



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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Senators: Stop Consumers from Getting Buffaloed by Mislabeled Meat

A bipartisan group of five U.S. Senators today pushed federal regulators to immediately halt the sale of imported water buffalo meat products labeled in a manner that leads consumers to believe they are buying North American bison.

Republican Senators John Hoeven (ND) and John Thune (SD), along with Democratic Senators Michael Bennet (CO), Heidi Heitkamp (ND) and Tom Udall (NM) sent a letter to FDA Deputy Commissioner Stephen Ostroff and USDA Acting Under Secretary Carmen Rottenberg urging prompt action to respond to the National Bison Association's complaint regarding imported water buffalo meat being labeled only with descriptions such as "Natural Ground Buffalo."

"Bison ranchers and marketers have worked diligently for more than two decades to build a strong market for bison meat. Their success was built on developing a relationship with the public based upon the great taste and high quality of bison meat," the senators wrote.

"Because the term buffalo is widely used to describe bison, the failure to label water buffalo transparently and accurately could be misleading to the American consumer."

The National Bison Association in September filed a formal complaint with the FDA and USDA regarding water buffalo being marketed in a manner to deceive customers into believing they were buying bison meat. The complaint was prompted by a surge of products in the human food and pet products categories containing water buffalo meat that were only labeled as "buffalo."

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, noted, "Americans consider the term buffalo to describe bison. Importers of water buffalo products are buffaloing consumers into believing their products are bison. That's wrong."

Carter added, "We appreciate the leadership of these five senators to push the FDA and USDA to immediately address this mislabeling."

Bison Day Celebrates Cultural, Ecological and Economic Role

(NBA News Release)

Events across the country this weekend will celebrate the important role that America's National Mammal, the American Bison, has played in the cultural, ecological and economic life of the North America.

A resolution sponsored by U.S. Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND) and 22 other Senators designates the first Saturday in November as National Bison Day and "encourages the people of the United States to celebrate the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities." The Senate has designated every first Saturday in November as National Bison Day since 2012.

The push for National Bison Day was initiated by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the InterTribal Buffalo Council, and the National Bison Association; the same organizations that also led the effort to establish bison as the National Mammal of the United States.

Activities planned this weekend to celebrate National Bison Day range from a Bison Crawl, at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Illinois, to family-oriented Bison Day celebrations at zoos in Denver, Detroit and elsewhere. Many individual bison ranches are hosting field days and tours to celebrate the day. Wildlife Conservation Society will be hosting a celebration on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on November 13th, following the mid-term elections.

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, said, "Bison literally shaped the landscape of North America's grasslands over the last thousands of years. Native Americas relied on bison for food, clothing, shelter, and spiritual strength. Today, bison are providing a viable economic future—and a healthy food source—for people in rural and urban communities alike."

NBA to Attend Farm Broadcasters Confab Next Week

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter and Regional Director Keith Yearout will be headed to Kansas City next week to spread the Bison Advantage message to the radio and television journalists gathered at the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB)

For nearly a decade, The NBA's annual presence at the NAFB "Trade Talk event has provided agricultural journalists with broadcast-ready information that gets utilized throughout the year.

"With the nation's major farm journalists circulating around the hall, our job is to provide a message that will resonate with their listeners," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. "With bison continuing to be a bright beacon in an otherwise gloomy ag economy, farm broadcasters are eager to carry our message."

Buffalo: Back from The Brink

(From Drovers)

Mention Africa, and there's little debate that the lion is the continent's iconic animal, the symbol of a creature that is not only unique to that land mass but emblematic of its wild heritage. And of course, threatened with extinction as a result of relentless trophy hunting, coupled with equally energetic destruction of its habitat.

So what would be North America's equivalent animal, a species that is both majestic and powerful, as well as unknown elsewhere in the world?

I would argue that it's the bison, the bovine, named in 2016 as the U.S. national mammal, that once roamed by the multi-millions across the prairies in herds so vast that the first whites to explore the West were astonished by their numbers as these magnificent animals thundered across the Great Plains.

And not just the Plains. Bison are nomadic animals that for thousands of years ranged across much of the eastern United States and as far south as parts of Mexico. Much like the great cats of Africa, Asia and Latin America, they have no natural enemies, no other animals able to harm them, other than occasionally picking off one of the sick or weaker animals in the herd.

The indigenous people who populated this continent for millennia couldn't put a dent in the massive bison herds, either. As they hunted bison for their meat, their hides and their bones, which were essential to their ability to survive the often-harsh winters in what we now call the heartland, the Native tribes developed a symbiotic relationship with bison, a connection that survives to this day.

Full story here. <https://www.drovers.com/article/buffalo-back-brink>

Inaugural Bison Crawl to Celebrate National Bison Day

(From Natural Awakenings Chicago)

Bison, our national mammal, once thundered across North America. These massive animals, characterized by long, shaggy brown coats, have poor eyesight, but acute hearing and an excellent sense of smell. Celebrate the key role they played in the settlement of our young nation on National Bison Day, November 3, by joining in the first-ever Bison Crawl. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie and Forest Preserve District of Will County, Two Hounds Antiques, Manhattan-Elwood Public Library and Wilmington Public Library are collaborating on a host of open-to-the-public activities at stops along the crawl.

At the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie stop, visit with volunteers and staff along the Iron Bridge Trail and look for the Midewin bison herd that roams over 1,000 acres. The Iron Bridge Trailhead at Midewin is located on the east side of Highway 53, between Elwood and Wilmington, about two miles north of the Gemini Giant.

"There is something very special about National Bison Day here at the USDA Forest Service's Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie; it is one of our favorite days of the year," says Veronica Hinke, Midewin public affairs officer and public services team leader. "This year, we are looking forward to co-hosting bison interpretive activities with neighboring organizations who share our passion in spreading the message about the ecological, historical and economic importance of bison. You can study up at the bison learning stations in Manhattan and in Wilmington—and then you can take a hike near where a herd of conservation bison actually lives and contributes to the restoration of this incredible ecosystem."

Montana tribes head to conference to talk restoring bison in Indian country

(From The Montana Standard)

Restoring bison to tribal lands has a value beyond the obvious ecological benefits to other species and the landscape that has been documented by scientists: “It’s to help us heal,” said Jason Baldes, an Eastern Shoshone tribal member from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

Baldes was one of 30 tribal members — including the Blackfeet, Jicarilla Apache, Cherokee, Yakima and Southern Ute — and national wildlife conservation group representatives gathering here through Saturday to focus on the networks and partnerships that can assist in restoring bison.

“I hope this (conference) highlights the conversation within Indian country for bison conservation,” Baldes said.

The program included representatives from the World Wildlife Fund, the National Wildlife Federation and Defenders of Wildlife. The groups see reintroduction of bison to native lands as a way to expand the animals’ presence in places where it was once the dominant mammal, roaming by the millions from Texas to Canada before being nearly exterminated by market hunters in the late 1800s.

Read more. https://mtstandard.com/lifestyles/recreation/montana-tribes-head-to-conference-to-talk-restoring-bison-in/article_eb5fb778-69f4-5460-bcf4-e9c7c3f78225.html

John Klein: Tallgrass Prairie Preserve bison roundup turns 25 this week

(From Tulsa World)

PAWHUSKA — All the ranch hands who worked the first Tallgrass Prairie Preserve bison roundup will never forget it.

“It was in the middle of winter,” said Kevin Chouteau. “It was so cold. It was raining and sleeting and just miserable.

“Of course, the bison loved it. It was their kind of weather.”

The annual bison roundup on The Nature Conservancy’s Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, to monitor, evaluate and work one of America’s most famous buffalo herds, got underway on Wednesday. It was cloudy and chilly but not miserable when the work began at sunrise.

“We learned that January wasn’t the best time to do this,” laughed Joe Bob Briggs, another ranch hand who has worked all 25 roundups.

Over the next week, about 2,500 bison will be rounded up and run through a staging area where weight, age, health and other factors will be evaluated.

"It is a very complex event, but we've learned a lot about how best to do it over the years," said Harvey Payne, former director of the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. "We still learn a few things every year about how to make it better.

Read more. https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/state/john-klein-tallgrass-prairie-preserve-bison-roundup-turns-this-week/article_960922c0-8a8f-592f-832b-3199d946ca48.html

Riders round up bison on Antelope Island

(From The Salt Lake Tribune)

The Antelope Island Bison Roundup — a fall tradition in Utah — took place Saturday, with horseback riders pushing the large animals from the Fielding Garr Ranch north to holding corrals near Whiterock Bay.

In all, about 700 bison were expected to be rounded up on the island, a state park located near Syracuse in Davis County. The herd will rest for a few days and then each animal will be checked, one at a time, receiving vaccinations and health screenings. They also receive a small external computer chip to store health information.

Each year, between 100 and 150 calves are born on the 28,000-acre island, creating a herd that is too large for the available food supply. To keep things in check, about 200 animals are sold at an auction, which will be held this year on Nov. 10

The revenue generated through the sale is used for operating costs, habitat improvements and research. Some funds also go toward fire protection and weed management.

Read more. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2018/10/27/riders-round-up-bison/>

Buffalo Roundup Evokes Images of the Wild West

(From How Stuff Works)

On a cool late September weekend in southwestern South Dakota, a group of 20 or so lucky lottery winners mounted up at [Custer State Park](#) for an honest-to-goodness buffalo roundup. If you're looking for something more American than that — horses, [bison](#), the grassy plains of South Dakota, the rolling Black Hills, storming hooves, clouds of dust, yeehaws, cowboy hats, the whole bit — you'll be searching for a while. The roundup, with a herd of about 1,300 buffalo, is a living, rumbling reminder of what once was commonplace in this part of the West.

And it's something that remains, to this day, uncommonly cool. "Even having grown up in South Dakota, to us, it's still a really cool event. You just don't see it that often. It's crazy," says Lydia Austin, the interpretative programs manager at Custer State Park. "As I tell people when they ask me what my favorite part about it is, it's waking up in the prairies of South Dakota at 6 o'clock in the morning, you're in your truck, and it's usually a beautiful morning, a cold morning ... and you're rounding up buffalo."

Full story here. <https://animals.howstuffworks.com/mammals/buffalo-roundup-evokes-images-of-wild-west.htm>

Meet the Folks Behind South Dakota's Annual Bison Roundup

NBC News carried an excellent story on the annual bison roundup at Custer State Park in South Dakota. Watch that story here.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/meet-the-folks-behind-south-dakota-s-annual-bison-roundup-1349641795514?v=raila&>

Slim Puffer Jacket Is Filled with Bison Down

(From Business Insider)

While the purpose of most outdoor brands is simply to provide adventurers with dependable apparel and gear, [United By Blue](#), a new startup in the space, wants to do much more. Founded in 2010 by Brian Linton, the company was started with the primary goal to preserve and protect the place in which explorers play. In doing that, the brand has put great emphasis on sustainability in its designs, and an unsuspecting material has been a huge part of its success.

[United By Blue](#) just launched [a new collection of bison down-filled puffer jackets and vests](#) for men and women, and it's proving to be the future of sustainable outdoor apparel.

The [United By Blue Bison Puffer Collection](#) uses the brand's proprietary B100 insulation, which is a 50/50 blend of North American bison fiber and recycled polyester. The material is naturally temperature regulating, hypoallergenic, lightweight, and provides superior warmth. With the B100 bison down, you get to take advantage of the natural properties that allow bison to tough out cold winters instead of migrating south.

Typically regarded as waste in the ranching industry, bison down can be sustainably sourced and repurposed as opposed to other materials like duck or goose down where the animals are inhumanely treated or killed specifically for their feathers.

Full story here. <https://www.businessinsider.com/united-by-blue-bison-puffer-jacket-vest-review-2018-10>

Bovine tuberculosis found in Dane County dairy herd [WI - edited]

(From The Wisconsin State Journal)

A Dane County dairy herd has been quarantined after bovine tuberculosis was discovered in the carcass of a cow from that herd, during a routine slaughter inspection.

Leeann Duwe, public information officer at DATCP, told the State Journal over 2,000 animals had to be quarantined, which prevents any animals from moving on or off the farm.

"We are working closely with the herd owner, the US Department of Agriculture, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, area veterinarians, industry partners and other herd owners," said acting state veterinarian Dr. Darlene Konkle.

"Our staff and partners train for these types of responses and are taking the necessary steps to protect animal and human health," Konkle said.

It is believed this is the first case of a Wisconsin herd to have bovine TB since 1995, according to information provided to DATCP from the USDA.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y7jobz39>

An Unknown 'Disease X' Could Become an Epidemic. Can We Find It Before It's Too Late?

(From LiveScience.com)

BERLIN - Earlier this year, the World Health Organization listed "Disease X" among the diseases most in need of research and development.

Disease X is not a specific illness, but rather a hypothetical epidemic that could be caused by a pathogen (contagious strain of a virus or bacterium) that we don't yet realize affects humans.

Experts at the World Health Summit in Berlin this week warned that we're not prepared to find such a disease at its likely animal source, or spot it quickly when it starts making people sick.

Most emerging epidemic threats - from Ebola to SARS - have been zoonotic diseases, meaning they originate in animals, said veterinary pathologist Tracey McNamara, who organized a summit panel on Disease X.

"If we want to protect people, it makes sense that we should detect these threats in animal populations before spillover to human populations," said McNamara, who is a professor at Western University of Health Sciences. "We need to take a species-neutral approach, and we need to find whatever novel emerging pathogen could threaten human health." [The 9 Deadliest Viruses on Earth]

But McNamara said there is little to no surveillance of wildlife diseases, and in her career, she has found that the divide between the public health sector and animal health sector makes it very difficult to recognize and respond to a novel threat.

Full text:

<https://www.livescience.com/63862-disease-x-animal-source.html>

No Conclusion on Cell-Cultured Animal Products At USDA-FDA Meeting

(From The Hagstrom Report)

The Agriculture Department and the Food and Drug Administration finished their two-day public meeting on what some call animal cell culture products on Tuesday, and posted the sessions on YouTube.

The sessions allowed officials and stakeholders to present their views in a formal setting, but offered nothing conclusive on the contentious subjects of how the new food products should be regulated and labeled.

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb promised to work together on regulations and to issue a plan by next spring. The cooperative approach is unlikely to satisfy the conventional meat industry, which wants the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service to be in charge, and the emerging cell-cultured food industry that wants FDA in charge.

North American Meat Institute Senior Vice President of Regulatory and Scientific Affairs Mark Dopp said, "That the inspection system FSIS administers is more rigorous than the one administered by FDA is undeniable. Administration officials have said as much. But I am baffled why those who advocate that FDA should have primary jurisdiction over cell-based meat products want to deny those companies the benefits of FSIS inspection."

Dopp said USDA's label-approval process "protects companies from frivolous lawsuits and gives consumers confidence that products are accurately labeled and not represented to be something they are not."

Dopp also said the North American Meat Institute, which represents packers, considers FDA-regulated plant-based products which are represented on the package as sausage products but contain no meat to be "misbranded."

Full text:

<https://www.thefencepost.com/news/no-conclusion-on-cell-cultured-animal-products-at-usda-fda-meeting/>

Most Shoppers Still Prefer To Buy Groceries In A Store: Research

(From Meatingplace.com)

Online grocery shopping is making inroads but remains a small niche in the \$800 billion industry, generating less than 5 percent of sales, according to [new research](#) from Tabs Analytics.

A quest for convenience over price shopping led to a 2-percentage-point decline in sales at traditional grocers while small-format retailers such as dollar stores, drug outlets and value food banners like Aldi notched gains of 2 to 4 percentage points year over year, the firm found.

Online grocery sales grew 4 points from last year, but the number of online food and beverage buyers, defined as those who make six or more purchases a year, is still just 17 percent. Only 38 percent of consumers have shopped in the format even once, and less than half of them (44 percent) say they are loyal to the format.

Loyalty rates of online grocery shoppers are well below the 75 percent level needed to ensure a viable, successful business model, Tabs President and founder Kurt Jetta said in a press release. "This format has a long way to go to achieve a stable demand; until then eComm grocery will be relying on having to invest in expensive trial-generating activities."

To sell groceries, he said, “online retailers still have a lot of ground to make up to see the same kind of penetration we’ve seen in other markets, such as vitamins and products for children.”

Brick-and-mortar grocers continue to push into the home delivery market, with the Meijer chain announcing Friday it is expanding a pickup option for the service to 227 supercenters in six states.

Tab's sixth annual food and beverage study also found grocery sales overall increased meaningfully in the past two years as median income rose and the unemployment rate declined.

FDA To Develop, Regulate Gene-Edited Animals For Food

(From Sustainable Foods News)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said Tuesday it will adopt policies for the development and regulatory oversight of intentionally genetically altered animals and the food and drug products derived from them.

The agency said among the applications to be realized and regulated through genome editing technology is the production of human foods using xenotransplantation, the process of grafting or transplanting organs or tissues between different species.

“Promising new technologies that can edit animal and plant genomes have the potential to improve human and animal health, animal well-being, food productivity and food security,” the FDA said.

The agency's announcements were rolled out in its new [Plant and Animal Biotechnology Innovation Action Plan](#), which identified three priorities:

- advancing human and animal health by promoting product innovation and applying modern, efficient and risk-based regulatory pathways
- strengthening public outreach and communication regarding the FDA's approach to innovative plant and animal biotechnology
- increasing engagement with domestic and international partners on biotechnology issues

The FDA is also piloting a new [Veterinary Innovation Program](#) (VIP) for developers of intentionally genetically altered (IGA) animals and animal cells, tissues and cell- or tissue-based products (ACTPs) that are seeking the FDA's approval of a new animal drug application.

“The program will provide intensive assistance for developers of IGA animals or ACTPs that benefit human or animal health, animal well-being or food production,” the FDA said.

Trans-Pacific Free Trade Pact To Take Effect Dec. 30

(From Morning Ag Clips)

A trans-Pacific free trade pact without the United States covering 13 percent of the global economy is set to enter into force on Dec. 30 after Australia's ratification Wednesday, a move that appears to counter U.S. President Donald Trump's protectionist policy.

"We will proactively engage in strengthening trade framework based on free and fair rules," Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the Japanese Diet as Australia became the sixth nation to ratify the 11-member deal.

The deal, which will cut tariffs on agriculture and industrial products and also ease investment restrictions and enhance protection of intellectual property rights, stipulates that it will enter into force 60 days after at least six signatories complete necessary domestic procedures.

Toshimitsu Motegi, Japan's state minister in charge of the trade pact, said he hopes to join hands with countries sharing the existing members' vision for free trade.

Japan plans to chair the first ministerial meeting as early as mid-January to discuss the future acceptance of such members and the implementation of the trade pact, according to Motegi.