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Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for June 25, 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.

Coming to Summer Conference? Here's What to Expect

National Bison Association is putting the finishing touches on the plans for a fun-filled conference and get together starting Sunday.

Sunday activities will kick off at 5 p.m. with a reception and Center of Excellence for Bison Studies Fundraiser on the Hathaway Patio, adjacent to the restaurant. The reception will feature the inaugural Bison Cornhole Tournament, in which contestants will pay a \$20 entry fee and compete for an NBA membership or one of the customized cornhole boards. All proceeds will go to support the Center of Excellence for Bison Studies. The evening will feature light appetizers, including tender tails provided by Rocky Mountain natural Meats

and a cash bar. Conference registration will also open at 4 pm on Sunday in the conference area of the hotel.

The Monday ranch tours will depart Little America in front of the lobby at 7:30 am.

“Come down and get registered for the conference starting at 6:30 am, grab some coffee and hop on the bus, or follow along in your own vehicle as there’s plenty of parking at both locations,” said NBA assistant director Jim Matheson. “We will first tour Memphis Bison Ranch in Carr, CO, which will feature a tour of their bison startup operation and a ‘mini farmers market’ that will provide breakfast to attendees and exhibit direct to consumer marketing tools and techniques.

“We’ll then head to the historic Terry Bison Ranch, and tour Cold Creek Buffalo award winning herd and see a live animal handling demonstration,” he said.

Attendees will enjoy a bison burger lunch at the Terry Ranch before afternoon presentations on site. There will be a bus that will head back to Little America at 2 pm for those that would like to get back or enjoy the Terry Ranch and take advantage of a discounted \$10 train ride through their own bison herd.

Remaining buses will return to Little America after the afternoon presentations at approximately 4 pm.

Please be sure to bring your benefit auction item to dinner with you Monday evening and fill out a donation slip provided on the display tables. The benefit auction dinner will feature bison strip steaks donated by North American Bison, LLC, and will also feature the 2020 NBA Member of the Year presentation.

Tuesday will kick off with the trade show opening and breakfast in the Wyoming Room. A series of educational presentations will begin at 9 am with Dr. Kayla Brown explaining what you can do as a producer in a bison-emergency. Lunch will feature a pulled bison sandwich and all the fixings, courtesy of Rocky Mountain Natural Meats.

The closing dinner will be a bison roast thanks to a sponsorship from Frontiere Natural Meats.

The weather forecast is looking promising with highs in the low 70s and sunshine. The entire conference agenda is available [here](#).

NBA Submits Recommendations for Supply Chain Resiliency

Establishing a more secure, resilient and diverse supply chain requires more than a piecemeal approach, but instead requires a comprehensive set of policies that diversify and strengthen every step of the food production process from ranchers’ pastures to consumers’ plates, the National Bison Association said in formal comments filed with USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service earlier this week.

The NBA’s comments were filed in response to President Biden’s Executive order in April seeking input on creating a resilient, diverse and secure supply chain.

“Because resiliency won’t come through changes in one link of the supply chain, our recommendations focus on three critical areas of the meat sector: animal production, meat processing, and food marketing,” the NBA wrote.

In the area of meat processing, the NBA urged adopting of the provisions included in the proposed Strengthening Local Meat Processing Act, which include scale-appropriate guidance and assistance from USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service, implementing a small plant grant program, and increasing training and technical assistance resources for small processors. The NBA recommended that meat processors be allowed to use value-added grant funds to purchase equipment and requested research into ways that small processors could better utilize slaughter by products. And the association requested that fees be lowered for voluntary inspection.

At the ranch level, the NBA listed a series of recommendations, including:

- Expanded support for beginning farmers and ranchers, expanded risk management goals
- Incentives for regenerative practices
- Greater research into alternative agriculture production and marketing;
- Assistance in obtaining organic or Process Verified certification; and
- New research into technologies for livestock finishing protocols and manure utilization.

In the area of marketing, NBA urged greater focus on regional food hubs, expanded support for farm-direct marketing, and additional emphasis on export market development for bison.

In emphasizing the need for a more resilient supply chain, the NBA wrote, “Events over the past 16 months have torn back the curtain to expose the fragility of the concentrated, centralized food production, processing and distribution system.”

The full comments filed by the NBA are available [here](#).



Center of Excellence Taking on New Look with Donated Items

The Newly Establish Center of Excellence for Bison Studies is looking a bit less like a university agricultural field station, and a bit more like a hub for all-things bison, thanks to some recent donations by Center supporter.

This week, COE board member and Sinte Gleska University Provost Phil Baird delivered to Center Director Kristi Cammack a sculpture created for Baird in 1999 by Darrell Holy Eagle of Rapid City. In an inscription accompanying the sculpture, Holy Eagle wrote, “The carving is a refined idea to reflect my feels about the return of our relatives, the buffalo. They are so important to us. There are many different perspectives, and w need to continue to export the reasons why the bison are coming back to us. Those who are skeptics about the return of the buffalo will be enlightened in time.”

Baird, an alumnus of South Dakota State University, said that he decided to provide the sculpture on loan to the center “because I believe in the Center and the work it is doing. We gave birth to something significant, and I thought this sculpture would be a symbolic way of marking the significance of the center.”

COE board member Mimi Hillenbrand is also providing a bison head mount to replace the current elk head mount currently adorning the wall in Cammack’s office.

“Cammack noted, “ These generous donations really give our office a look and feel that is reflective of our mission and commitment. We really appreciate these generous gifts.

NBA Bison Producers’ App Puts More Control in Ranchers’ Hands

Concerns over the lack of transparency and accountability in the commodity meat industry has dominated the agricultural news over the past few weeks.

The NBA’s Producer App, utilizing innovative technology developed by HerdDogg, provides bison ranchers with a valuable tool to promote transparency from pasture to plate. HerdDogg continues to expand their platform to provide even more capabilities for ranchers.

“This month, we officially launched the first phase of the HerdDogg Animal Traceability Initiative,” HerdDogg announced in a recent news release. “Now underway as

a pilot with the Lockhart Cattle Company in Wyoming, the program is set to expand to other states in coming months.

“Working shoulder-to-shoulder with visionary Wyoming producers, HerdDogg is aiming to create a model for food traceability and transparency that can deliver value for ranchers and consumers nationwide” HerdDogg notes.

Melissa Brandao, HerdDogg's founder and chief revenue officer, explained, ““HerdDogg tags generate automated data sets onto which is layered additional data collected by the producers, protocols, and programs within the ranch. That data—along with insights into the region, breed, and flavor profiles—are encapsulated in a QR code, which can then be accessed in much the same way today as you access a restaurant menu using your phone.”

HerdDogg will be exhibiting at the NBA Summer Conference, so attendees can swing by and gain more information on this new technology, and get started on the NBA Bison Producer App on the spot!

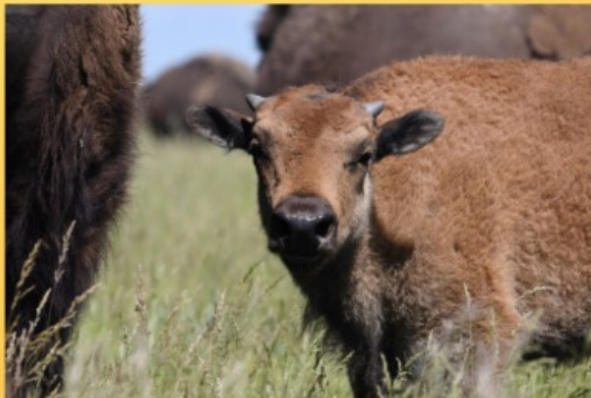
Learn more about the NBA Bison Producer app [here](#).



Winner's Choice... Could Be Yours

Be sure to arrive by 5 p.m. on Sunday for the Summer Conference in Cheyenne, WY to compete in the inaugural NBA Conhole Classic tournament (it's so good that it earned the name "classic" before the first bean bag was ever tossed). The winner gets their choice of one set of these cornhole boards. All proceed will benefit the Center of Excellence for Bison Studies.

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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USDA Invests \$55.2 million in Grants to Increase Capacity and Expand Access in Meat and Poultry Inspection Operations

(From USDA News Release)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) this week announced \$55.2 million in

competitive grant funding available through the new Meat and Poultry Inspection Readiness Grant (MPIRG) program. The new program is funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

USDA encourages grant applications that focus on improving meat and poultry slaughter and processing capacity and efficiency; developing new and expanding existing markets; increasing capacity and better meeting consumer and producer demand; maintaining strong inspection and food safety standards; obtaining a larger commercial presence; and increasing access to slaughter or processing facilities for smaller farms and ranches, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged producers, and veteran producers. Eligible meat and poultry slaughter and processing facilities include commercial businesses, cooperatives, and tribal enterprises.

MPIRG's Planning for a Federal Grant of Inspection (PFGI) project is for processing facilities currently in operation and are working toward Federal inspection. Applicants can be located anywhere in the states and territories. Whereas MPIRG's Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) Compliance project is only for processing facilities located in states with a Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) CIS program.

Yellowstone's First Bison Goring in '21

(From Jackson Hole News & Guide)

An inglorious and painful, though hallmark, sign of Northwestern Wyoming summer passed by over the weekend near the shoreline of Yellowstone Lake.

The unfortunate, typically annual event that unfolded was a Yellowstone National Park tourist being gored by a bison. Details of the Sunday afternoon incident are sparse, but Public Affairs Officer Linda Veress confirmed over email that a 30-year-old female from Ann Arbor, Michigan, was hiking with a partner on the Storm Point Trail when there was a wildlife interaction that turned dangerous.

"We're not clear how the encounter with the bison occurred," Veress wrote in an email. "The female sustained significant injuries and was flown to Eastern Idaho Medical Center in Idaho Falls, Idaho."

There is no more information available about the incident, she said.

Although it's unclear what led to the goring, oftentimes incidents with bison that don't work out favorably for Yellowstone visitors are precipitated by people getting way too close. Park regulations demand that visitors keep at least 25 yards away from bison, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, deer and coyotes, and 100 yards away from bears and wolves.

Read more [here](#).

Tanka Bar Featured in Hatman Group Podcast

The Hartman Group, a leading consumer research firm, featured Native American Natural Foods' Tanka Bar brand in the latest installment in their Insatiable Appetite podcast series.

The teaser notes, "On this podcast, we learn about how the unique Tanka Bar (an all-natural buffalo jerky) is part of returning the buffalo to Native American lands and what that means in terms of indigenous people, cultural traditions and environmental and social justice."

You can listen to the entire podcast [here](#).

CME Group to Initiate Nature-Based Offsets Futures

(From AgriPulse)

CME Group is launching a new futures contract Aug. 1 that will be tied to the value of nature-based carbon credits, including those generated from agriculture.

The new N-GEO futures are designed “to help create a more transparent and efficient voluntary emissions offset market,” CME Group said in a news release .

"More companies are relying on nature-based offsets as part of their overall climate strategies as the move to net-zero emissions continues to accelerate," said Peter Keavey, Global Head of Energy at CME Group. "By offering a standardized mechanism for managing the price risk associated with those initiatives, our new N-GEO futures will provide the marketplace with an important tool to help navigate the ongoing energy transition."

The move was welcomed by Debbie Reed, executive director of Ecosystem Services Marketplace Consortium, which is developing a market for credits that are generated from farming practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect water quality.

"I do think this will bring welcome transparency in pricing/valuation," Reed said in an email. She said the increasing demand for carbon offsets, combined with a futures market, "will show increased pricing for natural climate solutions over time."

Reed said she doesn't know whether the new futures contract will lead to an increase in credit prices, but she does think “it will reflect the increased demand, which will lead to increased pricing/valuation.”

The futures were developed with Xpansiv market CBL, which launched an N-GEO spot contract earlier this year based on eligible voluntary offsets from Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) projects with additional Climate, Community, and Biodiversity (CCB) accreditation.

"Following the rapid market adoption of the GEO, we launched the N-GEO in response to rising demand for nature-based solutions," said Xpansiv President and COO John Melby. "It brings transparency and price certainty to a vital subset of the offset market, and N-GEO futures will further empower participants to meet climate commitments while promoting biodiversity and supporting developing communities."

Colorado Court Rejects Livestock Slaughter Ballot Measure

(From meatingplace.com)

The Colorado Supreme Court has rejected a ballot measure that could have led to considerable changes in the state's meat processing operations.

The measure, Initiative 16, was set to appear on the 2022 state ballot, and had it passed, would have implemented three new rules for livestock: removing livestock exemptions from animal cruelty statutes; expanding the definition of a “sexual act with an animal”; and most relevant to processors, requiring that animals live a quarter of their “natural lifespan” before being slaughtered.

The initiative would have defined “natural lifespan” as 20 years for cows, 15 for sheep and pigs, 10 for turkeys, eight for chickens, and six for ducks and rabbits.

However, in a [new ruling](#), the Colorado Supreme Court rejected the measure for violating the single-subject rule of the Colorado Constitution. Regarding the “sexual act with an animal” statute, the court stated that the new rule would have been overly broad and could have impacted arenas beyond animal agriculture.

“The initiative’s central theme is incorporating livestock into the animal cruelty statutes but expanding the definition of ‘sexual act with an animal’ would criminalize additional conduct regardless of whether that conduct is directed at livestock or other animals,” the ruling stated.

Senate Hearing Showcases Beef Industry Struggles, Lack of Consensus on Fixes

(From AgriPulse)

A hearing called to explore beef price transparency issues highlighted some possible changes, but senators also heard a good deal of defense for the current system.

Five witnesses representing producer groups and different academic and economic viewpoints all agreed in their testimony to the Senate Ag Committee that price disparities between producers and beef packers are high; the question was whether there is something wrong that needs to be corrected.

“Both the direction and magnitude of the price spread are well within the range of expectation,” Rabobank animal protein analyst Dustin Aherin told senators. “Like many businesses, the pandemic has created enormous challenges for cattle producers; seeing the price difference between cattle and beef has only added to that emotional strain.”

But Justin Tupper, a South Dakota rancher and auctioneer who is the vice president of the U.S. Cattlemen’s Association, argued that producers are being forced to bear a disproportionate amount of market risk.

“I don’t disagree that there are cycles,” he said. “But as we look back through the history of the cycles, how many farms and ranches and how many small feedlots do we have to lose every time we go through a cycle because ‘it’s just another cycle?’”

The issue of price disparity is not a new one, although recent events like the COVID-19 pandemic, a fire at a Kansas packing plant, and the JBS cyberattack have intensified producer concerns and gotten the attention of Congress. Many in the industry have pointed to the events and disparate impacts as evidence of a need for more price transparency in the industry.

Arkansas Sen. John Boozman, the panel’s top Republican, said there is some agreement that producers would benefit from a more transparent marketplace but no consensus yet on how to do that.

Biden Picks Wilkes to Head USDA's Natural Resources, Environment Mission Area

(From AgriPulse)

President Joe Biden announced Wednesday that he plans to nominate Homer Wilkes, the current director of the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Restoration Division of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, as USDA's undersecretary for natural resources and environment.

Wilkes is a veteran of several different NRCS and USDA roles and has been with the department for more than 31 years. He has also spent time as the Mississippi state conservationist, the chief financial officer and acting associate chief of NRCS and was also involved in overseeing the cleanup of the Gulf Coast following the BP oil spill in 2010.

In a statement, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said the nomination "reflects USDA's commitment to putting agriculture, forestry and working lands at the center of solutions to increase climate resilience, sequester carbon, (and) protect our air and water."

Vilsack added Wilkes is a “collaborative leader with a track record of working towards large-scale solutions in partnership with communities. This spirit and approach position Dr. Wilkes to ensure that even with different leadership within the USDA subcabinet there is connectivity between NRCS and the Forest Service.”

Wilkes was first nominated to serve in the position in 2009 during the Obama administration, but withdrew his nomination for personal reasons, according to a report

Wisconsin Assembly Passes Meat Labeling Bill

(From Meatingplace.com)

The Wisconsin State Legislature has passed a bill that would prohibit plant-based and cultivated proteins from using the word “meat” on product packaging.

“Under this bill,” the legislation states, “no person may label a food product as, or sell or offer for sale a food product that is labeled as, any type of meat product or ‘meat’ unless the food product is derived from an edible part of the flesh of an animal or any part of an insect and does not include cultured animal tissue that is produced from animal cell cultures.”

The measure passed unanimously on voice votes, and now moves to the Wisconsin Senate. The legislature also passed bills banning the term “milk” from beverages not deriving from hoofed mammals, and from selling products as “cream,” “yogurt,” or “cheese” unless they include animal-based dairy.

A number of other states are attempting similar labeling bills, including Michigan, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.



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Save the Date!

- 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

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.

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