



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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January 18, 2019

Bison Ranchers Look to Expand Market at Annual Meeting

The nearly 500 bison ranchers bringing more than 100 head of live bison to Denver next week will also be bringing a commitment to continue building the market for bison meat based upon the quality of the meat and a dedication to sustainable ranching practices.

The ranchers will be gathering at the National Bison Association's 24th annual meeting at the Denver Renaissance Hotel, and at the association's Gold Trophy Show and Sale at the National Western Stock Show.

"The bison business has logged another year of record-breaking sales, and extremely strong prices for producers," said Dave Carter, executive director of the Westminister, CO-based association. "We know that introducing more people to the great taste and nutritional benefits of naturally-raised bison will continue to help us grow."

A major focus of the association's annual meeting, entitled "Gaining Ground," will be the development of collaborative partnerships to assure the continued growth of the bison business.

The annual conference will kick off at the Renaissance Hotel at 3801 Quebec St. with a luncheon on Wednesday (which the association has renamed as Bison Hump Day).

Presentations during the conference will include a seminar on Ranching for Profit, conducted by David Pratt, a nationally recognized leader in helping producers consider financial, personal and ecological growth in their business. Agricultural researchers from South Dakota State University will also provide extensive information about that institution's commitment to develop a Center of Excellence in bison research.

Other presentations will focus on herd health, low-stress animal management, and tips for newcomers to the bison business.

On Saturday, January 26th, activities move to the National Western Stock Show, where the live animal auction will begin at 10:30 a.m. in the Livestock Center sale arena. More than 100 head of live bison are expected to be auctioned. At 10 a.m., prior to live animal sale, the carcass entries in the "market class" competition will be auctioned in the sale arena. "The market class auction is a great opportunity for members of the public to come out and purchase meat to stock their freezers," Carter said, adding that the association has an arrangement with Innovative

Packing Co. nearby Greeley to cut and package the meat for anyone purchasing a carcass at the sale.

A complete agenda for the conference, and the Show and Sale, is available at www.bisoncentral.com

No Weekly Update next Friday

Please note, there will be no Weekly Update next Friday. We understand that people who can't attend the conference want to keep up-to-date on all of the events in Denver, so we'll do our best to make regular posts on Facebook and Instagram.

Then, we'll return on February 1st with full coverage of winter conference.

Great Selection of Top Breeding Stock Available at GTSS – Catalog Available Now

More than 100 head of live bison, along with 20 Market Class carcass entries will be judged and sold during the 39th anniversary Gold Trophy Show and Sale in Denver next week.

The live animals consigned to the show and sale will begin arriving at the Yards at the National Western Stock Show on Tuesday to be judged Thursday and Friday. Consignments this year include seven two-year old bred females, 8 yearling heifers, 11 heifer calves, 5 ranch-ready pen of five yearling heifers, and three pen of five heifer calves. Also consigned are 11 two-year old bulls, 17 yearling bulls, and 10 bull calves.

Meanwhile 10 bulls and 7 heifers will be processed at Brush Meat Processing to be judged in the annual Market Class competition.

This year, a buyers' Reception will be held in The Yards near the bison pens from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. on Friday. Winners in the live judging and market class will be announced at the NBA Winter Conference banquet Friday evening.

On Saturday, January 26th, the judges will give their comments in the Yards at the Stock Show, starting at 8 a.m. The Market Class auction will begin at 10 a.m., followed by the live auction at 11 a.m. People can bid remotely via LiveAuctions.tv. To get set up for online bidding, log onto: http://www.bisoncentral.com/sites/default/files/LiveAuctionsTV_InfoGuideLines.pdf

The catalog is now available online at: <https://bisoncentral.com/gold-trophy-show-and-sale/>

The NBA is promoting the GTSS through a variety of outlets, including advertising in two livestock publications, a Facebook push, Trading Board, and a 30-second video clip airing continuously in the Stadium Arena at the Stock Show.

This year, attendees at Winter Conference will be able to ride a dedicated shuttle from the Renaissance Hotel to the Stock Show. The shuttle will run 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Wednesday-Friday, and 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Free Bison Junior Judging This Wednesday

The next generation of bison ranchers will have a chance to test their judging skills as they compete for scholarship and recognition at the annual NBA Junior Judging contest at the National Western Stock Show in Denver next Wednesday.

The annual event scheduled from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. in the Yards at the stock show will include both team and individual categories. Awards will be given to the top three in each of the categories. Scholarships will be presented to the top three individual winners. Those scholarships are \$1,500 for the first-place winner, sponsored by the National Buffalo Foundation; \$1,200 for the second-place winner, sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association, and \$900 for the third-place winner, sponsored by Rocky Mountain Natural Meats. The contest is open to everyone between the ages of eight and 21. There are no entry fees to participate.

Thank you to the generous sponsors and volunteers that make this 100% volunteer-run event possible each and every year.

Canadian Bison Association Nominates Robert Johnson as International Director

Members attending the NBA annual membership meeting next Friday will be electing a slate of officers, and an International Director, to guide the organization through the coming year.

All existing officers, President Dick Gehring, Vice President Roy Liedtke, and Secretary-Treasurer Tom Barthel have announced their intention to seek re-election.

The Canadian Bison Association has nominated Robert Johnson of Saskatchewan to serve as International Director. If elected, Johnson will replace Paul Kolesar, who is stepping down after serving as international director since 2015. Johnson and his wife, Rebecca, operate RJ Game Farm at Fairlight, in the south east corner of Saskatchewan.

They have been bison producers for 12 years, and transitioned ownership of the farm, which was started in 1974, from Rebecca's parents, Ryan and Roberta Clark. It was originally an elk farm and post BSE they saw an opportunity and a lot of potential in the bison industry.

They have a herd of 450 cows and finish all our calves, plus buy animals from other producers.

Robert said, "I am very much aligned with the objectives and focus of the National Bison Association. I would like to use my skills and the knowledge gained in my experience as a bison producer to help this group, and my fellow producers reach their goals."

Wholesale Bison Prices Hold Steady in December

Wholesale prices for dressed bison carcasses finished strong in December, closing out another year of stability and profitability for producers across the country.

In a report released despite the partial shutdown of the federal government, USDA's Grain and Livestock Market News Reporting Service pegged dressed bison bull carcass prices at

\$484.50/cwt. which was \$2.40/cwt. lower than in November, but \$3.34/cwt higher than in December 2017. Dressed heifer carcasses averaged \$477.56/cwt. in December, which was \$8.12/cwt. higher than in November, and \$5.61/cwt higher than the previous year.

Aged bull carcasses were higher for the month, and aged cows were lower.

Bison/Buffalo Labeling on Agenda as Pet Food Regulators Meet Next Week

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) will be weighing options to clarify the labeling of bison and water buffalo on pet food products, as it convenes in Savannah, GA next week for the association's mid-year conference.

AAFCO is comprised of state feed officials and FDA representatives, and develops the model regulations that are adopted by individual states to govern the composition and labeling of pet food and feed products.

At the request of the National Bison Association, AAFCO has established a Bison/Buffalo Working Group to develop proposed language to halt deceptive labeling of water buffalo ingredients in pet food products. NBA Executive Director Dave Carter is a member of that working group.

Because the AAFCO mid-year meeting is being held on the same days as the NBA winter conference, NBA member Ken Ludwick of Kentucky will be representing the association at the meeting. Ludwick owns and operates Tasman Natural Pet and Tasman Group.

Carter noted, "Ken Ludwick has a strong background in bison products, and the pet products business. He will provide a strong voice for our business at the AAFCO meeting."

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North American Bison LLC Building Customer Connection

(From Food-Drink Magazine)

Now, more than ever, people are looking for healthy meat alternatives and [North American Bison LLC](#) is ready to fill that need. Bison meat, President and CEO Tom Riemann says, brings health benefits that some might not be aware of.

For example, "A sirloin cut from bison has 1/3 less fat, calories and cholesterol than skinless chicken," he says, adding that a bison burger tends to be less saturated with fat than one made from beef.

But it also can be more memorable. Riemann often talks with people who remember eating their first bison burger when they were young. "You can't say that about a beef or chicken product," he says. "It's unique."

Based in New Rockford, N.D., the company partners with independent ranchers to bring sustainably raised bison to market under its TenderBison brand. Riemann explains that North

American Bison began operations in 1993, to develop a market for the bison being raised by ranchers.

At the time, he says, the bison industry was surging. “People were seeing the value in eating bison vs. beef,” he says, noting that the numbers of buffalos increased across the country. “An overproduction of animals at that time required immediate attention to increasing the demand and awareness of bison,” he recalls. “As a result of the marketing efforts put forth by [our] sales and marketing staff, we were able to triple the sales of the company in four years-time.”

“North American Bison owns its harvest and fabrication portions of the production process thus providing a lot of flexibility and control that many of our competitors don’t have as they don’t own both of these production entities,” he says.

Today, North American Bison works with nearly 100 independent family ranchers that take care of all the animals’ needs. But unlike many of its competitors, North American Bison chooses to not have corporately owned herds, as that would then lead to competing with the independent rancher, and that would be counter-productive in helping to sustain the independent family bison rancher, he explains.

Although they do have to follow guidelines in regards to feeding requirements and humane treatment procedures, each follows their own idea of “the best way to nurture those animals to maturity,” Riemann says. “They are independent thinkers.”

Currently, ground bison comprises 60 to 70 percent of the company’s sales. Riemann explains that is because ground bison is something consumers have a familiarity with and is also economical, making bison burgers a high-demand product.

Full story here. <http://www.fooddrink-magazine.com/sections/producers/2526-north-american-bison-llc>

Dakota Territory Buffalo Association Winter Conference – New Format, Same Location

“It is that time of year and we are all getting ready for conference and sale season. Following the National Conference in Denver next week, the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association will be holding their Winter Conference and holding the Black Hills Buffalo Classic in Rapid City, SD.

Unlike previous years, the Winter Conference will only be a 2 day event, Friday February 1 and Saturday February 2. This change is mostly due to the Show and Sale Committee keeping true to their goal of holding a simulcast auction instead of a live show on Sunday to decrease animal stress.

Friday’s agenda includes a panel discussion regarding bison vs buffalo labeling issues seen this year in the industry as well as our annual business meeting. During the banquet we will be awarding the winners of the DTBA Young Guns and Girlz Going Wild Production Challenge, as well as the North American Producer’s Challenge for the first time. After this Bradeen Auctions will be conducting our annual fun auction featuring a game of Bison Bingo and fun items such as raffle tickets for the DTBA Scholarship Committee Gun Raffle (to be awarded at the end of the evening), 10 bags of Redmond Mineral, an exquisite, travelling prairie dog mount, and much

more. This will all end with a band playing till midnight featuring South Dakota's own Zeona Road.

Saturday will have a choice of options for folks. Animals that made it to sale from the Guns and Girlz will be held at Cammack Buffalo Ranch in Stoneville, SD, about an hour from Rapid City. Bus transportation will be provided for those who wish to view the animals prior to the sale. For those who do not wish to view the animals, there will be a line up of speakers on a variety of topics ranging from social media marketing to NRCS programs and multiple bison health speakers. Following the education part of the conference, we will be holding the first even Black Hills Buffalo Classic via simulcast at the Ramkota Hotel.

We hope to see you all there, and in Denver. Travel safe and keep roaming.

For more information about the DTBA Winter Conference please go [here](#).

For more information about the Black Hills Buffalo Classic featuring the Young Guns and Girlz Going Wild Production Challenges please go [here](#).

For more information on the DTBA Scholarship, which is currently accepting applications, please visit [here](#)."

Despite Warnings, Education, Yellowstone Visitors Still Get Too Close To Bison

(From Wyoming Public Media)

Yellowstone officials try to make it very clear that tourists should not get close to wild bison. There are posters, educational videos and park rangers who warn people to stay clear of wildlife. But all that education might not be cutting it, according to [a recent study](#).

Twenty-five people were injured by wild bison in the park between 2000 and 2015. The majority of those people actively approached the bison before getting hurt. Several people got too close to try and take photos of the beasts before they were gored or chased by bison. "People just don't understand. They go to Yellowstone and think it's a zoo," says Stephany Seay with the Buffalo Field Campaign.

Seay says bison give warning signs when people come too close. If you come too close to a bison that's bedded down, it will warn you by standing up. It might next raise its tail, bellow at you and shake its head. And usually, a bison will "bluff charge" someone before actually attempting to gore them.

The authors are federal employees, and could not be reached because of the partial government shutdown. But the study concludes that education alone is not enough to prevent tourists from trying to pet or chase wildlife. Researchers looked at incident reports following injuries and found that many people were affected by social influencers.

Full story here. <https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/despite-warnings-education-yellowstone-visitors-still-get-too-close-bison#stream/0>

Illness Strikes Antelope Island's Bighorn Sheep Population

(From ABC4.com)

The herd of bighorn sheep on Antelope Island is often referred to as the “nursery herd.” The animals have been used since the 1990s to re-establish bighorn sheep populations in various parts of the state.

Soon, the herd will not exist. After a dramatic drop in population numbers, the Division of Wildlife tested tissue in four rams that turned up dead.

DWR was tipped off because those rams were wearing radio collars. Test results came back just a few days ago, and it’s a respiratory illness that serves as a death sentence.

“When they get this respiratory disease, they suffer a really agonizing and slow death. It’s just really a tough thing to watch, it’s really bad,” said Mark Hadley, the Public Information Officer for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

Their disease is like an extreme case of pneumonia in humans, and it’s unclear how the herd contracted the illness. Typically, domesticated sheep or goats can spread it to wild populations. “To our knowledge, there aren’t any domestic sheep or goats on the island. We are trying to figure out how that disease could have gotten out here on the island,” said Hadley.

The disease doesn’t impact any other wildlife and cannot be passed to birds or bison, it just moves very rapidly in sheep. The Antelope Island herd was known for thriving and has numbers of more than 150 animals, but now only 26 remain.

Full story here. <https://www.abc4.com/news/local-news/illness-hits-antelope-island-s-big-horn-sheep-population/1705236978>

Cattle Deaths In Florida And Georgia Lead To Feed Investigation

(From AGDAILY Reporters)

Florida authorities are investigating sudden deaths among cattle in parts of Florida and Georgia. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services this week received multiple reports related to acute deaths in cattle. These deaths are being investigated by both the Division of Agricultural Environmental Services and the Division of Animal Industry. Local law enforcement agencies and veterinarians have also been involved in the ongoing investigation.

While the specific cause has not yet been determined, these deaths may be related to feed. The product in question is Producer's Pride 20% All-Natural Cattle Cube, lot number 8DEC22MUL2, manufactured by Purina Animal Nutrition, and distributed to 40 Tractor Supply Company stores in Florida and Georgia in multiple locations.

Tractor Supply Company has voluntarily removed the product in question from their shelves in all 40 stores. In addition, Purina Animal Nutrition has initiated a voluntary market withdrawal of the affected product. Consumers are advised to either discard the product or return it to their retail purchase location for exchange or refund. There are no expected impacts to human health at this time, nor are there expected to be, according to Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried.

Full text:

<https://www.agdaily.com/news/cattle-deaths-floriday-georgia-lead-feed-investigation/>

USDA FSA To Open Offices on Limited Basis

(From AgWeek)

Farm Service Agency offices across the nation will open up for three days to assist agricultural producers with existing farm loans, to ensure the agency provides tax documents to borrowers and release proceeds from the sale of loan security.

Select FSA offices will be open Jan. 17, Jan. 18 and Jan. 22, during normal business hours, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue announced on Wednesday, Jan. 16. About 2,500 U.S. Department of Agriculture employees have been recalled to perform certain services. A list of offices that will be open can be found at <https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/documents/OpenFSAServiceCenters.pdf>. The list accounts for about half of FSA locations. Since not all offices will be open, producers can visit nearby, open service centers if the office with which they typically do business is not on the list. Producers can call rather than visit if their business can be handled over the phone.

Recalled staff will be able to help with existing farm loans, ensure the agency provides 1099 tax documents to borrowers by the Internal Revenue Service's deadline, process payments made on or before Dec. 31, 2018, continue expiring financing statements, open mail to identify priority items and sign checks jointly payable to FSA.

Farmland Values Steady But Uncertainty Remains

(From AgriPulse)

Farmland values are expected to remain stable in 2019, despite uncertainty caused by lower commodity prices and farm incomes over the past five years, Farmers National said after looking at recent trends in its 28-state service area.

Prices have been buoyed by the low supply of land for sale, strong cash rental rates, and historically low interest rates. "Even though the rate of bankruptcies and forced land sales is low, there is the expectation that numbers will increase somewhat in the year ahead as farmers' cash flows are stressed," said Randy Dickhut, Farmers National's senior vice president of real estate operations. He added that there has also been an increase in the number of quiet sales between neighbors or investors that does not allow the land to be exposed to the market to see what the value is.

"The ultimate question here is how many more properties for sale can the market handle before the volume overwhelms the number of buyers and puts downward pressure on land prices," Dickhut said. In Kansas, where land was valued at \$4,500/acre in 2017 and \$4,000/acre last year, Farmers National sees the price dropping to \$3,800 in 2019. In Iowa, the price is expected to fall from \$10,500 last year to \$9,750 this year. In Washington, growers can anticipate a 3 percent drop, to \$13,000, which is nonetheless still above 2017's price of \$12,500 an acre. Nebraska growers can expect to see their second year of decreases, from \$9,000 last year to \$8,500 in 2019.

Updated Canadian Food Safety Rules Aim To Boost Disease Prevention

(From Meatingplace.com)

Food businesses that import or prepare food for export from Canada will be required to follow new rules designed to remove unsafe food from the marketplace faster and stop the spread of disease, starting yesterday.

The new [Safe Foods for Canadians Regulations](#) (SFCR), effective Jan. 15, cover a wide range of food safety-related efforts from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), including licensing, labeling standards, rules enforcement and new recall protocols. The program launch also includes CFIA-developed educational efforts such as [online videos](#) covering the new rules, documents outlining fee changes, an online glossary of key terms and a downloadable handbook for businesses seeking additional information about SFCR.

The [new regulations](#) – which are being phased in over the next 30 months – also feature traceability requirements designed to help Canadian food companies that import or send food between Canadian territories track the origins of the products they manage. Other issues covered by SFCR include packaging, organic products, excluded products and inspection standards. The latest rules stem from 10 previously enacted regulations that were current as of December of 2018.