



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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November 17, 2017

Major Research Review Launched by NBF, NBA

Defining science-based nutritional requirements for bison took a significant step forward this week as the National Bison Association and the National Buffalo Foundation initiated a comprehensive review of the existing scientific literature regarding nutritional and other research needs for bison.

Dr. Gerald Huntington, professor emeritus from the Department of Animal Science at North Carolina State University, was selected from among a field of nine applicants to conduct the comprehensive literature review of existing information. The literature review is being funded through the National Buffalo Foundation.

Dr. Huntington brings more 40 years of professional experience in ruminant nutrition to this process. He has conducted in-depth research into nutrient absorption and liver metabolism in ruminants, and has served as a technical consultant to the National Academy of Science. He earned his Ph.D in animal science from the University of Nebraska, and his Masters' degree from South Dakota State University.

The process to initiate a literature review emerged from a meeting that a delegation of NBA members held with Dr. Robin Schoen, director of the board on Agriculture and Natural Resources at the National Academy of Science, during the association's Washington, D.C. Policy Roundup in September. Dr. Schoen told the NBA delegation that a comprehensive review of existing scientific information was a necessary first step in working with the Academy to establish National Research Council (NRC) Nutrient Requirements for Bison.

Following that meeting, the NBA's Science and Research Committee issued a notice to solicit applicants to conduct that literature review and the National Buffalo Foundation stepped forward with funding to underwrite the process.

Dr. Dave Hunter, chair of the Science and Research Committee, said, "We were astounded by the quality of candidates that stepped forward for this review. Dr. Huntington stood out because of his extensive background in animal nutrition, including work in bison."

Cecil Miskin, chair of the National Buffalo Foundation, added, "The literature review, alone, will advance the knowledge available to producers. More importantly, once completed it will put the

entire bison community on a more assured path to reach the NBA's goal of restoring one million bison to North America.”

The literature review is expected to be completed by March 2018.

Carter, Duncan to Address Canadian Bison Convention

National Bison Association Executive Director and past President Mike Duncan will connect with members of the Canadian Bison Association regarding plans to build herds across North America as a part of the *Bison 1 Million* campaign.

Roughly 300 Canadian ranchers, markets and bison enthusiasts will be gathering at the Delta Regina Hotel, in Regina, SK, for the Canadian Association's 34th annual convention. This year's theme is: *Centuries of Bison – 150 Years as a Country*.

Carter and Duncan will join CBA Executive Director Terry Kremeniuk in a presentation Monday morning on *Bison 1 Million*.

Member of the Year Nominations Due December 1st

Just two weeks remain before the December 1st deadline to nominate the 2017 National Bison Association Member of the Year!

The National Bison Association's Past President's Council will announce the 2017 NBA Member of the Year at the Winter Conference on Friday, January 19th at the annual Gold Trophy Banquet Dinner. The member of the year award recognizes one NBA member each year who has gone above and beyond to promote our collective business and the American bison.

- The nominee should be a rancher, farmer, or citizen whose efforts enhance the bison industry for all.
- The nominee should support and promote the NBA and state and regional organizations.
- The nominee should be a role model to persons in the bison industry. Role model status will be weighed heavily in the decision process.
- State and regional involvement is encouraged

The Council is now accepting nominations from the NBA membership through December 1st.

To nominate an outstanding NBA member who has gone above and beyond to promote bison and move our industry forward, please take a moment to complete a nomination form quickly online at <https://bisoncentral.com/documents-record/member-of-the-year-nomination-form/> by December 1st.

Mark Your Calendars for the 2018 NBA Junior Judging Contest

The 2018 NBA Junior Judging competition will take place on Wednesday January 17th at noon at the National Western Stock Show yards. See all the details here.

FFA and 4H student teams and individuals will judge bison that are on premise for the Gold Trophy Show and Sale. Competitors will judge bison on conformation, body condition, etc. and will present oral arguments as well.

The Junior Judging competition was started by Dr. Gerald Parsons at the Oklahoma Bison Association approximately ten years ago in an effort to educate the next generation of bison producers. The program has since grown to regional judging competitions facilitated by various state and regional bison associations in addition to the NBA's.

Thanks to the volunteers who make this program a reality including Marilyn Drake, John Graves, Bob and Laurie Dineen, Larry Higgins, and everyone else. Also, thank you to the sponsors who provide the top three scholarships;

The National Buffalo Foundation – 1st place

Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association – 2nd place

Please register students by emailing Jim@bisoncentral.com with FFA/4H chapter information advisor name/email, and team member names.

2018 GTSS Catalog Ads Now Available

Want to reach up to 1,000 bison enthusiasts in a cost-effective manner? Then consider an ad in the 2018 Gold Trophy Sale catalog. The NBA prints over 1,000 of the catalogs for the sale, many of which are kept as keepsakes from the GTSS.

See ad rates and specs here and reserve your ad space by January 5th by emailing jim@bisoncentral.com, or calling the NBA at 303-292-2833.

<https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/2018-GTSS-Catalog-Ad-Rates-Spec-Sheet-1.pdf>

Herd Supporter Sponsors Sought

You don't have to be a large major marketer or industry affiliate to be included as a sponsor for the 2018 Winter Conference. NBA members can support the conference—and receive recognition—as a Herd Supporter at the \$1,000 level.

“Sponsors at all levels help assure that we can offer a memorable, and educational conference experience at an affordable price for members,” said Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director.

“The Herd Supporters help the NBA offset its many conference expenses and provide a lower-level cost to support the conference and be recognized by attendees and the membership” Matheson said. “They will have their Logo on conference sponsor banner, agenda sponsor

recognition, GTSS catalog recognition, and logo inclusion in *Bison World*, the *Weekly Update*, NBA social media and website.”

Anyone wanting to sign up as a Herd Supporter should contact Matheson at jim@bisoncentral.com.

Offer Agritourism? The NBA Will Let the World Know

The National Bison Association is seeking to identify all members who offer any type of agritourism events so that they can be included in a new on-line directory being developed through funding from the USDA’s Farmers Market Promotion Program.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, explained, “We are developing a new on-line agritourism directory that will include a basic listing for every member at no cost. Those operations who offer more extensive agritourism experiences such as wedding venues, bed and breakfast, and overnight hunts, can purchase larger listings to promote their business.”

According to Carter, the grant provides resources for the NBA to promote the on-line directory through advertising in publications like *Sunset Magazine*, *Cowboys and Indians*, and other media that reaches potential customers.

The NBA will be sending out an eblast to all members requesting information on agritourism offerings so that we can start developing the database.

Twice Annual Marketers’ Survey Underway

The twice-yearly survey of the commercial bison marketers is now underway, and will remain open through November 28th.

“This survey has become a major tool that allows us to measure the status, and the major trend lines in our business,” said NBA Executive Director Dave Carter. “The information gleaned from the survey helps the marketers adapt to emerging market conditions, and it provides direction to the association on where best to invest our resources.”

All members of the NBA Commercial Marketers’ Committee were emailed a link to the survey earlier this week.

Bulls Higher, Heifers Lower in Latest USDA Report

Prices paid for market ready young bulls were higher in October, but heifers were lower, according to the latest monthly wholesale bison price report issued by USDA’s Livestock and Grain Market News Service.

According to the report issue this week, slaughter-ready young bulls averaged \$487.27/cwt. In October, which was \$3.58/cwt higher than the previous month and \$13.95 higher than the previous October. Finished heifers averaged \$466.26/cwt. in October, which was \$23.98/cwt. lower than in September and \$18.20/cwt. lower than in October 2016. Older bulls averaged

\$402.50/cwt. and older cows averaged \$438.24/cwt. in October, both down from the previous month.

Carcass weights in October averaged 600 lbs. for finished young bulls and 553 lbs. for finished heifers.

Year-to-date, 42,814 bison have been slaughtered under federal inspection, according to USDA's national Agricultural Statistics Service. That's about one percent lower than the same time in 2016.

And, heifers comprised 39 percent of the young animals processed through October. That compares to the seven-year average of 39 percent.

Hong Kong, Macau Open for Bison Business

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service announced earlier this month that it had successfully cleared away the last regulatory roadblocks that were preventing bison meat exports to Hong Kong and Macau.

Earlier this month, FAS worked with the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service to update the FSIS Export Library to include bison as a product eligible for export to Hong Kong. That listing is available here: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/exporting-products/export-library-requirements-by-country/Hong-Kong>

Last week, Elizabeth Riley, International Trade Specialist with FAS, notified the NBA that the agency's pose in Hong Kong had notified her that the Macau government will also permit the import of bison meat via Hong Kong.

In addition, the U.S. Meat Export Federation plans to sample bison meat at an upcoming marketing event in Macau.

Riley mentioned that bison marketers interested in exploring the Hong Kong marketplace should consider exhibiting at HOFEX, a major Asian food trade show held in Hong Kong.

Custer State Park to hold annual bison auction

(From the Rapid City Journal)

The 2017 Custer State Park Fall Classic Bison Auction will be held on Saturday at the park's visitor center where approximately 272 head will be available for sale.

This year's offerings include 26 mature bred cows, 41 mature open cows, four two-year-old bred heifers, 14 open two-year-old heifers, nine yearling heifers, 10 heifer calves, 90 bull calves, 48 yearling bulls, three two-year-old grade bulls, 17 two-year-old breeding bulls and 10 three- to five-year-old mature bulls. Burros for sale include four mature jennys, four 10-month-old jacks and four 10-month-old jennys.

The video and online auction will begin at 10 a.m. at the Custer State Park visitor center, located 15 miles east of Custer on Highway 16A, near the junction of the Wildlife Loop Road and Highway 16A.

“This is the second year that we will be doing a video auction for the annual sale,” said Chad Kremer, buffalo herd manager, in a release. “It speeds up the auction and reduces stress on the animals, as we can just sort and load them instead of running them through the ring.” The internet auction, going on its sixth year, has helped reach buyers that wouldn’t have been reached in the past.

Read more. http://rapidcityjournal.com/sports/custer-state-park-to-hold-annual-bison-auction/article_6e250042-a491-59d9-b6d8-c582ffd0c891.html

Bison Are Gracing Iowa’s Landscape Once Again

(From The Fort Dodge Messenger)

AN METER — Bison are known as the largest hooved mammal in North America. These large animals once used to be a very prominent part of the continent and even throughout Iowa.

According to the Polk County Conservation website, the largest concentrations of bison were in northwestern and north central parts of the state. In the late 1890s, the numbers of bison across the continent dropped as low as 1,000 due to overhunting. The last wild bison seen in Polk County was in 1850 and they completely disappeared from Iowa in 1870.

Helping bison make a comeback in Iowa are four men that are working together to develop a bison farm and business, Bare Bison.

Although the bison will not be in the wild, but raised for meat and with the purpose of increasing bison numbers through breeding, Johnnie Kennell, Scott Sullivan, Nick Fiala, Josh Haufbauer and Dean Quirk started this venture earlier this year with their 350-acre bison farm near Van Meter.

Kennell said they started up their bison farm last March with bison coming from several locations including Missouri, South Dakota, Kansas, southern Iowa and even upstate New York. Kennell said bison are a strict herd species, and also a very intelligent species.

Currently, they have more than 20 bulls and 180 cows and calves on their farm with plans to increase their herd size to more than 300 by the end of the year.

The majority of their bison herd is made up of Plains bison. Unique to their herd, Kennell said is a group of Plains bison that happen to be a true 100 percent DNA herd. He said they plan to keep that particular herd for breeding purposes in order to help build up that population.

Read more. <http://www.messengernews.net/news/local-business/2017/11/bison-are-gracing-iowas-landscape-once-again/>

Bison Auction a Big Hit at Kansas Refuge

(From KAKE – ABC)

The [Maxwell Wildlife Refuge](#) in Canton, Kansas is home to all kinds of animals, but a few too many bison. Each year, the refuge auctions off its surplus of bison, and draws people from around the country, some just for the entertainment value.

"The majority of them are here to watch. It's kind of like a circus," said Auctioneer Roger Hiebert

The public auction will sell as many as 40 bison, a variety including bulls, cows and heifers. They're sold for different purposes.

"Some for breeding animals," Hiebert said. "Most are buying animals that they'll feed, and some place down the line they will be slaughtered."

One of the main buyers here drove all the way from Texas to bid on the cattle. Auctioneers say that's not uncommon.

"It's business. It's business. The people who buy come here because they're in business to do that."

"A lot of people come to this particular one, and a lot of people watch and see how things are going...see what they're selling for and just to watch the animals," said bidder Jerry Schmidt. The auction was considered a success, as all of the animals up for bidding were purchased.

Source. <http://www.kake.com/story/36855240/bison-auction-a-big-hit-at-kansas-refuge>

Hunters May Be Solution to Reducing Destructive Bison Herd at Grand Canyon

(From the Daily Miner)

A spring used to rush through a hillside on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, nourishing bats, mule deer and other wildlife – that is, until bison trampled the watering hole into a mud puddle.

The herd has proven to be an environmental nuisance, depleting water sources, mowing down once-flourishing meadows to stubs of grass and wallowing in fields until they turn into dust bowls, wildlife experts say.

Officials for Grand Canyon National Park and other government agencies are considering lethal and nonlethal methods to reduce the 600-animal herd to around 200 within five years. However, those plans land at the controversial crossroads of salvaging the environment or salvaging the bison.

"We're trying to find that happy balance where bison can be on the landscape and also have minimal impacts," said wildlife biologist Brandon Holton.

If the herd goes untouched its numbers could nearly triple over the next decade, making the bison difficult to manage, experts say.

“We are already seeing pretty adverse impacts,” said Holton, who works for the Grand Canyon park service. “If we had 1,500 animals on the landscape here, it would be quite devastating.” The bison rob other animals of resources they need to survive and basically overrun the landscape, disturbing the cycle of vegetation growth.

Part of the current plan for immediate herd reduction is to incorporate culling, or selective shooting, Holton said. Grand Canyon staff would oversee a group of licensed volunteer hunters who are capable of shooting the bison one at a time with extreme accuracy. The bison meat would then be distributed among local tribes, the volunteers, and other groups, experts said.

Grand Canyon National Park and other government agencies like Arizona Game and Fish, the InterTribal Buffalo Council and others, view culling as a primary option for herd reduction. But some conservation groups, such as the Sierra Club, believe nonlethal methods of corralling and moving the herd should be exhausted before considering the alternative.

Read more. <https://kadminer.com/news/2017/nov/14/hunters-may-be-solution-reducing-destructive-bison/>

Funding Available for Sustainable Agriculture Projects

(From the MN Dept. of Ag)

St. Paul, MN - The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation (AGRI) Sustainable Agriculture and Demonstration Grants. Approximately \$250,000 is available to fund projects that explore new ways of conserving natural resources, enhancing farm profitability, increasing energy efficiency, and improving life in rural communities.

“No one cares more about Minnesota’s rural landscape than farmers and their families,” said Lt. Governor Tina Smith. “The Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Sustainable Agriculture and Demonstration Grant program is available to help farmers improve the sustainability and profitability of their operations. I encourage all farmers interested in making changes to their operations to apply for a grant worth up to \$25,000.”

Farmer David Abazs hopes his grant funds will help demonstrate a cost-effective way to increase soil health on the Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center School’s organic farm. Abazs is testing a variety of materials, including lime, wood ash, and biochar for their ability to affect soil chemistry and increase pH levels of the acidic soils in Lake County.

“These fields have never been farmed before and are providing a great template to help us and other farmers,” said Abazs. “We’re trying to find soil amendments that will help simultaneously meet pH goals and enhance soil health.”

Previous grant rounds have funded projects exploring farm diversification, cover crops and crop rotation, conservation tillage, input reduction strategies, and alternative energies like wind, methane, and biomass.

AGRI Sustainable Agriculture and Demonstration grantees must share their findings. These are published annually in the MDA's [Greenbook](#), which provides a summary of each project along with results, management tips, and other resources.

Applications from farmers receive priority, but the program also funds Minnesota nonprofit and educational organizations as long as Minnesota farmers are meaningfully involved in the project. Projects may last two to three years.

AGRI Sustainable Agriculture and Demonstration Grant applications are due by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13, 2017. For more information and to apply, visit www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/demogrant.aspx.

Groundbreaking TB Test Brings Cattle Vaccination One Step Closer *(From Farmers Guardian)*

A TB vaccination for cattle could be one step closer thanks to a new test which detects bacteria in blood or milk after just six hours.

Actiphage TB, which has been created by Suffolk-based start-up PBD Biotech, is a highly sensitive test which can pick up whether an animal is infected or has been vaccinated.

At the moment, it is illegal to vaccinate cattle under EU rules because older tests were unable to distinguish between a vaccinated and infected cow.

It is hoped the faster results from Actiphage TB will also allow farmers to identify affected cattle more quickly, helping to prevent the spread of the disease.

Dr Cath Rees, one of the co-founders of PBD Biotech, carried out research on TB testing at the University of Nottingham.

Full text:

<https://www.fginsight.com/news/groundbreaking-tb-test-brings-cattle-vaccination-one-step-closer-42159>

Get Ready for the Census of Agriculture *(From AgWired.com)*

It's that time farmers. The 2017 Census of Agriculture is coming in December. The survey is conducted by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. It has been conducted since 1840 and is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. It takes place every five years.

During the NAFB Trade Talk session I visited with Barbara Rater, USDA-NASS, about the new survey. She says there will be new questions that include veteran status, farm decision-making and food marketing practices. There is also a much improved online questionnaire designed to make it easier to fill out. There will also be versions for mobile phone, tablet and desk/laptop computer.

Barbara also talks about the importance of filling out the survey which includes being able to show the country the importance and value of U.S. agriculture. The information will also be useful for influencing decision makers on topics like transportation/marketing locations, farm services, production practices and new technologies and farm policy. I can vouch for the importance of the survey even to those of us in agricultural marketing and ag media.

Full text:

<http://agwired.com/2017/11/14/get-ready-for-the-census-of-agriculture/>

WHO Releases New Antibiotic Recommendations

(From AgWeb)

Claiming that animal agriculture accounts for 80% of the use of medically important antibiotics in some countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) this week called for an end to uses other than for control and treatment of disease.

The report, titled “WHO guidelines on use of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals,” recommends that “healthy animals should only receive antibiotics to prevent disease if it has been diagnosed in other animals in the same flock, herd, or fish population.”

In the United States, implementation of FDA’s Guidance for Industry 213, while voluntary, has removed label indications for animal-performance uses from all medically important antibiotics. Several products are, however, labeled for disease prevention, meaning they can be administered to groups of healthy animals known to be at risk for contracting specific diseases. Notably, the authors rate the evidence supporting each recommendation as “low quality” or “very low quality.” They stress that “the beneficial human health benefits (lowered prevalence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria isolated from humans) strongly outweigh any potentially harmful or undesirable outcomes.”

The recommendations include:

- We recommend an overall reduction in use of all classes of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals.
- We recommend complete restriction of use of all classes of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals for growth promotion.
- We recommend complete restriction of use of all classes of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals for prevention of infectious diseases that have not yet been clinically diagnosed.
- We suggest that antimicrobials classified as critically important for human medicine should not be used for control of the dissemination of a clinically diagnosed infectious disease identified within a group of food-producing animals.
- We suggest that antimicrobials classified as highest priority critically important for human medicine should not be used for treatment of food-producing animals with a clinically diagnosed infectious disease.

Full story: <https://www.agweb.com/article/who-releases-new-antibiotic-recommendations/>

Regenerative Ag Eco-Label Makes Debut

(From Sustainable Food News)

The [Savory Institute](#) has debuted its new regenerative agriculture label for food and clothing products.

The Boulder, Colo.-based nonprofit has a goal to regenerate 2.5 billion acres of grasslands - about 20 percent of the world's grasslands - through holistic management by 2025. It also administers a global network of about 100 hubs that work with producers to show them how to restore the natural cycles of grasslands through properly managed grazing.

Savory had announced its [Land to Market \(L2M\) verification program](#) in January 2016, which aims to create the world's first verified, regenerative supply chain for meat, dairy, wool and leather. The verification process measures a producer's trends in biodiversity, soil organic carbon, water infiltration and ecosystem process function.

Chris Kerston, Savory's director of market engagement and public outreach, told *Sustainable Food News* earlier that each hub "is bringing on board at least 20 producers in their region."

Savory explained how L2M works:

- **Hubs:** Meet growing consumer demand by training, supporting and verifying producers in their regions. The regenerative agricultural footprint grows.
- **Producers:** Receive Ecological Outcomes Verification from regional Hub, join the regenerative supplier roster, and get preferential access to brands and retailers.
- **Brands and retailers:** Source from the verified regenerative supplier roster, publicize their involvement in Land to Market, and build consumer loyalty and demand.
- **Consumers:** Choose health and wholeness for themselves and for the land through their food and fiber purchases. Demand for regenerative products increases.

Savory said that the program "is not just another certification or label. There are many amazing programs in the marketplace that tell consumers if the products they are purchasing were grown without chemicals, or are GMO-free, or have high animal welfare standards. These certifications fill an important niche, but none of those programs tell us if our environment is getting better."

Public Hearing on Multi-Species Montana Plant Canceled

(From Meatingplace.com)

A public hearing scheduled for Dec. 7 to discuss a proposed multi-species slaughter plant in Great Falls, Mont., has been canceled, a spokesman for the project confirmed for **Meatingplace**.

Friesen Foods is amending its initial special-use permit application, and will reschedule the meeting afterward, said Todd Hanson, managing partner of local project developer Norsman Consulting Group.

As proposed, the Madison Food Park would employ as many as 3,000 people in what the company calls a state-of-the-art, robotically controlled, environmentally friendly, multi-species food processing plant for cattle, pigs and chickens and related further processing facilities for beef, pork and poultry.

Friesen recently purchased more than 3,000 acres of undeveloped farmland just east of Great Falls.

Cattle producers say the facility would help spare them the cost and inefficiency of having to truck cattle out of state to be slaughtered, but some local residents have concerns including what they say are potential environmental and health risks.

Developers of the project, meanwhile, counter that the Madison Food Park project will invest in technology and infrastructure to address those types of concerns, including mitigating detectable, residual odors.

They emphasize that the project will have a positive economic impact on the area. "The projected influx of workers, and their families, will have measurable economic impact on every aspect of the community, including existing and expanding business enterprises across the spectrum of manufacturing, wholesale, distribution, etc.," Hanson said in a statement.

Trans Pacific Agreement Moves Forward without U.S. Participation

(From Associated Press)

Trade ministers from 11 Pacific Rim countries announced an agreement Saturday on pushing ahead with a free-trade deal whose destiny was uncertain after President Donald Trump dropped it.

"We have reached an agreement on a number of fundamental parts," Vietnam's trade minister, Tran Tuan Anh, told reporters in the coastal resort city of Danang, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. But more work must be done before leaders of the countries involved can endorse the plan, said Anh and his Japanese counterpart, Toshimitsu Motegi.

The 11 countries remaining in the trade pact rejected by Trump in January have been working to revise the deal to allow them to proceed without U.S. involvement. That involved a difficult balance between maintaining high standards and pragmatism, Motegi said.

"Through a pragmatic response of the officials involved we could come to an agreement," Motegi said. He said it was clear there would be a need for further changes but that differences had been narrowed down.

The substance is something all the TPP countries can agree on," said Motegi. "This will send a very strong message to the U.S. and the other countries in the region."

The talks resulted in an even longer name for the trade pact than originally devised. It is now the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The announcement of a basic agreement was delayed by last-minute discord that prevented the TPP leaders from endorsing the plan when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau did not join other leaders who gathered Friday to endorse an agreement in principle on pressing ahead without the U.S.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-apec-trade-tpp-20171110-story.html>

Millennial Dining Habits Reshaping the Industry

(From Forbes)

With so much of the industry shifting its attention to Gen Z, you might think that millennials have fallen out of favor as the “it” demographic. Yet millennials, defined as those consumers born between 1982 and 1996, became the largest generation in the US last year, overtaking baby boomers for the first time. And while many still picture a teenager when they hear “millennial,” even the youngest members of this generation are decidedly adults -- at age 21, they are graduating college and entering the workforce, while the oldest members, topping out at 35, have been working for over a decade. Today’s millennials are also becoming parents and raising families -- millennials now account for the vast majority of women giving birth in the US, according to the Pew Research Center.

But they are also waiting longer than previous generations to have children, partly due to finances – many millennials are struggling with massive student loan debt, high rents and stagnant wages. The differences within this generation can be striking -- were you the same person at age 21 compared to age 35? And those differences that arise as this generation moves through the various life stages -- single or married, children or no children -- impact their food preferences and purchases. How? To find out, Datassential surveyed 1016 millennial consumers for our upcoming "Keynote report: The growing differences among millennial consumers." We not only uncover how the subgroups within this generation think and behave differently, but we also dive into how millennials differ from the population overall.

Here are five early findings:

1. **Millennials are eating out and ordering in.** Wherever they enjoy their meals, millennials are certainly more willing than the general population to let someone else do the cooking. Not only are they more likely to eat out, but they are also far more likely to have food delivered -- in fact, they are more than twice as likely to have food delivered from nearly every away-from-home delivery option.
2. **Millennials love lunch.** For the overall population, their last meal out was most likely at dinner, but for millennials their last meal out was most likely lunch, which may not be surprising for a generation that grew up on fast casuals.
3. **Millennials are looking for new supermarket experiences.** Millennials are not only more likely than the overall population to shop at specialty retailers like Whole Foods and Trader Joe's, but millennials are also willing to consider a wider range of options for their grocery needs. They are far more likely than the general population to purchase groceries from a convenience store (over a quarter have in the past month), and they are much more likely to have purchased groceries online (nearly 30% have).
4. **Millennials are using some fancy prep methods.** Millennials are comparatively less likely than the general population to bake or microwave their food, while they are more likely to poach, braise or steam their meals. Meal kit delivery services have been particularly focused on targeting customers who are looking for ways to upgrade their cooking skills.
5. **Millennials want an app for that.** While the total population vastly prefers wait-staff to take their orders and bring food, millennials are far more interested than the general population in ordering ahead and picking food up via an app and using ordering kiosks.

It's clear that changes in the industry are impacting millennials' preferences and choices. The supermarket prepared foods section, for instance, has radically evolved in recent years and now

many of them resemble mini (and even not-so-mini) food halls. Millennials are responding -- they are nearly twice as likely as the general population to stop at the prepared foods section every time they shop.

Source: http://smartbrief.com/original/2017/11/five-lessons-millennials-mature-and-evolve?utm_source=brief