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March 25 - SBA Cream of the Crop - Yorkton, SK.



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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 February 3, 2023

*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 Attends Dakota Territory Buffalo Association Winter Conference

This weekend is the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association's 2023 Winter Conference, and the 1st annual Stack the Deck Show and Sale, February 2nd-4th at the Ramkota Inn in Rapid City, South Dakota. They are offering a great line-up of informative speakers, engaging discussion, and lot of fun for "The Great Bison Get Together." The Stack the Deck performance-based show & sale will be collectively judging bison according to performance based data and management practices of their home ranches.



NBA Executive Director Jim Matheson, Communications Director Karen Connelly, and NBA President Chad Kremer are all in attendance. "There is so much to engage with this year for bison. We've got folks raising our national mammal, regenerating healthy soils and grasslands, and demonstrating so much resiliency. We have a lot of hope for what is to come in the markets, in resources for drought and processing needs, and research especially through the Center of Excellence in Bison Studies at South Dakota State," said Jim Matheson.

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## Whitman Participates in Sustainable Ag DC Summit

Lydia Whitman, Program Manager for the National Bison Association just got back from the National Sustainable Agriculture Council (NSAC) Winter Conference in Washington, D.C. The NSAC Winter Meeting was a chance for members to strategize together around coalition priorities for the year and plans to ensure that the next farm bill invests in resilient local and regional food systems, and levels the playing field for small- and medium-sized farms and farm-related businesses.



This meeting included in person remarks by United States Secretary of Agriculture, Thomas J. Vilsack, who detailed USDA's vision and efforts under the to create an economy where the wealth and opportunities created in rural America stay there and where a transformed food system helps create new and better markets and more resilient farms and ranches. Farmers and advocates came to Washington, DC to advocate for a range of issues including increased support for sustainable agriculture research, local and regional food systems, working lands conservation, and improving crop insurance.

Lydia met with 14 senate offices, 1 house office, and the house ag committee staff to discuss legislation critical to the bison industry. She was joined for several meetings by Practical Farmers of Iowa Director Sally Worley, and current chair for NSAC's board (pictured above with Whitman). "We can find strength in our alignment with other ag groups as we move forward on farm bill development," says Whitman.

NBA legislative information can be found on the [NBA Website](#).

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## Truth in Buffalo Labeling Bill Introduced in the Senate

Thursday, February 2nd, Senator Hoeven introduced a bill to provide clarification regarding the common or usual name for bison and compliance with section 403 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and for other purposes. Cosigner support was bipartisan and included Senators Bennet (CO), Cramer (ND), Tester (MT), Braun (IN), Smith (MN), Rosen (NV), Thune (SD), Moran (KS), and Marshall (KS).

The truthful labeling of bison products represents more than simply a labeling issue. The choice to use bison meat for human or pet consumption is because of nutritional factors, dietary consideration, or simply because federal regulations prohibit the use of growth hormones in bison. Thus, the deceptive labeling of bison products compromises those consumers' right to make an informed choice. American bison ranchers established a relationship with our customers that is based upon the quality of our meat, and the manner in which we raise our bison. Mislabeled water buffalo products in the marketplace threaten to undermine this relationship.

The bill was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. We will continue to track progress in the weeks to come.

Please extend thanks to the senators championing this bill.

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## Ken Burn's "American Buffalo" Shares First Public Clip with NBA

Attendees of the 2023 National Bison Association Winter Conference were treated to a once in a lifetime experience: the first public clip of the Ken Burn's documentary,



"American Buffalo."

"I was thrilled to introduce two of our country's most acclaimed filmmakers. Ken Burns has been making films about Americana history for more than forty years, including *The Civil War*, *The War*, *JAZZ*, *The National Parks* and most recently *The US and the Holocaust*. Julie Dunfey has worked with Ken and Florentine Films since 1986, serving as a producer on many of the films, including *The Civil War* and also *National Parks* and most recently *Country Music*," said Executive Director Jim Matheson.

"*The American Buffalo*", will premiere on PBS on October 16 and 17th. The audience at the conference was spellbound during the 8 minute sneak peak. They were the first audience to see clips from the much anticipated series.

The National Bison Association is grateful to Ken and Julie for joining virtually (see photo below) and providing their time for an interview in addition to sharing the clip. They commented about the film, why they made it, and their hopes for the upcoming release.



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## Winter Conference Survey Indicates Quality Programming, Great Event

We're still crunching the data- but the preliminary survey results indicate an undeniable success for the 2023 National Bison Association Winter Conference. Almost exactly 1/4th of all respondents attended for the first time. The biggest theme was gratefulness for the event setting, with high praise for the Westin Hotel and Conference Center in Westminster, Colorado.

We appreciate all of the feedback for future programming ideas. We are definitely going to dig deeper into different opportunities, including the concept of a new member/ new producer networking event (and thank you to those that have already offered to sponsor this!); and a game night to engage folks and offer some alternate fundraising routes.

If you've got some conference thoughts, but didn't get the post survey completed, just email Lydia at: [lydia@bisoncentral.com](mailto:lydia@bisoncentral.com).

Thank you for participating, providing feedback, and all of the encouragement along the way. We are so grateful for the NBA members and wish you the very best until we have our next big get together.

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## New Partnership Seeks to Expand Bison Processing Opportunities

JEMEZ PUEBLO, NM (January 24, 2023)--A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalized last week between the National Bison Association and the New Mexico-based Flower Hill Institute will expand efforts to assure that bison ranchers and processors have full access to the resources USDA is offering to create a more resilient, diverse and equitable meat processing system.

The MOU signed between the two organizations last week formalizes a commitment to develop and expand the processing resources available to the bison business. Last year, the USDA announced a commitment of \$1 billion in loans, grants, and other resources to create a more resilient, diverse, and equitable meat and poultry processing system in the United States. As part of the commitment, USDA established a network of organizations to provide technical assistance to ranchers and farmers seeking to access those resources. Flower Hill Institute, an Indigenous-led nonprofit organization, entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to coordinate the technical assistance network.

Flower Hill has also developed a series of MOUs with organizations to extend the reach of the technical assistance network.

National Bison Association President Chad Kremer noted, "We have a great group of processors in our business who are looking to expand their operation, and several new projects emerging around the country. We are pleased to partner with Flower Hill Institute to make sure our members have full access to the resources that USDA is offering to support the growth of our processing sector."

Roger Fragua, executive director of Flower Hill Institute, added, "Independent ranchers and Tribal producers are playing a vital role in restoring this magnificent animal to its historic habitat. We are pleased to work with the National Bison Association to make sure that the processing capacity expands to be able to bring this healthy, natural meat to more people across the country."

More information on USDA's new technical assistance initiative is available [here](#).

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***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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# EAT BISON

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### **Winning bison and top sales at the Gold Trophy Show and Sale**

*The Fence Post*

WESTMINSTER, Colo. — Over 500 ranchers gathered recently for the National Bison Association Winter Conference, and brought with them about 100 head of live bison to the National Western Stock show to participate in the Gold Trophy Show and Sale. The mission of the Gold Trophy Show and Sale is to create an environment where producers can compete to establish the value of their bison in the current marketplace. Thank you to all of our consignors and buyers that made the 2023 Gold Trophy Show and Sale a huge success. Thanks too to our great volunteer handling team, the “Buffaleros,” as well as Karen Conley for organizing a great show and sale. Finally, thank you to our GTSS award sponsors, and Rocky Mountain Natural Meats for sponsoring the banquet dinner.

All of the bison growers bring with them a commitment to continue building the market for bison meat based upon the quality of the meat and a dedication to sustainable ranching practices. John Graves, yard supervisor for the Gold Trophy Show and Sale, commented, “The GTSS animals were some of the highest quality we have had, making judging them quite a challenge.”

Wolverine Bison Company brought the Grand Champion Male. Buffalo Run Ranch had the Reserve Grand Champion Male. Snyder Land and Development brought the Grand and Reserve Grand Champion Females; and also received the high honors of Producer of the Year. Wrapping up the recognitions was Miller Bison, LLC, landing the Rookie of the Year award.

On Saturday, Jan. 21, at the National Western Stock Show, the award winning animals were sold by live animal. “Previous winning entries at the Gold Trophy Show and Sale

have served as foundation seed stock for most of the top buffalo herds throughout the United States. We expect great things from these animals, and the prices reflected the quality charging through these pens today,” said Lydia Whitman, program manager with the National Bison Association.

[Click to read more.](#)

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## Kansas rancher Dick Gehring Named Bison Association Member of the Year

From *Jody Heemstra, DRG News*

Kansas bison producer Dick Gehring was recently honored as the National Bison Association’s (NBA) 2022 Member of the Year.

Awarded each year during the association’s Winter Conference, the Member of the Year is presented to a member who goes above and beyond. In the months leading up to the award, the NBA Past Presidents’ Council receives member of the year nominations from fellow NBA members and then votes on the recipient.

Gehring, who operates Black Kettle Buffalo near Moundridge, KS, is a long-time member, current Chair of the NBA Commercial Marketers Committee, and past president of the NBA. Nominees noted his commitment to the organization through service on the Board of Directors as well as numerous committee and his work with the Gold Trophy Show and sale. On the home front, Gehring has been involved with the Kansas Buffalo Association (KBA) for many years and spearheads the group’s annual auction each December. He also does consulting and is always available to answer questions and lend his support to producers both new and established. One nominee noted his strong work ethic and his mentorship, noting they could only hope to have Gehring’s grit and determination.

Gehring’s tireless dedication to all things bison garnered him accolades from many in the bison community. As part of his service to the NBA, Gehring still serves on the Past Presidents’ Council, making the voting on nominations a little tricky for the rest of the group. Past Presidents’ Council Chair, Gail Griffin, who did the honors of presenting the award, noted that there was some evasive maneuvering done to keep Gehring in the dark about being this year’s recipient.

Gehring received the award during the association’s annual fundraiser dinner, in which 500 of his friends and colleagues in the bison community celebrated the recognition. The group went on to raise nearly \$70,000 that evening for the NBA and its partner foundations, the National Buffalo Foundation and the Throlson American Bison Foundation.

[Click to read more.](#)

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## Ask the Expert: A Q&A on Agricultural Wetlands and Water Quality with Dr. Joseph Prenger

By Elizabeth Creech, Natural Resources Inventory and Assessment  
Feb 01, 2023

Dr. Joseph (Joe) Prenger is the Wetlands Lead for the [Conservation Effects Assessment Project \(CEAP\)](#), an effort led by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to quantify the effects of voluntary conservation across the nation’s working lands. In this Ask the Expert, Dr. Prenger answers questions about [new CEAP findings](#) on the capacity of wetlands to capture and store nutrients from cropland fields, associated water quality benefits, and NRCS resources to support wetlands on private and Tribal lands.

Let’s start with the basics: What are wetlands, and how do they improve local water quality?

Wetlands occur where water covers or is present near the soil’s surface, either seasonally

or year-round. Wetlands in agricultural settings may capture and store sediment and nutrients from the surrounding environment, reduce flooding, contribute to climate change mitigation by serving as a carbon sink, increase biodiversity, and provide wildlife habitat.

This nutrient capture and storage component is key for local water quality. We know nutrients, namely nitrogen and phosphorus, support healthy, productive crops. When nutrients are lost from cropland fields and enter local waterbodies, however, they may contribute to harmful algal blooms and hypoxic or low oxygen zones, and compromise water quality.

A recent CEAP report highlighted an increase in both nitrogen and phosphorus lost from cropland fields over a ten-year period. Based on these findings, NRCS is focusing on efforts to help farmers and other land managers save money and protect water quality with SMART Nutrient Management.

Supporting farmers in making targeted, site-specific decisions to effectively manage nutrients is critical. It's very difficult to achieve 100% crop uptake and 0% nutrient loss, though, even with strong planning. We need SMART Nutrient Management to reduce the amount of nutrients lost from cropland fields, plus a way to capture and store those nutrients that are lost before they reach local waterbodies. Wetlands in agricultural landscapes have the potential to serve this second function, particularly when restored or constructed with this goal in mind.

[Click to read more.](#)

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## **Sustainability, animal welfare top concerns in Merck consumer study**

Two-thirds or 66% of consumers reported transparency in animal proteins extremely or very important.

*Beef Magazine*  
January 31, 2023

Merck Animal Health has unveiled the results of the company's first-ever consumer transparency research study, finding that two-thirds of consumers say transparency in animal protein is extremely or very important.

The consumer transparency study focused on consumers' growing interest in transparency and its importance in their purchasing decisions and brand trust. The study explored consumer desire for transparency in animal protein, such as meat, fish, eggs and dairy, and their perceptions of industry transparency when it comes to animal welfare and sustainability. It also looked at the interplay of transparency and traceability and consumers' willingness to pay for transparency label claims.

"The survey results tell us consumers want more information than ever in order to make informed decisions about the food they put on their dinner tables," said Allison Flinn, DVM, executive director, Value Chain and Consumer Affairs, Merck Animal Health. "We work to be the industry leader in improving animal health through our biopharmaceutical and technology portfolio solutions, and we also have the technology that can provide greater transparency and allow consumers to make informed decisions. In fact, our DNA TRACEBACK technology, which uses nature's bar code - DNA - with data analytics, provides an evidence-based animal protein traceability solution to accurately trace meat and seafood that is verifiable from farm-to-table to help build trust in food labels."

[Click to read more.](#)

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## **USDA Issues Additional Pandemic Assistance Payments for Underserved Producers**

From *FSA National Outreach and Education Update*  
February 2023

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is currently making automatic Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) top-up payments to underserved farmers and ranchers. Payments will be based on the 2020 program



certification on form CCC-860, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification.

Producers who have not previously certified to their status for the 2020 program year have until Feb. 10, 2023, to submit form CCC-860 to be eligible for the additional payments. Contact your local [USDA Service Center](#) for more information.

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## USDA launches cattle-sales database to help producers negotiate

*Meatingplace*

The USDA launched a public database disclosing payment terms for private cattle sales, information that should help producers negotiate more favorable terms, the agency announced Tuesday.

Intended to increase market transparency for cattle producers, the USDA's pilot Cattle Contracts Library sheds light on the terms, conditions and volumes under which cattle are contracted, the USDA stated in a news release.

"USDA is committed to creating a more level playing field for cattle producers," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack stated. "The Cattle Contracts Library pilot program supports this commitment by providing producers with the market information they need."

[Click to read more.](#)

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## Your response is due by February 6, 2023

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently mailed you a form for the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Everyone who receives a Census form is required by law to respond (Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113). If you are not farming or ranching, please call us toll free at 1-888-424-7828 and enter 0 to speak with a representative so we can update our records.

If you have already responded, thank you! If not, please respond by February 6, 2023, in one of the following ways:

\* Online at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov) and enter your unique survey code found on the front of the Census of Agriculture form mailed to you.

\* Mail your completed Census form back using the prepaid envelope.

Questions: Please see the Frequently Asked Questions for Completing the Census of Agriculture. If you need other assistance completing your Census form, please call toll free 1-888-424-7828. Please do not reply to this email as this email box is not currently monitored.

All information you provide is confidential and protected by federal law. For more information, visit [www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus).

Thank you for responding and for your support of U.S. agriculture. The 2022 Census of Agriculture is Your Voice, Your Future, Your Opportunity.

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## Request for Proposals for Farmers for Soil Health

The submission deadline for full proposals is February 28, 2023.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, in partnership with the Farmers for Soil Health collaboration, anticipates awarding competitive grants to accelerate the voluntary adoption of cover crops on corn and soybean farms in 20 states.

NCAT is a partner in this project. The program is expected to award approximately \$15 million in grants in 2023. Applicants should propose state-level or multi-state programs to



support Farmers for Soil Health in one or more of the 20 eligible states.

Grantees are limited to state corn, soy, or pork commodity affiliate organizations or their designated partners.

[Learn more.](#)

## farm crisis center

Even in the best of times, farming can be an incredibly high-stress occupation. Unpredictable weather, crop disease, volatile markets, heavy workloads, and social isolation are just a handful of the challenges that farmers may face.

These conditions force many family farmers and ranchers to make tough financial decisions that will impact their families, communities, and the entire country.

National Farmers Union compiled resources to help farmers through stressful times. Find them at:

<https://farmcrisis.nfu.org/>

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### **Save the Date!**

- 2/04/2023 - Dakota Territory Buffalo Assn. Simulcast Auction - SD
- 2/06/2023 - Prairie Monarch Bison Webcast Auction - Online
- 2/11/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction, Grande Prairie, AB - Online
- 2/24/2023 - Beltway Bison Consignment Auction - PA
- 2/25/2023 - MBA Great Spirit - Brandon, MB
- 3/04/2023 - RMBA Spring Conference - Fort Collins, CO
- 3/09/2023 - Eastern Bison Association Winter Conference and Auction - PA

- 3/10/2023 - BPA Wildrose - Camrose, AB
- 3/11/2023 - Missouri Bison Assn. & Oklahoma Bison Assn. Show & Sale - MO
- 3/11/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction, Camrose, AB - online
- 3/11/2023 - Irish Creek Bull Sale - Camrose, AB
- 3/25/2023 - SBA Cream of the Crop - Yorkton, SK
- 3/30/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction - Online
- 4/27/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction - Online

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](mailto: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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