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Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for July 29, 2022

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.



Registration Now Open for Sept. 10th South Dakota

Regenerative Field Day

The National Bison Association this week opened registration for the 2nd of its Regenerative Bison Ranching Field Day series, which includes six field days in six states at working bison operations.

The September 10th event in Mission, SD will take place at Antelope Creek Bison and will be hosted by the [Dakota Territory Buffalo Association](#) (DTBA). The event will not only feature the field day, but also a DTBA membership meeting and a dinner provided by the association and [Dakota Pure Bison](#).

The National Bison North Central Regenerative Ranching Workshop Series, which is being funded by the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Education and Research (NCSARE) program at the University of Minnesota, will be facilitated in the summers of 2022 and 2023 and will feature six one-day workshops on bison farms and ranches in the states of IL, MN, ND, OH, SD, and WI. The field days will include expert speakers offering first-hand knowledge on properly managing bison grazing and handling to maximize their regenerative potential as a livestock species.

See the tentative agenda below and please register by September 7th the latest at <https://bisoncentral.com/product/nba-south-dakota-regenerative-workshop/>. Cost is only \$30/person and includes the workshop and two bison meals. Please direct questions to Jim Matheson - jim@bisoncentral.com.

NBA Regenerative Ranching Field Day #2

Sept. 10th - Antelope Creek Bison - Mission, SD

Just \$30 per person!

Register at bisoncentral.com/product/nba-south-dakota-regenerative-workshop/



Saturday, September 10th:

- 9:30 am: Register and network
- 10:00: Welcome from NBA and Host Ranch
- 10:15: Pasture walks and bison herd tour
- Noon: Lunch
- 1:30: NRCS Presentation - What can NRCS do for my bison operation?
- 2:30: Break
- 3:00 – TBD – Regenerative/Holistic Bison Management
- 4:00 – Antelope Creek Bison Ranch corral and handling facility tour
- 5:00 – Dakota Territory Buffalo Association (DTBA) meeting
- 6:00 - DTBA dinner



Thanks to North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Education and Research (SARE) and the University of Minnesota for their support in this project. Learn more at <https://www.sare.org/>.



Sustainable Agriculture
Research and Education

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.



CWF is proud to work with our partners to support continued recovery for the North American bison.



CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca

REFLECTIONS OF NATURE PHOTO CONTEST/PIOTR PISANSKI

Carcass numbers grow in Wood Buffalo bison anthrax outbreak

From cabinradio.ca

Parks Canada says 47 bison carcasses have so far been counted as an anthrax outbreak continues inside Wood Buffalo National Park.

Bison are susceptible to anthrax and past NWT outbreaks have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of animals. Ordinarily, Parks Canada said, the Wood Buffalo herd numbers around 5,000 animals.

Not all carcasses observed may necessarily be part of the outbreak. Parks Canada says two field-tested cases have been identified to date and none have been confirmed in a laboratory.

“We’re certainly keeping an eye on what’s happening,” said Jean Morin, the park’s acting superintendent, on Friday, adding the number of deceased bison did not yet appear to be having a significant impact on the herd as a whole.

“As soon as the weather cools off a little bit, usually the outbreak stops,” he said. “I don’t expect we’ll reach a number that would be significant enough that it would have an impact.”

The outbreak was first reported earlier this week.

Anthrax outbreaks don’t happen every summer but are triggered, Morin said, by conditions similar to those experienced over the past couple of years: fluctuations in the water table followed by heat. The park, he said, has an outbreak of note every five to 10 years.

In 2012, an anthrax outbreak among bison in the Northwest Territories killed more than 300 animals. Morin said Parks Canada was “in contact” with NWT authorities but the risk of the current outbreak spreading from herd to herd is considered low.

At the moment, carcasses are turning up in the southern reaches of the park. Several areas near the Peace River – the Sweetgrass Station, the Trident Creek and Meadows area, and the Peace Point junction with the old Garden River Road – have been closed.

The remainder of the park is open and Parks Canada says the risk to humans is minimal. “We have a team to deal with carcasses,” said Morin.

“It’s important to tell all the land users that are out and about, whether it’s in the park or outside, to keep an eye and report any animals they come across that are deceased. Then we can better assess them and keep an eye on the larger picture.”

Bison: The New Healthy Red Meat Raised Nearby

From vmetronews.com

TERRA ALTA, W.Va. — The industry of bison farming is growing in West Virginia. There are about a half-dozen operations in the Mountain State, and one of those is owned by Liz and Jimmie Riffle in Terra Alta-Riffle Farms.

Liz and Jimmie started the operation in 2017 and have about 40 bison today.

“It is a super-lean red meat. It actually has less fat in it than chicken,” Liz Riffle said during an appearance earlier this week on MetroNews “Talkline.” “So, it’s all heart healthy, one of the only red meats on a cardiac diet, and it’s good to eat.”

The Riffles both served in the US Navy and are nurses by trade. They spent a lot of time in the western part of the country. There, the Riffles learned bison was abundant, healthy, and tasty. Liz has been an animal lover with experience training horses and started considering bison as a business opportunity rather than just a meal.

“When you’re out there, you can go to a restaurant and get a bison burger or a bison steak anywhere,” Riffle said. “We realized then that is really good food. It’s super healthy. So, we started asking people they raise them and started asking questions.”

Both cow and buffalo are from the Bovidae family and are known for meat and leather production, and that’s where the similarities end.

Bison are much larger than their bovine cousins and do not require the same level of veterinary care. Bison are also fine with the cold weather, snow and high winds of the Terra Alta area.

“They’re technically a wild animal, so all their innate features are intact,” Riffle said. “So, they really don’t want you to touch them. They just want you to open a gate so they can go to more grass- that’s about it.”

Many cattle farmers do spend a great deal of time repairing fences or even responding when a cow wanders onto a neighboring property. For the Riffles, their location keeps the bison where they’re supposed to be and if they do get off the property, they typically don’t need to be chased.

“We’re at the top of a mountain, so they have a couple of miles to travel before they went anywhere,” Riffle said. “But, they’re so herd-bound when they get out they want to go back with the others.”

Riffle Farms operates with a regenerative philosophy when it comes to the land. The practice focuses on responsible practices that maintain the farm for generations of production. The bison on the farm are free-range, roaming on the farm eating grass, never in a stall or barn.

The Riffles offer tours that include tastings, farm-to-table dinners and bison products for sale. The farm also has a special event space for weddings and RV or tent camping at The Pointe at Riffle Farms.

“We do a lot of outreach in regards to agritourism events. People can come up to the farm for dinners and different tours and tastings,” Riffle said. “We talk all about the difference between farm-fresh meat and meat you buy in the grocery store.”

Meet the Group That’s Been Bringing Bison Back to Tribal Lands for 30 Years

From Civil Eats

For the past three decades, the InterTribal Buffalo Council has worked to reconnect Indigenous people with bison, reviving traditions and healing communities.

Whenever Wayne Frederick watches the American bison roaming around the sprawling South Dakota prairies of the Rosebud Indian Reservation, he sees a piece of himself. The

43-year-old Rosebud Sioux member and tribal council representative was born into the family tradition of bison herd management and has since dedicated nearly 37 years of his life to the hooved beasts.

“In times of question or hardship, I was lucky that I had those animals most of my life to ground me,” Frederick told Civil Eats. “If people were able to see this more often, you’d really respect life a lot more and where we came from.”

His father, Tom Frederick, who once worked as director of the tribe’s Department of Natural Resources and Game, Fish, and Parks, had always dreamed of bringing the buffalo back to Rosebud. It eventually became a reality in 1980, when the U.S. Department of the Interior approved his request to acquire 25 buffalo as surplus property from the Wind Cave National Park’s historic herd in the Southern Black Hills. Forty-two years later, the Rosebud herd has grown to 300 under the department’s watch, and Wayne Frederick had a chance to manage it from 2011 to 2014.

Frederick helped start another small herd with his father in 1999 at the Sinte Gleska University, a tribal public land-grant university located on the reservation, alongside university President Lionel Bordeaux. It began with 13 bison, each symbolizing a traditional moon of their calendar year, that arrived from Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge in Nebraska. By 2001, the herd had increased to 100 buffalo from the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve in Colorado.

Both tribally owned and operated herds and others like them are especially significant, as the beloved buffalo have been brought back from the brink of extinction since the dawn of the 20th century. Historical figures indicate that 30 to 60 million once wandered North America at their peak. But due to the rise of transcontinental railroads, unregulated hide hunting, drought, and the U.S. Army’s eradication of some northern herds, the total population dwindled drastically to only 325 wild buffalo by 1884.

“We see ourselves. They’re a resilient animal, just as we are resilient people,” said Troy Heinert, a Rosebud Sioux member and Democratic minority leader in the South Dakota Senate. “We’ve still been able to maintain our identity, and that is extremely important to us. When you’re handling those animals, they recognize that.”

In November, Heinert, 49, became executive director at the InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), which originated in 1992 as the InterTribal Bison Cooperative. This year, ITBC celebrates three decades of buffalo stewardship after transporting 20,000 animals to 55 tribal herds owned and operated by 76 member Nations. More than half of them were transferred from national parks, wildlife refuges, nature preserves, and private owners through the federal surplus property program—the same process that Frederick utilized in 1980.

The process of repopulating Indian Country has been a healing experience, especially for communities that lost contact with the buffalo for generations.

“There are ceremonies and songs that may not have been performed or sung for decades. But when we bring those buffalo back, that tradition is revived,” Heinert said. “There’s no greater feeling than that.”

The connections that have been built among member tribes are also noteworthy. Each time an eagle feather is tied to the council’s ceremonial staff, it symbolizes the welcoming of a new federally recognized tribe. Heinert says this annual tradition “serves as a reminder that all decisions to be made need to reflect the Nations and people we serve.” Yet despite this sense of collective triumph, the ITBC and its members still struggle to grow their herds and protect their way of life. As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) considers reclassifying the animal and requiring more inspections, some tribal members worry that the shift could inadvertently undercut their autonomy over bison for agricultural and cultural purposes.

Read [more](#).

Custer State Park officials urging visitors be on alert while observing bison during annual rut

From Newscenter1

CUSTER, S.D. – Under no circumstances is it ever safe to approach large wild animals, including the bison at Custer State Park – and especially during rutting season.

From mid-July through the beginning of September, the bison enter their rut or mating season. Males, or bulls, often are in competition with one another, duking it out as they fight for available females, referred to as cows. According to the National Park Service, male bison are known to mate with multiple females, but they will only mate with one male.

“It is just our standard bison awareness. Always stay within 100 yards – that is kind of our general rule of thumb that we always recommend here at the park,” Resource Program Manager Jason Gooder said. “For folks to stay at least 100 yards away from the animals and then to stay close by their vehicle.”

The rule of thumb can be a useful thing to remember. With a fully-extended arm, if your thumb blocks the animal, then you are at a safe enough distance. If you are in a situation where bison are a little too close for comfort, Gooder recommends being mindful of any unusual or aggressive behavior.

Vocal signs can include grunts and bellows, which bison normally use to communicate with each other, and loud sounds like a car or motorcycle engine can anger the animals and cause further disruptions.

“Any time the tail is starting to become raised, then the animal is becoming agitated,” Gooder explained. “And when the tail goes from being straight down to straight up, straight up means that the animal is very agitated and that is when folks should really pay attention and start to back off.”

And with the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally happening during what Gooder says will be the peak of the rut, he advises everyone, including bikers, to be situationally aware at all times.

“This is an exciting time of year if you want to come out to the park and see some unusual bison behavior,” Gooder said. “The rut is very exciting and a need-to-see.”

Museum’s Bison Antiquus exhibit now open to public

From The Orcasonian

16,000 years ago bison grazed in the meadows of Orcas Island. 14,000 years ago human beings harvested, butchered and ate bison meat in a meadow near Olga on Orcas Island, Washington State. Even today an artistic interpretation of a bison (created by George Post) grazes peacefully with living sheep at Fowler’s Corner on Orcas Island.

Some of the most complete skeletal remains of prehistoric bison ever discovered were unearthed in 2003 in an excavation in Olga. The bones, which were carefully gathered and brought to the Burke Museum at the University of Washington for evaluation, were carbon-dated at University of California, Irvine and said to be about 14,000 years old.

Archeological staff identified a large male bison, with the head almost completely intact, a smaller male, and one other. Some of the bones bore evidence of butchering with some kind of stone tools.

At this point, the bones were returned to the Orcas Island Historical Museum. Facsimiles were made to display, and the originals were safely stored.

A new installation featuring the bison presence and the significance of these particular bones will become part of the museum’s permanent exhibits and open to the public on July 28, announced Museum Executive Director Nancy Stillger.

Key sponsors for the exhibit include the Humanities Washington, Orcas Island Community Foundation, Island Hardware & Supply, Orcas Island Food Co-op, San Juan County Lodging Tax Funds, Bond Lumber – Andrew Stephens, Tony and Nancy Ayer, Antoinette Botsford and Vance Stephens. The new exhibit has been designed by Chris Erlich and is being realized by museum staff, numerous volunteers, and local craftspeople.

“The significance of this discovery cannot be underestimated,” said Carol Kulminski, President of the Museum’s Board of Directors. “Nowhere else has such a complete skeleton been found. The evidence of human presence shows that people were here long before the Clovis-first model.”

“This discovery helps to validate Indigenous tales of antiquity,” noted Antoinette Botsford, exhibit chair.

BLM issues final decision on bison grazing proposal

From The Rogersville Review

(MALTA, Mont.) – The Bureau of Land Management issued a final decision today for a bison grazing proposal involving seven allotments in Phillips County, Montana, held by American Prairie, which allows for bison grazing on six of the seven allotments.

The Telegraph Creek, Box Elder, Flat Creek, White Rock, French Coulee, Garey Coulee and East Dry Fork allotments – a total of approximately 63,500 acres of BLM-administered lands – currently provide 7,969 animal unit months of permitted use.

One common allotment grazed with another livestock operator would remain approved for cattle-only grazing. Four of the allotments are approved for seasonal grazing with pasture rotation. Year-round grazing is approved for three allotments; two of which had been previously authorized for bison grazing. There is no change in animal unit months on any of the allotments. Most allotments will be managed under a pasture rotation grazing program.

The final grazing decision, which describes the terms and conditions for each of the seven allotments, is based on existing laws, policies, and management plans, and supported by the analysis brought forward in its associated environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, released on March 30, 2022.

The release of the final grazing decision initiates a 30-day BLM appeal period. Certified letters of notification have been sent to qualified interested publics, as defined by federal grazing regulations. More information regarding the appeal period can be found within the final grazing decision.

The final grazing decision and related documents are available on the BLM’s ePlanning website [here](#).

USDA looking for innovations in soil health and climate-smart agriculture

From Ohio’s Country Journal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it will invest \$25 million this year for the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials program.

Through CIG, partners work to address our nation’s water quality, water quantity, air quality, soil health and wildlife habitat challenges, all while improving agricultural operations. The On-Farm Trials component of CIG supports widespread adoption and evaluation of innovative conservation approaches in partnership with agricultural producers. This year’s funding priorities are climate-smart agricultural solutions, irrigation water management, nutrient management and soil health.

“Through science and innovation, we can develop solutions to tackle the climate crisis, conserve and protect our water, enhance soil health, and create economic opportunities for producers,” said Terry Cosby, Chief of USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “Through On-Farm Trials, partners can work directly with farmers and ranchers to test and adopt new strategies on agricultural lands, accelerating the development and application of conservation that works for producers and the land.”

For FY 2022, to ensure that equity is incorporated in the planning and delivery of On-Farm Trials, at least 10% of the total funds available for On-Farm Trials are set aside for proposals that entirely benefit historically underserved (HU) producers. Additionally, applicants competing for the HU set-aside can waive non-federal match requirements.

Applications for On-Farm Trials are being accepted now through Sept. 22, 2022. Private entities whose primary business is related to agriculture, nongovernmental organizations with experience working with agricultural producers, and non-federal government agencies are eligible to apply. For more information and to apply, visit [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

Read [more](#).

Oregon gets USDA OK to operate its own meat inspection program

From KTVZ

SALEM, Ore. (KTVZ) -- Oregon on Thursday became the first state on the West Coast approved to operate a state meat inspection program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) just finalized a cooperative agreement with the Oregon Department of Agriculture to launch the program aimed at providing economic opportunity and resilience for Oregon’s livestock producers.

The agreement grants ODA the authority to inspect meat products produced for shipment within the state. Under the agreement, Oregon’s program must develop, administer, and enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA).

“I am so proud of our state, our partners, and the many ODA staff that helped make Oregon’s State Meat Inspection Program a reality,” said ODA Director Alexis Taylor. “Two years ago, in the middle of the pandemic, Oregonians and the ag industry came to us when they couldn’t move their meat products due to a shortage of inspection services. After much hard work, collaboration and determination, we designed a program that creates additional opportunities for producers and processors to grow and satisfy local demand.”

Federal law requires that meat sold for retail/wholesale markets be processed at a federal or equivalent state-inspected facility. Unfortunately, during the pandemic, federally inspected facilities were booked months or years out, meaning Oregon meat producers couldn’t get their products into the market.

Oregon’s cooperative agreement with USDA FSIS will give ODA the authority to inspect with oversight by USDA FSIS. Like the USDA, an ODA inspection will ensure compliance with construction, sanitation, food safety, and humane handling regulations.

The state’s program is not meant to compete with USDA. Instead, it complements the federal program and increases the state’s capacity by supporting smaller, local businesses to enable them to produce, process and ship statewide.

Existing USDA-inspected facilities may choose to stay with the federal inspection program or enroll in Oregon's program if it is beneficial to the business. ODA continues to work to serve the changing needs of Oregon's diverse agricultural and food sectors.

Oregon producers can apply to the State Meat Inspection Program by visiting ODA's State Meat Inspection Program web page or emailing StateMeatInspection@oda.oregon.gov. According to the cooperative agreement, USDA will reimburse the state 50 percent of the program costs. Inspections during normal business hours will be conducted free of charge. Please visit ODA online for more information on Oregon's state meat inspection program and answers to frequently asked questions.

With the addition of Oregon, 28 states now have state meat inspection programs and for more information about state inspection programs nationwide, please visit <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/state-inspection-programs>.



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Save the Date!

- 8/15/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 8/18/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 9/10/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Mission, SD
- 9/15/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 9/24/2022 - Rocky Mountain Bison Assn. Fall Ranch Tour - WY
- 10/14/2022 - Wisconsin Bison Producer's Association Fall Meeting - WI
- 10/15/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Villa Grove, IL
- 10/17/2022 - Middle Creek Ranch Production Webcast Auction - Online
- 10/20/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 11/05/2022 - Custer State Park Annual Buffalo Auction - SD
- 11/09/2022 - Antelope Island State Park Bison Webcast Auction - Online
- 11/17/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction - Online
- 11/19/2022 - Coyote Trail Buffalo Ranch Simulcast Production Auction - SD
- 11/25/2022 - Minnesota Bison Association Bison Fundamentals - MN
- 11/26/2022 - Minnesota Bison Association Legends of the Fall Sale - MN
- 11/27/2022 - Rocking P Ranch Simulcast Production Auction - SD
- 11/14/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 12/01/2022 - Kansas Buffalo Association Sale - KS
- 12/01/2022 - Western Bison Association Meeting and Show/Sale - UT
- 12/06/2022 - Northern Range Buffalo Consignment Simulcast Auction - Online
- 12/15/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction - Online
- 1/02/2023 - Prairie Legends Bison Webcast Auction - Online
- 1/07/2023 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Simulcast Auction - SD
- 1/17/2023 - Jack Auction Group Video Auction - Online
- 1/18/2023 - NBA Winter Conference - Westminster, CO
- 1/21/2023 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - Denver, CO
- 2/04/2023 - Dakota Territory Buffalo Assn. Simulcast Auction - SD
- 2/11/2023 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Sale Simulcast Auction - SD
- 2/24/2023 - Beltway Bison Consignment Auction - PA

- 3/09/2023 - Eastern Bison Association Winter Conference and Auction - PA

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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