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## NBA Weekly Update for September 25, 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.*

### Application Period Now Open for CFAP-2 Assistance

Bison producers who were declared eligible for assistance under the second round of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP-2) can file their claims for payments any time between now and December 11<sup>th</sup>.

2019 Sales Range	Percent Payment Factor for the Producer's 2019 Sales of Eligible Commodities Falling in the Range
\$0 to \$49,999	10.6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	9.9%
\$100,000 to \$499,999	9.7%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	9.0%
Sales over \$1 million	8.8%

All payments will be based on the producer's sales of live bison in 2019. Breeding stock and value-added products are not eligible for coverage. Payments are based on a sliding scale, which is listed above. For example, a producer filing a claim on 2019 sales totaling \$120,000, would receive a payment equaling 10.6% of the first \$49,999 (\$5,300), 9.9% of the next \$50,000 (\$4,950), and 9.7% on the final \$20,001 (\$1,940). In this example, the rancher would receive \$12,190 in total assistance.

Details on filing an application are available through local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. More information on the program is available [here](#).

## Deadline Today to Submit Bids for USDA Ground Bison Purchase

Qualified bison processors and marketers have until midnight tonight to submit bids to sell up to 1.8 million pounds of ground bison to USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service for use in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). The bid invitation was issued last Friday, and the awards are scheduled to be announced next Wednesday.

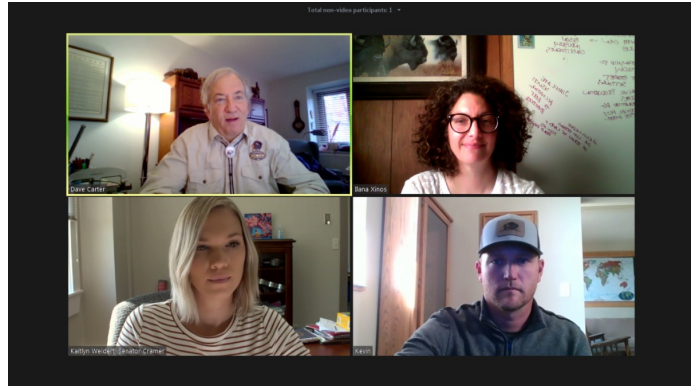
This solicitation is an annual request from USDA, and is not connected to the Section 32 surplus removal program request that was filed by the National Bison Association on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

Information on submitting bids can be found [here](#):

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### NBA Meets On-line with USDA, Hill Offices

September is normally the month when a delegation of bison ranchers stampede to Washington, D.C. to meet with USDA agencies and top elected officials to discuss priority issues for the bison business. With COVID-19 impacting in person meetings, groups of NBA members "Zoomed" to Washington, D.C. instead to meet on-line with those officials.



Individual meetings were held with key leadership from USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS). Those meetings with AMS, APHIS and FAS included NBA Executive Director Dave Carter, Assistant Director Jim Matheson, and members of the NBA Executive Committee.

At AMS, the delegation met with Administrator Bruce Summers, Deputy Administrator Tricia Kovacs, and Associate Administrator Jennifer Porter. The NBA members stressed the importance of approving the Section 32 surplus removal request that has been submitted to AMS to purchase \$17 million in bison meat. They also thanked AMS for issuing its annual solicitation to purchase ground bison for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, and for initiating a new weaned bison calf report.

The APHIS officials meeting with the NBA included Administrator Kevin Shea, Associate Administrator Mark Davidson and Veterinary Services Deputy Administrator Burke Healey. Topics included NBA cooperation in distributing RFID animal identification tags, assisting FAS in opening new foreign markets for bison, and the progress being made in the new bison industry assessment being conducted by the National Animal Health Monitoring System.

FAS Administrator Ken Isley, along with Animal Products Director Dawn Williams and Bison Specialist Joseph Degreenia, briefed the NBA delegation on progress being made to expand the newly implemented Mexico trade agreement to include human grade bison offal, and to open Japan, Korea and Taiwan for U.S. bison meat exports.

The meeting with ARS Research Team Leader Cyril Gay included Dr. Dave Hunter, chair of the NBA Science and Research Committee, and Dr. Kristi Cammack, Director of the newly established Center of Excellence for Bison Studies. Discussion focused on how to utilize the Center to support and strengthen ongoing USDA research activities into infectious diseases in bison. Dr. Gay also reported on promising progress in developing a commercially available MCF vaccine for bison.

Carter and Matheson, along with a small group of bison constituents, also met with staff

members for U.S. Sens, John Thune (R-SD) Pat Roberts (R-KS) Kevin Cramer (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO). They also met with the staff of U.S. Rep Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) topics in those meetings included:

- Urging support for the NBA's Section 32 purchase request with USDA;
- Assuring that bison are included in any future COVID-19 assistance programs;
- Support for Truth in Buffalo Labeling bills pending in both the Senate and House;
- Support for three bills aimed at bolstering the financial stability of small meat processing plants; and
- Support for the Senate resolution designating November 7<sup>th</sup> as National Bison Day.

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## More Participation Needed for New USDA Weaned Calf Report

The National Bison Association is urging producers to participate in the new annual weaned calf report being developed by USDA's Livestock and Grain Market Reporting Service.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, noted that USDA began developing that report this year at the request of the NBA.

"Major finishers and marketers meeting in January agreed that an annual report of weaned calves would provide valuable information regarding the number of animals that would be available for processing 15-20 months down the road. Accordingly, they could adjust the sales and marketing efforts to make sure we didn't experience a surplus of bison ready for processing," said Carter.

Amber Wells Sisco of USDA's Livestock and Grain Market Reporting Service has been working to gather the information needed for that report. She notified the NBA this week that additional participation is still needed. Anyone wanting to provide that information should contact her at: [amber.wells@usda.gov](mailto:amber.wells@usda.gov).

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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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## The Annual Buffalo Roundup Was Livestreamed From South Dakota

*(From Forbes)*

When the American Bison was named the national mammal of the United States in 2016, the Department of the Interior heralded it as "one of the greatest conservation success stories of all time." Indeed, the bison has come a long way from near extinction at the turn of the 20th century to joining the bald eagle as an official national symbol.



Every year, on the last Friday in September, tens of thousands of people flock to the Black Hills of South Dakota to attend the Annual Buffalo Roundup in 71,000-acre Custer State Park, home to one of the world's largest publicly-owned bison herds. In the United States, only Yellowstone National Park contains a larger herd.

It's worth attending this unique event at least once in your lifetime. The ground rumbles and clouds of dust rise as the thundering herd of 1,400 American Bison — some standing six-and-a-half feet at the shoulder and weighing as much as 2,000 pounds — stampede through the park. In hot pursuit are dozens of wranglers on horseback. These real-life cowboys and cowgirls guide the herd down the hills and into the corrals, where the animals can then be counted and given health checks. To keep the bison population at a sustainable size, several hundred animals are sorted from the herd and later sold at an auction.

South Dakota is currently smack in the middle of the Midwest's COVID-19 surge, with 33.4 new daily cases per 100,000 people based on a rolling seven-day average. That puts the Mount Rushmore State "at a tipping point," according to the risk-assessment map by Harvard Global Health Institute and Brown School of Public Health. Only in Wisconsin and North Dakota is the COVID-19 caseload climbing faster.

Just as well, then, that Custer State Park's 55th Annual Buffalo Roundup was [livestreamed on YouTube](#) on Friday, September 25.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Bipartisan Contingent Offers Support For More, Smaller Meat Packers**

*(From AgriPulse)*

Since COVID-19 disrupted the meat supply chain in the spring, there has been a growing consensus between Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill that the meat processing industry needs more competition, but that comes with a few barriers.

The spread of the virus exposed weaknesses in the meat supply chain, which led to plant shutdowns, price margin differences between the producer and packer, and more consumers buying from a local butcher to ensure they wouldn't be faced with empty shelves at the grocery store.

House Agriculture Committee Chair Collin Peterson, D-Minn., recently said consumers are likely to face higher costs if the current structure — which emphasizes a smaller number of larger facilities — is maintained.

"I don't think like in the case of hogs, they're going to be able to run as tight of ship as they did," he said at Monday's Agri-Pulse Ag and Food Policy Summit. "The end result out of these plants are going to be higher prices because we're going to have costs if you slow all this stuff down."

What's more, Peterson sees this as an issue that will need to be addressed on Capitol Hill, dismissing potential action from the Justice Department that might infuse competition in the sector as "a pipe dream."

"To think that the Justice Department is going to fix this. ... I've got some swampland in Arizona if you want to buy it," Peterson quipped.

One way Peterson thinks he could help plants is through [legislation](#) establishing a program to provide grants to existing meat and poultry processors to upgrade their facilities. Peterson argued this bill, introduced in July with former committee Chair Frank Lucas, R-Okla., and a handful of other committee members, would help processors move to federal inspection and be able to sell their products across state lines.

"We don't need a plant that's going to have 20,000 head a day killed. We need some

1,000-2,000 head a day plants and we need them spread out geographically," Peterson said. He also noted the smaller plants need federal inspectors so they can sell their products commercially.

Other legislation introduced since the onset of the coronavirus would make it easier for certain state-inspected facilities to sell their products across state lines, which is currently prohibited by federal law.

Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, the committee's top Republican, told Agri-Pulse he sees a movement toward smaller processors, but cautioned about the need to protect foreign perception of the U.S. processing sector.

"What we don't want to do as we look at that is somehow create any kind of a food safety issue or perception of a food safety issue with our trading partners around the world," Conaway said.

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## **American Bison Are Gone From Ohio's Ecosystem, But Can They Be Reintroduced?**

*(From the Ashland Source)*

ASHLAND -- The last American bison to roam the Ohio wilderness was documented in 1803 in Lawrence County.

Humans are the sole reason for the decline of the American bison population. They were hunted to near extinction nationwide and altogether extirpated from Ohio. In the 1800s, people could pay money to sit on a train that drove by herds of bison, and could shoot the animals while sitting in the train cars for sport.

With interest continually growing in wildlife protection and ecological maintenance, some have wondered if the American bison can successfully be reintroduced in Ohio's ecosystem. Reintroduction, according to Brian Banbury, executive administrator for Information and Education for the Ohio Division of Wildlife, would rely on a multitude of factors.

"That's where things get a lot more muddy. Bison, by nature, are migratory. It's built in their DNA to travel around so they don't overgraze an area and literally 'eat themselves out of house and home.' They need a tremendous amount of area to roam around in."

Whitetail deer were also said to be extirpated from Ohio around the same as the American bison, but the species successfully made a comeback in the regional ecosystem. Banbury said that there is still much debate on whether or not whitetail deer were ever fully expunged from the state.

Among the concerns for bison is they travel in nomadic herds and could pose a threat to Ohio farmers. They would trample through and destroy most modern fences. They also eat roughly 30 pounds of grass a day.

Therefore, the reintroduction of wild bison in Ohio would require thousands of connected acres due to their transient nature.

Ohio was home to woodland American bison, as opposed to the traditional prairie bison which still roam in and around Yellowstone National Park.

Meanwhile, the woodland bison were smaller in size, which allowed the beast to traverse dense forests with ease.

Before human interaction, the American bison only had one natural predator in Ohio: wolves; which were completely eradicated from the state in 1842. Because wolves were the bison's sole predator, they were crucial for the species' sustainability.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Documents Detail Push To Manage Yellowstone Bison As Cattle**

*(From the Billings Gazette)*

BILLINGS — In May 2018, Yellowstone National Park’s superintendent was ordered by then-Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke to manage the park’s bison “more actively like cattle on a ranch,” according to a park briefing statement.

About a month later, Yellowstone Superintendent Dan Wenk was removed from his post. Wenk was replaced by current Superintendent Cam Sholly who took over in October 2018.

Before being appointed to lead the Department of Interior, Zinke was Montana’s lone representative in Congress. He left his Interior post at the beginning of 2019.

The revelation of Zinke’s order didn’t surprise Darrell Geist, habitat coordinator for the Buffalo Field Campaign, a nonprofit bison advocacy group.

“These are things we’ve been saying for a long time ... that the herd is being managed for the good of the livestock industry and not the public trust,” Geist told the Billings Gazette.

Confirmation of the group’s theory came after a long court fight by BFC seeking the release of documents from the National Park Service through the Freedom of Information Act. In July, U.S. District Court Judge Donald Molloy ruled the NPS must release nine documents in their entirety. Buffalo Field Campaign recently made the documents available online, including the briefing statement.

Read more [here](#).

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## **What’s At Stake When Cargill Says It’ll Help Farmers Adopt Regenerative Agriculture Practices?**

*(From The Counter)*

Global food companies and the farmers in their supply chains need to adapt to the changing climate. But any change to the way a farmer farms is costly and fraught with risk, which makes many of them averse to trying. Here, a look at the complex business of making regenerative practices “accessible” to conventional commodity farmers.

On September 16, global industrial food giant Cargill announced a new initiative to support the farmers working in its supply chain: the company will provide an array of opportunities and incentives to help them adopt “foundational” regenerative agriculture practices across 10 million acres in North America over the next 10 years. The initiative’s overall impact, said the company—which produces corn- and soy-based animal feeds and supplies beef to McDonald’s, for example—would be equivalent to removing 1 million cars from the road.

Regenerative ag, as it’s commonly known, is viewed by its champions—farmers who adhere to its principles, politicians who legislate in support of it, longtime soil-health evangelists—as a corrective to soils that have been degraded and rendered increasingly unproductive by chemicals, monocultures of commodity crops, and the overgrazing of livestock. Project Drawdown, a non-profit organization working to stop greenhouse gas levels from climbing, lists regenerative ag among its top 25 climate solutions, determining that it “enhances and sustains the health of the soil by restoring its carbon content, which in turn improves productivity.”

Nevertheless, some responses to Cargill’s announcement fell short of enthusiastic. Environmental watchdog group Mighty Earth, which named Cargill the “Worst Company in the World” last year for, among other affronts, reneging on anti-deforestation promises in Brazil, issued a cautionary statement via campaign director Lucia von Reusner: “Cargill has a long track record as one of the most polluting companies in America,” Reusner wrote. And although the company’s announcement “suggests they are beginning to recognize the urgency of the problem, [it] has a history of making ambitious... promises to

address the damage caused by its supply chains but frequently fails to provide concrete implementation plans or details for follow-through.”

Read more [here](#).

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## **UC Davis Establishes Research, Training in Cultivated Meat**

*(From UC Davis News)*

Is cultivated meat - essentially, animal protein grown under lab conditions - a nourishing prospect to help feed the world, or is it more sizzle than steak? A consortium of researchers at the University of California, Davis, aims to explore the long-term sustainability of cultivated meat, supported by a new grant of up to \$3.55 million from the National Science Foundation Growing Convergence program, in addition to previous support from the Good Food Institute and New Harvest.

"The societal need is to feed 9 billion people," said principal investigator David Block, professor and chair of the UC Davis Department of Viticulture and Enology and professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering. "What we want to know is, will cultivated meat be a viable supplement to traditional agriculture?"

Block does not see cultivated meat as replacing conventional agriculture, but rather as adding more production and flexibility. Potentially, if the conditions are right, farmers might find it advantageous to operate cultivated meat production alongside conventional agriculture, he said.

The NSF-funded project, which will run over five years, has a number of goals. These include: developing stable stem cell lines from which cultivated meat can be grown; developing inexpensive, plant-based media in which to grow the cells; and assessing the nutritional value, stability and sensory qualities of cultivated meat products. The project aims to look at both "unstructured" products such as for sausage or burger patties and "structured" products that look and cook more like natural cuts of meat or fish.

An arm of the project led by Karen McDonald, professor of chemical engineering, will look at the technical and economic hurdles on the way to sustainable cultivated meat, including life cycle analysis of the entire process.

Read more [here](#).

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## **Rising Population Of Wild Hogs In The U.S. Deemed A Ticking 'Feral Swine Bomb': Report**

*(From PennLive.com)*

Wild swine is an invasive species that causes economic, health, and ecosystem devastation - and there are roughly 9 million of them rapidly multiplying across the U.S. According to a report by The Atlantic\*, over the last three decades the feral swine population has expanded from about 17 states to at least 39, causing an estimated \$2.5 billion worth of damage each year.

"I've heard it referred to as a feral swine bomb," says Dale Nolte, manager of the National Feral Swine Damage Management Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"They multiply so rapidly. To go from a thousand to two thousand, it's not a big deal. But if you've got a million, it doesn't take long to get to 4 [million], then 8 million." How did the species thrive?

According to the report, most pigs are a combination of domestic breeds and European wild boar.

"The problem with the hybrids," said Ryan Brook, a University of Saskatchewan biologist who researches wild pigs, "is you get all of the massive benefits of all of that genetics. It creates what we'd call super-pigs," the report quoted.

According to The Atlantic report, domestic pigs have been bred to grow big and be fertile year round, bearing large litters averaging 10 each, while boars have attributes, including heavy fur, that help them survive the winter months. The resulting hybrid is a highly intelligent "super-pig" with a keen sense of smell, the report said.

Read more [here](#).



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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
- 11/16/2020 - 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](mailto:jim@bisoncentral.com) and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

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