



National Bison Association

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Weekly Update from the National Bison Association

A news and update service **exclusively** for members of the National Bison Association.
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October 19, 2018

State-Regional Associations, NBA Leadership Discuss Transitions, Mentorship, Collaboration

Participants in the fifth State/Regional-NBA Retreat focused on a series of important organizational issues in Kansas City last weekend, including succession planning, mentorship development, organizational structure and organizational collaboration.

“Our participants worked hard over the weekend, and covered a lot of ground,” said Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director. “We came out of the retreat with some specific steps to help strengthen or individual organizations, and to increase the collaboration at all levels of the bison business.”

The retreat began Friday evening with a discussion of succession planning within state/regional associations. Dale Rengstorf, president of the Minnesota Buffalo Association, joined the meeting by speaker phone to review the process that association utilized to bring on a new executive director when long-time leader Gail Griffin announced her retirement plans.

On Saturday morning, the group discussed organizational issues, including mission statements, bylaws review and job descriptions for staff and volunteers. In the afternoon, discussion focused on developing mentorship programs within the bison business.

Matheson said, “Jud Seaman, chair of the state/regional committee, did an outstanding job in facilitating the retreat. And everyone attending was actively engaged and willing to share the challenges they face in continuing to build their organizations.”

Senate Resolution designates November 3rd as National Bison Day

The United States Senate last week formally adopted a resolution designating November 3rd as National Bison Day 2018.

The resolution was sponsored by U.S. Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND) and cosponsored by 22 other Senators. Because Senate rules do not allow for standing designations, the resolution is required to be adopted annually.

The resolution cites a lengthy list of reasons for celebrating National Bison Day, and singles out the contribution played by private language with, “Whereas a small group of ranchers helped save bison from extinction in the late 1800s by gathering the remaining bison of the diminished herds” and “Whereas, as of 2012, the Department of Agriculture estimates that 162,110 head of bison were under the stewardship of private producers, creating jobs and contributing to the food security of the United States by providing a sustainable and healthy meat source.”

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, noted, “National Bison Day is a great opportunity to celebrate our National Mammal, and to reach out to the public to increase awareness and sales of deliciously healthy bison meat. We appreciate the support of the Senate in making sure that National Bison Day is officially recognized.”

Carter thanked Wildlife Conservation Society for taking the lead in working with Sen. Hoeven to circulate the petition. He also noted that the NBA members meeting with Senators and their staff during the September Policy Roundup helped build strong support for the resolution.”

The WCS is working with Senate offices to host a Bison Day celebration on Capitol Hill on November 13th.

Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director, encouraged NBA members to organize activities in their area to celebrate National Bison Day. Matheson and John and Jennifer Graves of the Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association will be at the Denver Zoo on November 3rd to participate in the zoo’s Bison Day celebration.

Senators Circulate Letter to Push FDA on Mislabeled Water Buffalo

U.S. Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) began circulating a letter among their colleagues this week to urge the FDA to take prompt action to stop water buffalo meat from being sold in a manner that leads consumers to believe they are buying bison.

The NBA worked with both Senate offices to develop the language for the letter.

The association also reached out this week to two major national consumer organizations to enlist support for the truth in labeling campaign. In letters to the leadership of the Consumer Federation of America and Consumers’ Union, NBA Executive Director Dave Carter urged them to “Get the word out to consumers to “not be buffaloed” by mislabeled water buffalo meat in the human food marketplace, or in pet products. Whatever communications network you have will be very helpful in that effort. And, we’d like to get at least 10,000 signatures on our on-line petition at: <https://www.change.org/p/national-bison-association-label-water-buffalo-as-water-buffalo-in-north-america-not-buffalo>.”

NBA Develops Model Legislation for Truth in Labeling

The National Bison Association has developed a model bill designed to be utilized as a framework for state legislation to prevent mislabeled water buffalo products in retail stores and restaurants.

Dave Carter, NBA Executive Director, noted, “States have strong authority to enact truth in labeling statutes. We wanted to provide the tools for state/regional bison associations to work with their respective legislatures to enact language that will protect bison products in the marketplace.

The model bill language was adapted from a law already on the books in Texas. The wording is designed to be utilized by other states. And the NBA has also developed a guide to working with state legislatures to pass a bill.

The model bill was reviewed by the participants at last weekends’ state/regional retreat and was distributed to all associations yesterday.

Wholesale Prices Remain Strong

Wholesale bison meat prices remain strong, with both young bull and heifer carcass prices up slightly from August, according to the September Wholesale Market Price Report released by USDA’s Market News Service this week.

According to that report, dressed young bull prices of \$487.11/cwt. were \$4.52 higher than the previous month, and \$3.42/cwt. higher than in September 2017. Dressed heifer prices averaged \$476.64/cwt. in September, which was \$3.08/cwt higher than the previous month, but \$10.52/cwt. than last September. Older bulls were lower and older cows higher, than the previous month.

The average young bull carcass was reported at 636 lbs. and the average heifer carcass was reported at 560 lbs. for September. Year-to-date, young bullas accounted for 58 percent of the younger animals processed under federal inspection. That is slightly higher than the eight-year average of 57 percent.

According to USDA’s national Agricultural Statistics Service the year-to-date federally inspected slaughter of 39,457 head is 3.2 percent lower than during the same period last year.

The USDA market price report can be found here.

https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw_ls526.txt

The NBA’s five-year tracking report is available in the members’ section of www.bisoncentral.com

Gehring to Represent NBA at ITBC Annual Meeting

NBA President Dick Gehring will be representing the National Bison Association this week at the annual meeting of the InterTribal Buffalo Council in Las Vegas, NV.

Gehring is scheduled to provide the meeting with an update on NBA issues, and will conduct a bison handling presentation.

“This is another indication of the strong working relationship we’ve developed among our organizations,” Gehring said. “This is a great opportunity to make sure that we continue to work together whenever possible.”

NBA to Be at FFA Next Week

NBA Members: If you know of students or ag advisors headed to the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis, be sure to tell them to stop the National Bison Association booth and get their picture snapped with Ernie, the travelling half bison – half bison skeleton display.

“We’ll be at booth No. 870 from Wednesday-Thursday, helping to spread the word about bison to students and ag advisors alike,” said Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director. He noted that the NBA has developed a series of packets designed specifically for ag advisors.

Running for Office? Let Us Know

Are you a bison producer? Are you a member of the NBA? Are you running for state or federal office?

If you’ve said “yes” to all of those questions, Please send along a brief description of your operation, and your campaign message. While the NBA cannot endorse candidates for office, we can let our members know about fellow bison producers who are seeking elected office.

We will publish the information in an upcoming Weekly Update prior to the election in November.

Winter Issue Bison World Advertising Now Available

To accommodate the new printing schedule for Bison World, production is now underway on the Winter issue of the magazine. This will be our membership/conference issue that will include the annual membership directory. There are a variety of advertising options available, from 1/8 page all the way to full page. Lifetime and Active NBA members will enjoy discounted rates as part of their membership perks.

For those interested in conference sponsorships, we have developed new sponsorship opportunities that include advertising in the magazine.

The advertising deadline is quickly approaching and the magazine is slated to be mailed in late December or early January. Editorial submissions and suggestions are welcome at any time. For more information about editorial submissions or advertising your ranch, business or events, contact Karen@bisoncentral.com or call (605) 381-3738.

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New Brucellosis Vaccine Rules Announced in Multiple Montana Counties *(From KTVQ TV)*

HELENA – A new rule in effect in ten Montana counties means all eligible animals must be vaccinated against brucellosis.

According to the Department of Livestock, eligible animals include all sexually intact female cattle and domestic bison, 12 months or older.

The rule now includes Big Horn, Broadwater, Carbon, Jefferson, Stillwater, and Sweet Grass counties. It includes cattle that enter these counties for seasonal grazing. Before this rule, only cattle and domestic bison in Gallatin, Madison, Park, and Beaverhead counties had to be vaccinated.

The rule also moves away from December 1st as a cutoff date for vaccinations and doesn't specify animals be calfhood vaccinates.

The department says this gives producers more options.

According to the department, if producers haven't vaccinated their replacement females in the past, they should contact their veterinarian to schedule replacement heifer vaccinations, as well as discuss options for unvaccinated adult females in the herd.

The "Designated Surveillance Area" boundary in a portion of Beaverhead County is also being adjusted for the third time since 2009, and cattle and domestic bison in the area will be subject to all brucellosis DSA regulations.

Source. <https://ktvg.com/news/montana-news/2018/10/13/new-brucellosis-vaccine-rules-announced-in-multiple-montana-counties/>

Charting the Success of Exotic Meat Purveyor Fossil Farms

(From New Jersey Monthly)

In 1995, Paramus natives Lance and Todd Applebaum were on a ski trip to Breckenridge, Colorado when they tasted bison and ostrich for the first time. "I just fell in love with it," recalls Lance Applebaum, CEO of Fossil Farms. "Growing up, my brother [Todd] always wanted to be a farmer, and I always knew I wanted to run my own business. Right then and there, I realized this is what we gotta do."

Two years after the trip, the Applebaum brothers opened the Boonton-based Fossil Farms, now one of the state's primary sources of farm-raised, all-natural exotic meats such as alligator, antelope, buffalo, duck, elk, rabbit, guinea hens, Poussin, squab, venison, wild boar, Piedmontese beef, quail, pheasant and caribou.

Not that it was easy. When the brothers opened Fossil Farms in 1997, it was a 13-acre ostrich farm challenging well-trodden (beef/chicken/pork/lamb) protein terrain. "People laughed at us," says Applebaum. "This was pre-organic, pre-natural food movement." His solution: hoof it (so to speak). "I did what I called 'The Grind.' I went to everyone that would listen to us. I went to chefs in New Jersey and asked them 'Hey, we've got this product, ostrich, it's 97% fat free, low-cal, high protein, would you like to feature it as a special on your menu?' Every single chef said yes."

Part of it was timing. "We were really involved in this farm-to-table movement before it was popular," Applebaum says. But growing up in Bergen County didn't hurt, either, with working farms and New York's culinary scene each within an hour's drive. In fact, it's no coincidence restaurant-savvy Applebaum ended up much more open to chef input than other suppliers at the time. "I learned [the business] from a chef's point of view," he says. Also, no coincidence, many of Fossil's 38 employees are professionally-trained and/or former chefs. "The best people to really talk to other chefs, or educate consumers on these products, are chefs"

That chef-supplier dynamic has proven critical to Fossil's growth. "A lot of our chef-clients became friends. We learned from them. They're asking me 'What else can you do? You guys are doing such a great job with this, can you do venison, quail, can you get me this, can you get me that?'" To accommodate the demand, Applebaum began sourcing from like-minded farmers. "I've developed a lot of relationships over 21 years," he says. "Every single farm, it's the same mindset, the same caring for animals that we do," whether it's Piedmontese beef from the Midwest or Hawaiian-raised antelope.

Fossil was so successful that by 2008, the brothers split the business, with Lance handling supply and Todd manning the 118-acre Roaming Acres farm in Lafayette, raising ostrich, bison, Berkshire pig and emu. "[The farm] is like a scene out of Jurassic Park," Lance laughs. "Part of our success is because of the diversity of our business," he continues. They sell to restaurants in NJ like the Hill, [Viaggio](#) and the Washington Inn in Cape May, as well as Eatly in New York. They have an on-site retail market, and an online store where consumers can get chef-quality product shipped direct. "It's like a meat candy store for adults."

Full story here.

<https://njmonthly.com/articles/eat-drink/table-hopping/fossil-farms-exotic-meat/>

Herds Head to Annual Bison Auction in The Wichita Mountains

(From Texoma'sHomepage.com)

History nearly made them extinct, but once a year, the free-roaming bison herds at the Wichita Mountains Annual Bison Auction refuge are culled to keep them manageable for buyers. The 48th annual Bison Auction brought people from all over the area who were looking to add to a herd or possibly start a new business. There were also a lot who came out just to see what the auction was like.

One of the onlookers was Derek Phillips and his family, who made the drive from Moore, Oklahoma.

"I've been trying to make it the last two years, but due to work constraints, I wasn't able to make it here," Phillips said.

While Phillips wasn't ready to purchase a herd this round of auctions, he said he's looking into buying bison in the future.

"I grew up around cattle with my grandpa, but now that I am retiring, I want to get into bison," Phillips said. "It's supposed to be, not easier per say, but they take care of themselves a lot more than cattle."

The bison that are auctioned off live on the refuge.

"We try to keep as much genetic diversity within our herd as we can," a wildlife biologist on the refuge Dan McDonald said. "The animals that are more related to everybody else are the ones that we may sell. It's a way for us to conserve genetics and also reduce inbreeding by removing those animals from the population."

The money raised from the auction will help the bison's original habitat.

"A portion of it comes back to the refuge for funds to help us manage this bison herd with facilities and equipment and things that we need to manage this bison herd," McDonald said. "A portion goes back to the county in lieu of taxes and the rest goes to a revenue sharing fund with the Fish and Wildlife Service

Full story here. <https://www.texomashomepage.com/news/local-news/herds-head-to-annual-bison-auction-in-the-wichita-mountains/1533953936>

Trump announces plan for trade deals with Japan, EU and UK

(From AgriPulse)

The Trump administration has formally announced to Congress that it intends to begin negotiating free trade agreements with Japan, the European Union and the UK. That starts the ball rolling on what the U.S. ag sector has been clamoring for: new trade deals that will help boost farm commodity exports by tearing down tariff and non-tariff barriers.

"Today's announcement is an important milestone in that process," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said in a statement. "We are committed to concluding these negotiations with timely and substantive results for American workers, farmers, ranchers, and businesses." The Trump administration must give Congress a 30-day warning before it can begin new FTA talks under the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015, known more commonly as Trade Promotion Authority (TPA).

Praise for the announcement arrived quickly from Capitol Hill.

"A trade agenda that prioritizes free trade and open markets is the best ways to defend American interests and strengthen our economy," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orin Hatch, R-Utah. "I am pleased that the administration is pursuing new trade agreements with several of our most important trading partners in accordance with Trade Promotion Authority (TPA)."

A potential FTA with Japan would be huge for U.S. farmers.

Global Food Cos. Form Animal Welfare Group

(From Sustainable Food News)

Seven global food companies have formed the [Global Coalition for Animal Welfare](#) (GCAW) to address "systemic barriers to improving animal welfare, accelerate the development of standards and drive progress on key welfare issues."

The GCAW is being called the world's first food industry-led initiative aimed at advancing animal welfare globally.

Compassion in World Farming estimates that more than 70 percent of the world's 70 billion farm animals live in intensive systems, often in conditions where they are unable to move freely or behave naturally.

The treatment of farm animals and the nature of the production systems in which they are reared is not only an ethical issue but one that connects to other issues such as food safety, human health and antimicrobial resistance, as well as environmental issues such as carbon emissions, water supply and land use.

The seven founding member companies, with combined annual revenues of \$165 billion, include Aramark, Compass Group, Elior Group, IKEA Food Services, Nestlé, Sodexo and Unilever.

GCAW said it aims to publish a collective action agenda in the first half of 2019, focusing on five priority work streams: cage-free policies, improved broiler chicken welfare, farmed fish welfare, antimicrobial resistance, and global standards for transportation and slaughter.

Among its actions, GCAW pledges to:

- provide a platform for food companies to work more closely with farm animal welfare experts to identify common objectives and drive improvements
- prioritize welfare issues and developing roadmaps for industry change while supporting producers in implementing strong animal welfare practices
- advance animal welfare knowledge globally through industry insights, bespoke research and partnerships for action

New WOTUS Rule Projected for September 2019

(From AgriPulse)

The Environmental Protection Agency says it is on track to issue a final rule replacing the Obama administration's 2015 "waters of the United States" rule by September 2019, but don't hold your breath.

If former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's **promises** had come true, there already would be a new WOTUS rule in place. Now, in the latest **semiannual regulatory agenda** released by the federal government, EPA **estimates** it will publish a proposed replacement rule by this month, which aligns with pledges made recently by Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler.

Even if a proposal were published this month, however, the complex nature of the rulemaking could make it difficult for the agency to meet the September 2019 target.

"We're hopeful, but they better get busy," said Don Parrish, senior director for regulatory relations at the American Farm Bureau Federation.

As he has said before, Parrish said it's important that the agencies allow plenty of time for public comment. He said he supports a 90-day comment period on the new proposal.

Because of court rulings from federal judges in different states, the 2015 rule is now in effect in 22 states while its implementation is blocked in 28 others.

Online Grocery Sales Expected to Quadruple in Five Years

(From Meatingplace.com)

Online sales of groceries will more than quadruple from now through 2023 as web-based options become more available and consumers more willing to shop for their food online, according to a new forecast from market research firm Packaged Facts.

Already, online grocery sales have more than tripled between 2013 and 2018. Most of the growth has come since 2016, with the expansion of both e-commerce platforms and conventional grocery stores. As an example, Aldi launched a partnership with InstaCart in three cities in August 2017; by September 2018 the company announced it would extend the service to all of its U.S. stores.

Packaged Facts expects more people to become open to trying online grocery shopping, while those who already do it are seen making purchases more frequently. Increased use of smartphones, better website interfaces and mobile apps, and growth of crowdsourced business models for shopping and delivery all have fueled the online grocery boom.

South Dakota Senator Optimistic Farm Bill Will Be Completed This Year

(From AgriPulse)

Farm Bill conference committee leaders are continuing to try to come to agreement on a new farm bill. South Dakota Senator John Thune says the holdup remains differences between the House and Senate over the Nutrition Title and work requirements for the Food Stamp Program or SNAP.

He says some of the other points of contention over the farm bill involve regional differences and possible increased payments for cotton growers.

Thune wants to see the farm bill completed this year and he's optimistic that will happen. The thoughts are that the farm bill likely won't come up again until the Lame Duck Session of Congress following the mid-term elections.