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The National Bison Association (NBA) Weekly Update is an exclusive service for NBA members.

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### ***NBA Weekly Update for May 6, 2022***

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*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.*

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### **Happy Mother's Day from the National Bison Association!**

The NBA wishes all of our member-Moms a happy Mother's Day! As calving season comes into full swing, motherhood is on full display with cows nurturing their newborns while their herd mates protect the calves and keep an eye on their fellow moms. It's the same spirit that our community of NBA Moms support each other on the farm and ranch, at our conferences, bison auctions, and everywhere in between. We see it all the time and we're grateful for the many wonderful Moms that make up our membership.



*Photo Credit: Matt Blocker*

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## **NBA Officially Hires Matheson as Executive Director**

Westminster, CO (May 6, 2022) – The National Bison Association (NBA) selected Jim Matheson as their new executive director this week. Matheson replaces Dave Carter, who recently resigned as executive director after serving in that position for 20 years.



Matheson has served as assistant director at the NBA for over 17 years as the sole full-time staffer. In that role, he has provided various services to the NBA membership. Hallmarks of Matheson's tenure include quality annual summer and winter membership conferences, bison-specific educational resources and outreach, bison-specific marketing and management tools, IT support, and individually raising over \$500,000 in grant funds to help educate bison producers.

"It's a true honor to be selected as the executive director of the NBA. Having worked and participated in the bison community for the last 17-plus years, I'm eager to continue the excellent work that the NBA has undertaken over the previous two decades. I'm also looking forward to implementing exciting new programs and services that will benefit the entire NBA membership and the bison business as we continue to restore the species to its native landscape," said Matheson.

NBA President, Chad Kremer, said, "The board, staff, and membership of the NBA congratulate Mr. Matheson on this new opportunity for taking the reins of the association. He has been an instrumental part of the team for the last 17 years, and I look forward to continuing to work with him and the team in the future. Jim worked alongside Mr. Dave Carter for the last 17 years, and together they guided the association along the trail. He now has the opportunity to lead the charge. Congratulations, Jim!"

The National Bison Association (NBA) is a not-for-profit trade organization that serves nearly 1,200 members across North America and beyond. Our members comprise bison farmers, ranchers, processors, marketers, conservationists, tribal groups, and the general bison-loving public. The NBA serves as an umbrella organization for all things bison.

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**Save the Date - June 18th - NBA**



## Regenerative Bison Field Day



Sustainable Agriculture  
Research and Education

Thanks to a grant from the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and

Education service (NCSARE) at the University of Minnesota, the NBA will have its first of six Bison Regenerative Field Day workshops at Heartland Bison Ranch in Rugby, ND on June 18th.

The one-day workshop will include a ranch tour of this working bison operation, guest speakers, lunch, an update on the national bison business and more. The focus of the tour and the speaker presentations will be how to maximize the regenerative potential of bison on your own farm or ranch. Heartland Bison Ranch is a family run bison operation that includes an amazing breeding herd, a great grazing program, as well as a direct to market meat program. The Leier family is a great example of how to utilize bison's instincts and natural grazing behavior to regenerate the ranches grasslands and soils. The NBA is working to film at least portions of these Field Days to share in the Video Archive section of the member's area of [www.bisoncentral.com](http://www.bisoncentral.com).

More about Heartland Bison Ranch from <https://www.heartlandbison.com/>:

"At Heartland Bison Ranch, we strive to raise our bison in as natural of a manner as possible. Our focus is to raise healthy, good quality stock, that can work for anyone's operation. Our herds thrive in our northern climate and we utilize the top bloodlines in the Bison Industry today to continue to improve our herd performance. Starting in 2018, we are continuing our commitment to providing top quality animals with some major changes. Our expansion of the ranch is fully underway and we are working hard to build herds that produce animals we want to represent our ranch. Check out the links below and look for new information soon on what we have been up to here at the ranch."

Registration and the final agenda is being developed and will be available soon at [www.bisoncentral.com](http://www.bisoncentral.com).

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## NBA Gets Tutorial on New Bison Genetics Study

Chairs of three NBA committees in addition to President Chad Kremer and Executive Director Jim Matheson were provided an overview of the recently published research paper on modern-day bison genetics. Dr. Carter Kruse, chair of the Science and Research Committee, Ken Klemm, chair of the Conservation Committee and Dr. Connor Elliott, chair of the North American Bison Registry all participated.

Texas A&M's Dr. James Derr and Sam Stroupe, two primary authors of the paper, generously provided an in-depth overview of their work on the genomic evaluation of hybridization in historic and modern North American Bison, and answered questions from the group. Matheson encouraged the authors to also provide a similar presentation at the 2023 NBA Winter Conference, which they tentatively agreed to. See the study [here](#).

### Abstract:

During the late nineteenth century North American bison underwent a significant population bottleneck resulting in a reduction in population size of over 99% and a species-level near-extinction event. Factors responsible for this destruction included indiscriminate killing, loss of access to suitable habitat, and diseases. At the nadir of this population crash, very few wild plains bison survived and were restricted to Yellowstone National Park, USA and a small number of wild wood bison remained in Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada. However, most surviving bison in the late 1800's were maintained by cattle ranchers in private herds where hybridization between bison with various breeds of domestic cattle was often encouraged. Over the last 20 years, the legacy of this introgression has been identified using mitochondrial DNA and limited nuclear microsatellite analyses. However, no genome-wide assessment has been performed, and some herds were believed to be free of introgression based on current genetic testing strategies. Herein, we report detailed analyses using whole genome sequencing from nineteen modern and six historical bison, chosen to represent the major lineages of bison, to identify and quantitate signatures of nuclear introgression in their recent (within

200 years) history.

Read [more](#).

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## Technical Assistance Available for Bison Processing Expansion

Bison producers and processors looking to access any of the USDA grants or loans being offered for expansion of the meat processing sector are encouraged to utilize the network of technical assistance that USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has established to support individuals, businesses and groups accessing those resources.

AMS has established agreements with eight organizations—including the Niche Meat Processors Assistance Network, the American Association of Meat Processors and the Intertribal Agricultural Council—to provide technical assistance and outreach to people requesting and receiving USDA funding for meat processing expansion.

People can request technical assistance by clicking this link:

<https://flowerhill.institute/usda-mppta>, to provide information regarding the type of technical assistance needed.

The form will be received by the Flower Hill Institute, an indigenous-led nonprofit coordinating the network on behalf of AMS. The staff at Flower Hill then assigns each request to the appropriate person or organization within the network to provide assistance and support. (The Flower Hill team includes former NBA Executive Director Dave Carter)

While the experts within the network cannot write grants or conduct feasibility studies, they can provide information and guidance as people navigate the process of applying for grants and loans, and as recipients implement their projects.

More information on the USDA technical assistance network, including the organizations involved, is available here: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/mppta>

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## International Bison Convention 2022 Poster Session and Competition



Are you involved in a project that has application or benefit to ranched or wild bison?

If so, you are invited to present a poster about it at the International Bison Convention (IBC) July 12-15, 2022. Taking place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, the 2022 IBC will be a great place to highlight bison research done across North America and the world.

Criteria, eligibility, application found [HERE](#).

Invitation to Participate & Application [HERE](#)

Submit to [poster@bisonconvention2022.com](mailto:poster@bisonconvention2022.com)

We have a few more spaces in the IBC 2022 Poster Session and Competition. Therefore, we are extending the deadline to May 31, 2022! All posters will be displayed at TCU Place during the convention from July 12-15.

Please pass this information on to anyone you know who is involved in a bison project, etc.

Register for the IBC at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/international-bison-convention-2022-registration-126340121705>.

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**Editor's Note: The following news stories were distributed by organizations not affiliated with the National Bison Association. They may not reflect the opinions or the positions held by the NBA on matters such as genetic integrity, animal management, and other issues.**

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## HELP US BUILD A STRONGER BISON MARKETPLACE



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### **Montana State student publishes research on bison distribution and abundance over past 20,000 years**

*(From Montana State University)*

BOZEMAN – Though bison are often closely associated with the Great Plains, a new study by a Montana State University doctoral student has found that bison actually occupied much of North America over the last 20,000 years.

John Wendt, a doctoral student in the Department of Earth Sciences in MSU's College of Letters and Science, studies how the distribution and abundance of large herbivores, such as bison, changed over thousands of years. His paper, "Large-scale Climatic Drivers of Bison Distribution and Abundance in North America Since the Last Glacial Maximum," written with his MSU academic adviser David McWethy as well as Chris Widga from East Tennessee State University and Bryan Shuman from the University of Wyoming, was published online in the journal *Quaternary Science Reviews* in April.

The paper is the first to combine a large, interdisciplinary dataset to reconstruct how the distribution of bison herds shifted, expanding and contracting across North America over the last 20,000 years. By mapping the occurrence of bison fossils over time, researchers determined that the animals occupied much of North America, not just the Great Plains region.

"This study brings a more holistic view of bison and how they responded to a varying climate," Wendt said. "It also adds to our knowledge about how bison responded to past environments."

Read [more](#).

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### **8th white bison born to herd at Sioux Valley Dakota Nation**

*(From The CBC)*

With a new white bison calf joining the herd in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, community members say it's a sign to get back to living in balance with nature.

The calf born on April 16 is the eighth white bison to be born on the First Nation in as many years. They are part of a herd of 104 bison in the community about 40 kilometres

west of Brandon, Man.

"The white buffalo is a blessing and a warning for our people, not just Native people but all people," said Kevin Tacan, one of the community's spiritual advisors, whose family also takes care of the herd.

Tacan said climate change is noticeable not only to us, but to animals as well

"They're starting to come back, reminding us that we're supposed to be living in balance with nature," he said.

"We're supposed to be living in balance with the animals and the natural world, and we're not doing that."

Tacan said First Nations have a special relationship with bison.

"We have a very close, spiritual relationship with the buffalo, because we both experienced genocide," he said.

Read [more](#).

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## **Escaped bison that went viral captures 'community spirit' in Seabeck**

*(From The Kitsap Sun)*

SEABECK — The juvenile bison had become an elusive social media darling. She had escaped from a rural property near Crosby in November last year but had, improbably, popped up again last month, still alive. Her appearance made waves on social media.

Would she make it back home? After months off the radar, presumably wandering the wide swath of wooded lands near what had briefly been her home, might the animal get a rosy, Disney-esque ending to her tale? A video posted in a Facebook group for the greater Seabeck area showed her trotting down Seabeck Holly Road last week.

Two days later, another post announced a dour conclusion to the closely watched story: The animal had been struck and killed on the same road. The bison would be loaded up and hauled away.

Kitsap Animal Control Director Chase Connolly confirmed that his office had received a report that the animal had been struck by a vehicle.

"It seemed like it was going in the right direction to get back to the property and things were lining up great," he said. "There were unforeseen circumstances, and it just didn't work out."

Read [more](#).

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## **WOTUS regional roundtables set to begin; farm groups express frustration about process**

*(From Agri-Pulse)*

Virtual roundtables to discuss the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers' effort to come up with a "durable" definition of "waters of the U.S." will kick off Monday. But many in agriculture and on Capitol Hill say they're perplexed by the organization of the events and how exactly the agencies plan to use the information gleaned from the dialogues.

Five of the roundtables, which will feature representatives from a diverse range of conservation, farming and other groups, have been organized by farm-related organizations, including the Farm Bureau affiliates in North Carolina, California and

Arizona, the Regenerative Agriculture Foundation, and Kansas Livestock Association. The Monday roundtable was put together by the National Parks Conservation Association and begins at 9:30 a.m. CT. Links to view the roundtables have been posted by EPA and are also available below.

“As EPA and Army continue toward WOTUS implementation that is durable and protects our water resources, it is essential that we hear from diverse perspectives and understand regional variations in how that plays out,” EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox said. “We believe all Americans support clean water and look forward to the interesting dialogue that will be cultivated in these roundtables.”

The way the roundtables were organized has caused some consternation from groups worried about the latest rewrite of the controversial definition of WOTUS, which has divided industry and environmentalists for decades.

EPA and the Corps asked groups last fall to submit nominations for roundtables that include representatives from “agriculture, conservation groups, developers, drinking water and wastewater managers, environmental organizations, communities with environmental justice concerns, industry, Tribal nations, and state and local governments.”

Read [more](#).

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## **U of Wisconsin slates meat snacks short course**

*(From Meatingplace.com)*

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Meat Science & Animal Biologics Discovery program has scheduled a Meat Snacks Short Course for two and a half days in June, the program said in a news release.

The course is scheduled for June 7-9 at the Meat Science & Animal Biologics Discovery building in Madison. Registration will be held to 50 attendees.

The program promises a comprehensive approach to understanding meat snacks, focusing on jerky, bars and snack sticks, a category that has exploded over the last several years. Participants will learn about the science, safety and production behind this category of products from a group of nationally and internationally recognized authorities in their fields.

Laboratory demonstrations will be held in the state-of-the-art Meat Science & Animal Biologics Discovery building to reinforce important concepts discussed in the classroom. Processors from every level of experience can benefit from this program with content focused on those interested in, or currently involved in, the meat snack industry.

Attendees will study all aspects of meat snack production, from basic meat science to meat microbiology, jerky and whole muscle manufacturing processes, food safety and labeling, starter cultures and acidulants, drying technologies and nutrition, marketing and shelf life.

Read [more](#).

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## **Minnesota awards grants to 15 processors**

*(From Meatingplace.com)*

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced 15 grants to some of the state's small and mid-size processors to invest in various aspects of their operations, the agency said in a news release.

For the 2022 AGRI Meat, Poultry, Egg and Milk Processing Grant Awards program, the agency has awarded amounts from \$100,000, to Jenniges Meat Processing Inc. in Brooten, to expand a new facility with new processing equipment, including a rail system



and smokehouses, to \$12,500, to Kerkhoven Country Butcher in Kerkhoven to buy a walk-in freezer, a walk-in cooler and a meat saw.

A grant for \$50,000 has gone to Thief River Falls-based Northern Pride Inc., a grower-owned turkey processor that plans to use the funds to acquire overwrap tray equipment at its Pennington County facility. Northern Pride specializes in processing whole-bodied turkeys for private and packer labels.

Read [more](#).

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## **Ukraine aid plan includes \$500M to boost U.S. crop production**

*(From Meatingplace.com)*

The proposed \$33 billion federal aid package to help Ukraine may also offset potential supply issues for the U.S. meat industry, as it includes funding to support domestic crop production in 2022 and 2023.

The Biden administration proposal, announced last week, would provide security, economic and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, which is under siege by Russian troops for a third month. The invasion has disrupted shipments of corn and wheat and caused shortages of crops used to feed animals that are being raised for food on a global basis.

The package includes \$500 million in domestic food production assistance in the form of additional loans and crop insurance incentives to U.S. farmers to make up for potential shortages in such crops as wheat and soybeans due to the war in Ukraine, the White House said. "Through higher loan rates and crop insurance incentives the request provides greater access to credit and lowers risk for farmers growing these food commodities, while lowering costs for American consumers," the White House said.

[Source](#).

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## **Funding Opportunities**

### **Conservation Innovation Grants in New Hampshire**

Applications are due by June 1, 2022.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Hampshire is accepting applications for a total of \$200,000 in Conservation Innovation Grants. The minimum award will be \$75,000 and the maximum \$200,000. Applicants must share 50% of the total project cost.

Priorities include urban and small farm innovation, carbon markets innovation, energy, and weather resiliency. For FY 2022, at least 10% of the total funds available are set aside for historically underserved producers.

Qualifying entities representing historically underserved producers may qualify for a reduced match.

Read [more](#).

### **Conservation Innovation Grants in Texas**

Applications are due by May 20, 2022.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has up to \$1 million available in Texas for Conservation Innovation Grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.



Non-federal entities and individuals are invited to apply.

Read [more](#).

## Conservation Innovation Grants in Virginia

Proposals are due by May 16, 2022.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Virginia is seeking Conservation Innovation Grant submissions that involve research, demonstrations, outreach and educational initiatives, or technical/financial assistance strategies leading to improved soil health and/or pollinator habitat restoration.

Grants will be awarded for projects between one and three years duration with maximum awards of \$200,000 for each priority topic. The soils emphasis will be on establishing improved forbs in perennial grassland systems for greater stand diversity, forage quality and soil health. Diversity will be a key criterion for pollinator proposals.

Read [more](#).

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## Save the Date!

- 5/26/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 6/03/2022 - Texas Bison Association Spring Conference - TX
- 6/17/2022 - Montana Bison Association - MT
- 6/18/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Rugby, ND
- 6/23/2022 - Western Bison Association Spring meeting - UT
- 6/23/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 7/12/2022 - International Bison Conference - Saskatoon, SK
- 7/21/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 8/15/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 9/10/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Mission, SD
- 11/9/2022 - Antelope Island State Park Bison Auction - Online
- 11/14/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 12/01/2022 - Western Bison Association Meeting and Show/Sale - UT
- 1/07/2023 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Simulcast Auction - SD
- 1/18/2023 - NBA Winter Conference - CO
- 1/21/2023 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - Denver, CO
- 2/11/2-23 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Sale Simulcast Auction - 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](mailto:jim@bisoncentral.com) and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

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

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