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NBA Weekly Update for May 21, 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.

Just 2 Weeks Left to Reserve Conference Lodging



The deadline to reserve your discounted lodging at [Little America Hotel and Resort](#) is June 4th. Please [reserve online here](#), or call 800-235-6396 and request the National Bison Association room block. Room rates are \$122/night/double occupancy and \$132/night triple/quad. Prices apply before and after conference, pending availability.

Please register for the conference by June 11th. You can register online [here](#), or call the NBA at (303) 292-2833 to register by phone. Get all the details at <https://bisoncentral.com/nba-summer-conference/>.

NBA Weighs in on Genetically Modified Meat Animals

Two leaders of the National Bison Association yesterday urged USDA to keep bison the sidelines in the regulatory push to allow the commercial sale of meat and poultry products from genetically engineered animals.

In late December, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) for the Regulation of the Movement of Animals Modified or Developed by Genetic Engineering. The ANPR noted that the agencies are developing the regulatory framework to allow for the sale of meat on poultry sourced from amenable species animals and requested input regarding thoughts on the risk assessment policies that should be implemented to protect food safety, prevent disease transmission and other factors.

The ANPR defines genetic engineering as, “techniques that use recombinant, synthesized, or amplified nucleic acids to modify or create a genome,” and would not include conventional breeding methods such as directed breeding, artificial insemination, embryo transfer, selective breeding, cross breeding and other currently legal processes.

On Wednesday NBA Executive director Dave Carter and Assistant Director Jim Matheson met via Zoom with four officials of APHIS and FSIS as a part of the agencies’ public input process on the ANPR.

Carter informed the USDA officials that business does not desire to get involved in genetic engineering of the animals, and that the NBA code of ethics specifically prohibits “animal cloning technology in any manner for the production of bison or bison meat products.”

“We’ve built our market on the fact that Mother Nature did a very good job of perfecting this animal over thousands of years to provide great meat, and to be a part of a healthy ecosystem,” Carter said. “Our customers don’t want meat from genetically engineered bison.”

Matheson noted that bison producers consider factors other than maximum meat production in raising the animals. “We are raising wild animals that know how to take care of themselves, and don’t require a lot of management. We don’t want to lose that quality,” he said.

Carter noted that one of the issues mentioned in the ANPR was that “ USDA would evaluate the scientific data submitted by the developer to ensure that the animal of the amenable species modified or developed using genetic engineering would not pose an increased risk to animal health as compared with animals from the same species that were not modified or developed using genetic engineering.”

“Bison and cattle are not in the same species, but bison are at risk from diseases that can be transmitted from cattle and sheep. Limiting this evaluation to the same species is too narrow,” he said.

Officials on the call did not address what type of labeling would be required for meat produced from genetically engineered animals.

Rulemaking for marketing meat and poultry from genetically engineered animals is expected to take at least two years.

NBA Bison Producer’s App Implements Payment

The NBA’s Bison Producer App, the only bison-specific field management app on the market, has implemented user-pricing as the grant that supported the development and implementation of the app has ended. See our new video of the app, featuring NBA Past President Dick Gehring and his son Reese, to see what the app can do for you at <https://bisoncentral.com/conservation-item/nba-producers-app/>

Moving forward, NBA members can use the app for a flat \$25/year, \$100/year for non-members, regardless of the size of herd. These user fees are necessary to cover the hosting and maintenance cost of the app, and when compared to comparable livestock field apps with comparable features, is very reasonably priced. Payment is collected when downloading or logging in to the app or program. Don’t let this highly discounted NBA member benefit go to waste, download the Bison Producer’s App today.

The app allows users to improve their bison operation by tracking and analyzing their herd’s vital data, including everything from vaccination schedules, to birthing rates, to animal transport/transfers, to automated weight tracking and much more. The NBA Bison Producer’s App is available for both iOS and Android devices, as well as a web-based desktop program available at <https://bison.herddogg.com>. Download the app for your smart phone or tablet at:

Google Play Store: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.herddogg.bisonapp>

App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/herddogg/id1470531054>

The app is also the portal to the NBA’s innovative new Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP provides bison farmers and ranchers the ability to monitor and document their conservation practices to both improve and exhibit how their work positively impacts the bison, the land they’re on, and the people around them. The simple web app based interface allows all producers to manage and measure their conservation efforts effectively. This program will help managers of all experience levels increase their conservation effectiveness and help them engage with a wide variety of like-minded managers and thereby take their operations to even higher levels of conservation success. See a successful Master Steward application [here](#).

Learn more about the CMP and get started at <https://bisoncentral.com/conservation-item/nba-conservation-management-plan/>.

Bulls Edge Higher in Latest USDA Wholesale Report

Average prices paid for dressed young bull carcasses edged upward in April but dressed heifer carcasses dropped, according to the latest USDA monthly wholesale bison price report issued today.

According to the report compiled by USDA's Grain and Livestock Market News Service, dressed young bull carcasses brought an average of \$384.92/cwt. In April, which was \$8.80/cwt higher than the previous month, but still \$23.17/cwt lower than in April 2020. Dressed heifer carcasses brought an average of \$383.57/cwt., which was \$12.67/cwt. Lower than the previous month, and \$40.33/cwt. Lower than the previous year. Aged bull and cow carcasses were both lower for the month as well.

According to a separate report compiled by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, 22,467 bison have been processed under federal inspection to date this year. That's five percent higher than the number processed to this point last year, and the highest level year-to-date since USDA began compiling statistics in 2001.

See the full report [here](#).

Commercial Marketers: Please Complete Your May Survey

Commercial marketers are encouraged to complete the twice-annual survey being conducted by the NBA this month.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, noted, "This twice-annual survey is one of our best tools to gauge the trends in our business, and to help us focus our resources to meet the needs of the commercial marketers."

All commercial meat marketers should have received a link to the survey and are asked to participate by next Tuesday.

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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Bison Calf Takes Nap in Middle of Road, Blocks Traffic

(From Boston Fox 25)

YELLOWSTONE — When a bison is tired, it can and will take a nap anywhere, even in the middle of a road blocking traffic.

One bison calf was so tired last week that it lay down on the street in Yellowstone National Park, according to Viral Hog.

Viral Hog reported, "The little guy was quickly surrounded by protective cows. No one was going anywhere."

One person tried to get close to the bison, but the National Park Service says people should stay at least 25 yards from bison.

See the video [here](#).

50 Years Ago, The San Diego Zoo Gifted Just Over A Dozen North American Bison to Camp Pendleton Where 90 Of Them Now Roam

(From CBS8.com)

CAMP PENDLETON NORTH, Calif. — The dusty roads behind Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton are ones that most civilians don't get to see. They crisscross hundreds of miles of rolling green hills in a pristine, undeveloped expanse of land along California's busy coastline.

It might be undeveloped, but it's certainly not quiet. The size and isolation of the base make it a perfect place for explosives and firearms training, while the rolling hills make sure Marines are in peak physical condition.

But in an area so large, 220 square miles to be exact, it's not just the Marine Corp that gets dibs on this unspoiled plot. An ecosystem without much human impact has allowed a variety of animal species to thrive, including several critically endangered species.

"Camp Pendleton has a population of Pacific Pocket Mice, and then there's the Arroyo Toad," said Camp Pendleton's Game Warden Michael Tucker.

It's his job to manage all the species that live on base. Because we would be hard-pressed to find a Pacific Pocket Mouse, Tucker took me to meet the herd of North American Bison.

Around 90 of them roam the green hills of Camp Pendleton. Before they were hunted to near extinction these massive, tanks-on-hooves once roamed America's great plains in the tens of millions, but you never would have found a Bison in Southern California.

"This particular population comes from the plains of Kansas," said Tucker "The San Diego Zoo had them in their exhibits and they were looking for another home for them. So, between 1973-1978, the zoo gradually moved a herd of 14 bison to the base."

Read [more](#).

Voting Open for Bison-Naming at Buffalo Bill Park

(From Nebraska NBC 2)

NORTH PLATTE, Neb. (KNOP) - The baby bison at Buffalo Bill State Historical Park is ready for a name, and the staff at the Nebraska Game and Parks are closer to giving him one. Originally announced as a "girl" bison, the park is realizing after closer inspection that she is actually he. And "he" needs a name.

Since his May 10 birth there have been many name suggestions floating around on social media. The park opened up an opportunity for folks to share their ideas on the Nebraska Game and Parks Facebook page for the son of P.B. and Taco.

Now the suggestions are narrowed down to five options. The options are: Billie, Cody, Mocha, Scout, and Oakley. And everyone has the chance to vote until May 26. The baby bison's name will be announced on May 28.

Read [more](#).

The "Bison Bridge" Stirs Up A Debate Over How Much Upkeep the Aging Structure Would Require

(From WQAD TV)

LE CLAIRE, Iowa — It's been two months since local environmentalist Chad Pregracke unveiled his vision to turn the current I-80 bridge between Le Claire, Iowa and Rapids City, Illinois into a wildlife crossing. The project has gained traction across the region - and beyond - as the "Bison Bridge."

Both the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation are looking for a place to build a new interstate bridge across the Mississippi River. They say the current bridge is 55 years old and aging; it's dangerously narrow, with no shoulders for impaired vehicles to pull onto; and with only two lanes on either side, it's too small for the amount of traffic it holds.

It's estimated over 40,000 cars, trucks and semis cross the bridge every single day. Over the last decade, millions of dollars have been poured into the bridge's upkeep, including construction around 2010, when a routine inspection found parts of the bridge to be structurally flawed.

If the DOTs find a new location, Pregracke and his team, the Bison Bridge Foundation, want to transform the structure into a half pedestrian bridge, half bison crossing, with the possibility of national parks on either side of the water.

Read [more](#).

Man Headed-Butted by Bison After Attempting to Pet the Animal

(From Out There Colorado)

One man recently learned a lesson the hard way – don't pet a bison.

A man building power lines on a ranch was blasted by a bison after getting way too close. The video below shows the worker reaching out to pet the bison on its forehead. The bison replied with a head-butt, knocking the worker to the ground.

"We build power lines, and this was on a ranch where there was a bunch of bison," the video's caption reads. "A coworker and I decided to try and pet one. He didn't seem to mind until I walked up and tried to pet him. Well needless to say he knocked me down and gave me a scare of a lifetime."

Male bison can weigh up to 2,000 pounds and stand six feet tall, while females can weigh up to 1,000 pounds and reach a height up to 5 feet tall. That's certainly not an animal you want to mess with!

[Source](#).

Thirteen more bison to be released in Southern Carpathians rewilding area in Romania

(From The Romanian Insider)

Thirteen more European bison arrived last week from Germany to Bison Hillock rewilding area, in Romania's Southern Carpathians, WWF announced.

Rewilding Europe and WWF Romania have been reintroducing European bison into the Southern Carpathians rewilding area, which is located close to the village of Armeniș, in western Romania, since 2014.

The Bison Hillock herd is the largest of free-roaming bison in the country. With this latest transport, it now stands at about 80 individuals.

The Life-Bison rewilding project aims to create a viable population that breeds in the wild and supports the area's biodiversity. Each bison is genetically valuable and is carefully chosen by specialists to be translocated and released into this optimal habitat, the Țarcu Mountains Natura 2000 Site, the NGO said.

"The animals in the latest release, for example, come from nine different European reservations," said Alexandra Sallay-Moșoi, LIFE Re-Bison technical project manager with WWF-Romania. "They have already spent almost a year together forming social, non-habituated groups at two locations in Germany: ten females at the Springe Reservation, and three females at the Donaumoos Reservation. This process is designed to give the animals the best chance at thriving in the wild."

Read [more](#).

DSM Launches First-Ever Sustainability Calculator

(From Feedstuffs)

Royal DSM, a global science-based company active in Nutrition, Health and Sustainable Living, has launched Sustell- a first-of-its-kind intelligent sustainability service that delivers accurate, simple, and actionable farm-level solutions - to improve the environmental footprint and profitability of animal protein production.

Through Sustell, DSM is underlining its commitment to its strategic initiative We Make It Possible, which is driving a robust and achievable global transformation toward sustainable animal protein production. By leveraging digital and data-driven solutions such as Sustell, DSM is advancing its precision animal farming journey towards a brighter future.

DSM has developed Sustell together with Blonk, a recognized independent expert and leader in Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) and sustainability performance in the food and agriculture fields. The Sustell service is built around a state-of-the-art Intelligence Platform that is connected to the Blonk APS-footprint tool, together with an "Expert Center" made up of a team of DSM and Blonk experts in LCA, animal nutrition and sustainability.

The Expert Center partners with animal protein producers, assessing the baseline environmental footprint of their animal production using their actual farm and feed data rather than industry averages and proxy data sets, and then developing case-specific intervention scenarios known as "what-if" models to make measurable sustainability improvements. In this way, Sustell combines an advanced, powerful sustainability calculation tool that utilizes real farm data, with expert knowledge, tailor-made, practical solutions and business development projects to unlock the value of sustainability.

"We are excited to be launching Sustell alongside DSM - a truly intelligent sustainability service that is front and center to our mission at Blonk - to support organizations in addressing the challenge of making the global production and consumption of food more sustainable," said Hans Blonk, chief executive officer of Blonk Consultants & Blonk Sustainability Tools.

Read [more](#).

USDA Extends the Comment Period on Supply Chains for the Production of Agricultural Commodities and Food Products

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is providing an additional 30 days for public comments on the notice for Supply Chains for the Production of Agricultural Commodities and Food Products published in the Federal Register on April 21, 2021. Comments are now due by June 21, 2021. USDA is extending the comment period to allow additional time to receive information valuable to the preparation of the report required by the Executive Order on "America's Supply Chains."

During the first two weeks of the comment period, USDA received requests from representatives of critical supply chain activities asking for additional time to provide thoughtful and thorough feedback to this notice.

Written comments in response to this notice should be posted online at www.regulations.gov. Comments may also be sent to Dr. Melissa R. Bailey at melissa.bailey@usda.gov or mailed to: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, Room 2055-S, STOP 0201, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0201.

Comments received will be posted without change, including any personal information provided.

Comments submitted during the initial 30-day comment period from April 21 to May 21 will be retained as part of the public record and do not need to be resubmitted.

For more information, contact Dr. Bailey at (202) 690-1300 or email melissa.bailey@usda.gov.

USDA sets strategy for expanding 'climate-smart' ag, ensuring all farmers benefit

(From AgriPulse)

The Agriculture Department issued a climate strategy Thursday that heavily focuses on measuring the impact of climate-friendly practices, taking steps to facilitate private carbon markets and ensuring all farmers can benefit financially from addressing climate change. The climate plan, billed as a progress report that lays out broad goals and priorities and provides no specific policy proposals, makes no direct mention of establishing a carbon bank or using the department's Commodity Credit Corp. spending authority to make payments to farmers.

The plan, which was developed at the direction of President Joe Biden, briefly suggests USDA could help support carbon credit prices but emphasizes the use of private markets to compensate farmers for carbon-conserving practices.

The report "addresses every aspect of the challenge that we have, and we'll enlist all of the resources, tools and capacities that the Department of Agriculture has to enable agriculture to be part of the solution" to climate change, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said in an interview with Agri-Pulse.

"First and foremost, we're going to continue to make sure ... that we have the tools — and that farmers have the tools — to be able to accurately assess the impact of the work they are currently doing and will do on the farm relative to greenhouse gas emissions."

He said implementing the plan will require increased staffing and conservation technical assistance as well as more funding for agricultural research and conservation programs. There's also a need for new money to fund Biden's proposed Civilian Climate Corps.

The plan calls for USDA to develop or improve existing methods for quantifying the carbon impacts of "climate-smart agriculture and forestry" (CSAF) practices and to track the benefits on a national scale. The department will set specific goals and benchmarks for measuring progress on the adoption of conservation practices.

To encourage the wider use of such practices, the strategy calls for prioritizing the "climate risks, adaptation opportunities, and carbon benefits" provided by existing conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, and Conservation Reserve Program.

"USDA has already begun this work through the CRP by introducing a new Climate-Smart Practice Incentive that will increase sign-ups for the program while providing the opportunity to demonstrate "proof of concept" regarding CRP-related increases in carbon sequestration and reduced GHG emissions," the strategy says.

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New Report Shows How U.S. Agriculture Can Fight Climate Change

(From Farm Journal Foundation)

A new report commissioned by Farm Journal Foundation found that U.S. farmers have the potential to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and become part of the global solution to climate change.

U.S. agriculture contributes about 10% of the total greenhouse gas emissions of the entire national economy, but farmers could greatly reduce those emissions if they were provided with the right government incentives, according to the report, which was co-authored by Dr. John Reilly of MIT's Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change and Dr. Stephanie Mercier, senior policy adviser at Farm Journal Foundation.

Expanding existing government programs could enable farmers to become more

sustainable – helping them improve their soil health, increase livestock efficiency, convert animal waste into clean energy, and decrease reliance on fossil fuels. Farm businesses run on tight margins and are affected by volatile commodity markets, so farmers need incentives – such as tax breaks, cost share, technical assistance, or favorable loan terms – in order for sustainable investments to make financial sense.

“Farmers are already feeling the effects of climate change, with U.S. growing areas experiencing a series of droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events in recent years,” Reilly said. “These conditions are only expected to intensify. The U.S. should develop and expand programs that help farmers prepare for the challenges that lie ahead and enable them to make investments to mitigate future climate change.”

A number of government programs already provide impactful financial and technical assistance for conservation, such as USDA’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). However, there is more demand for assistance than can be met under existing funding levels. For example, between 2000 and 2010, only about 40% of projects proposed under the EQIP program were actually funded, and farmers submitting requests for technical assistance often face long waiting periods.

Increasing the funding for government programs and enabling more farmers to participate would go a long way toward making the agricultural industry more sustainable. With the right incentives in place, the U.S. farming sector could ultimately become a net carbon sink – meaning that it would absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than it releases.

Read more [here](#).

The battle between animal protein vs. plant-based

(From Meatingplace.com)

Does it seem like there is a divide between individuals that consume animal protein and the ever-increasing plant-based community? Suppose we look back to when we saw the rise of plant-based products entering the mainstream market as opposed to the tofu vegetarian world that started in the U.S. much earlier. In 1993, the Boca Burger hit the market with great success as it was not just the vegetarian crowd that embraced this plant-based burger. It certainly went ... beyond that.

Fast forward to 2009, when Beyond Meats founder Ethan Brown made the “Beast Burger.” This initial product wasn’t very tasty. It has obviously improved flavor-wise since then. Ethan Brown’s intentions (in a nutshell) were to end all livestock production. I’m sure you could have heard all the cattlemen around the country chuckling; 150 years of beef marketing, ingrained in the fabric of our country as an example of success, isn’t going to disappear overnight.

Moving on to 2011, Patrick O. Brown M.D. Ph.D. (no relation to Ethan) started Impossible Foods. His stated goal was also to end the use of animals to make food. Instead, he aimed to produce meat, dairy and fish directly from plants.

As we look at today’s ever-expanding market channel there has been an explosion of newcomers nationally. I’m not even mentioning all the large meat companies that either bought small start-ups or created whole new plant lines to stick their toes in plant-based product development.

Which begs the question, who is really creating the riff between the two? There are the hard-core carnivores and naysayers who think plant-based products can’t possibly taste, or have the mouth feel that grilled or fried animal protein provides us. Or is it the media that’s creating conflict? There is certainly enough room for everyone to play in the sandbox and I don’t think the cattleman or chicken producers have too much to worry about.

Read [more](#).



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- 06/11/2021 - Texas Bison Association Summer Meeting - TX
- 6/27 - 29/2021 - National Bison Assn. Summer Conference - Cheyenne, WY

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