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JUNE 27 - 29, 2021
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Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for March 19, 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.

Summer Conference Committee Starts Planning June Event

Members of the National and Rocky Mountain Bison Associations met on Thursday to start planning the 2021 NBA/RMBA Summer Conference. The event is scheduled for June 27th – 29th in Cheyenne, Wyoming at the Little America Hotel -

<https://cheyenne.littleamerica.com/>. Please note, Sunday June 27th is intended to be a travel day for attendees with an optional dinner event that evening at a location to be determined.



Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for this exciting event. The summer conference will include at least two ranch tours and top-notch bison educational programming that the NBA is known for.

We'll also enjoy bison feasts, excellent networking opportunities, fun activities and a family-friendly environment over two days of learning and fellowship. For those attendees that plan to fly in for the event, Cheyenne is just 90 minutes or so from Denver International Airport.

Please keep an eye on the Summer Conference web page for updates as the agenda comes together at <https://bisoncentral.com/nba-summer-conference/> and we hope to see you in Cheyenne!

NBA Reminds Vilsack, Tai of Commitment to Address EU Bison Tariff

The National Bison Association today sent letters to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and newly confirmed U.S. Trade Representative Katheryn Tai asking them to reaffirm the commitment that was previously made to eliminate the 20% tariff that the European Union imposes on U.S. bison meat imports.

In 2013, Secretary Vilsack and then-U.S. Trade Representative Michal From had affirmed their commitment to address that issue in the trade negotiations underway with the EU at the time.

“As the Biden administration move to reopen any trade negotiations with the EU, and to complete the development of a free trade agreement with the United Kingdom, we urge you to again make this issue a part of the agricultural trade agenda,” NBA Executive Director Dave Carter wrote to Vilsack and Tai.

The letters included copies of the 2013 communication that the NBA had received from both Secretary Vilsack and Ambassador From.

USDA Holding Two Listening Session on COVID Relief Measures

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is holding listening sessions today and Monday to gather input on how to implement the agricultural provisions of the American Rescue Act recently enacted by Congress. The legislation includes roughly 4 billion for food distribution, grants, processing plants, farmers markets and other programs.

The session today is focusing on gathering input on the grant programs. On Monday, the agency will focus on listening to ideas regarding the commodity purchase and food distribution programs. NBA Executive Director Dave Carter is among the 275 people registered to provide comments during Monday's session.

Science & Research Committee Prepares to Review Grant Proposals

The NBA Science and Research Committee met this week to prepare to review the 16 grant proposals that were submitted to the Center of Excellence for Bison Studies this week.

The 16 proposals, covering an array of bison research issues, were invited to be submitted after the Center Board of Directors winnowed through 36 letters of intent earlier this year. Now, the members of the NBA's Science & Research Committee will serve as the reviewers to determine which proposals will have priority status for funding from the center. The review process is scheduled to be completed by mid April.

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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Organization Working to Create Yellowstone Bison Refuge to Increase Herds

(From the Cowboy State Daily)

The nonprofit arm of Yellowstone National Park is working to expand a refuge and transfer area for bison to protect them from potential slaughter or hazing operations.

[Yellowstone Forever](#) is attempting to raise \$250,000 by June to create the refuge area, which would allow Yellowstone National Park to increase the number of bison it is able to quarantine and make eligible for transfer.

Yellowstone quarantines bison to make sure they are free of brucellosis, a disease that can be transmitted to cattle and cause heifers to abort their calves.

Bison without the disease are to be used to establish new tribal and conservation herds across North America through the foundation's Bison Conservation and Transfer Program.

The program is designed to protect the bison, support the culture and economy of Native Americans and preserve the unique Yellowstone bison genome.

Yellowstone's facility for quarantining bison and ensuring they are disease-free is currently at capacity. The park is unable to take in any more bison this coming winter.

The expansion of Yellowstone's quarantine facility will increase the percentage of quarantine-eligible bison that can enter the program, the foundation said.

Currently, about 75% of bison eligible to be placed in the quarantine program are sent to slaughter due to lack of space. The expansion will reduce that number to 35%.

Capacity will increase from 100 animals entering the program to 250 animals over three-year intervals and the number of bison transferred to new areas each year will increase on average from 30 to 80 animals.

By 2023 this could result in almost 400 wild Yellowstone bison being diverted from slaughter. By 2024 these bison will be ready for transport to other tribal or conservation herds.

Read [more](#).

Vilsack: US Tariff Deals May Pave Way For EU, UK Trade Deal Talks

(From Agri-Pulse)

Agreements by the U.S., European Union and the UK to suspend all tariffs tied to airplane subsidies may open the door to renewed efforts by the U.S. to strike separate free trade agreements with the British and Europeans, according to Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack.

The U.S. announced Friday an agreement to suspend tariffs for four months on European yogurt, milk, cheddar cheese, Swiss cheese, cherry juice, whiskey, wine, peaches and other goods that are meant to punish the EU for continuing to subsidize airplane-maker Airbus. Likewise, the EU agreed to halt tariffs on U.S. orange juice, cotton, grapefruit, almonds, walnuts, cheese, ketchup and rum that are a response to U.S. subsidies for Boeing.

Similarly, the U.S. announced Thursday its suspension on Airbus-related tariffs on British cheese and other commodities.

“These steps signal the determination of both sides to embark on a fresh start in the relationship,” the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said in a statement.

Both the EU and the U.S. stressed that the tariff suspensions would allow for talks to resolve the airplane subsidy disputes, but Vilsack went further during a seminar at the Commodity Classic.

“Maybe it gives us an opportunity to have conversations about trade agreements with both the UK and the EU,” Vilsack said.

European Commission Executive Vice President and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis issued a similarly optimistic statement, although he did not mention FTA negotiations.

“A positive EU-U.S. trade relationship is important not only to the two sides but to global trade at large,” he said.

Deb Haaland Confirmed as Secretary of Interior

The Senate on Monday confirmed New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland as interior secretary, making her the first Native American to lead a Cabinet department and the first to lead the federal agency that has wielded influence over the nation’s tribes for nearly two centuries.

Haaland was confirmed by a 51-40 vote, the narrowest margin yet for a Cabinet nomination by President Joe Biden. Four Republicans voted yes: Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

[Democrats and tribal groups hailed Haaland’s confirmation](#) as historic, saying her selection means that Indigenous people — who lived in North America before the United States was created — will for the first time see a Native American lead the powerful department where decisions on relations with the nearly 600 federally recognized tribes are made. Interior also oversees a host of other issues, including energy development on public lands and waters, national parks and endangered species.

“Rep. Haaland’s confirmation represents a gigantic step forward in creating a government that represents the full richness and diversity of this country,” said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

“Native Americans for far too long have been neglected at the Cabinet level and in so many other places,” Schumer said.

Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo and a 35th-generation resident of New Mexico, thanked hundreds of supporters at a virtual party hosted by Native American

American Prairie Reserve Bison Herd Given Clean Bill of Health

(From the Sydney Herald)

American Prairie is pleased to announce that once again no evidence of clinical disease was found in its bison herd. The animals were tested under the expanded protocols agreed to earlier this year with the Phillips County Conservation District, and as part of the agreement, the Montana-based nonprofit also shared the full results with the Conservation District board prior to its March 9, 2021 meeting.

In January 2021, an adjustment board appointed by the state Department of Natural Resources and Conservation unanimously approved a new bison grazing and disease management agreement between American Prairie and the Phillips County Conservation District. The agreement gives American Prairie a 10-year variance from the Phillips County bison grazing ordinance. Under the agreement, American Prairie is expanding its already-robust disease management program to test more animals, as well as sharing herd information more frequently with the Conservation District. This most recent clinical testing was done as part of the agreement.

“This bison management agreement is the hard-won result of constructive talks with American Prairie, the Phillips County Conservation District, and livestock industry representatives,” said Alison Fox, CEO of American Prairie. “We are dedicated to continuing to build stronger relationships with these parties through the terms of the agreement, which is why we shared these test results without delay.”

Following the approval of the agreement, American Prairie conducted a bison handling where samples were collected from 97 bison from the herd and tested for a wide range of diseases. The samples were tested by the Montana Department of Livestock Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (MVDL) in Bozeman, MT, and one test was forwarded and conducted by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL).

The results show that all 97 bison are negative for brucellosis, Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR), Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD), and Johne’s disease. The bison samples did carry antibodies for several less-significant diseases, including Bluetongue, Parainfluenza 3 (PI-3) and Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD). According to the veterinarian conducting the examinations, all three diseases are known to be prevalent or endemic in livestock and wildlife across Montana, and exposure was not a surprise or a concern.

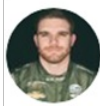
Read more [here](#).

Earnhardt Jr. Talks Driver Out Of Riding Bison To Indy 500 Intros

(From The Score)

Dale Earnhardt Jr. prevented IndyCar driver Conor Daly from making what could've been a big mistake at this year's Indianapolis 500.

Daly sent out a tweet Wednesday asking for thoughts on him riding a bison to the Indy 500 driver introductions. Earnhardt, who owns several bison, advised Daly against it.



Conor Daly  @ConorDaly22 · Mar 17

I legitimately asked someone over the weekend for their permission to ride their real life bison to #indy500 driver intros. Are people capable of riding those animals? Thoughts on this? @IMS  just a thought.

 80

 35

 696



Dale Earnhardt Jr.  @DaleJr · 23h

I've got 4 females and I wouldn't get in the fence with them. @RyanJNewman could give you an honest answer as he owns a large herd.

 13

 5

 317



Earnhardt's reply was all Daly needed to convince him to scrap the idea.

"This is exactly what I needed. It was at the time a thrilling American idea. But might have to put it on hold. I appreciate your expertise," Daly [tweeted](#), to which Earnhardt [responded](#), "Always happy to save a life."

The Indy 500 is scheduled for May 30.

[Source](#).

National Buffalo Museum Welcomes New Interactive Exhibit

(From NewsDakota.com)

JAMESTOWN, N.D. (NewsDakota.com) – The National Buffalo Museum's newest exhibit is installed and ready for visitors.

It is an interactive life-size taxidermied bison lying on its side with a fiberglass cavity fit with removable internal organ and bone replicas. Visitors can learn about the anatomy and physiology of bison by taking apart and reassembling the various parts of the bison.

The unique exhibit was designed and fabricated by KidZibits in St. Paul, MN. Their designers and craftspeople had to acquire a tanned bison hide, create a base and form sturdy enough to withstand years of handling by visitors, research the size, shape and orientation of bison organs, sculpt them from appropriate materials, and finally make sure that the exhibit is safe, durable, accurate and attractive. Creating this would have been difficult enough under any circumstances, but the added complication of the COVID-19 pandemic made this work challenging, as it did most jobs across industries.

"The museum's exhibits have focused heavily on the cultural significance of the American bison through the years, and while that is important, we have been looking for more opportunities to introduce visitors to bison physiology and behavior, which is linked to their prairie habitat," said Executive Director IlanaXinos.

"We've also been looking for ways to increase the interactivity of our exhibits. We know that visitors absorb more information when they learn while doing something fun." She added, "We are very grateful for the generous grants from Jamestown Tourism and the support of our donors, which made this exhibit possible."

The National Buffalo Museum's mission is to advocate for the restoration of the North American Bison through education and outreach.

For more information, contact Rachel Johnson at 701-252-8648 or collections@buffalomuseum.com.

[Source](#).

Bovine Tuberculosis-Positive Beef Herd in Michigan County

(From Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development News Release)

LANSING, MI - The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is reporting a case of bovine tuberculosis (TB) that was confirmed to be present in a Cheboygan County beef herd, located in Michigan's Accredited Free Zone (AFZ). The case was found through routine surveillance testing, as required by the state's current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This is Michigan's 81st cattle herd to be identified with bovine TB since 1998.

"As with all new findings of this disease in a cattle herd, additional testing will be done in the herd, and an epidemiologic investigation has been started to rule out the possibility of additional cases stemming from the affected herd," said State Veterinarian Nora Wineland, DVM. "A key part of this investigation will be whole genome sequencing, a comprehensive analysis of DNA from the TB bacteria found within this sample. This analysis will help to determine the source of the infection. Results of this testing may take up to three months to be completed."

Bovine TB is a bacterial disease that can affect all mammals, including humans. It is known to be present in the free-ranging white-tailed deer population in specific areas of northeastern lower Michigan, and the disease can be transmitted between deer and cattle. As a result, there are currently two TB zones within the state: a four-county area in northern lower Michigan called the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ); the remainder of the state is referred to as the Accredited Free Zone (AFZ).

Although Cheboygan County is a part of the AFZ, it is also categorized as a buffer county, which is a county adjacent to the four counties of the MAZ (Alpena, Alcona, Oscoda, and Montmorency counties). As required by the MOU, MDARD has been testing herds in buffer counties over the past year. This herd was identified as part of that surveillance program.

This is the first recorded case of a bovine TB-positive cattle herd in Cheboygan County; however, the disease was detected in two free-ranging white-tailed deer from the county in 2010. While state and federal agencies are taking significant steps to manage the disease, the continued hunting of deer in this area is an important tool in maintaining healthy deer and cattle populations.

More information about bovine TB can be found at Michigan.gov/BovineTB.

Animal Ag Alliance Monitoring Plan To Add Intelligence Division To The USDA

(From WNAX.com)

The Animal Ag Alliance is busy monitoring federal and state legislative proposals currently under consideration. Hannah Thompson Weeman with the Alliance says they're interested to see what happens in the U.S. House with the introduction of the Agricultural Intelligence Measures Act. If passed that would add an intelligence division the USDA to guard against any efforts to harm agriculture.

She says the general public is becoming more aware and appreciative of how important agriculture is and the need to protect it.

Weeman says they're also watching state issues like the one in Colorado that's calling for what's known as a Meat Out as well as efforts to push back against it.

Weeman says besides monitoring legislation at the federal and state levels, the Animal Ag Alliance is preparing for its Virtual Stakeholders Summit which runs May 5 and 6, 2021.

[Source.](#)

One year later: Pandemic introduces unprecedented supply, demand issues into livestock sector

(From Agri-Pulse)

In mid-March 2020, when restaurants and food service mostly shut down due to COVID-19, the livestock and dairy industries experienced unparalleled disruption. Half the industry's customers saw sales spike as consumers overwhelmed grocery stores, at times emptying out entire meat and dairy cases, while the remaining customer base ceased orders completely.

Hog producers suffered some of the most difficult decisions because hogs had to be slaughtered, or worse yet, euthanized. Early in the 2020 lockdown, year-over-year hog slaughter spiked 10% due to strong demand for pork, both domestically and abroad. Futures prices were also down, and with cash prices steady, basis levels encouraged producers to market hogs, according to [Lee Schulz](#), agricultural economist at Iowa State University. But then things changed.

"By the first week of May, hog slaughter was down 35%, and that created a major backlog that persisted through summer," Schulz said. "The week ending May 2, 850,000 fewer hogs were slaughtered compared to the same week in 2019."

As workers fell ill with the virus or stayed away from work out of fear of contracting it, slaughter plants shut down or reduced capacity, and producers cut rations to slow hog growth. Despite these efforts, some hogs had to be euthanized. Fourteen-day shutdowns mandated by local authorities in plants where one or more workers tested positive for COVID-19 added to the backlog, said [Julie Anna Potts](#), president and CEO of the North American Meat Institute.

"At the height of the slowdowns and shutdowns, plants were operating at 50-60% capacity for pork and beef," Potts said. Early in the pandemic, no overall plan existed for when a plant had to cease operating or what it had to do to reopen, she added, and that created uncertainty and inconsistency across the country.

In early April, the industry implemented employee temperature checks and screening and distributed guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE). On April 8, 2020, CDC issued guidance for critical infrastructure workers that stated they could continue working following potential exposure to COVID-19, as long as they remained asymptomatic and additional precautions were implemented.

On April 28, [President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order](#) widely interpreted — some said wrongly interpreted — as compelling meat plants to remain open to head off shortages in the food supply chain. As of Monday, more than 570 plants have reported outbreaks, more than 57,000 meat plant workers have contracted COVID-19, and more than 280 have died, according to an analysis by the [Food and Environment Reporting Network](#).

As processors [continued to grapple with early outbreaks](#), consumers stocked up on proteins, creating an unprecedented shift in packaging. "Restaurant-sized packages of red meat couldn't just be plopped into a grocery store. It took time to make the switch," Potts said.

To hasten the process of getting meat to consumers, companies began operating their plants on Saturdays. According to Potts, red meat production for 2020 climbed 1% above 2019 levels.

Sales of meat skyrocketed in 2020 despite a hobbled food service sector. Volume sales were higher in every quarter of 2020, ranging from a gain of 16.3% in the second quarter to an increase of 7.3% in the third quarter, according to data from 210 Analytics. Processing adjustments paid off. By early June, hog slaughter was back to previous-year levels, and packing plants were basically operating near capacity, Schulz said. By early September, he said there was evidence the national backlog was exhausted, and third-

and fourth-quarter 2020 slaughter levels were normal compared with 2019.

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants

The [Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin competitive grant program](#) is designed to strengthen Wisconsin's agricultural and food industries by working to reduce the marketing, distribution, and processing hurdles that impede the expansion of sales of Wisconsin's food products to local purchasers.

A total of \$300,000 is available in grant funding through the program; the maximum award for each project is \$50,000, and grant applicants must provide a cash or in-kind match of at least half of the total project budget.

Generally, qualified applicants include individuals, groups, or businesses involved in Wisconsin production agriculture, food processing, food distribution, food warehousing, retail food establishments, or agricultural tourism operations.

Applications are due March 26, 2021.

Read [more](#).



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- 3/20/2021 - Missouri Bison Association Spring Sale - MO
- 3/31/2021 - Jerry Farlee Buffalo Ranch Online Bidding Deadline - SD
- 4/09/2021 - Minnesota Bison Association's Annual Education Conference - MN
- 6/27 - 29/2021 - National Bison Assn. Summer Conference - Cheyenne, WY

Please visit <https://bisoncentral.com/calendar/> for details and more up-to-date events. If you have a bison event coming up that's not listed, please send the details to jim@bisoncentral.com and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

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

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