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### *NBA Weekly Update for July 2, 2021*

*The Weekly Update is a service designed to provide National Bison Association members with news and information affecting bison production and marketing. Many items in the Weekly Update are reprinted from outside sources. The content of those articles does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the National Bison Association. The articles are reproduced here only as a means to keep our membership informed as much as possible of all information and opinions relating to bison that is circulating publicly.*

### **Mimi Hillenbrand Named 2020 Member of the Year**

Monday evening of the NBA's summer conference included the postponed-from-Winter Conference 2020 NBA Member of the Year ceremony. Gail Griffin, chair of the Past President's Council, and other past NBA presidents present, named Mimi Hillenbrand Member of the Year.



The NBA is lucky to have Mimi as its current Director at Large, she also serves as National Buffalo Foundation President, and is the proprietor of the 777 Bison Ranch in western South Dakota. The NBA congratulates Mimi on this well deserved honor!

From the 777 Ranch [website](#):

Mimi Hillenbrand has been running the 777 Ranch for the family for 15 years and has worked on the ranch since she was a kid. It has always been her dream to run a ranch in the West. She has always had a passion for the land and all that lives there.

Mimi completed her undergraduate studies at The University of Montana and received a

BS in Wildlife Biology and received her Master's in Agricultural Sciences from Colorado State University.

She has studied Holistic Management and has been practicing it for over 30 years. Mimi has the best outdoor office, works with amazing people, and loves the bison and land, which teach her something new every day.

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## Close to 250 Enjoy Summer Conference Regathering

Nearly 250 Rocky Mountain Bison Association and National Bison Association members headed home from Cheyenne, WY after enjoying three days of reconnecting with old friends, and welcoming newcomers into the "bison family" at the association's 2021 Summer Conference.



Participants at the conference enjoyed tours of two local bison operations, competed in a cornhole tournament, shared meals with fellow producers and attended a series of educational presentations during this year's conference.

"It's great to see everyone getting together again," said NBA President Donnis Bagget in his opening remarks to the conference. "This past year of being apart has made us appreciate the value of being together with our friends in this bison family."

The conference kicked off on Sunday afternoon with the NBAS inaugural cornhole classic, with 17 teams competing for the right to take home one of the stylized cornhole sets. Winners of the tournament was Brent Bronson's team from BBR, LLC.

Monday morning, Greg and Tami Nott of Memphis Ranch Bison in Carr hosted attendees at their start-up operation near Carr, CO. Attendees enjoyed a breakfast of bison burritos, bison tamales, pastries, coffee, milk and other local and fresh items provided by some of the fellow farmers' marketers that the Notts work with. Boyd and Allison Meyer of Cold Creek Buffalo near Cheyenne were the next stop on the Monday tour. There, participants saw the Meyer's bison finishing operation, a handling demonstration, and a tour of their cow-calf herd.

Following a bison burger lunch at the Terry Bison Ranch, where Cold Creek Buffalo operates, Roland Kroos of Crossroads Consulting in Montana and Pat Thomson of Durham Bison Ranch in Wyoming provided information on utilizing holistic management to manage through drought.

Tuesday's agenda centered upon providing conference participants with useful information on bison health, fencing, and capitalizing on carbon capture. Information provided during the day included a market update, and an overview of the Center of Excellence for Bison Studies.

The Monday evening banquet also included the NBA benefit auction, which generated more than \$30,000 in revenue, thanks to the generosity of conference attendees.

Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director, said, "We designed this year's summer conference with lots of information and activities, but also plenty of free time for people to just get together, relax, and reconnect."

Please mark your calendars for the NBA Winter Conference, January 19 - 22, 2022 in Denver, Colorado.

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## NBA to Join U.S. Meat Export Federation

As USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service continues to work to open up new export markets

for bison producers, the National Bison Association board of directors on Sunday authorized the association to formally join the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

USMEF operates with the mission of “increasing the value and profitability of the U.S. beef, pork and lamb industries by enhancing demand for their products in export markets...” and serves as a key marketing voice for the red meat sector overseas. Belonging to USMEF will put bison on display at upcoming trade shows, cooking exhibitions and other forums in markets overseas.

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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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## **Turner Institute of Ecoagriculture, Inc. to collaborate with South Dakota State University Center of Excellence for Bison Studies**

*(From DRG News)*

Turner Enterprises, Inc. and Turner Ranches announced today the launch of the Turner Institute of Ecoagriculture, Inc. (“Institute”). The Institute is a 501(c)(3) public charity and agricultural research organization formed by Ted Turner, whose history of sustainable ranching and animal production, natural resource conservation, and imperiled species restoration spans over three decades. Turner currently owns 14 ranches in the U.S. (and a herd of approximately 45,000 American plains bison) that practice ranching in an economically sustainable and ecologically sensitive manner while promoting the conservation of native species and habitats.

The Institute’s mission is to research, develop, practice, and disseminate sustainable strategies and techniques for conserving ecosystems, agriculture, and rural communities.

Our company’s passion for the environment, conservation and sustainable practices continues to drive our mission of innovatively managing our lands to unite economic viability with ecological sustainability,” said Ted Turner.

Five Turner ranches are in the Sandhills region of western Nebraska, encompassing approximately 445,000 acres of North American Great Plains mixed grass prairie. Turner is contributing the McGinley Ranch, located in the northern Sandhills region, and all its operations to the Institute. McGinley Ranch straddles the border between Nebraska and South Dakota and is comprised of 79,292 contiguous acres of native rangeland. It is contemplated that the remaining four ranches in the Sandhills area (collectively, the “Sandhills Ranches”) may be transferred to the Institute in the future.

Read [more](#).

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## **Support Bison with Online Auction for National Buffalo Museum**

*(From KVRR TV)*

North Dakotans love their bison. And now you can help support the iconic North Dakota Museum dedicated to the animal.

The 2nd annual "Bid for Bison" auction starts Thursday and runs through July 16th. The National Buffalo Museum in Jamestown has hundreds of bison-themed items up for auction from clothes and jewelry, home items and art and collectables.

The money helps the museum promote the buffalo, America's National Mammal, and take care of its two buffalo herds.

The online auction started out of necessity during COVID. Organizers are hopeful after a successful first virtual auction last year.

Museum Executive Director Ilana Xinos says, "We've had an in-person event which we were known for in Jamestown, but when COVID hit we just decided we had to make a change and so we threw together an online auction and it went pretty well. And we decided to do it again this year."

[Click here](#) to head to the auction website.

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## **Public input sought for bison grazing proposal on BLM lands in Phillips County**

*(From KULR NBC)*

LEWISTOWN, Mont. - Public input is being sought by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a bison grazing proposal on BLM-administered lands in Phillips County.

The public is being invited to comment in the BLM's Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) regarding the proposal.

Background provided by the BLM says on Sept. 24, 2019, the American Prairie Reserve (APR) submitted a proposal (an update to their earlier proposal submitted on Nov. 20, 2017) to modify certain terms and conditions of seven BLM-administered grazing permits held by the APR.

The original proposal sought permit changes for 18 BLM grazing allotments in four counties.

BLM conducted public scoping April 9 through June 11, 2018, including public meetings held in those four counties.

The BLM received 2,497 submissions which were reviewed and considered in determining the final set of issues to be included in the NEPA analysis.

You can view the documents associated with the EA's completed public scoping period on the [BLM'S ePlanning website here](#).

Read [more](#).

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## **Hometown Farmer - Heritage Bison Ranches**

*(From Siouxland News)*

HINTON, Iowa — It's a premium meat from America's national mammal and you can get it right in Siouxland.

It's a creature you don't normally catch around here - and you can see a lot of them in a

herd near Hinton!

"They're pretty territorial," said farmer Lance Bollmeyer. "Once they know the boundaries, they don't challenge the boundaries much."

Lance and his wife Rachel own Heritage Bison Ranches.

Rachel's family raises the bovine on a big ranch out in South Dakota, but when COVID hit, the two had the idea to bring the animals out east.

"With COVID and everybody's ordering their food online, we thought it might be a good time to get started," said Rachel.

That's how Heritage Bison Ranches was born.

The animals are brought out to Hinton in small groups and grain fed for 90 days after eating grass out on the range.

"It's super-high in protein," said Rachel, describing the finished product. "Higher than beef, higher than chicken, super high in vitamin B12 - it's just very healthy for you."

The meat is anti-biotic and growth-hormone free, but to eat the meat and unlock those buffalo health benefits, Rachel says you've got to know how to cook it.

"You either have to cook it low and slow or you have to cook it, like flash sear it, really high heat for shorter amounts of time," said Rachel.

Read [more](#).

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## **From Bison to Tree Forts, Columbus Metro Parks Boast More Than Just Hiking Trails**

*(From the Columbus Dispatch)*

The 19 natural areas that make up the Metro Parks system in central Ohio are great local attractions to visit any time of year. The system boasts hiking trails, nature center programs and all sorts of wildlife.

But did you know features at the Metro Parks also include a herd of bison, a 35-foot-tall climbing wall and a treehouse?

Here are some of the more unique aspects and hidden gems of these central Ohio green spaces:

One might expect to see birds or deer or maybe even a snake when hiking through a Columbus-area Park. But visitors to this Galloway Park also can see a herd of bison roaming freely within two large, enclosed pastures.

A beloved central Ohio attraction, about 10 of these massive creatures call the more than 7,000 acres of forest, prairie and wetlands that make up Battelle Darby Creek home.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Indiana Nature Notes: Kankakee Sands closes in on 100 bison**

*(From the Newton County Enterprise)*

It's that exciting time of the year when the bison calves are born!

At the close of 2020, we had 93 bison in our Kankakee Sands herd. As I pen this article, 21 calves have already been documented in the bison pasture, which means that for the first time in the history of Kankakee Sands, we have more than 100 bison grazing on our

prairies.

With 32 mature cows in our herd, we are expecting somewhere between 25 to 30 calves to be born this spring. Cows typically give birth to one calf per year; twins are rare.

Bison calves, with their red fur and sprightly 40-pound bodies, are a joy to watch romp on the prairie. These energetic little “red dogs” are able to run when they are just hours old.

And run they do!

While the female bison calmly graze and chew their cud, the calves are often seen sprinting around the matriarchal groups in wide circles, only to stop suddenly and decide that it is time to nurse.

As the year progresses, the calves will run less and eat more; their fur will change from red to brown, and they will begin a steady ascent to their ultimate adult weight of weight of 1,200 pounds for a female and 2,000 pounds for a male.

There's such a natural comfort in watching the calves grow up on the prairie. It seems so “right” to have them here that it is sometimes hard for me to remember that, just five years ago, there were no bison at Kankakee Sands.

Not even one.

It was in October 2016 that we first brought 23 bison to Kankakee Sands to help manage our prairies. These keystone species of the North American prairies create habitat for insects, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians as their massive bodies move across the prairie, churning up soil, eating vegetation, defecating and reproducing.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Unique European bison transport just arrived in Romania**

*(From the EU Reporter)*

The Bison Hillock herd is the largest population of free bison in Romania, and thanks to this latest transport now stands at about 80 individuals. The European bison is one of the most vulnerable large mammals in the world, and it is protected at the European level. The Life-Bison rewilding project, begun in 2014 by Rewilding Europe and [WWF-Romania](#) aims to create a viable population that breeds in the wild and supports the area's biodiversity, but also brings back a cultural value, a symbol that has allowed people in the local communities to rediscover the beauty of their surroundings, and develop entrepreneurial activities based on experiences in nature. Romania is among the few countries with European bison roaming in the wild. The Bison Hillock herd is the largest population of free bison in Romania, and thanks to this latest transport now stands at about 100 individuals. European bison is one of the most vulnerable large mammals in the world.

The transport was prepared at length by [WWF-Romania](#), [Rewilding Europe](#) and the German Donaumoos, Bad Berleburg, Neumünster and Bielefeld Reserves where the bison came from. The decision to relocate the males was taken after a complex selection process and consultations with the IUCN SSC Bison Specialist Group on the ethology and conservation of the species. The bison spent six months together in the Donaumoos Wisentgehege Reserve to get to know each other and to facilitate the adaptation process once they arrived in the unknown environment of the Natura 2000 Țarcu Mountains Site. "After six years we can say that we have had many firsts in this project, from having more than 25 calves born in the wild, to GPS data that shows a bison reaching an altitude of more than 2000 meters in the Țarcu Mountains, and now we managed to successfully deliver a unique transport, consisting only of males. This is a pioneering project, and this helps the whole scientific community in Europe to better understand the species and to have good results in its conservation," said WWF Romania LIFE RE-Bison Project Manager Marina Drugă.

After the quarantine period, the newly-arrived males will be released into the wild where, thanks to the last two relocations this year, there is now a population of 100 bison, the

largest in Romania. These males are still young, but at maturity they can weigh more than 800 kg, while females can reach over 600 kg. Male bison are solitary and spend most of their time away from the female group with calves, but return during the breeding season and over winter.

"When monitoring males like Bilbo, brought from Sweden in 2017, you can't help but treat it with respect, like a wild animal should be treated.

Read [more](#).

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## **Senate Oks Bill to Boost Ag Carbon Markets**

*(From AgriPulse)*

A bill that would lay the groundwork for ag carbon markets by putting USDA in charge of certifying farm advisers and credit verifiers won easy Senate approval Thursday in a defeat for some progressives and fossil fuel advocates on opposite sides of the climate issue.

Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., said that passage of the Growing Climate Solutions Act was a "landmark" step toward using agriculture and forestry to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and curb climate change.

The bill reached the Senate floor with a whopping 55 co-sponsors, and the Senate easily turned aside an amendment backed by the American Energy Alliance, an advocacy group for the fossil fuel industry, that would have stripped the legislation of the USDA certification program. AEA advocates for the fossil fuel industry.

The amendment, sponsored by Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, failed, 11-89, and then the Senate passed the legislation, 92-8.

Five of the Senate's most progressive members, including Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, voted against the bill as well as three Republicans.

The bill now goes to the House, where Ag Committee members Abigail Spanberger, D-Va., and Don Bacon, R-Neb., have introduced a companion bill.

Opposition from conservatives and progressives could be a factor in the House. The Agriculture Committee's top Republican, Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson of Pennsylvania, said the bill "is a big-government solution in search of a problem. The consequences of government intrusion into voluntary carbon markets have not been adequately explored and Congress should continue educating itself and vetting these issues before legislating."

During Thursday's Senate debate, Lee argued that the USDA certification program would actually choke the development of carbon markets by slowing innovation. "This will ultimately only impose obstacles for farmers, ranchers and foresters," he said.

But the bill's chief GOP sponsor, Mike Braun of Indiana, said the certification program would "provide legitimacy to the trustworthy actors in the marketplace." That, in turn, will make it easier for small farmers to participate in carbon markets, Braun said.

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## **US, Taiwan to Resume Formal Trade Discussions**

U.S. and Taiwanese officials are set to resume formal discussions on improving trade ties between the two countries as part of a long-dormant Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, or TIFA for short, according to a statement released by the American Institute in Taiwan.

Taiwan's Office of Trade Negotiations and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative will be the primary participants, according to the AIT statement.

About a year ago Taiwan announced it would lift its ban on U.S. beef from cattle under 30 months old at slaughter as well as ditch its zero tolerance for ractopamine residues in pork. The moves were seen broadly as a goodwill gesture, and in October [50 U.S. Republican and Democratic Senators signed a letter](#) to the Trump administration, pushing for talks to begin negotiations for a trade agreement with Taiwan.

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## Drought's Toll on U.S. Agriculture Points to Even-Higher Food Prices

*(From the Wall Street Journal)*

The Southwest is suffering through one of its worst droughts on record amid a critical reduction in the amount of water from snowpack runoff.

Roughly 9.8% of the U.S. is currently in what climate experts refer to as exceptional drought, the most severe designation, which is characterized by widespread crop and pasture losses and shortages in reservoirs, streams and wells amounting to water emergencies. About 44% of the nation is experiencing some level of drought, with a further 13% currently affected by drier-than-normal conditions.

Reduced snowmelt is one of several factors that contribute to drought conditions, along with dry weather, warmer temperatures and population growth, which puts added strain on water resources.

The current drought is on pace to be one of the worst ever. One of the hardest-hit states is California, home to about 70,000 farms and ranches with a combined output of about \$50 billion a year. The dairy industry accounts for the largest chunk of the state's agricultural revenue, followed by almonds and grapes.

Read more [here](#).

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## Save the Date!

- Fall 2021 - Date TBD - RMBA Fall Ranch Tour of Prairie Ridge Buffalo - CO
- 09/23/2021 – Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival, SD
- 09/25/2021 – BisonFest, TX
- 11/6/2021 - Custer State Park Annual Auction, SD
- 11/8/2021 - Antelope Island State Park Production Auction, UT
- 12/4/2021 – Kansas Bison Association Sale, KS
- 12/7/2021 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Auction, SD
- 1/1/2022 - Prairie Legends Bison Auction - TBD
- 1/8/2022 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Bison Auction, SD
- 1/19/2022 – 1/22/2022 – National Bison Association Winter Conference, CO
- 2/12/2022 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Sale, SD
- 2/19/2022 – Dakota Territory Bison Association Sale, SD



- 3/04/2022 - RMBA's Spring Conference - Location TBD

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.

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[Click Here for NBA Calendar of Events](#)

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