made from commercial processors, Carter noted that the purchase of bison meat will benefit everyone along the supply chain.

“We are just getting into the major auction season for live bison. This announcement provides buyers and sellers with a degree of confidence in the economic outlook of our business,” he said.

Matheson to Address KBA Members Tonight

NBA Assistant Director Jim Matheson is in Salina, KS, where he will update members of the Kansas Buffalo Association at the Salina Farmers and Ranchers Livestock Commission Sale Barn tonight prior to their annual sale there tomorrow.

Matheson will update the KBA members on the NBA’s efforts to obtain a \$17 million Section 32 surplus removal of ground bison meat, and on other policy developments that will impact the bison business.

The KBA will be auctioning approximately 400 head of live bison starting at 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Carter Sends Update to USDA for Section 32 Request

National Bison Association Executive Director Dave carter provided officials at USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service with an update on economic conditions in the U.S. bison business this week, as a part of the associations ongoing request for the agency to approve a \$17 million purchase of ground bison under the Section 32 Surplus Commodity Removal Program.

In his letter, Carter provided information from the most recent NBA twice yearly commercial marketers’ survey, which was conducted in late November (See related story below).

“The most recent survey documents the continuing stress imposed on our business because of COVID-19, and by the unanticipated increase in harvest ready animals over the past 18 months,” Carter wrote to the agency. “The increased supply of bison is weighing heavily on the market price. When asked their opinion on a sustainable carcass price for the foreseeable future, two thirds of our marketers now list a price below \$4 lb. Two years ago, more than two thirds listed a price above \$4.25 lb. as sustainable.”

“Currently, 46% of our marketers rely upon foodservice outlets for more than 60% of their sales. Those marketers are continuing to struggle through the impact of the pandemic. More than half of the marketers foresee that the largest growth in the coming years will be retail markets, which offer primarily ground bison. Without the restaurants to absorb the high value cuts, the ongoing impacts will be significant,” Carter wrote.

USDA Deputy Administrator Jennifer Porter responded promptly to the NBA letter, and said she would provide an update to the association shortly.

Marketers Survey Reflects 2020

The major commercial bison marketers offered a mixed assessment of market conditions and outlook in the results of the most recent twice-yearly survey which was conducted by the National Bison Association in late November.

When asked how marketers can satisfy customer demand, 28% of the respondents

reported experiencing a buildup in unsold inventory, with 23% reporting a significant buildup. Only four years ago, nearly a third of our marketers reported having to short their customers by at least 20 % because of not enough animals to process.

When asked about the supply of finished bison available during the past 12 months, 84% reported an increase in supply, with 38% reporting that availability had increased more than 10%. Responding to a separate question 75% of the marketers anticipate that supplies of harvest ready bison will continue to increase over the next 7-12 months.

A total of 38 percent of the marketers say that consumer demand for bison is continuing to grow, with 23 percent reporting growth more than 10 percent over last year. Another 38 percent say that the market is holding steady.

Two thirds of the marketers say they have the potential to attract new customers for bison meat, with 50 percent saying they see increased marketing potential more than five percent next year.

You can find the full summary of the latest marketers' survey [here](#).

NBA/DTBA Winter Conference Registration Now 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 NBA/DTBA WINTER CONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 19 - 20 - RAMKOTA HOTEL, RAPID CITY
VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON OPTIONS AVAILABLE

SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, February 19th

8:00 am - Registration Open
9:00 - Trade Show Opens
9:30 - Conference Kickoff Welcome
10:00 - Bison Marketing Successes in 2020
11:30 - Center of Excellence for Bison Studies at South Dakota State University
1:00 pm - Dr. Brad Johnson - Ruminant Nutritionist, Eat Bison!
3:00 - The Bison Mentor Session
5:30 - Social/Bison Dinner/Fun Auction

Registration - Adult In-Person \$150

Adult Virtual - \$50

Children (13 years and under) - \$25

Saturday, February 20th

8:00 am - Consignors' Meeting
9:00 - Managing the 'Young Guns' and Mycoplasma Bovis
10:30 - Processing Challenges and Solutions in 2020
11:30 - Lunch and Visit the Bison
2:00 pm - Dusty Oedekoven, DVM - State Veterinarian Herd Health Update
3:00 - DTBA Membership Meeting
4:00 - NBA Membership Meeting
5:00 - GTSS/DTBA Awards Dinner
6:00 - Bison Simulcast Auction

Please register by January 20th at
<https://bisoncentral.com/winter-conference/>

NBA Leaders Meet with APHIS on RFID Tag Distribution

Three top National Bison Association leaders met this week via Zoom with two officials from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to discuss how the association can work with the agency to increase the use of the official RFID tags in bison.

Earlier this year, the agency conducted a public comment period on a proposal in which APHIS would only approve Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) as the official ear tag for use in interstate movement of cattle and bison that are required to be identified by the traceability regulations.

An official ear tag is defined as an identification tag approved by APHIS that bears an official identification number for individual animals. Regulations allow APHIS to approve

tags that can be used as official identification, and both metal and RFID tags are current options.

NBA President Donnis Baggett, Executive Director Dave Carter, and Assistant Director Jim Matheson met Monday with Dr. Aaron Scott, director: National Animal Disease Traceability and Veterinary Accreditation Center at USDA, and Alex Turner, DVM, assistant director, National Animal Disease Traceability & Veterinary Accreditation Center. Discussion centered upon the potential for the NBA to play a role as the official distributor of RFID tags to the U.S. bison business, like the system utilized in Canada. There, the Canadian Bison Association serves as the official distributor for tags for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Scott said that a final regulation on the agency's new procedure will likely be posted in the coming weeks, and that discussions on a partnership with the NBA should continue after that time.

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.



MISSOURI BISON ASSOCIATION

24TH ANNUAL FALL SHOW & SALE

Thursday, **December 10, 2020** – 11:00 am
Lolli Brothers Livestock Market, Macon, MO
Dinner & Fun Auction: Dec 9th, Apple Basket Restaurant, 6pm

22ND ANNUAL SPRING SHOW & SALE

Saturday, **March 20, 2021** – 11:00 AM
Mo-Kan Livestock Market, Butler, MO
Dinner & Fun Auction: March 13th, Sale Barn Cafe, 6:30pm

To Consign, Call:
Carol Morris: 660-998-0990 or
Peter Kohl: 816-585-4779



MISSOURI BISON ASSOCIATION

USDA to Offer New Stats for Bison Producers

(From RFDTV.com)

USDA's Market News Report says that it will now offer a weaned calf report for bison producers.

This industry information will assist in long-term planning and marketing efforts. Dave Carter of the National Bison Association talks about the demand for bison over the last decade and the importance of this new data.

"Our marketers kind of had to take their foot off the gas, because it didn't do any good developing a new market if we can't supply it. So, all of a sudden we ended up with this surplus of animals and you can't fire up your marketing efforts overnight... this new weaned calf report is going to be very helpful," he explains. "That's going to be so valuable to us because it helps our marketers know what's in the pipeline, what's going to be come to harvest in the next 16-24 months, and so then they can start planning accordingly."

A set date of when this will be available is still unknown, but Carter says that the effects of the pandemic on processing plants also hurt bison producers this year.

[Source:](#)

Dec. 11 Deadline Approaching for USDA Program for Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by COVID-19

(USDA FSA Press Release)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers to apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) by Dec. 11, 2020. This program provides direct relief to producers facing market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19.

“With over 300 eligible commodities, from livestock and row crops to specialty crops and aquaculture, most farmers and ranchers are potentially eligible for CFAP 2,” said Richard Fordyce, Farm Service Agency administrator. “FSA offers several options for farmers and ranchers to apply. Don’t wait to check out our online resources and connect with our employees who are ready to answer your questions and help you get started on your application.”

Producers have several options for applying for the CFAP 2 program by the Dec. 11 deadline. Producers can find eligible commodities, payment rates, calculations and options to apply on farmers.gov/cfap.

Customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP 2 application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office. The call center can also provide service to non-English speaking customers. Customers will select 1 for English and 2 to speak with a Spanish speaking employee. For other languages, customers select 1 and indicate their language to the call center staff.

Additionally, farmers.gov offers several resources for producers interested in applying for CFAP 2, including:

[Eligible Commodities Finder](#)

Videos, including “[How to Apply for CFAP 2](#)”

Blogs, including “[Myth Debunked: Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2](#)”

A correction to the CFAP 2 rule is pending. In case a producer is affected by this correction, FSA will provide additional time to apply or edit their application.

CFAP 2 is a separate program from the first iteration of CFAP, now referred to as CFAP 1. Participating in CFAP 1 is not a prerequisite for participating in CFAP 2. Additionally, producers who applied for CFAP 1 will not be automatically enrolled in CFAP 2 and must complete a new application to be eligible for assistance.

Montana Officials Plan to Cull 700 Bison

(From Associated Press)

BOZEMAN, Montana (AP) — Wildlife officials have announced plans to cull between 500 and 700 Yellowstone bison from the population, and no longer enroll the animals to a brucellosis quarantine program.

Yellowstone National Park biologist Chris Geremia said if the target is met, an additional 200 male bison could be culled later in the winter, the Bozeman Daily Chronicle reported. The animals will either be shot or rounded up and shipped for slaughter.

Federal, state, and tribal agencies finalized the culling numbers during a virtual meeting on Wednesday. The plan attempts to balance conservation strategies with strategies to prevent the spread of brucellosis.

Brucellosis is an infectious disease that appears in elk, bison and cattle and causes abortions, low milk production and infertility. The program gathers bison from the herd, tests them for brucellosis and gives them to tribal lands for cultural and conservation purposes.

Read more [here](#).

Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd Helps Preserve Natural Legacy

(From the Circle News)

As the sun rises on a crisp October morning, Blue Mounds State Park comes to life with a buzz of activity. More than two dozen workers and volunteers gather under a bright blue sky for a special mission focused on America's largest and most iconic animal. Bison. Buffalo.

A massive woolly beast that once roamed the great plains of the upper Midwest in vast herds that by some reports took days to pass. The Lakota had another word for it: Tatanka.

Estimated to have numbered 30 million or more at one time, the plains bison played a critical role, along with fire, in maintaining healthy prairie ecosystems. Weighing as much as a ton, and yielding 400 to 800 pounds of meat, the bison was also central to the culture, economy, and spirituality of indigenous peoples.

"The buffalo gave us everything we needed," said 20th century Lakota elder John Fire Lame Deer, who made his home on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. "Without it we were nothing. Our tipis were made of his skin. His hide was our bed, our blanket, our winter coat. It was our drum, throbbing through the night, alive, holy. Out of his skin we made our water bags. His flesh strengthened us, became flesh of our flesh. Not the smallest part of it was wasted."

As European settlers embarked upon westward expansion, though, bison were slaughtered by the thousands for their hides, for sport, and at the urging of military officials who saw the animals' extermination as a strategy to weaken the Plains Tribes and force them onto reservations. Within a few decades, bison were pushed to the brink of extinction. The last wild bison in Minnesota was observed in Norman County in 1880, and by 1883 there fewer than 1,000 left nationwide.

Read more [here](#).

Historical Photo of Mountain of Bison Skulls Documents Animals on The Brink of Extinction

(From the Conversation.com)

We are living through a period of unprecedented species extinction due to human-induced changes to the planet's ecosystems. This is not the first-time human activities radically changed relationships between land and life. Illustrated by a famous photograph of remains, the extermination of bison from the North American West in the 19th century is one key example of catastrophic species loss.



As a visual studies researcher, I use photographs to analyze the impacts of colonization on human and non-human lives. Images of bison bones provide a window into the cultural and ecological relations that tie animal and human lives together. Through photographs, we can also think about bison extermination as part of a history of relationships.

The most famous photograph of bison extermination is a grisly image of a mountain of bison skulls. It was taken outside of Michigan Carbon Works in Rougeville, Mich., in 1892. At the close of the 18th century, there were between 30 and 60 million bison on the continent. By the time of this photograph, that population was reduced to only 456 wild bison.

Increased colonization of the West led to the large-scale slaughter of bison. The arrival of white settler hunters with their weapons, as well as [growing market demand for hides and bones](#), intensified the killing. Most herds were exterminated between 1850 and the late 1870s.

The photograph shows the massive scale of this destruction. A man-made mountain emerging from the image's grassy foreground, the pile of bones as appears part of the landscape. The image can be read as an example of what Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky has called "[manufactured landscapes](#)." What was taken from prairie land to make this manufactured landscape in Michigan?

Read more [here](#)

USDA Announces General CRP And Grasslands Signup Periods

(From AgriPulse)

Producers can begin signing up for the Conservation Reserve Program Jan. 4 and CRP Grasslands March 15, USDA has announced. The CRP signup will run through Feb. 12, while the grasslands signup will go through April 23.

The competitive programs both provide annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes. According to USDA data, after a CRP signup last year of about 3.4 million acres, nearly 22 million acres are enrolled in the program nationwide. The 2018 farm bill increases the cap to 27 million acres by 2023.

"Through **CRP**, farmers and ranchers establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland," USDA said.

"**CRP Grasslands** helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands while maintaining the areas as grazing lands," the department said. "Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and improves environmental quality."

APHIS Announces \$14.4 Million in Farm Bill Funding to Protect Animal Health

(From USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Bulletin)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is awarding \$14.4 million to 76 projects with states, universities, and other partners to strengthen our programs to protect animal health.

This critical funding supports projects focused on increasing practical livestock biosecurity measures or advancing rapid depopulation and disposal abilities to be used during high-consequence animal disease outbreaks. It will also support projects to enhance early detection of high-consequence animal diseases and improve emergency response capabilities at NAHLN veterinary diagnostic laboratories.

"We continue to use our Farm Bill funds to increase our capabilities and prepare for potential foreign animal disease incursions," said USDA Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Greg Ibach. "Our consultation board and leaders in animal health and laboratory diagnostics provided recommendations for the type of projects we would fund, to make sure we were targeting these funds where they can make the most impact. Our partners across States, laboratories and industry alike will benefit from the projects we are funding today."

Read more [here](#).

Scott Picked as Next House Ag Leader

(From AgriPulse)

Georgia Democrat David Scott cleared a major hurdle to becoming the next chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, installing new leadership for the committee as it prepares to begin work on a new farm bill.

A Democratic steering committee chose Scott over California's Jim Costa in a 32-19 vote Tuesday evening. The two were both vying for the position vacated by current committee Chair Collin Peterson's unsuccessful effort to secure another term in Congress. Scott — if ultimately approved by the full House Democratic caucus — will take the gavel in January.

Scott, who will be the first African American chair of the committee and the first African American from Georgia to chair any committee, announced his intent to run for the chairmanship the day after the November elections.

Originally elected in 2002, Scott has been a member of the Ag Committee throughout his time in Congress. He currently sits behind only Peterson in committee seniority among Democrats and chairs the panel's Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit Subcommittee. In his statement announcing his candidacy, Scott said he was born on a farm in South Carolina, and agriculture has been a crucial part of his life ever since.

"I spent my childhood years living and working on my grandparents' farm. The core lessons I brought from these experiences still resonate throughout farming communities today, and I have drawn upon them as I have fought to support the needs of rural and urban America," Scott said.

"But our farm systems have evolved, and our policies must reflect and urge forward these changes," he added. "And I believe that the progress of our nation cannot be true progress if it leaves behind the most vulnerable among us."

During development of the 2014 farm bill, Scott took part in an effort that was ultimately successful in killing a supply management plan for milk that Peterson and National Milk Producers Federation wanted included in what became the Margin Protection Program for dairy producers. An amendment backed by dairy processors that Scott co-sponsored with then-Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., initially failed in committee but later prevailed on the House floor.

Among other things, Scott is known for his efforts to secure funding for a scholarship program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the 2018 farm bill. In November, Scott said those efforts — coupled with a pledge to offer strong support for government nutrition programs — will help "make this great nation better for the next generation."

Thompson Selected to Lead Republicans on House Ag

(From AgriPulse)

The House Republican Steering Committee on Wednesday selected Rep. Glenn Thompson of Pennsylvania to serve as ranking member for the House Agriculture Committee.

Pending formal approval of the full House GOP conference, he will succeed Texas Rep. Mike Conaway, who is retiring from Congress.

"As a lifelong resident of a small town in rural central Pennsylvania and the descendant of a long line of dairy farmers, I am incredibly humbled to have been elected by my Republican colleagues to be their leader on the House Agriculture Committee in the 117th Congress," Thompson said in a statement. "The challenges ahead of us are considerable, but we will continue to put farm families first and ensure our country has the most safe and affordable food supply chain on the planet."

Rep. Austin Scott of Georgia (no relation to [presumptive Democratic Chair David Scott](#), who got the nod from that party's steering committee Tuesday) and Rep. Rick Crawford of Arkansas, were also vying to be the top Republican on the panel.

Thompson has served 11 years on the House Agriculture Committee and serves as ranking member of the general farm commodities and risk management subcommittee. He also was the vice chair of the full committee and chair of the nutrition subcommittee during the development of the 2018 farm bill.

His vision to lead the committee has two parts: having a robust rural America and serving the next generation of family farms.

New Candidates for Agriculture Secretary Emerge as Biden Faces Pushback on Heitkamp

(From Politico)

Lawmakers and industry leaders are pushing new candidates in the race for Agriculture secretary as the Biden transition team seems to be at an impasse between the leading names in the race: former Sen. Heidi Heitkamp or Rep. Marcia Fudge.

For weeks, food and agriculture leaders have assumed that the pick will come down to either Heitkamp or Fudge.

Now, two other prominent agricultural leaders are being aggressively pushed by allies: Kathleen Merrigan, a USDA veteran who was deputy secretary in the Obama administration, and Arturo Rodriguez, past longtime leader of the United Farm Workers union. Former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, a loyal Biden surrogate, is also now a possibility.

The Biden transition team was on the verge of announcing the selection of Heitkamp early last week, four people familiar with the deliberations said. But then, House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, who has been pushing for Fudge, gave several media interviews publicly criticizing Biden for a lack of diversity among his first round of Cabinet appointees, and the race is now considered more open.

Read more [here](#).

Study: Packing Plants Spreading COVID-19

(From AgriPulse)

A new [study](#) of COVID-19 at meat processing plants suggests that they pose a special risk for spreading the virus into local communities.

“Ensuring both public health and robust essential supply chains may require an increase in meatpacking oversight and potentially a shift toward more decentralized, smaller-scale meat production,” says the study, authored by researchers from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs and the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business. It was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Results of their analysis “indicate a strong positive relationship” between the plants and local community transmission of COVID-19, suggesting the plants may act as “transmission vectors” into the surrounding areas, the study says.

Keep in mind: There has been renewed interest in Congress in expanding meatpacking capacity primarily by helping smaller plants get approved to sell across state lines. Whether that happens remains to be seen, and interest could wane once the COVID-19 crisis abates.



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Save the Date!

- 12/05/2020 - Canadian Bison Association Annual Conference and Sale - Virtual
- 12/05/2020 - Kansas Buffalo Association Annual Production Sale - KS
- 12/8/2020 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Consignment Auction - SD
- 12/10/2020 - Missouri Bison Association Fall Sale - MO
- 12/19/2020 - North Dakota Buffalo Assn. Simulcast Auction - ND
- 1/02/2021 - Prairie Legends Bison Auction - NE
- 1/04/2021 - Wolf Springs Ranch & Guests Auction - CO
- 1/9/2021 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Auction - SD
- 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
- 2/27/2021 - Beltway Bison Consignment Auction - PA
- 3/20/2021 - Missouri Bison Association Spring Sale - MO
- 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.

Click Here for NBA Calendar of Events

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