



## **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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***February 1, 2019***

### **NBA Hosts Successful 2019 Winter Conference**

Key decision-makers in the bison business, and newcomers alike gathered in Denver last week to celebrate another year of strength and stability, and to prepare for the challenges of the coming year at the National Bison Association's 24th annual winter conference and Gold Trophy Show and Sale.

Nearly 500 ranchers and marketers gathered at the Denver Renaissance Hotel for three packed days of workshops, presentations, receptions and sumptuous meals.

Several sessions during the conference provided attendees with practical information on building profitable operations, and in improving the health and productivity of their herds. The keynote presentation, Ranching for Profit, was conducted by Dave Pratt, an internationally-recognized expert in helping agricultural producers improve their bottom line. Other sessions focused on utilizing DNA to improve the quality of their herds, and on utilizing social media to promote their businesses.

Key leaders from South Dakota State University, including Interim Research Station Director Dr. Bill Gibbons, also updated the conference audience with that institution's commitment to establish a Center of Excellence for Bison Research.

"Roughly 20 percent of our attendees were first-time participants, and another 20 percent have been attending NBA conferences for more than 10 years," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. "That reflects a healthy, growing organization."

Jim Matheson, assistant director for the NBA added, "Our presenters had a wealth of information for experienced producers and newcomers alike. For the second year, we video-taped the sessions, and will be posting those presentations on-line in the members' only section of bisoncentral.com soon."

Carter and Matheson thanks the Winter Conference planning committee for their hard work in organizing and facilitating the annual event. That committee consists of Beverly Brown of Texas as chair, John Graves of Colorado, Deb Thieman of Colorado, Jud Seaman of South Dakota, Kim Zimmerman of California, Gail Griffin of Minnesota, Susan Maass of Colorado, Amy Eudy of

Texas, Christine Hung of Montana, Katie Kramer of Kentucky, Roy Liedtke of Texas, and Lauren Dobson of Texas.

## **Canadian. SD Entries Popular with GTSS Judges, Buyers**

Wolverine Bison Co. from Saskatchewan, CA garnered the Gold Trophy prizes for two-year-old and yearling bulls at the annual gold Trophy Sale in Denver last week, while Trails' End Bison in South Dakota grabbed two Gold Trophies in the female categories.

Roughly 100 head of live bison consigned at the Gold Trophy Show sold for a combined total of \$423,000 during Saturday's auction at the National Western Stock Show.

The Grand Champion Male, a two-year-old bull shown by Wolverine Bison from Saskatchewan, CA, brought \$19,500. Wolverine also had the Reserve Grand Champion male, a yearling bull. And the Canadian consignor won Producer of the Year honors.

The Grand Champion female this year was a two-year-old bred heifer from Trails End Bison in South Dakota. That heifer brought \$5,500. Trails End also had the Reserve Grand Champion Female entry, a pen of five yearling heifers.

The market class honors were a family affair with Prairie Ridge Buffalo Co. of Colorado winning the top heifer trophy and BD Bison taking the top bull trophy. Prairie Ridge Buffalo is owned and operated by Ray and Debbie Thieman of Limon, CO, while CB Bison is owned by their grandson, Cannan Bennett.

See the full results at <https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2019-Sales-Results-Web.pdf>

## **Winter Conference Survey Out Now**

The NBA depends on attendee input to help shape future conferences and events. An email was sent to all who registered for the conference, but not registrant guests. If you attended the conference and did not receive the invitation, please email [jim@bisoncentral.com](mailto:jim@bisoncentral.com) to receive the invitation to participate in the brief survey.

## **AAFCO Committee Pushes Forward on Pet Food Labeling**

The Association of American Feed Control Officials' (AAFCO) working group on Bison/Buffalo labeling continued to push forward to develop new definitions, or a model regulation that will prohibit water buffalo ingredients in pet products from simply being labeled as "buffalo."

Because the AAFCO mid-year meeting in Savannah, GA occurred at the same time as the National Bison Association Winter Conference, NBA Executive Director Dave Carter was unable to attend. However, Ken Ludwick of Tasman's Natural Pet (and an NBA member) from Louisville, KY represented the association at the meeting.

According to Ludwick, the state feed officials on the working group were very vocal in expressing a need to stop water buffalo from being labeled as buffalo. The group, however, is debating whether to address the issue through a change in the ingredient definitions requirements, or through a change in the model pet food regulations.

“I spoke and first thanked the committee on behalf of the NBA for tackling this issue and allowing the NBA to present our views,” Ludwick reported, adding that he then led the AAFCO meeting in singing a verse from the Kansas state song: Home on the Range.

“It lightened the mood in the room and got a lot of chuckles,” Ludwick said. I then got serious and basically said the NBA just wants AAFCO to provide clarity to consumers and retailers.”

## **Johnson Joins as NBA International Director**

Robert Johnson was ratified by the NBA membership to join the association’s board of directors as the International Director at the annual membership meeting held during the NBA winter conference last week. Johnson replaces Paul Kolesar as the International Director.

Johnson and his wife, Rebecca, operate RJ Game Farm in Saskatchewan. They have been bison producers for 12 years, and have transitioned ownership of the farm, which was started in 1974, from Rebecca’s parents, Ryan and Roberta Clark.

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

Johnson said, “We take great pride in our family’s hard work. We are grateful for all the relationships that we’ve built with other producers, and people in the business across North America. I am very much aligned with the objectives and focus of the National Bison Association. I’m very appreciative for the opportunity to serve this organization.”

## **Dave Hunter Honored as Member of the Year**

The NBA’s Science and Research Committee Chair, Dave Hunter, DVM, was honored as the association’s Member of the Year during a special presentation at the Winter Conference last week.

Hunter was recognized with the award for his leadership in advancing the association’s science and research priorities, and in forging a strong partnership with South Dakota State University. Under Hunter’s leadership, the Science and Research Committee has developed new resources to assist producers in dealing with *Mycoplasma bovis*, worked with the national Buffalo Foundation to establish the world’s leading library of bison peer-reviewed literature, and has assisted SDSU in its efforts to establish a Center of Excellence in Bison Research.

Hunter retired last year as veterinarian for Turner Enterprises after 20 years in that position, but continues to serve the Turner Endangered Species Fund.

## Harper Recognized as Friend of the Bison

Longtime NBA supporter and bison business champion Stan Harper of Texas was also honored during the NBA winter conference for his generous contributions to advance the interests of bison.

Harper's Harper Cattle, LLC served as the Presenting Sponsor of the 2017 International Bison Conference. And has supported the involvement of youth in the National Bison Association's activities.

He raises cattle and bison under the Harper Cattle brand and has land holdings in Texas, New Mexico and Colorado.

Stan serves on the advisory board of the Former Texas Rangers Foundation, and his charitable interests include a number of organizations benefiting children in Texas and New Mexico. And, of course, he has always been very generous to NBA children who help with our benefit auction.

## December Prices Hold Strong

Wholesale prices for dressed bison carcasses held firm in December, according to the latest monthly report issued by USDA's Grain and Livestock Market News Service.

According to the latest USDA report, dressed young bull carcasses averaged \$484.50/cwt., which was \$2.40/cwt. lower than in November, but \$3.34 higher than the previous December. Heifer carcasses averaged \$477.66/cwt., which was \$8.12/cwt, higher than in November and \$5.61/cwt higher than the previous December. Old bull carcasses were higher and aged cow carcasses were lower in December.

Because of the government shutdown, the overall number of bison processed under federal inspection for 2018 is not yet available.

The USDA monthly report can be accessed here.  
[https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw\\_ls526.txt](https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw_ls526.txt)

The NBA's five-year tracking report is available in the members' section of [www.bisoncentral.com](http://www.bisoncentral.com).

## New Online North American Bison Registry Launched

Introducing the newly developed NABR web page and software function for the NBA membership. Whether you are registering animals for the first time, registering animals on-going, or just looking around for possible breeding stock candidates, the web page provides you a look that has never been offered. See it at

More and more people want knowledge about lineage and historic connections that their bison, or the bison they are considering, have. The NABR web page provides pedigree information

and phenotype records (pictures) that result in your ability to make knowledgeable decisions about your part in the 'Great American Bison Story'.

The NABR is: 'A Species Registry', as such we embrace DNA analysis from all accredited labs, while offering DNA testing from UC Davis at the most cost-effective rates possible. The NABR also uses language and criteria that is distinctly different from breed registries for domestic animals.

Whether your interest is parentage testing, introgression, historic lineage or gene diversity, the North American Bison Registry exists to:

"Record the lineage and origin of North American bison in private, public, and tribal herds, as a means to enhance stewardship, conserve unique traits, advance bison knowledge, and preserve the integrity of the species."

Learn more at <https://bisoncentral.com/bison-registry/>

## **ABC Affiliate Spotlights Bison Auction at Stock Show**

Calling it the Grand Finale of the Stock Show, Denver's ABC affiliate featured a news segment last Saturday featuring the National Bison Association's Gold Trophy Sale. The segment noted Colorado's role in the bison business, and emphasized the role ranchers are playing in building healthy herds across the North America.

Full video here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8j1rkf4osw&feature=share>

## **School District Captures Junior Judging Excitement**

Among the more than 30 contestants in the NBA's Junior Judging Competition last week as a contingent from Jefferson County Schools, located in a largely suburban area near Denver. Accompanying the students was the school district's videographer, who put together a YouTube video covering the event.

The students were part of Jefferson County 4H, which is directed by Lisa Stavig. Ms. Stavig noted that she had prepared the students by taking them out to a local bison ranch.

The full video is available here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZK4GyGum4B8>

## **Local Ranch Donates Bison Hunt to Wounded Marine**

Goodland, KS. – Last Saturday, a local bison ranch hosted Purple Heart Stephen Lunt, USMC (Retired), and treated him to an authentic prairie bison hunt. The spot-and-stalk hunt provided Stephen a great experience as well as all the meat, hide, and head from the animal. The Denver, Colorado-based American Heroes in Action played an integral role in organizing and providing additional funding for the transportation, butcher and taxidermy fees.

Bison rancher Ken Klemm, says, "We've been wanting to give back to our troops in a very real way for years. We've consistently donated buffalo jerky to our troops serving overseas but we've wanted to do something bigger and better for a returning veteran that needed a hand-up. We understand how ethical hunting and time in nature can help heal the soul and we are so glad that we've been able to provide this hunt to Stephen."

Stephen Lunt, the recipient of the hunt, was born and raised in Charleston, South Carolina. He served 8 years with the United States Marines Corps and endured multiple deployments overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan. On March 2, 2010, while serving in combat operations in Herat Province Afghanistan with the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, Lunt's unit was attacked along a river bottom. Stephen was struck in the head with an axe by a local national fighter while engaging in close-quarters combat. He was evacuated to Bagram, Afghanistan, where the first of 2 brain surgeries took place to repair his skull and spine. Stephen is an avid bowhunter who uses physical fitness and outdoor rehabilitation to empower himself and help other veterans heal through hunting, fishing, and other outdoor experiences. Stephen is now a student at Colorado State University and is in his final year of his master's degree in weed ecology with a completed undergraduate degree in rangeland ecology.

Mr. Klemm worked closely with his friend, Command Sergeant Major Dale Veneklasen (Retired), to organize this hunt. CSM Veneklasen served in the Calvary unit known as the Buffalo Soldiers in many deployments. The American Buffalo is central to their military culture and the hunt will provide a special significance. Mr. Veneklasen makes his home near Ft. Carson and now dedicates his time to helping wounded warriors integrate into society.

Also assisting with the hunt was Brian Soliday, board member of the all-volunteer American Heroes in Action organization. His help was invaluable in providing additional funding and support to complete the experience for Stephen.

Partners, Ken Klemm and Peter Thieriot (AKA The Buffalo Guys), are working on plans for next year's hunt to make this an annual tradition of thanks and remembrance for the men and women who serve us in harm's way.

See [www.thehomesteadranch.com](http://www.thehomesteadranch.com) to learn more about bison hunting in Kansas and see [www.americanheroesinaction.org](http://www.americanheroesinaction.org) to learn more about the important services they provide.

## **Member Business News:**

After ten highly successful years in partnership, Ronald "Ron" C. Brownotter and Thomas E. "Tom" Aman, President of Jet Co., a SD corporation, signed a Purchase Agreement. Effective January 9, 2019 Ron acquired Jet's remaining partnership shares.

Ron and Tom wish their associates and the NBA to know that their partnership has been highly successful. Brownotter-Jet Buffalo Ranch, LLC was organized in 2010. It has grown from 170 cows and bulls to nearly triple that number today. This past fall, BJBR, LLC harvested 334 calves, 15 yearlings and a dozen or so Open cows. Plus, since 2012 Ron and BJBR's professional outfitters, Ides Guides and Buffalo Hides of Park Falls, WI have hosted nearly 50 highly successful Trophy Bull Hunts.

Tom wishes to add that it has been his rare privilege to have been associated with Ron, both as his partner and friend. Tom quotes the saying that when each partner brings something different to a partnership, one and one can add up to the strength of three. With Ron in his 50's, as the rancher, and him in his 80's, as the back-office provider, we couldn't have been more different. But Tom says their partnership is living proof of the truth of this wisdom.

In recent years, Ron operated a sister corporation, Brownotter Buffalo Ranch, LLC. So, on January 9th, 2019, Ron merged BJBR, LLC into Brownotter Buffalo Ranch, LLC. All future ranch business will be conducted under Ron's Brownotter Buffalo Ranch, LLC. With an expectation of about 400 calves to be harvested this fall, Brownotter Buffalo Ranch, LLC is believed to be the largest, solely owned and operated Native American buffalo ranch in the USA/Canada.

For more information you may contact Ron Brownotter or Tom Aman. Our contact information can be found in the NBA directory, whose help in promoting the industry we greatly appreciate.

## **My First Bite Of Bison**

*(From Meatingplace.com)*

Contrary to the song "Home on the Range," it is bison not buffalo that roamed in the American West. Although bison and buffalo do share the same family, buffalo are actually indigenous to South Asia (water buffalo) and Africa (Cape buffalo). Bison were found from Canada to Mexico and from coast to coast. Bison were also native throughout Europe. Calling a bison a buffalo is inaccurate, but a common mistake. Although Bison NY does sound funny, doesn't it?

This past week my wife and I had the pleasure of meeting up with some old friends from New Zealand at Beaver Creek Resort. The skiing was outstanding and the food we ate was first-rate.

We dined out several times during our stay and were pleasantly surprised by the differentiation of the menus. Having lived and cooked in Colorado, I assumed we'd see the usual meat-heavy menu. The obligatory ribeye and sirloin were there, as were plenty of local poultry, fish and vegetarian offerings. What I was not expecting was bison. Bison popped up in an array of offerings from appetizers to mains. We had one dish that was particularly wonderful — a richly flavored Bison Osso Bucco with a cornbread and lemon gremolata that makes my mouth water just thinking about it. I have eaten Beefalo, but I can honestly say that I have never tasted bison. Beefalo is a cross-breed of domestic cattle and bison developed for a flavorful lean meat that is high in protein and very low in cholesterol.

Traditionally, bison was a prized and essential part of Native American life. Every part of the animal was used. The meat, fat and organs for food, sinew for bowstrings and thread. Hides used for everything from clothing, blankets and tanned for tipi covers and moccasins. Every bone, horn, tail and head were used for tools and ceremonies. In the mid 1800's the bison population went from 25 million to fewer than 1,000. Today, bison are thriving due to smart management and breeding efforts and restoration of their native grazing land. Bison meat ranching has been a way of life in the Mountain West for a bit over 100 years. One of the only

bison herds to live continually in one spot since prehistoric times remains in Yellowstone National Park. They may be some of the only bison that remain genetically free of cattle DNA.

Have you eaten, or better yet, raised Bison? Please share your stories.  
Live well...

## **Bison Are Back, And That Benefits Many Other Species On The Great Plains**

*(From Seattle PI)*

Driving north of Pawhuska, Oklahoma, an extraordinary landscape comes into view. Trees disappear and an immense landscape of grass emerges, undulating in the wind like a great, green ocean.

This is the Flint Hills. For over a century it has been cattle country, a place where cows grow fat on nutritious grasses. More recently, a piece of this great, green ocean.

This is the Flint Hills. For over a century it has been cattle country, a place where cows grow fat on nutritious grasses. More recently, a piece of this landscape was transformed in 1992 when the nonprofit Nature Conservancy bought the Barnard Ranch. It created a nature reserve there, the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, which now covers almost 40,000 acres.

A central element of the group's conservation strategy was reintroducing the American bison (*Bison bison*), which had been eradicated from the land in the mid-1800s. Releasing the first bison in 1993 was a step toward restoring part of an ecosystem that once stretched from Texas to Minnesota.

Today some 500,000 bison have been restored in over 6,000 locations, including public lands, private ranches and Native American lands. As they return, researchers like me are gaining insights into their substantial ecological and conservation value.

It was not always certain that bison could rebound. Once numbering in the tens of millions, they dominated the Great Plains landscape until the late 1800s, anchoring a remarkable ecosystem that contained perhaps the greatest concentration of mammals on Earth. That abundance was wiped out as settlers and the U.S. government engaged in a brutally effective campaign to eradicate the ecosystem and the native cultures that relied on it.

Bison were shot by the millions, sometimes for "sport," sometimes for profit, and ultimately to deprive Native Americans of vital resources. By 1890 fewer than 1,000 bison were left, and the outlook for them was bleak. Two small wild populations remained, in Yellowstone National Park and northern Alberta, Canada; and a few individuals survived in zoos and on private ranches.

Recovery

Remarkably, a movement developed to save the bison and ultimately became a conservation success story. Some former bison hunters, including prominent figures like William "Buffalo Bill" Cody and future President Theodore Roosevelt, gathered the few surviving animals, promoted captive breeding and eventually reintroduced them to the natural landscape.



With the establishment of additional populations on public and private lands across the Great Plains, the species was saved from immediate extinction. By 1920 it numbered about 12,000.

Full story here. <https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Bison-are-back-and-that-benefits-many-other-13543845.php>

## **Bison auction to be held Saturday at the Land Between the Lakes**

*(From WPSD TV)*

LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES, KY — Approximately 40 bison will be auctioned off Saturday, February 2 at the Land Between the Lakes Elk & Bison Prairie Corral.

The auction is used to help maintain the size and health of the heard in the prairie.

Bison up for auction include:

- 1 mature bison bull born 2003—He has been a primary breeder that is being replaced by younger bulls. He weighed 1700 lbs. January 2018.
- 2 young bulls born 2016
- 8 young bulls born 2017 (yearlings)
- 8-10 yearling heifers born 2017
- 2-4 mature cows, born 2005-2009, tested for pregnancy
- A mix of 17 male and female calves born 2018

Bidder registration and viewing begins at 8:00 am. with the auction starting at 9:00 a.m.

The Elk & Bison Prairie corral is located on the east side of Woodlands Trace National Scenic Byway, KY 453, just north of US 68/KY 80.

Source. <https://www.wpsdlocal6.com/2019/02/01/bison-auction-to-be-held-saturday-at-the-land-between-the-lakes/>

## **The Effects Of Near-Extinction Of The Bison Are Still Being Felt By Native Tribes Today**

*(From Minn-Post)*

Less than three hundred years ago, bison roamed a huge swath of the North American continent, from Mexico up through Canada, and from nearly the east coast of the United States through the American West.

The animals were a livelihood for many of the people who lived in the region, providing food, shelter, clothing and other means of survival.

Then came white settlers, who destroyed the animals' habitat and hunted them by hundreds of thousands, sometimes leaving their carcasses to rot. By the late 1800s, the animals were all but wiped off the continent.

The historical record shows the bison's disappearance had immediate effects on the health and wellbeing of tribes that depended on them.

But the effects weren't *only* immediate, says [a working paper published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' Center for Indian Country Development](#): More than a century after the

American bison nearly went extinct, the tribes that relied on them still have lower incomes, and higher rates of suicide mortality and unrest than those that didn't.

Full story here. <https://www.minnpost.com/economy/2019/01/the-effects-of-near-extinction-of-the-bison-are-still-being-felt-by-native-tribes-today/>

## **Dakota County Will Study Bringing Back The Bison To County Parks**

*(From the Minneapolis Star-Tribune)*

Dakota County will spend \$50,000 to study the idea of whether it's feasible to return bison to the county through its park system.

The Dakota County Board has voted to spend up to \$50,000 on a study to find out whether it's feasible to return bison to the county through its park system.

"Bringing something like bison back to parks captures people's imagination," said Tom Lewanski, the county's natural resources manager. "It's a big, iconic animal."

**Source.** <http://www.startribune.com/dakota-county-will-study-bringing-back-the-bison-to-county-parks/505058232/>

## **USDA Restarts Work on Farm Bill Implementation**

*(From AgriPulse)*

The federal government is lumbering back into action - for at least three weeks - and the Agriculture Department looks to jump-start work on implementation the 2018 farm bill, a task that was interrupted just as it was beginning in December.

Job No. 1 for USDA is to prepare the newly overhauled dairy support program so that producers can sign up for the expanded coverage that took effect Jan. 1. The Dairy Margin Coverage program, the new name for the relatively unpopular Margin Protection Program, is primarily aimed at keeping smaller scale producers in business but will benefit farms of all size.

"We will immediately begin work on implementation of the farm bill" and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue plans to "prioritize the dairy program," USDA spokesman Tim Murtaugh said over the weekend.

President Donald Trump on Friday night signed a continuing resolution that will fund those departments and agencies to Feb. 15, allowing time for a House-Senate conference committee to negotiate a deal that would meet his demands for border wall funding. Trump restated his

threat to fund the wall by declaring a national emergency if he isn't satisfied with the result of the negotiations.

USDA, along with several other major departments and agencies important to agriculture, including the Interior Department, Food and Drug Administration and Environmental Protection Agency, were shut down on Dec. 22, just two days after Trump signed the new farm bill into law.

Meanwhile this week, a team of U.S. ag negotiators led by Ted McKinney, USDA's undersecretary for trade and foreign agricultural affairs, is preparing to meet their Chinese counterparts when the country's Vice Premier Liu He and a delegation arrive in Washington for talks on Wednesday and Thursday.

The overarching goal is to end the trade war and halt the tariffs that have decimated virtually all of the U.S. ag exports to the country that include everything from almonds to soybeans, but U.S. negotiators tell *Agri-Pulse* they will be pushing for China to lift a wide variety of Chinese non-tariff restrictions. That includes lifting China's ban on hormone-treated beef as well as U.S. poultry.

## **Boosting Farm Animal Health With Beneficial Microbes**

*(From Chemical & Engineering News)*

Is it possible to swap out one solution for its opposite and achieve the same result? Livestock farmers are about to find out.

For generations, farmers have used antibiotics to improve production of their chicken, pig, and cattle operations. With use of certain antibiotics on the chopping block because of concerns about the rise of resistant organisms, some are turning from anti to pro-probiotics, that is.

Probiotics, live microorganisms that are a staple of the human wellness industry, have the potential to fulfill many of the roles that antibiotics play down on the farm. Research suggests probiotics can help chickens, pigs, and cows quickly put on weight, efficiently digest feed, and withstand the infectious organisms that tend to lurk wherever animals are kept in close quarters.

But farmers have several ways to raise healthy livestock without relying on antibiotics. They can add enzymes to feed, choose different breeds of animals, and institute new infection controls, to name a few. Many are skeptical that microbes are worth the price.

Probiotics purveyors counter that their newest products, developed with cutting-edge genomic and modeling tools, are well on their way to proving their value. The field is led by firms with both animal nutrition and fermentation capabilities—namely, Evonik Industries, Chr. Hansen, DuPont Danisco, Kemin Industries, and Biomin. And at least one start-up, Ascus Biosciences, has jumped in with a unique approach for dairy cows.

Full text:

<https://cen.acs.org/business/agriculture/Boosting-farm-animal-health-beneficial/97/i4>

