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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 October 2, 2020

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.

Twelve Senators Urge USDA to Approve Bison Section 32

Twelve U.S. Senators, led by John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) sent a letter yesterday to USDA Under Secretary Greg Ibach urging approval of the National Bison Association's request for a \$17 million purchase of bison meat under the Section 32 surplus removal program.

"More than ever, the bison industry needs support. An unanticipated over-supply of harvest-ready animals, drought across the heart of bison production territory, and the COVID-19 public health emergency have created an uncertain economic outlook," the Senators wrote. "As you know, existing authority under Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935 (Public Law 74-320) allows the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make purchases of farm products to be used for distribution through the federal food and nutrition programs.

Granting the National Bison Association's \$17 million purchase request would provide much needed stability and market relief for bison producers struggling in the current environment."

As Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulation, Ibach oversees the Agricultural Marketing Service, which is considering the Section 32 request.

In addition to Hoeven and Bennet, Senators signing the letter were John Boozman (R-AR),

John Barraso (R-WY), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Michael Rounds (R-SD), Tina Smith (D-MN), John Thune (R-SD), Cory Gardner (R-CO), John Tester (D-MT)

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, said today, "We deeply appreciate the support from these 12 Senators, and particularly the leadership from Senators Hoeven and Bennet, to support the bison producers across the United States. Their input to USDA is a very positive development for our request."

USDA to Announces Award FDIPR Ground Bison Purchase Plan

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service yesterday announced yesterday that it had accepted the bids from Intermountain Bison Co. of Idaho to sell the agency up to 1.8 million of ground bison meat during the coming year to utilize in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

The meat will be used to fill orders submitted from January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021.

The agency had issued an invitation for first to submit bids on September 18th.

Please Participate in USDA NAHMS Survey

The National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), a nonregulatory unit of USDA-APHIS-VS, is developing its second national study of the U.S. bison industry, which will be conducted in 2022. In its studies, NAHMS strives to obtain information that will be most beneficial to stakeholders. Your input is essential if we are to identify key issues and try to fill information gaps facing the U.S. bison industry.

To help develop the information objectives for the study, NAHMS is now conducting a brief online survey to accomplish the following goals:

- Find out what you consider to be the most important health issues facing the bison industry.
- Help identify the critical information needs regarding health management practices used in the U.S. bison industry.
- Ask your opinion on how we can encourage bison producers to participate in the Bison 2022 study.

NAHMS will use these survey results to develop the objectives that will shape the NAHMS Bison 2022 study.

How You Can Help

Please help us by completing a brief (10 to 15 minutes) needs assessment survey to identify the critical information gaps regarding health issues and health-management practices used in the Bison industry. We welcome input from people involved in or interested in the bison industry.

You can access the survey directly at the following link or through the QR code.

Survey URL:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/bison-needsassessment>

A direct link to the survey, as well as information on the previous NAHMS bison study, is available at the [NAHMS Bison Studies webpage](#).

The survey will be available through October 23, 2020. Thank you in advance for your response. If you have any questions about the survey or the Bison 2022 study, please contact NAHMS@usda.gov.

Kevin Leier, Carie Starr Elected as New NBA Directors

With Balloting completed in the Regional Director Elections, Kevin Leier of North Dakota and Carie Starr of Ohio were elected to serve as the new directors for Regions III and VII, respectively. Leier will replace Mimi Hillenbrand of South Dakota, who was recently appointed to serve as director at large. Starr will replace Brian Grubb of New York, who was term limited.

Re-elected for two-year terms were Mary Adams of Arizona to represent Region I, and Jeremy Allemann of Wisconsin to represent Region V.

Starr's term will begin in January 2021. Because Leier is filling a board vacancy, he will begin serving on the board immediately.

Donnis Baggett, NBA president, said, "I want to thank all of the candidates who ran for the board, and welcome Kevin and Carie to their terms of service. I also want to thank Brian Grubb for his commitment to our board over the past four years."

Senate Declares November 7 as National Bison Day

The U.S. Senate this week once again unanimously passed a resolution declaring the first Saturday in November as National Bison Day. The resolution was sponsored jointly by U.S. Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM).

The resolution recognizes the important role that conservationists, tribal leaders and ranchers have played in bison restoration. It also highlights the valuable role bison have played in shaping the ecological, cultural and economic character of the United States. Dave Carter, NBA executive director, "National Bison Day provides us with a valuable platform to educate the public about this magnificent animal, and to promote bison meat as we move into the Holiday entertaining season."

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 Grazing and the American Prairie

(From The Kankakee Daily Journal)

It has been six months since I started working at Kankakee Sands in Indiana.

One thing I haven't written much about is our bison herd. Kankakee Sands has about 90 wild bison.

By wild I mean, the bison are not production animals but are from the Wind Cave National Park genetic herd.

The bison serve two main purposes for us: 1. To support Wind Cave National Park by growing out our satellite herd and maintaining genetic lineages and 2. To serve as a native grazer on the prairie and, thus, as an important tool of disturbance that is a missing piece to most restorations.

For the native grazing portion, they produce cascading effects on the prairie.

Bison tend to focus a lot of their diet on the tall prairie grasses like big blue stem. By munching those down, it gives our prairie a shorter, patchwork-look consisting of a more open structure than a prairie without bison.

The reduced tall grass competition opens opportunities for many other shorter grasses and flowers.

These new floral resources not only support conservative plant species but also increase abundance of insects that utilize those plant species.

Birds also benefit significantly from the grazing patterns of bison.

Read [more](#).

Buffalo Or Bison? There's A Difference

(From KELO Land Media)

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (KELO) — The buffalo don't roam in South Dakota but bison do. And the indigenous Lakota residents who lived here before Europeans named them tatanka. In other words, North Dakota State University got it right.

Although the words buffalo and bison are often used interchangeably to describe the large mammals that live in Custer State Park and other parts of South and North Dakota, those animals are technically bison.

It's bison that will be rounded up this weekend at Custer State Park. But the event is called a buffalo roundup. There are also plenty of other events and venues that call bison buffalo. South Dakota has a town and a county called Buffalo. There's even a Buffalo, New York, which is home to the Buffalo Bisons minor league baseball team.

The Smithsonian National Zoo, Modern Farmer, Britannica and a host of other sources and websites tell us buffalo are native to Asia and Africa and bison are native to North America and Europe.

Britannica.com cuts people some slack for using buffalo to describe bison. "It's easy to understand why people confuse [bison](#) and buffalo. Both are large, horned, ox-like animals of the Bovidae family," the website said.

The animals that are rounded up each year at Custer State Park are bison. They have a hump at their shoulders and bigger heads than buffalo. They also have beards and thick coats they shed in winter and summer.

Read [more](#).

Bison Storm Prairie In 55th Buffalo Roundup

(From KOTA ABC)

CUSTER STATE PARK, S.D. (KOTA) - Custer State Park: the place where the buffalo roam free. Normally in small herds, there one day a year where more than one thousand of the noble beasts storm the prairie.

Thousands of spectators lined hills around the park to observe a herd of 1,400 wild bison charge across the plains during the 55th Annual Governor's Buffalo Roundup on Friday. 60 riders drove the massive buffalo gang through water and land on horseback, eventually pushing them to the park's buffalo corrals.

Once there, organizers branded and checked the health of new members of the herd as well as vaccinated them from disease.

Herd managers chose 400 bison for auction, helping to preserve the overall buffalo population.

People from all corners of the United States watched the spectacle, citing it as the perfect opportunity to enjoy a breathtaking scene in the open air.

Mary Ellen Phillips of Buffalo, N.Y. said the Buffalo Roundup was the one vacation idea that worked out this year.

Read [more](#).

Bill Introduced to Address Critical Livestock Supply Chain Issues

(From the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition)

Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) this week introduced The Strengthening Local Processing Act, a comprehensive bill that addresses acute livestock supply chain issues and supports small meat and poultry processing plants, and issues the following statement in support of the legislation: "NSAC applauds Representatives Pingree and Fortenberry for leading the way on this bill, which reflects real needs for small processing plants and will foster a stronger sustainable livestock sector overall. NSAC and small processors across the country are excited to see the introduction of this bill, which reflects key priorities identified by the Coalition's members and partners engaged in the small-scale processing sector."

The bill includes support for small plants' compliance with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans; increased cost share for state meat and poultry inspection programs; increased cost share and expansion of the Cooperative Interstate Shipment Program; a grant program to expand small plants, including small and very small federally inspected plants; and an education and training grant program.

"Based on NMPAN's 12 years of research, education, and providing technical assistance related to the viability of small and mid-scale meat processors, our organization finds that the provisions of the proposed 'Strengthening Local Processing Act' are thoughtfully designed and will address persistent challenges that our processor members frequently share with us," said Rebecca Thistlethwaite, Director of the Niche Meat Processors Assistance Network. "We think it gets at some of the core and complex challenges in the sector that many other bills have not addressed."

"The Strengthening Local Processing Act offers necessary resources that small-scale USDA facilities like ours have been advocating for. The appropriate allocation of these resources, as proposed in the Strengthening Local Processing Act, will allow establishments like ours to continue to survive and thrive during these immensely challenging times," said Nichole Sargent, Owner, Southpaw Packing Company, INC. DBA Windham Butcher Shop, based in Windham, Maine.

"The Strengthening Local Processing Act has the potential to have a large impact on small processors and farmers. It can help create resiliency in the food supply and additionally support rural communities," said Andy Shaw, CEO Cypress Valley Meat Company and Natural State Processing, of Clinton, Arkansas.

Kevin Barnhill, owner of the Blair Meat Market in Blair, Nebraska, offered: "The Strengthening Local Processing Act is a winning proposal. Business owners will

appreciate the targeted assistance. Farmers will profit from increased market opportunities. Consumers will benefit most of all from access to fresh and local foods.”

“The programs created and increased in this bill are absolutely necessary for the safe processing and distribution of meat in our nation,” said Ben Meyer, co-owner at Revel Meat Company in Canby, Oregon. “As we have seen in the past year, relying on large consolidated meat processing facilities to dominate our domestic markets leave consumers at dangerous risk of losing access to safe, clean meat from the local ranchers who produce it.”

Small processors were also excited to see a focus on scale-appropriate regulations, and support for education of the next generation of small-scale, niche meat processors.

“It provides financial relief for required food safety activities, reducing the regulatory burden on small companies with limited resources,” said Jim Wells, CEO of the North American Bison, LLC in New Rockford, North Dakota. “This financial support for the colleges and universities would be used to develop curriculum and programs in meats and meat processing, resulting in a more competent and resilient workforce for bison processors.”

For more information, see the one-page bill summary [here](#).

Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program

The [Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program](#) (TAEP) provides cost-shares to agricultural producers for the purpose of making long-term investments in Tennessee farms and communities. Producers can apply for a variety of programs and may qualify for up to 50% cost share, depending on the program.

Producers should use Application A for livestock equipment, genetics, hay storage, herd health, livestock solutions, working facility structures, dairy solutions, and row crop solutions. The Dairy Solutions program is new this year, focusing on facility and milk quality improvements.

Application B is for farmers with investments in agritourism, fruits and vegetables, honeybees, horticulture, organics, and value-added products. Application C is available for commercial poultry growers.

The application period is open from October 1 - October 7, 2020.

Read [more](#).

Minnesota Value-Added Grant Program Available

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) [Value-Added Grant Program](#).

The MDA anticipates awarding approximately \$1 million to for-profit businesses, agricultural cooperatives, and local governments for equipment purchases that help increase sales of Minnesota agricultural products—including efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest in the Twin Cities following the murder of George Floyd.

Grant funds reimburse up to 25% of the total project cost. The maximum equipment award is \$150,000, and the minimum award is \$1,000.

Applications must be received by October 29, 2020.

Read [more](#).

Minnesota Safe on the Farm Direct Marketing Cost Share Program

The [Safe on the Farm Direct Marketing Cost Share Program](#) provides financial assistance to Minnesota U-Pick Operations, On-Farm Markets, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms to purchase supplies and equipment to prepare for safe sales on their farms and pick-up sites during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture encourages pick-your-own berry farms, apple orchards, pumpkin patches, Christmas tree farms, CSA farms, and on-site farm stands to apply. To be eligible, you must be a current or new Minnesota Grown member. With this program, you may purchase equipment or supplies that will help you follow the Guidance for Minnesota U-Pick Operations and On-Farm Markets.

If you are a farm that meets the applicant eligibility criteria, you may be reimbursed up to \$250 for eligible expenses. Applications will be accepted until October 31, 2020, or until all funds are gone, whichever is first.

Read [more](#).

NRCS Hiring On 'Positive Trajectory,' Acting Chief Says

(From Agri-Pulse)

The [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) is on its way to filling positions needed to deliver technical assistance and other services to farmers across the country, but still has a ways to go, NRCS Acting Chief Kevin Norton told a House Agriculture subcommittee Thursday.

“We are very close to 9,400 people, and that is at least 700 more than any number that we’ve had in the past two years, so we are on a positive trajectory, we are making inroads,” Norton said at a hearing before the panel's subcommittee on conservation and forestry.

Specifically, he said despite some disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, NRCS was able to bring on board about 2,900 new employees in fiscal year 2020, about 1,300 more than joined the agency in fiscal 2019. In the fourth quarter of fiscal 2020 alone, NRCS was able to bring on 639 employees, he said.

But the total is still far short of NRCS’ goal of 10,445 employees, Norton said.

“We are beginning to see the staffing improve,” he said, adding that “the focus of all of these efforts are the field servicing points — those state offices down to the field office where we interact and connect with our customers”

Read [more](#).

Meat retail sales up 34% during pandemic: Midyear Power of Meat

(From Meatinplace.com)

Sales of meat have increased an unprecedented 34% during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new data released in a *Midyear Power of Meat 2020* survey.

The new survey analysis, released by FMI –The Food Industry Association and the Foundation for Meat and Poultry Research and Education, the foundation of the North American Meat Institute (NAMI), also revealed several changes in consumer meat purchasing behavior in the supermarket brought on by the pandemic.

The midyear survey found that meat and poultry sales grew 34.6% amid the pandemic

driven by more buyers and trips and greater spending per trip/buyer. Between March 15 and July 26, the meat department sold an additional \$7.9 billion and 1.4 billion pounds as compared to a year ago.

Nearly half (48%) of shoppers bought more meat to support the greater number of at-home meal occasions, according to the report, while beef generated 61% of new fresh meat dollars, with ground beef driving sales.

"Meat department sales almost doubled in the first week of the pandemic, compared to the same week in 2019," said Rick Stein, FMI vice president, fresh food, in a press release. "We witnessed that consumers did not discriminate over the type of meat, as beef, chicken, pork, fresh, frozen, or processed were all loaded into shopping carts week after week."

The survey found that as a result of the pandemic 75% of consumers made changes in their meat purchasing behavior with at least half buying different brands (58%), cuts (51%) or types (50%) of meat. Out-of-stocks were the primary reason for doing so, the survey found, with shoppers also diverting dollars to frozen meat (33%), seafood (27%), different retailers (27%) or other proteins, such as beans/eggs (25%) or meat alternatives (11%). Additionally, during the pandemic, consumers are now cooking more meals and need more variety (50%), cooking new recipes (37%) and experimenting with different cuts/kinds of meat (34%).



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Save the Date!

- 10/12/2020 - Bridger Valley Buffalo Online Only Auction - WY
- 10/17/2020 - Texas Bison Association Virtual Fall Meeting - Online
- 11/07/2020 - 55th Annual Custer State Park Fall Classic Bison Auction - SD
- 11/15/2020 - Oklahoma Bison Association Fall Sale, Payne County Stockyards - OK
- 11/16/2020 - Brownotter Buffalo Ranch Annual Production Sale – SD
- 11/16/2020 - Antelope Island State Park Bison Auction - UT
- 11/17/2020 - Bison on the Bear Annual Production Auction - ID
- 11/21/2020 - Coyote Trail Buffalo Annual Production Auction - SD
- 11/28/2020 - Minnesota Bison Association's Legends of the Fall Show/Sale - MN
- 11/29/2020 - Rocking P Ranch Production Auction - SD
- 12/05/2020 - Kansas Buffalo Association Annual Production Sale - KS
- 12/05/2020 - Western Bison Association Meeting and Show/Sale - UT
- 12/8/2020 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Consignment Auction - SD
- 12/19/2020 - North Dakota Buffalo Assn. Meeting/Simulcast Auction - ND
- 1/02/2020 - Prairie Legends Bison Auction - NE
- 1/08/2021 - Montana Bison Assn. Winter Conference - MT
- 1/9/2021 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Auction - SD
- 1/20/2021 - National Bison Association Winter Conference - Postponed
- 1/23/2021 - National Bison Association Gold Trophy Show/Sale - Postponed
- 2/6/2021 - DTBA Black Hills Buffalo Classic Simulcast Auction - SD

- 6/27/2021 - 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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