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Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for September 4, 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.

NBA Direct Marketing Webinars Provides Expert Advice & More

Bison producers specializing in farmers' markets, on-line marketing and other farm-to-consumer channels received a wealth of information earlier this week during two on-line Roundtables featuring five experts ranging from California to New York.

The webinar opened Monday with an in-depth presentation on shopper behavior at farmers' markets, which was presented by Chris Wayne and Erik Hassert of GrowNYC Farmer Assistance. The presentation featured information gleaned from major retail store studies, and from research conducted at farmers markets. Wayne and Hassert provided recommendations regarding signage, booth layout product merchandising and more.

Ari Adams, CEO of ShiftCon Media, then joined the webinar to provide recommendations for connecting with bloggers and other social media influences. While much of Adams' presentation focused on bloggers with a national audience, she also suggested that there are many uber local bloggers who would love to connect with bison producers.

Day two opened with an overview of the challenges facing farmers' markets as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and how markets are pivoting to survive and succeed. Ben Feldman, Executive Director of the National Farmers' Market Coalition, provided that overview.

Sean Lenihan, CEO of The Honest Bison, closed out the Roundtable with a guide to

developing an on-line store for bison. Lenihan stressed the importance of having a professional-looking on-line presence, backed by a commitment to customer satisfaction.

He particularly stressed the importance on quality on-line photography, mentioning that “consumers eat with their eyes.” While professional food photographers can cost tens of thousands of dollars, he added that anyone can increase the quality of their on-line photos by enrolling in online photography classes. Following the webinar, BA member and fellow direct-marketer, Carie Starr (Cherokee Valley Bison Ranch – OH) found just such a photography course focused on food photography and wanted to share with the membership. Learn more at <https://www.udemy.com/course/basic-food-photography/> and thank you, Carie for sharing!

All of the presentations, and webinars, are now available on-line [here](#) in the Digital Archives and Publications section, which is in the member's area of bisoncentral.com

The Roundtable was made possible through USDA's Farmers' Market Promotion Program.

NBA Plans “Virtual Policy Roundup” for Targeted Lobbying Campaign

While COVID-19 prevents the bison ranchers from traveling to Washington, D.C. for the annual Policy Roundup, the NBA will bring D.C., to the ranchers in a targeted series of on-line meetings being scheduled for the week of September 14th.

“With a number of critical issues pending before Congress and the USDA, we cannot fall off the radar screen this year,” said NBA Executive Director Dave Carter. “That’s why we are setting up a series of on-line meetings with key lawmakers, and agency officials at USDA.”

Meetings with USDA will focus on the NBA's Section 32 bison meat purchase request, Coronavirus Assistance decision-making, market news reporting, export issues, and agricultural research. On Capital Hill, meeting will target the next round of COVID-Relief Assistance, honest labeling of bison and water buffalo, and the annual National Bison Day resolution.”

Processors-Marketers Encouraged to Pre-Qualify for Selling to USDA

With a Section 32 bison meat purchase request pending at USDA, along with ongoing periodic opportunities to sell bison meat to the agency for use in Food Distribution on Indian Reservations, NBA processors and marketers are encouraged to take the steps necessary to pre-qualify as a vendor.

“USDA has great tools on-line to walk companies through the process of becoming an approved vendors, “ said NBA Executive Director Dave Carter. “The best time to go through this process is before the agency announces any offer to purchase bison meat.”

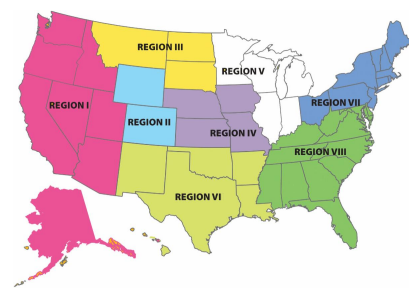
An on-line 18-minute webinar is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_e36KkRDzo

APDF version of the webinar is available here: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2018NewVendorWebinarPDFofSlides82418.pdf>

And, a checklist of the qualification requirements is available here: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NewVendorQualificationChecklist.pdf>

NBA Regional Director Nominations Close Today

Today is the deadline for NBA members interested in running for election in Regions I, III, V and VII to submit nominations to the NBA office. The elections will be conducted from September 11 – 30.



According to the NBA bylaws, regional directors "shall be elected by a mail-in, or electronic ballot during September of each year prior to the expiration of the regions' directors' terms. If after the initial ballot, no one person in any region has more than 50% of the ballots cast, then a run-off election will occur during November, involving the two persons having the most votes cast in the September balloting. In case of a tie, a coin will be tossed to determine the winner. Only active and lifetime members residing within a region may vote in each region's election." Regional directors are eligible to serve two two-year terms.

The directors elected in September will begin serving in January 2021.

In this election cycle, directors will be elected for two-year terms from Regions I, III, V and VII.

The regions up for election for, and the states included are:

- Region I, representing AK, AZ, CA, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA. Mary Adams, the current director is eligible for re-election.
- Region III, representing MT, ND, SD. Mimi Hillenbrand of South Dakota is the current director but is term-limited and cannot seek re-election. Kevin Leier of Rugby, ND, and Corissa Busse of Rapid City, SD have been nominated as candidates for that position.
- Region V, representing IL, IN, MI, MN, WI, Jeremy Allemann of Wisconsin, the current director, is eligible for re-election.
- Region VII, CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT. Brian Grubb is the current director but is term-limited and cannot seek re-election. Carrie Starr of Thornville, OH has been nominated as a candidate for the position.

Nominations for candidates to serve as regional director can be submitted to the NBA at dcarter@bisoncentral.com.

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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3 Yellowstone Bison Begin Long Journey To Alaskan Island

(From The Billings Gazette)

Ask Melissa Berns the cost of flying one bison from Seattle to Anchorage and she quickly recalls the figure — \$9,000.

That may seem like an odd question, but Berns is undertaking an unusual task: transferring three former Yellowstone National Park bull bison from a remote Montana Indian reservation to an even more far-flung Alaskan island.

Despite the high ticket price, the bison won't be flying coach, or even first class. "When we started this venture, we were unsure how to ship a bison by air, so we contacted The Alaska Zoo," Berns said. "They are being FedExed."

It's no wonder the nickname for the journey became Operation Buffalo Wings. Berns is a member of the [Alutiiq Tribe](#). In 2015 the [Old Harbor Alliance](#) — which includes the Alutiiq Tribe, community of Old Harbor and the Old Harbor Native Corporation — purchased a small bison herd that has now grown to 70 animals. To ensure the herd's genetic diversity, the former Yellowstone bulls were purchased through the [Inter Tribal Buffalo Council](#).

Getting the bison to their new home, however, is no easy task. Berns, who is the bison herd manager for the [Old Harbor Alliance](#), arrived in Montana on Friday to accompany the animals during their epic journey.

Read [more](#).

Bison ecology, ecological influence, behavior, and decline.

(From The Wildlife News)

Due to gross similarities in size, food preference, and appearance, it is often asserted that bison and domestic cattle are ecological analogs. However, a review of their evolutionary history demonstrates that they have significant differences in evolutionary pressures that manifest themselves in strikingly different modes of resource exploitation.

Compared to domestic cattle, bison wander more, are less apt to regraze a site during a single growing season, will use steeper terrain, select and consume drier, rougher forage, and spend less time in riparian areas and wetlands (Kohl et al. 2013) Bison are considered "ecosystem engineers" by creating and responding to heterogeneity across the landscape (White et al. 2015).

In addition, bison were unable to colonize vast portions of the West due to a variety of factors. Evidence suggests these major rangeland ecosystems evolved in the virtual absence of large herding animals. The introduction of domestic livestock into these areas has had particularly negative impacts upon these landscapes.

This paper will discuss the differences in habitat utilization, and behavior between cattle and bison, the decline of bison as an ecological influence, and the implications for management of western rangelands and preservation of native biodiversity.

Bison (*Bison bison*) and cattle (*Bos taurus*) both evolved from a common ancestor in Asia. This animal, named *Leptobos*, appeared in the Pliocene, and became widely distributed throughout Eurasia. Both *Bison* and *Bos* branched from *Leptobos* prior to its extinction in the late Pleistocene. Early in its evolutionary history, bison resembled cattle in many features including horns that pointed forward, a straight back and few seasonal secondary sexual characteristics. Both cattle and the early bison forms inhabited woodlands and forested areas. During the Pleistocene, bison gradually evolved adaptations that enabled them to exploit the steppe tundra ecosystem, and eventually spread into the available habitat across Asia and Europe. This form became known as *Bison priscus* (McDonald, 1981).

Read [more](#).

Man Dead After Possible Bison Attack In Antelope Island, Utah

(From Today)

A 55-year-old Utah man has died after likely being gored by a bison, according to local NBC affiliate KSL-TV.

The incident was uncovered by two women who came across "a lone trail runner ... calling out for help" on Antelope Island's lakeside trail and called 911, explained a [press release](#) from Utah State Parks. Park personnel then administered first aid and arranged for a medical helicopter to transport the "injured man" to University of Utah hospital.

His "critical" injuries were "consistent with a possible bison encounter," but there were no witnesses to confirm, according to the release, which added that the incident was still under investigation.

[KSL-TV reported](#) that the call for help came in around 10 a.m. Saturday and that the man was found about a mile from where he'd parked his car in an area that's frequented by bison.

"He was certainly injured," Eugene Swalberg, public affairs coordinator for Utah State Parks, told KSL-TV. "We don't know how long he'd been lying there. He certainly had injuries consistent with a goring, but ... we cannot definitively say that's what happened."

The man also sustained lacerations consistent with being thrown by a bison.

"There was a hat near this individual and also some earbuds," Swalberg said. "Was he running with earbuds and spooked a bison? That's entirely possible. We just don't know the circumstances, but he does have wounds and injuries consistent with a goring ... and maybe if he was thrown, lacerations from the rocks."

Read [more](#).

Most Of The Bison That Escaped From South-Central Nebraska Feedlot Have Been Rounded Up

(From The Omaha World Herald)

Most of the 125 bison that escaped last week from a feedlot in south-central Nebraska have been rounded up, but they're not all back at the feedlot, the Phelps County sheriff said Monday.

Most of the animals are in pastures or pens in Phelps County, Sheriff Gene Samuelson said, but a few still were out in Phelps, Furnas, Harlan and Gosper Counties. At least 50 were back at the feedlot, Samuelson said.

Ritch Blythe, who owns Valley View Feeders south of Overton, said Monday that crews still were working to secure all the animals.

The bison escaped about 5 a.m. Wednesday from Valley View Feeders, which is south of Interstate 80 and the Platte River. The animals headed south from the feedlot after they broke down a gate.

Officials were alerted to the escape when a semitrailer truck hit a bison. Five of the bison were hit and killed by vehicles Wednesday, the Phelps County Sheriff's Office said Thursday. One county resident also shot one of the animals.

Blythe said he's grateful that so many people volunteered to help round up the animals.

The feedlot has handled bison since the early 2000s.

Read [more](#).

Illinois Family's Bison Farm Becomes A Thriving Business

(From The Huron Daily Tribune)

MONTICELLIO, Ill. (AP) — Raising bison started as a hobby for an Illinois man, but as the herd began to grow, it became a thriving family business.

Terry Lieb bought his first bison in 2000. After his death in 2015, his sons, Jake and Josh Lieb, took over Lieb Farms, The News-Gazette reported. The farm has 45 to 55 bison at any given time.

“They’re natural as they were 200 years ago. We really don’t mess with them too much,” Jake Lieb said of the bison. “And that’s kind of the creed of the bison producer. We don’t artificially inseminate. We don’t choose the winners and losers. The big bull does the breeding. It’s a natural process.”

“(The shortage) definitely got people looking elsewhere to source the meat and open their eyes up,” Jake Lieb said. “I’m sure people started googling on-farm meat sales and things like that and found our bison farm.”

Bison has brought in a lot of money to the family business, but most of the farm’s income comes from selling corn and soybeans.

“There’s times when we’re working the herd and they’re being aggressive and things aren’t going right and you’re like, ‘Man, it would be a lot easier just to convert this pasture into a cornfield,’” Jake Lieb said. “But that feeling fades away when your first calf in the spring is born and you see the circle of life.”

Read [more](#).

Perdue: Second round of CFAP to be announced next week

(From Agri-Pulse)

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said Thursday that he will release the rules for the next round of Coronavirus Food Assistance Program payments to farmers next week, just ahead of the deadline for applying for the first round.

Speaking at a farm in Radcliffe, Iowa, after touring crop damage from last month’s storms, Perdue said the payments would be designed to compensate farmers for losses incurred after April 15 through the end of the year.

He also said that CFAP-2 would be designed to address concerns among cattle producers that they weren’t compensated for post-April 15 losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The deadline for applying for the original program is Sept. 11. “Before then we’ll have the rules in for the second CFAP,” he said.

Some \$9.4 billion in CFAP payments had been made as of Monday, according to USDA.

Read [more](#).

Feature Film on Soil Health Stars Gabe Brown, Ray Archuleta, and Hollywood Names

[Kiss the Ground](#), an 85-minute movie that explores key soil health and regenerative agricultural principles, will stream September 22, 2020, on Netflix.

Directed by Josh and Rebecca Tickell, the film features soil-health practitioners Gabe

Brown and Ray Archuleta, along with Woody Harrelson, Gisele Bundchen, Jason Mraz, and Ian Somerhalder, and interviews with a wide range of authors, researchers, and scientists.

The movie's thesis proposes that by regenerating the world's soils, humans can rapidly stabilize Earth's climate, restore lost ecosystems, and create abundant food supplies. The film uses creative graphics and visuals, along with NASA and NOAA footage, to illustrate how, by drawing down atmospheric carbon, many of humankind's most pressing climate and environmental problems can be solved. A preview of the movie is offered online.

See the trailer at <https://kissthegroundmovie.com/>.

Ag Lenders Need To Take Conservation Into Account, Report Says

(From Agri-Pulse)

Agricultural lenders should design their loan programs to encourage farmers' adoption of farming practices resilient to the impacts of climate change, the Environmental Defense Fund says in a new report.

But lenders first need more data so they can understand the "financial benefits of and barriers to resilient agricultural practices" such as cover crops and no-till farming, the [report](#) says. They cannot let their "unfamiliarity with conservation practices discourage farmers or increase barriers to lending."

"We have lots of great anecdotes and we're beginning to see more use of bigger datasets, like USDA datasets, to understand" the dollars-and-cents impacts of resilient farming methods, said Maggie Monast, EDF's director of economic incentives, agricultural sustainability.

"But there's still a big gap between the information lenders need to make decisions and what's out there," she said. EDF is recommending that lenders familiarize themselves with current conservation information and "collaborate with organizations like ours" to identify information gaps, she told reporters.

"Historically, lenders have placed the heaviest weight on farmers' financial strength and repayment ability," Idaho farmer and EDF adviser Dick Wittman wrote in the report's foreword. "Little consideration has been given in credit scoring models to farmers' conservation strategies or exposure to climate risk. That needs to change."

Read [more](#).

Wyoming Launches Meat Processing Expansion Program

(From Meatingplace.com)

Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon announced the Wyoming Meat Processing Expansion Grant Program to provide support for meat processing facilities and citizens affected by supply chain disruptions and regional shutdowns of processing facilities due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The governor has appropriated \$10 million in federal CARES Act funds to the program, which seeks to strengthen Wyoming's local food supply chain and address meat shortages at retail locations and food banks within the state.

"As anyone who has tried to get a beef cut up this year knows, processing in Wyoming is facing significant bottlenecks in 2020," Gordon said in a press release.

Wyoming-based meat processing businesses and nonprofits may submit grant applications for capacity-related improvements made before Dec. 30, 2020. Applications will open Sept. 15 and be reviewed by a group from the Wyoming Business Council,

Wyoming Department of Agriculture, and the governor's office.

The grants require a portion of products to be provided to local food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, prisons, schools or other charitable organizations to help feed hungry or underserved populations.

USDA: Huge Influx Of Federal Aid Shores Up Farm Earnings

(From AgriPulse)

Many farmers will see their incomes rise this year amid the historically massive outpouring of government aid that producers have received as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agriculture Department reported Wednesday.

USDA economists estimate government farm payments, including the department's special Coronavirus Food Assistance Program and the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program, will total \$37.2 billion in 2020, a 65.7% increase over last year and roughly three times what farmers were getting on an annual basis prior to 2018.

As a result of the federal payments, net cash farm income is forecast to rise by 4.5%, or \$4.9 billion, this year to \$115.2 billion even though farm cash receipts are expected to be down 3.3% due to slumping markets for livestock, poultry and row crops.

In February, prior to the economic slowdown due to the pandemic, USDA had estimated net cash farm income would drop 9% this year because of an expected decline in federal payments following the "phase one" trade deal with China.

A broader measure of the farm economy, net farm income, is expected to increase \$19 billion, or 22.7%, to \$102.7 billion in the latest forecast by USDA's Economic Research Service.

Net cash farm income is based on cash receipts from farming, plus government payments and other farm-related income, minus cash expenses. Net farm income also factors in non-cash items such as changes in inventories and depreciation. As a result, net cash farm income is considered the better measure of farmers' cash flow. Net farm income, unlike net cash income, would be higher this year even without the increase in government payments, according to the forecast.

In February, ERS estimated government payments would fall this year by nearly 37% with the end of the Market Facilitation Program, the assistance provided to farmers in 2018 to 2017 to compensate for the impact of President Donald Trump's trade war with China.



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Save the Date!

- 09/12/2020 - South Dakota Ranch Tours - Vivian, Wood & Mission, SD

- 10/17/2020 - Texas Bison Association Virtual Fall Meeting - Online
- 11/07/2020 - 55th Annual Custer State Park Fall Classic Bison Auction - Custer, SD
- 11/16/2020 - Brownotter Buffalo Ranch Annual Production Sale – Bullhead, SD
- 11/21/2020 - Coyote Trail Buffalo Annual Production Auction - Onaka, SD
- 12/04/2020 - Western Bison Association Meeting and Show/Sale - Ogden, UT
- 12/8/2020 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Consignment Auction - Sturgis, SD
- 12/19/2020 - North Dakota Buffalo Assn. Meeting/Simulcast Auction - Mandan, ND
- 1/08/2021 - Montana Bison Assn. Winter Conference - Great Falls, MT
- 1/9/2021 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Auction - Rapid City, SD
- 1/20/2021 - National Bison Association Winter Conference - Denver, CO
- 1/23/2021 - National Bison Association Gold Trophy Show/Sale - Denver, CO
- 2/6/2020 - DTBA Black Hills Buffalo Classic Simulcast Auction - Rapid City, 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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