



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 20, 2017

Sponsor a FFA Chapter and Help Grow the Bison Business! *Over 25 sponsors have already stepped up to help!*

The NBA is preparing for its annual trip to the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis next week. There, over 60,000 young future farmers and ranchers visit an array of vendors at the convention's trade show, including our National Bison booth. These kids ask great questions, recognize the Bison Advantage and exhibit a genuine interest in bison production. As such, we try to find these FFA chapters a local bison sponsor in their region to provide them with 1) a \$50 Student Group membership, which includes the building blocks to educate their chapter about proper bison production, and 2) a local mentor to answer questions about bison production and potentially offer a farm/ranch tour.

In the past, we have collected contact information at the convention and then reached out to members in their region as potential sponsors, which can be time consuming. As such, this year the NBA is seeking to find sponsors **BEFORE** the conference as to have a list at the ready to match these enthusiastic FFA groups with a local sponsor. And we need to court these future farmers and ranchers. According to the NBA's last marketer's survey conducted in May, 75% of respondents reported shorting customers up to 19% due to lack of supply, 42% reported an increase in demand for bison in the last year, and 59% reported a decrease in supply of market-ready animals over the previous year.

So, if you'd like to sponsor a FFA group you can simply email jim@bisoncentral.com, or call the office at 303-292-2833, and the NBA will invoice you \$50 once the chapter has confirmed interest in a membership.

Thank you in advance for supporting the National Bison Association and the future of our great industry!

Membership Directory Updates Needed by November 10th

This is your chance to update any contact information you'd like included in the 2018 NBA Membership Directory, which is published as a supplement to our January Bison World magazine. Please have your updates to the NBA no later than November 10th.

If you have had a change of address, phone or email, or have updated any of your information in the last 12 months, please be sure to notify the NBA by emailing jim@bisoncentral.com, so we can update our internal records accordingly. If you'd like to check on your listing, please email jim@bisoncentral.com, or give us a call at 303-292-2833 to check.

Holistic Ranching Seminar Offered in Wyoming

John Flocchini and Holistic Management consultant/ educator Roland Kroos once again offer a unique opportunity to learn cutting-edge management practices and a behind the scenes look at the Durham Ranch in Wyoming February 20-23.

The four-day event will begin with a day-long introduction to the Holistic Management framework on February 20th. The following day, participants will begin with a tour out to the bison herd, where Kroos and Flocchini will talk about various management factors such a supplemental feed, mineral program, and land health. The afternoon will be spent with participants developing their holistic goals. On Thursday, the workshop will begin with a Question & Answer session involving the Durham Ranch staff, followed by an introduction into the testing guidelines used in holistic management. The evening will end with a Barbecue with the Durham Ranch staff (a time to relax and not think about work). The final day will conclude with participants outlining steps toward profitability and resiliency that they can utilize when they get back home.

This seminar is limited to 15 people. More information is available at: Learn more [here](#).

Buffalo Ranch in Stoneville, SD: "Along the Way"

(From KEVN – Fox)

There's a place south of tiny Mud Butte, South Dakota and north of the little town of Union Center: smack dab in the heart of Americana.

It's a ranch that sows and grows: family ties, work ethic, and a symbol of the old West, "Along the Way" in Stoneville South Dakota.

Steve: It's 13-thousand acres of a step back in time...The Cammack Buffalo Ranch stretches about as far as the eye can see. Last time through, so many dusty days ago, the big beasts were wild. Now they're back, an alternative livestock with a distinctively historic feel. Buffalo Rancher John Cammack says, "They look fluffy and nice, but they sure could hurt you in a real big hurry. They're way faster than cattle are."

John grew up on the ranch, He and Melanie fell in love in high school.

Buffalo Rancher Melanie Cammack says, "19 years of buffalo ranching and 19 years of marriage. We got married in October and we got buffalo in January."

John Cammack of the Cammack Buffalo Ranch says, "We usually are work side by side most every day of the year."

They're just one of 4 generations still working this family ranch. It had been a cattle ranch, but for the past 19 years, each year, it becomes more buffalo and less beef.

Melanie Cammack of the Cammack Buffalo Ranch says, "There's a huge demand for buffalo meat right now so the price is a lot better for the buffalo meat, but even with that only 1/10th of 1 percent of Americans have even tried buffalo."

John Cammack says, "The buffalo meat is a lot leaner meat and so the market for the buffalo meat right now is way outdoing what we can supply."

So just how short is the supply? here's a comparison.

"They slaughter as many buffalo in a whole year as they do for beef in one day, " says Melanie Cammack.

John Cammack says, "The profitability on the buffalo is about double what the cattle are right now."

Read more. <http://www.blackhillsfox.com/content/news/Buffalo-Ranch-in-Stoneville-SD-Along-the-Way-451378763.html>

Nature up Close: The American Bison

(From CBS News)

Just imagine what the North American plains looked like when Lewis and Clark first saw them -- no highways, no cars, no power lines, only the sound of the wind with mile after mile of grasses, bison, pronghorn antelope and prairie dogs. Those days are obviously gone, but today there are still places where large populations of bison can be found.

Yellowstone National Park currently holds the largest bison numbers, with a population of over 4,500.

Two hundred years ago, more than 30 million bison ranged over much of what is now the United States. Today there are only remnant populations in several protected areas, such as Yellowstone, several federally and state protected areas, and a number of private ranches. The American bison is ecologically extinct. Its population is now too small to fill the role it once played in trimming grasses, "plowing" the ground with its hoofs, fertilizing the soil with manure, and creating bison wallows. Several species of grasses and at least one bird, the brown-headed cowbird, evolved with bison.

In 2016 [President Obama signed a law making bison the national mammal of the United States](#). Conservationists, bison ranchers and tribal groups were all instrumental in passing this legislation. Native Americans have long advocated for protecting and increasing bison populations, as the history of both is so closely intertwined.

American and European bison are the only species left of the eight species known from fossils. American bison are classified into two subspecies: the plains bison (*Bison bison bison*), formerly found in much of North America, and the wood bison (*Bison bison Athabasca*), found in Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park. The history of bison in the New World shows several species existed including *B. antiquus*, the ancient bison and the predecessor of present-day North American bison. Fossils of the ancient bison, a 7.5-foot-tall, 3,500-pound animal, have been found with Folsom points imbedded in their bones, proving that people were hunting them over 11,000 years ago.

No one knows what influence, if any, Native Americans had on species such as mastodons and ancient bison, but we do know many mammal extinctions occurred during the late Pleistocene. Modern North American bison arose from *B. antiquus*, and this is the species the Plains Indians depended upon. Before Spanish explorers brought horses to North America in 1519, the indigenous peoples killed bison by driving them over "buffalo jump" cliffs, and then finishing them off with spears and clubs. Some buffalo jumps are known today, and artifacts from ancient buffalo harvests are still being found.

Indians probably first got horses around 1650, from Santa Fe, New Mexico traders. Horses then spread from there to Nebraska by 1680, and the upper Missouri River basin by 1750. While Eastern tribes used horses for bison hunts, they were not nomadic, and stuck to their maize growing and permanent lodges. In contrast, Western tribes were more nomadic. They traveled long distances following the bison herds. They used horse-drawn travois to haul their bison skin tipis, a dwelling unique to the plains people. Once they obtained horses, the Plains tribes killed bison while mounted on horseback, rather than continue to use cliffs as buffalo jumps.

Plains tribes were always dependent on bison, before and after the acquisition of horses, and revered them in their religious ceremonies.

More: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nature-up-close-the-american-bison/>

USDA Offers Loan Funding for Underserved Groups and Beginning Farmers

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Colorado Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that FSA offers specially targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to underserved applicants as well as beginning farmers and ranchers.

USDA defines underserved applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, underserved groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

In order to qualify as a beginning farmer, the individual or entity must meet the eligibility requirements outlined for direct or guaranteed loans. Additionally, individuals and all entity members must have operated a farm for less than 10 years. Applicants must materially or substantially participate in the operation. For farm ownership purposes, the applicant must not own a farm greater than 30 percent of the average size farm in the county at the time of application. All direct farm ownership applicants must have participated in the business

operations of a farm for at least three years out of the last 10 years prior to the date the application is submitted. If the applicant is an entity, all members must be related by blood or marriage and all entity members must be eligible beginning farmers.

Underserved or beginning farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program offers two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans.

Farm ownership loan funds may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch, purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm's operation, build or improve buildings such as a dwelling or barn, promote soil and water conservation and development and pay closing costs.

Farm operating loan funds may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm equipment, fertilizer and other materials necessary to operate a successful farm. Operating loan funds can also be used for family living expenses, refinancing debts under certain conditions, paying salaries for hired farm laborers, installing or improving water systems for home, livestock or irrigation use and other similar improvements.

Repayment terms for direct operating loans depend on the collateral securing the loan and usually run from one to seven years. Financing for direct farm ownership loans cannot exceed 40 years. Interest rates for direct loans are set periodically according to the Government's cost of borrowing. Guaranteed loan terms and interest rates are set by the lender.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs and underserved and beginning farmer guidelines, please contact your local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

National Park In North Dakota To Reduce Bison Herd

(From SF Gate)

MEDORA, N.D. (AP) — A national park in North Dakota is reducing the size of its bison herd this week in a move that will benefit several Native American tribes.

A majority of the animals from Theodore Roosevelt National Park will help supplement tribal herds through the InterTribal Buffalo Council, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

"We have a constant need for animals because our tribal herds are being used, they're being utilized the way they traditionally have been, for food source, for ceremonial purposes," said Patrick Toomey, range technician for the Rapid City, S.D.-based organization. The council represents about 60 tribes across 19 states. Decisions of how to manage the herd are determined by research.

"When we manage our bison herd, we use science. Our decisions aren't made arbitrarily," said Eileen Andes, chief of interpretation and public affairs.

Wildlife biologist Blake McCann said the reduction roundup is to prevent the bison herds from getting too large to ensure there's enough available forage for the grazing animals.

He said the park aims to keep its herd at about 300 to 500 animals at the South Unit and less than 300 at the North Unit. South Dakota and North Dakota are among the states that will receive the animals.

Toomey said the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe will receive 30 to 40 bison. The Three Affiliated Tribes will be receiving five to 10 animals to establish a new bison herd in Twin Buttes.

"It's a livelihood," said Tribal Business Council member Cory Spotted Bear. "It's a symbol of bringing local opportunity back to the community of Twin Buttes."

Read more. <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/National-park-in-North-Dakota-to-reduce-bison-herd-12284648.php>

Bluestem Bison Herd Grows

(From The Pawhuska Journal Capital)

The Osage Nation celebrated the return of the American Bison to the 43,000 acre Bluestem Ranch Monday afternoon during a sacred ceremony at the ranch, located southwest of Pawhuska.

Twenty bison were brought to the tribally-owned ranch from the Wichita Mountain Wildlife Refuge near Lawton. The transport of the bison was made possible through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Wildlife and the Intertribal Bison Council.

After making the long trek from Lawton via a semi truck, the herd of bison arrived at the pen at Bluestem Ranch slightly before 6 p.m. Monday.

Bluestem Ranch foreman Mike Alexander said the herd of 20 bison consists of young cows and bulls, ranging in age from 1- to 4-years-old.

"The new bison will stay in the pen for the next two to three days to get used to the area, and then we will begin to acclimate them to responding to a feed truck," Alexander said.

American bison, the largest land mammal in North America, are making a resurgence after facing near extinction. The bison is considered to be a sacred animal for Native American tribes, as bison provided sustenance for tribes across the plains.

"This is the first time in over 100 years where the buffalo has returned to us, and they will bring blessing to us," Osage Minerals Council Chairman Everett Waller said during a blessing of the herd.

Read more. <http://www.pawhuskajournalcapital.com/opinion/20171018/bluestem-bison-herd-grows>

Video Extra: Bison at Yellowstone National Park

(From KRTV)

In case you missed it, CBS Sunday Morning closed its program with this great video of bison in Yellowstone National Park. (Videographer: David Bhagat)

In 2016, President Obama signed the National Bison Legacy Act into law, officially making the American bison the national mammal of the United States.

The American Bison joined the ranks of the Bald Eagle as the official symbol of our country. Once numbering in the millions, bison were nearly hunted to extinction by 1900. However, efforts to preserve bison continued at locations like the National Bison Range at Moises and in private herds. Now, in addition to private and commercial herds, there are more than 10,000 bison on public lands.

See the video at <http://www.krtv.com/story/36605753/video-extra-bison-at-yellowstone-national-park>

A Wobbly Calf Grows Into a 1,000-pound Lake Stevens Behemoth

(From The Centralia Chronicle)

His name is Wobble. Home is not on the range, but in a fenced, grassy pasture along Sunnyside Boulevard near Ebey Slough.

At 25, Wobble is what Jeannine Fleming describes as “a lone buffalo.”

Fleming, who moved to a home near Lake Stevens in April, recently sent an email to The Herald asking about the mighty animal she sees while driving on Sunnyside. “I wonder why it’s a lone buffalo, wonder about its history, how it came to be there, and whether its owners might find it a companion,” she wrote.

A visit Monday to the 70-acre property of Paul and Ruth Brandal brought answers.

“He was born on our farm in 1992,” said Ruth Brandal, a 62-year-old nurse. “He was premature, only 26 pounds at birth. He nearly died.”

The Brandals raised bison, and had as many as 90 animals, from the early 1990s until 2005, when they sold their herd. They called their land Bisonsdalen. They sold grass-fed bison meat at the farm and to restaurants, including Captain Buffalo’s, a now-closed Everett eatery.

They also hosted school groups. Kids took wagon rides to see the herd. “Our big green barn still has a buffalo painted on it,” Ruth Brandal said.

About that name — buffalo. There are Asian water buffalo and the African Cape buffalo. Like American bison, Asian and African buffalo are in the Bovidae family. Early settlers mistakenly called American bison “bufello,” according to the Modern Farmer newsletter. Wrong as it is, buffalo became the familiar term.

Nature turned the Brandals into bison ranchers.

In late 1990, the year a November storm sank the I-90 floating bridge across Lake Washington, a small herd of buffalo on Ebey Island was flooded out. Ruth Brandal said the animals swam across the Snohomish River. "They ended up on our farm. We were trying to figure out whose buffalo they were," she said.

The Brandals eventually leased their land to the herd's owner. In time, they purchased about 50 bison from the man who owned the other herd. Wobble, born May 30, 1992, was the first bison to begin life on their farm.

Read more. http://www.chronline.com/news/a-wobbly-calf-grows-into-a--pound-lake-stevens/article_f94a126c-b4ef-11e7-8581-a3f1466ca239.html

Sparky, Bison That Survived Lightning Strike, Sparking with A Girlfriend

(From Patch.com)

PRAIRIE CITY, IA — If you've been worried about Sparky, a bison that earned his name after surviving a lightning strike in 2013, don't fret. He's not only doing well, he's sparking with a new girlfriend — and biologists at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge near Prairie City, Iowa, are optimistic the pair will produce a baby bison.

Called "the world's toughest bison" by the folks at the sprawling 5,600-acre restored tall-grass prairie that is managed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sparky lagged behind the rest of the herd when he was spotted in July 2013 by biologist Karen Viste-Sparkman. He was missing most of his hair, appeared to have burn marks and had a lump on one of his hind legs.

The situation looked grim for the bull. He was roughed up plenty in his tangle with nature and so thin the refuge staff feared he wouldn't live long. He had a limp and moved more slowly than the other bison in the herd, a number that fluctuates between 70 and 90 head. The staff decided to let nature take its course.

But Sparky proved to be resilient, and his amazing story of survival made headlines on Patch and many other news sites around the world. (Sign up for real-time news alerts and free morning newsletters from [your local Iowa Patch](#). If you have an iPhone, click here to get the free [Patch iPhone app](#).)

"Sparky spent most of his time hanging out near the family group, but not really with them," FSW said in news release Monday. "All of that changed this summer when he seemed to have [attracted a girlfriend](#)! She stays back with him and they move together, slowly."

Read more. <https://patch.com/iowa/across-ia/sparky-bison-survived-lightning-strike-sparking-girlfriend>

Michigan Value-Added Grant Program

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) is offering a grant opportunity to promote the expansion of value-added agriculture production, processing, and access within the state to enhance Michigan's food and agriculture industry.

MDARD will accept proposals that are intended to establish, retain, expand, attract, and/or develop value-added agricultural processing in Michigan; expand or develop regional food systems; or expand access to healthy food. Applicants must provide a 30% cash match for grants up to the \$125,000 maximum. Funding will be focused on food hub development, food access, or value-added food processing.

Proposals are due November 7, 2017.

Read more. <https://attra.ncat.org/calendar/funding.php/michigan-value-added-grant-program-1>

Online Financial-Education Tool Helps Farmers Buying Land

National Young Farmers Coalition has introduced a beta version of Finding Farmland, an online financial-education tool for farmers buying land. The tool includes a Land Affordability Calculator that can be used to compare financing costs for two different farm properties or to compare different financing scenarios for a single property.

There is also a case study that illustrates how one farmer navigated the path to secure land access. The site is in beta mode, and National Young Farmers Coalition is requesting farmers' feedback on the tool, especially from those who are actively seeking land.

Read more. <https://findingfarmland.youngfarmers.org/>

Kansan Doud Testifies in USTR Ag Confirmation Hearing

(From High Plains Journal)

The Senate Finance Committee Oct. 5 heard testimony in consideration of the nomination of Mankato, Kansas native Gregg Doud to serve as chief agricultural negotiator at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

Also testifying before the committee were Jeffery Gerrish, nominated to serve as deputy United States Trade Representative and Jason Kearns to serve as a member of the International Trade Commission.

“When you look over the respective resumes of each of these nominees, it’s clear that the president has selected individuals that are well-qualified and well-prepared to serve in these important posts. That’s a good thing,” Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-UT, said.

“There’s quite a bit going on in the trade world at the moment. The Trump administration has a number of ambitious goals and Congress has a key role to play with all of them. Among other things, we need to make sure the administration is well staffed and I hope we’ll be able to take some steps toward that end with the advancement of these nominees.”

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, R-KS, who also sits on the finance committee, introduced Doud and was pleased when Doud was an adviser on the Senate Agriculture Committee staff.

Doud, in his opening statement praised his family and friends, then discussed his work background.

"Growing up on the farm in Kansas, I have vivid memories of the economic difficulties that followed the decision to embargo U.S. sales of wheat to the Soviet Union. After graduate school, I jumped at the opportunity to work for U.S. Wheat Associates, which immediately exposed me to the multitude and complexity of challenges that we face in selling our wheat overseas.

"As chief economist of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association I spent each day for over seven years coordinating industry efforts with USTR, USDA and even our State Department as we slowly rebuilt our beef exports, from virtually scratch, in the aftermath of the single BSE cow that stole the Christmas of 2003. While in this role I also served as a 'cleared advisor' and later chairman of the USDA/USTR Animal and Animal Products Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee. This was during an extremely active period when trade agreements with Australia, Bahrain, Colombia, CAFTA, South Korea, Morocco, Panama and Peru were negotiated.

Source: http://www.hpi.com/ag_news/kansan-doud-testifies-in-ustr-ag-confirmation-hearing/article_01dd3a88-af6b-11e7-b92f-8f9f518a0d9a.html

As Trump Moves to Renegotiate NAFTA, U.S. Farmers Are Hopeful but Nervous *(From NPR)*

President Trump made his view of the North American Free Trade Agreement very clear during the presidential election. He called NAFTA "the worst trade deal in ... the history of this country." And Trump blamed NAFTA for the loss of millions of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

His administration is in the midst of renegotiating the free trade deal with Canada and Mexico, and that is making many U.S. farmers and ranchers nervous.

In the fellowship hall of a Lutheran church on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Chip Councill, a local farmer, sings the praises of the lunch just served to a trade delegation from Taiwan. He touts "a truly local meal" of local sweet corn, tomatoes and fried chicken, along with "crabcakes from the local rivers."

But while crabs are a cherished symbol of Maryland, these visitors from Taiwan are here to buy U.S. yellow corn for feed and ethanol production. This little white church sits in the middle of corn and soybeans fields on America's rich farmland between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay.

Councill raises 650 acres of corn each year, along with soybeans and wheat. His ancestors began farming here in 1690. "My son farms with us in the operation, and he is the 11th generation," he says.

Council says that in today's world, U.S. farmers have to look abroad for markets. "Ninety-six percent of the world's population lives outside of our borders," he notes. America is "very blessed to have productive farmland, [a] productive agricultural system. If we are to going grow and prosper then outside of our borders, that is our market."

In fact, Canada and Mexico, America's NAFTA partners, are two of the biggest markets for U.S. farmers. Mexico is the No. 1 buyer of U.S. corn. So Council, a past chairman of the U.S. Grains Council, says he and a lot of other corn farmers were alarmed when candidate Trump attacked NAFTA, a trade deal that has opened the door for U.S. corn exports to Mexico and Canada.

<http://www.npr.org/2017/10/15/555843792/as-trump-moves-to-renegotiate-nafta-u-s-farmers-are-hopeful-but-nervous>