



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 2, 2018

Matheson to Present Bison Advantage to Black Hills Stock Show

NBA assistant director, Jim Matheson, will present a two-hour Bison Advantage workshop at the Black Hills Stock Show in Rapid City today.

The Dakota Territory Buffalo Association invited the NBA to present the workshop at the start of their annual conference and bison auction at the Black Hills Stock Show.

Matheson will provide an introduction and overview of the bison business and will cover a variety of topics regarding the management and marketing of the animal.

The Bison Advantage outreach program was developed in 2014 through a grant from the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program.

Matheson will also provide an update to the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association on the bison industry on Saturday during the association's convention at the Rapid City Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center.

NBA Blog Launched

The National Bison Association went live with a blog this week, as a part of the organization's commitment to a greater presence on social media.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, will be the primary author of the NBA blog posts, but other staff members and officers may contribute as well. The first two blogs posted this week are entitled, "There's Strength in the Herd," and "The Perils of Becoming a Cog." Both can be found here. <https://bisoncentral.com/blog/>

The association will begin to push the blog out to the public via Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media tools.

The blogs are a part of the NBA Strategic plan goal: "The NBA will expand its social media presence with an Association blog, and relationships with at least three prominent bloggers."

Don't Miss Bison World Advertising Opportunity

Capitalize on the post-NBA-conference wave of optimism and strong industry projections by advertising in **Bison World**. Rates have not gone up in over a DECADE and start as low as \$100 per issue. Request a media packet by contacting Marilyn Bay Drake marilynbaydrake@gmail.com The deadline to reserve advertising space in the spring issue, which includes conference and GTSS results coverage, is Feb. 10.

USDA Agriculture Census Due This Monday - February 5th

There's an old saying: *You can't monitor what you don't measure.*

And, Monday is the deadline for producers to participate in the most important measurement tool for assessing the growth of the U.S. bison business: The USDA Census of Agriculture.

With the NBA and its partners dedicated to restoring one million bison in North America, it's vital to measure the status of bison herds in the United States. The best measuring tool available with the once-every-five-year Census of agriculture, conducted by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Everyone who received the 2017 Census of Agriculture questionnaire is to return it, even if they are not currently farming. The first few qualifying questions on the form will determine whether completing the entire questionnaire is necessary. After the February 5 deadline, NASS will begin following-up with additional mailings, e-mails, phone calls, and personal appointments. To avoid these additional contacts, farmers and ranchers are asked to complete their Census as soon as possible.

The Census of Agriculture is the only NASS questionnaire mailed to every producer across the country and is conducted just once every five years. The Census provides a complete account of the industry, its changes, and emerging trends. Census data are widely used, often relied on when developing the Farm Bill and other farm policy, and when making decisions about disaster relief, community planning, technology development, and more.

"We are asking producers to help show our nation the value and importance of American agriculture," said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. "We need to hear from all of our farmers and ranchers, no matter how big or how small their part of agriculture. The Census is their voice, their future, their opportunity. Please respond now."

Producers are required by law to respond; NASS is required by the same federal law to keep all information confidential, use the data only for statistical purposes, and only publish in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation.

For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call (800) 727-9540.

Farm Rescue Helps Rancher Who Lost 700 Acres in Legion Lake Fire
(From *The Rapid City Journal*)

The 34 bales of hay donated to Dave Reylets' ranch just west of Fairburn and S.D. Highway 79 Tuesday afternoon will likely feed his herd of about 900 bison for just five days.

But as the semi-truck stacked with hay settled between Reylets' bison corrals beneath a gray sky, it became clear that for a moment, the rancher's soul was nourished.

"What a blessing it is," a teary-eyed Reylets said of the donation by Farm Rescue, a North Dakota-based nonprofit that provides planting, harvesting and haying assistance to farmers and ranchers that have experienced a major injury, illness or natural disaster.

"It's unbelievable what Farm Rescue has done for our neighbors up and down (Highway) 79." During the Legion Lake Fire — which ripped through 85 square miles in Custer State Park, Wind Cave National Park and private land — Reylets lost about 700 acres of pasture to the blaze. Much of it, he said, contained the grass that he'd expected to feed his herd through the winter.

As bison bent forward and pulled from a hay rack, Reylets said corralling and feeding his bison with hay for the next couple months was the only option he had.

"We'll just have to keep buying hay," he said. "It's going to take a long time for that grass to come back because the way it's burnt. It will come back nice once it starts, but it just takes a long time to do that."

Levi Wielenga, an equipment specialist and program coordinator for Farm Rescue who drove the bales from Aberdeen, said the donation would typically cost about \$1,000 for trucking costs and between \$2,000 to \$3,000 for the hay.

Read more. http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/farm-rescue-helps-rancher-who-lost-acres-in-legion-lake/article_8aeaaa2f-1420-5908-9a94-35095e0f245d.html?utm_content=buffer41cd0&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=LEEDCC#tracking-source=home-top-story

Judge: US Must Reconsider Yellowstone Bison Protections

(From The Bozeman Chronicle)

A federal judge has ordered U.S. wildlife officials to reconsider a 2015 decision that blocked special protections for the iconic bison herds that roam Yellowstone National Park and are routinely subjected to hunting and slaughter.

U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper said in a ruling late Wednesday that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could not "simply pick and choose" between conflicting science, after the agency rejected a study suggesting the park's bison population might be too small to sustain its two herds.

Yellowstone's 5,000 bison make up the largest remaining wild population of a species that once numbered in the tens of millions.

The animals, also called buffalo, are captured and slaughtered by state and federal agencies and killed by hunters during their winter migrations outside the park into Montana.

Wildlife managers expect to cull between 600 and 900 of the animals this winter, under a program intended to keep the park's bison population at about 3,000 animals to guard against transmissions of brucellosis. The disease found in elk and bison is feared by Yellowstone-area ranchers because it can make cattle abort their young.

In a bid to stop the bison killing, wildlife advocates from the Buffalo Field Campaign and other groups sought protections for the herds in 2014.

They sued when their petition was denied, arguing the denial was politically motivated and made out of deference to the livestock industry.

The government's reconsideration of protections will take several months at a minimum and is not expected to affect this winter's capture and slaughter program.

Plaintiffs in the case said the judge's ruling sends a message to the government that it can't manipulate science to serve the interests of ranchers. But Buffalo Field Campaign director Ken Cole said it would likely take years to get protections in place that would stop the hunting and slaughter of park bison.

Full story: https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/court-asks-feds-to-review-decision-to-reject-endangered-species/article_595f3731-dcc8-5111-b59a-981e67187cb7.html

Editor's Note: T related story was published today in National Parks Traveler. That story contains the phrase, "only **Yellowstone National Park's** bison are genetically pure." Click here for that story, along with a response from NBA Executive Director Dave Carter, and a response from the article's author.

<https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2018/02/are-bison-endangered-species-fish-and-wildlife-service-says-no-courts-say-not-so-fast>

Yellowstone Bison Release Launches Criminal Investigation

(From National Public Radio)

On a windy and unseasonably warm winter day in Yellowstone National Park in Montana, spokeswoman Morgan Warthin stands in the middle of a massive, empty valley. "Yellowstone is so big," she says. "Where do you begin to look?"

She is searching for any of the 52 bison that were set free from two holding pens in mid-January.

Authorities say the bison escaped after somebody used bolt cutters to open up a fence. They soon scattered across an area larger than Delaware, and officials have launched a criminal investigation to find out what happened.

"I didn't believe it when I was first told," says Rick Wallen, a park bison biologist.

Finding these animals won't be easy, according to Wallen, because there are thousands of bison in Yellowstone.

The only thing that sets the escaped animals apart is a tiny ear tag, which can be hard to spot from long distances.

"Bison, in the winter time, are incredibly furry animals," Warthin says. "And so, the fur, being so thick, covers up those tags. So, it makes it very difficult to find the tag."

Before the bison went missing, Yellowstone park officials hoped to send them to a nearby Indian reservation in Montana. It was part of an effort to help the animals avoid what has become an annual and controversial slaughter of bison from Yellowstone.

Read more. <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/27/581217538/yellowstone-bison-release-launches-criminal-investigation>

Vandalism at bison facility yet another setback *(From Bozeman Daily Chronicle)*

The story of Yellowstone bison over the last century contains triumphs and setbacks, progress and stagnation. News broke last week that someone snuck into the park service's Stephens Creek facility and cut a pasture fence, removing more than 50 bison that were awaiting relocation to the Fort Peck Tribes.

The National Park Service and others have been working to advance a proposal to hold a small number of bison in pastures and routinely test to ensure that they are free of the disease brucellosis. National Parks Conservation Association has supported this proposal, which would relocate these bison to willing federal and tribal lands, helping to prevent a limited number of Yellowstone bison from being shipped to slaughter while also restoring bison to parts of their historic range.

While the transfer proposal has faced some setbacks, many were optimistic that progress was being made. It is disappointing to learn that what should have been an opportunity to celebrate another step forward for bison conservation has been jeopardized by this illegal act. These bison, which were destined to contribute to the health and genetic diversity of the cultural herd at Fort Peck, must be given a chance at a future other than the slaughterhouse. Such is unfortunately not the case for the nearly 4,000 Yellowstone bison that have been sent to slaughter, under an outdated, court-ordered management plan.

Source. https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/opinions/letters_to_editor/vandalism-at-bison-facility-yet-another-setback/article_c201c3dc-4c27-5484-81aa-d44f12519686.html

The Dinner Party That Served Up 50,000-Year-Old Bison Stew *(From Atlas Obscura)*

One night in 1984, a handful of lucky guests gathered at the Alaska home of paleontologist Dale Guthrie to eat stew crafted from a once-in-a-lifetime delicacy: the neck meat of an ancient, recently-discovered bison nicknamed Blue Babe.

The dinner party fit Alaska tradition: Since state law bans the [buying, bartering, and selling](#) of game meats, you can't find local favorites such as caribou stew at restaurants. Those dishes are enjoyed when hunters host a gathering. But their meat source is usually the moose population—not a preserved piece of biological history.

Blue Babe had been discovered just [five years earlier](#) by gold miners, who noticed that a hydraulic mining hose melted part of the gunk that had kept the bison frozen. They reported their findings to the nearby University of Alaska Fairbanks. Concerned that it would decompose, Guthrie—then a professor and researcher at the university—opted to dig out Blue Babe immediately. But the icy, impenetrable surroundings made that challenging. So, he cut off what he could, refroze it, and waited for the head and neck to thaw.

Soon, Guthrie and his team had Blue Babe on campus and started learning more about the ancient animal. They knew that it had perished about 36,000 years ago, thanks to radiocarbon dating. (Though new research shows that Blue Babe is at least 50,000 years old, according to the university's Curator of Archaeology, Josh Reuther.) Tooth marks and claw marks also suggested that the bison was killed by an ancestor of the lion, the *Panthera leoatrox*.

Blue Babe froze rapidly following its death—perhaps the result of a wintertime demise. Researchers were amazed to find that Blue Babe had frozen so well that its muscle tissue retained a texture not unlike beef jerky. Its fatty skin and bone marrow remained intact, too, even after thousands of years. So why not try eating part of it?

Read more. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/ancient-bison-stew-blue-babe-alaska>

USDA, FDA Announce Formal Agreement to Bolster Coordination and Collaboration

(From USDA Press Release)

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D. announced at the White House today a formal agreement aimed at making the oversight of food more efficient and effective by bolstering coordination between the two agencies. The formal agreement outlines efforts to increase interagency collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness on produce safety and biotechnology activities, while providing clarity to manufacturers.

"Today, Commissioner Gottlieb and I signed a formal agreement to promote coordination and the streamlining of capacities and obligations on shared concerns and jurisdiction," said Secretary Perdue. "Congress passed the Food Safety Modernization Act and assigned responsibilities to the USDA and the FDA. The USDA has the knowledge and expertise to support the FDA's work related to farming. We at the USDA have a motto: Do Right, and Feed Everyone. We believe this joint effort will help us move one step closer to that goal."

The FDA and the USDA have worked closely over the years to oversee the nation's food supply. The USDA oversees the safety of most meat, poultry, catfish and certain egg products while the FDA has authority over all other foods such as dairy, seafood, produce and packaged foods. The USDA and the FDA are partnering in many key areas, including the implementation of produce safety measures and biotechnology efforts.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y9e755fx>

EPA Delays WOTUS Implementation

(From Meetingplace.com)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said Wednesday it is delaying implementation of the 2015 “Waters of the US” (WOTUS) rule by two years as it works to rescind the regulation.

“The 2015 WOTUS rule developed by the Obama administration will not be applicable for the next two years, while we work through the process of providing long-term regulatory certainty across all 50 states about what waters are subject to federal regulation,” EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said in a press release.

WOTUS expanded the definition of the types of waterways that fell under federal jurisdiction. Farmers and livestock operations complained that it made them responsible for fertilizer or manure runoff into streams that they could not possibly control.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last week that states, organizations and property owners [could proceed with their lawsuits](#) that argue the process to finalize the WOTUS rule was flawed. The decision also ended a stay that was keeping the rule from going into effect.

EPA said its action “provides clarity and certainty about which definition of ‘waters of the United States’ is applicable nationwide in response to judicial actions that could result in confusion.”

APHIS Leadership Announcements

(From USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Bulletin)

Dear Stakeholders:

I recently announced the retirements of three APHIS leaders who filled crucial roles within our Agency-Jere Dick, our Associate Administrator since 2013; Bill Clay, who led Wildlife Services (WS) for 17 years; and Beverly Simmons, our Deputy Administrator for APHIS' International Services (IS), who was responsible for our operations abroad. Continuity of leadership is extremely important to me-APHIS provides vital services in every State, multiple territories and countless countries around the world and it's essential we have a team of strong leaders directing the vital work of our Agency.

For this reason, I've moved quickly to identify exceptional leaders from within our ranks to help carry out the broad and diverse mission of this Agency that I'm so proud to lead. I have several announcements to share with you, and I hope to soon announce the appointment of our new Associate Administrator, who will work alongside me and Mike Gregoire in the Administrator's office.

Today, I'm pleased to report that effective immediately, Cheryle Blakely will serve as Deputy Administrator for International Services-a role she has already been acting in. In addition, Janet Bucknall, WS' Eastern Region Director will take over as the program's Deputy Administrator-an organization she first joined in 1987. And Willie Harris, the current Eastern Region Director for Investigative and Enforcement Services will replace Janet as WS' Eastern Region Director.

I want to thank Cheryle, Janet and Willie for their dedication to APHIS and their willingness to take on these new roles. They will assume their new positions effective immediately. I would be

remiss if I failed to mention that today's announcements will cause a trickle-down effect, creating still more leadership vacancies, and we will fill these as expeditiously as possible.

I realize many of our stakeholders may not have had the opportunity to work with these senior leaders before, so I've included some biographical information to provide additional background on their careers and professional experience. I hope you'll have the chance to meet them in the coming months.

Sincerely,
Kevin Shea, Administrator

Full text:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/bulletins/1d74c65>

70 Bison Killed this Year by Montana Hunters

(From KPVI-NBC)

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Montana wildlife officials say 70 bison have been shot by hunters so far this year.

The Billings Gazette reported Thursday that 59 of those bison were killed on the west side near West Yellowstone, while 11 were killed in the Gardiner area.

The Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes killed 39 bison, while 24 were killed by state hunters. The Montana hunting season runs through Feb. 15. Five Native American tribes have treaty rights to hunt bison in Montana.

Aside from hunting, tribes also receive meat when Yellowstone National Park culls bison in the park. Last year, the park culled more than 1,200 bison.

The park's total bison population is about 5,400.

Source. https://www.kpvi.com/news/local_news/bison-killed-this-year-by-montana-hunters/article_0723fc3c-02d8-11e8-a3ff-e7181d77d2cf.html

Wyo. Brucellosis Team to Meet in Worland, Lovell

(From Univ. of Wyoming News)

The status of brucellosis in Wyoming, producer requirements for transport or selling and liability, and reports on a new test for the disease are among topics at February meetings in Worland and Lovell. Members of the Governor's Brucellosis Coordination Team will present the meetings.

The first meeting is Thursday, Feb. 15, during WESTI Ag Days in Worland, says Bruce Hoar, coordinator of brucellosis research at the University of Wyoming. WESTI Ag Days is Feb. 14-15 at the Worland Community Center, 1200 Culbertson Ave.

The team then meets at 10 a.m. Friday at the Lovell Community Center, 1925 U.S. Highway 310, he says. Lunch is available following the meeting.

Hoar will give a background on the disease to start the meetings, followed by producer responsibilities by a representative from the state veterinarian's office. Researcher Brant Schumaker of the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory at UW will provide an update on current testing and progress of a new brucellosis test his team is developing. If successful, the much-more-accurate novel molecular assay polymerase chain reaction test could replace culture testing.

Full text:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/uw/news/2018/01/state-brucellosis-team-to-meet-in-worland,-lovell.html>

TAHC Releases Texas County Fever Tick Quarantine Area

(From Texas Animal Health Commission News Release)

AUSTIN, TX - The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program (USDA-CFTEP) released the Kleberg County Fever Tick Control Purpose Quarantine Area (CPQA) on January 26, 2018.

The 17,397-acre CPQA was established by TAHC and USDA-CFTEP in December 2014 after cattle fever ticks were discovered on cattle located on a Kleberg County premises epidemiologically linked to a highly infested premises in Cameron County.

The release of the Kleberg County CPQA comes after three years of systematic treatment and inspections. The release rescinds all movement restrictions, inspections, and treatment requirements for livestock and wildlife in the area.

"TAHC is pleased to announce the successful surveillance and removal of cattle fever ticks in Kleberg County," Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director, said. "Though the fever tick outbreak is gaining ground along the Texas-Mexico border, the release of this CPQA is another small but significant step forward in our fever tick eradication efforts."

Today, portions of nine Texas counties have infested CPQAs. The counties include Cameron, Live Oak, Hidalgo, Kinney, Maverick, Starr, Webb, Willacy and Zapata.

Source: http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/2018/2018-01-31_KlebergCPQARelease.pdf

\$500,000 Movie About Bison Is Planned as New CSP Attraction

(From the Pierre Capitol Journal)

PIERRE — The state Game, Fish and Parks Department is asking the Legislature for a loan of \$11.5 million for improvements and additional facilities at Custer State Park, including \$500,000 for a world-class movie about bison that would be shown in the new visitor center being built near the park's busy east entrance.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission received a briefing Thursday about the legislation and the plans for repaying the money.

The loan would allow construction to proceed in 2015, while state officials look for a larger bond offering that involves other state projects.

http://www.capijournal.com/politics/movie-about-bison-is-planned-as-new-csp-attraction/article_0a800b5c-9d44-11e4-8544-e3dadcef34b9.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Report: Why Brands Should Stop Using the Term 'Natural'

(From Food Dive.com)

- Because the U.S. Food and Drug Administration still hasn't issued an official definition of "natural," consumers have different understandings of what the term means. To avoid confusion, food manufacturers shouldn't use the term in their marketing, according to a trend insight report from flavor manufacturer FONA International.
- FONA found that new product launches making "all-natural claims" have fallen by 51% during the past five years, reflecting a growing level of consumer skepticism.
- The flavor company added that its recent consumer survey found 40% of respondents don't trust a "natural" claim on a food label, and 45% read labels to decide whether the natural claim fits their personal definition of what "natural" means. Nearly 48% prefer that food firms no longer use the term, and shift instead to claims such as "no preservatives" or others citing just one attribute of a product.

Dive Insight:

FONA said that companies have been turning away from "all-natural" claims in new product launches in the top 20 food and beverage categories in order to avoid legal tangles. There have been some expensive missteps in this area. In 2014, General Mills settled a lawsuit over use of the phrase "all-natural" on some of its Nature Valley products. The agreement prevents the company from describing products that contain high fructose corn syrup or maltodextrin as "natural."

In 2015, Diamond Foods settled a lawsuit by agreeing to compensate consumers who bought Kettle Brand products that contained a "natural" or similar label in the U.S. between Jan. 3, 2010, and Feb. 24, 2015.

Despite the amorphous nature of the term "natural," consumers seem to have an intuitive feel for what it means. According to a recent online survey of 5,175 people from 10 countries by GNT Group, respondents said that in order to be considered "natural," food products must be free from preservatives as well as artificial colors, flavors and sweeteners.

<https://www.fooddive.com/news/report-why-brands-should-stop-using-the-term-natural/515626/>

Bison Meat Offers a Healthier Alternative to Beef

(From the Sioux City Journal)

Maurice Poe is a big believer in the benefits of buffalo.

"I think it's healthier than beef plus it just tastes better," the South Sioux City man said while grabbing some buffalo burgers from a freezer case. "Once you try buffalo, you're hooked."

Buffalo, also commonly referred to as bison, is one of the leanest red meats around. One Stop Meat Shop's Ron Muth has been selling the specialty steaks and burgers for more than 16 years.

"When I first opened up shop, it was hard getting people to even try buffalo," he said at his 519 Fourth St. store. "Nowadays, customers are more knowledgeable about what they put into their bodies and willing to be more open minded."

Just how healthy is bison meat? According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it's a nutrient dense food because of how its proportion of protein, fats and minerals are stacked against its caloric value.

The USDA said bison has significantly less fat, calories and cholesterol and significantly higher amounts of protein, iron and vitamin B-12 than beef, pork and chicken.

Not only that, bison is chock-full of Omega-3, which can protect your heart, promote cardiovascular function, lower blood pressure and keep you from getting sick since it contains anti-inflammatory elements.

The reason for bison's high nutritional value comes from how they are raised, Muth said. "Bison are grass-fed and grass-finished their entire lives," he said. "That means their meat isn't subject to chemicals, hormones or anything like that."

Instead, bison is produced like other meats were produced more than 70 years ago.

Full Story: http://siouxcityjournal.com/lifestyles/food-and-cooking/bison-meat-offers-a-healthier-alternative-to-beef/article_54a4ff5a-d8c4-591e-82b3-66ace489c158.html