



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 3, 2017

Dakota Territory to Meet, Matheson to Represent NBA

Fresh off a very successful 20th anniversary event, the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association (DTBA) is preparing for their 21st annual winter conference and live animal auction in Rapid City, SD February 3-5. The membership meeting will be held at the Ramkota Hotel today and tomorrow, and the Live Animal Auction will take place on Sunday, February 5 at the Bridger Steel Pavilion at the Central States Fairgrounds.

Jim Matheson, assistant director of the National Bison Association, is scheduled to update the DTBA members on national marketplace and policy issues.

Working off the theme of "Restoring an Icon Through Profitable Ranching", the DTBA will be celebrating the recent naming of bison as the national mammal. There will be plenty of patriotic fare to celebrate this milestone, including red, white and blue decorations.

The conference kicks off this afternoon with a Welcoming Reception at Prairie Edge in downtown Rapid City. On Saturday, attendees will convene at the Ramkota for a day of learning and networking, with numerous industry leaders leading the discussions. The featured speaker for the day will be Dave Pratt with Ranch Management Consultants in Fairfield, California.

On Saturday evening, the awards banquet will take place, followed by the fun auction. Awards will be presented for individuals in the group as well as for our live animal classes, the Young Guns Yearling Breeding Bull Challenge, the Girlz Gone Wild Two-Year-Old Bred Heifer Challenge and the Cutting-Edge Carcass Contests for both bulls and heifers. Additionally, the Producer of the Year will be named, with ranches having to compete in both the challenge classes and at least one of the carcass classes to be eligible for the award.

On Sunday, the live animal auction will take place at the fairgrounds, with both live and online bidding available for interested buyers. The DTBA will be selling animals in the Young Guns and Girlz Gone Wild classes. Animals in these classes are among some of the best breeding stock in the nation and the averages on both classes have been the top or second to the top-class averages in the country the past few years.

Learn more at <http://www.dakotabuffalo.com/>

Have You Logged onto the New www.bisoncentral.com?

With the new and improved NBA website two weeks from its launch, most bugs have now been worked out and it's time for members to log in and update their membership directory listing as well as their buyer's guide listing.

You should have received an email from the NBA on January 18th with your new username and temporary password. Please follow this link, <https://bisoncentral.com/my-account/> and enter this username and temporary password. Please be sure to search your spam or junk folders in your email inbox if you did not see this email. If you did not receive the email, please email jim@bisoncentral.com to receive another one.

Once logged in, you'll see that your contact information has been pre-filled for you. Please take a few minutes to review your contact information and update as needed. You can also personalize your password if you'd like, or keep the one provided to you. Your username cannot be changed.

Please go through your entire member profile and be sure to also check your privacy preferences for the Membership Directory and the Buyer's Guide, or create a new Buyer's Guide ad, as to appear on the website. Please note, the Membership Directory is set to show your information, which only other members can view, by default so please change this if you don't want to be listed in the directory.

Please contact the NBA with any questions by emailing jim@bisoncentral.com

Healthy eating trends increase demand for bison meat in Wisconsin

(From WQOW – ABC 18)

When we think of Wisconsin farmers, cows, corn, and other crops may come to mind. But healthy eating trends are creating an increasing demand for more bison producers in the area. Kyle Wathke, a bison producer just south of Eau Claire, represents one of about 2,600 private bison farms, according to the National Bison Association.

"Usually it is just smaller herds like this here around the area," Wathke said.

Wathke often has a helping hand from his daughter and stepdaughter. Emma Wathke, 6, said they normally feed the bison herd hay at night during the winter months. In the summer months, they typically have 30-40 acres of pasture for grazing.

"Usually if you keep their bellies happy, they are a pretty content animal," Kyle Wathke said. "They don't give me too many problems."

Wathke grew up in agriculture, but he bought bison on a whim.

"We started 17 years ago or so," Wathke said. "They had a sale just down the road at Equity Livestock Auction. I just went to check it out not intending to buy anything, but came home with two of them, and just started from there."

He now has about 33 bison in the herd.

"Every year, it keeps on getting a little bit bigger, and we try to make some improvements and stuff to the farm as we go along," Wathke said.

Read more. <http://www.wqow.com/story/34404961/healthy-eating-trends-increase-demand-for-bison-meat-in-wisconsin>

On Connecticut Farm, Visitors Enjoy Bison—in More Ways Than One *(From The Farm Bureau)*

When people in Brooklyn, Connecticut, heard about the Tanner family's five new bison, they had to see for themselves. As more people came from further away to check the bison out, Debbi Tanner realized her husband's elementary school dream of owning bison was an agri-tourism opportunity for the family.

The Tanners started with just five bison in 1990, but today their herd numbers nearly 100. In addition to cows and a few bulls used for breeding, there are several young bulls and heifers. When school groups or weekend visitors from the public come to Creamery Brook Bison farm, they're treated to a narrated wagon tour that strongly reflects Tanner's background as an educator.

As part of their visit, the younger children take turns making butter while the older kids crank out some ice cream. Birthday parties also bring children to the farm by the dozens. In addition to the wagon ride and the butter- or ice cream-making, party guests may get a catered lunch of bison burgers, chips, soda and ice cream.

Early on, the Tanners were asked frequently whether they sold the highly nutritional meat the animals provided, which prompted them to start selling bison meat sourced off the farm. The growth of their herd allows them to now offer a variety of bison meat options—from a bison Philly cheese steak to a tenderloin roast to sausage—from their own animals. The Creamery Brook Bison store is accessible online or on-farm (open Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. or by appointment). The Tanners also sell their meat at a handful of fairs and festivals.

While it's the bison people come to Creamery Brook Bison to enjoy—in more ways than one—the Tanner's farm is also home to a peacock, emu, pony and dairy cows.

This October, the Tanners hosted a "Walktober Event," during which visitors will take easy, guided 1/2 mile walks through the bison field and the handling facilities and finish with a sample of bison wild rice and barley soup. Throughout the fall, the Tanners also offer a pumpkin patch and pumpkin decorating. On various weekends, farm visitors can have a bison burger lunch with ice cream for dessert.

Debbi Tanner is a member of the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee. In addition, she serves as chair of the Connecticut Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee.

Read more. <http://www.fb.org/news/on-connecticut-farm-visitors-enjoy-bison-in-more-ways-than-one>

Simple slow-cooker recipes for bison chili, pulled pork, and more

(From The Boston Globe)

Low and slow is the way to tenderize tougher meats, and that slow cooker you haul out only for holiday buffets is actually the perfect kitchen tool for the job. Without a flame, you can slowly braise the meat, even while at work. Sear (and then refrigerate) the meat the night before to cut down on prep time in the morning. All these recipes make a large batch to ensure leftovers, since they taste even better the second day.

BISON-CHIPOTLE CHILI

Serves 8-10

Many grocery stores now carry ground bison, but you may have to go to a Middle Eastern or specialty store for the pomegranate molasses.

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 pounds ground bison meat
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 28-ounce can kidney beans, drained
- 2

Read more. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2017/01/27/simple-slow-cooker-recipes-for-bison-chili-pulled-pork-and-more/y3aP9M8lQeOv2KJzsDYrPO/story.html>

N.O. Saints' Tim Hightower's bison meatball recipe

(From NOLA.com)

New Orleans Saints player Tim Hightower and his wife, Rikki, love to cook together. They also are working to ensure that they and their young children eat healthful food.

This recipe for meatballs made from buffalo does contain bacon, but the rest of the recipes features lean protein, soy and other good-for-you foods.

Bison is tender, so do not overcook the meatballs or they could crumble. (If you do overcook, or if you have leftovers, cook up some egg noodles and scoop them atop. Delicious.) The ghee, or clarified butter, adds a bit of fat and flavor to the lean bison meat, giving it moisture.

For the gravy, the Hightowers recommend adding onion and garlic to taste. "Because we love caramelized onions, we go for it full throttle," Tim Hightower said.

Seasoning can be adjusted to taste. Rikki Hightower said she sometimes adds a bit of chili powder as well.

See the recipe at http://www.nola.com/food/index.ssf/2017/01/no_saints_meatball_recipe.html

Wood Bison Shot Illegally in Western Alaska Considered Setback for Project

(From KTVA TV, Anchorage)

ANCHORAGE – The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is calling the death of a wood bison in western Alaska a setback for a wildlife restoration project.

Fish and Game was notified last week that the bison — a five-year-old cow known by her number, 124 — had been shot and killed illegally near the village of Quinhagak.

According to biologist Tom Seaton, head of the bison project, 124 was one of 130 bison that were delivered from the [Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center](#) in Portage [to the village of Shageluk in the spring of 2015](#). Seaton said 124 quickly struck out on her own, traveling mostly south to villages along the Yukon River then to the Kuskokwim. He said she logged at least 600 miles along the way.

Seaton said biologists were hoping 124 would eventually encourage other bison to go with her and split off from the main herd, enlarging the animals' range.

"It's definitely a setback for that part of the range," Seaton said. "Because we had an animal that knew that part of the range and could have started populations in that area, but now we don't." Alaska Wildlife Troopers have identified the shooter as 25-year-old Benjamin Moore, of Quinhagak. If convicted he could face a maximum penalty of a year in jail and a \$20,000 fine.

See video coverage at: <http://www.ktva.com/reintroduced-wood-bison-shot-killed-near-southwest-alaska-village-532/>

Aboriginal Leaders Bless Bison Bound for Banff

(From Postmedia, Canada Network)

Aboriginal songs, drumming and prayers honoured a herd of Elk Island National Park bison Sunday being shipped to Banff to reintroduce the long-missing species back into the mountains.

"We're handing them off ceremonially, and those blessings will go with them," said Samson Cree Nation Chief Kurt Buffalo, who took part in the event at the park 50 kilometres east of Edmonton.

"Mother Earth hasn't heard those buffalo footsteps in Banff for a long time. It's about restoring a balance."

Plains bison roamed along the Eastern Slopes of the Rockies for thousands of years until they were eliminated by hunting in the mid-1800s.

Parks Canada has been working for years with First Nations to bring the animals back to Banff for spiritual, cultural and ecological reasons.

Now the 16 bison, mostly young, pregnant females, are about to leave Elk Island for their new home.

They'll be loaded into shipping containers next week and hauled by flatbed truck to the end of a gravel road in Banff National Park, where a helicopter will fly them 20 kilometres to a backcountry pasture, said Karsten Heuer, Parks Canada's manager for the \$6.5-million project. The bison will be held in the pasture for 16 months, enough time for them to have a second set of calves that will help tie them to the area before they're released in June 2018 into 1,200 square kilometres on the east side of the park.

Officials will monitor their progress for five years to ensure the herd remains a healthy size and doesn't wander on to adjoining provincial land or private property, where some owners fear they'll cause damage, Heuer said.

In future, it's possible First Nation members might again be allowed to hunt the animals on which they once depended for survival.

"We have full confidence that there's adequate habitat, enough to support them year-around," Heuer said.

"We're witnessing a tremendous amount of excitement among First Nations and Métis about the prospect of bringing bison back to Banff."

Elk Island, which has about 430 plains bison and 300 of the larger wood bison, has sent surplus animals to repopulate sections of their former grazing lands in Canada, the United States and Russia.

"Given the genetic diversity and long-standing disease-free status in Elk Island, this is the nursery herd for the world for bison conservation," park superintendent Dale Kirkland said. The Buffalo Treaty signed in 2014 by more than 20 Alberta, Saskatchewan and U.S. First Nations aims to bring back bison physically and as a symbol of their culture.

Buffalo, who said Samson is a treaty signatory, hopes the animals can start being restored to First Nations and other areas they once roamed within a couple of years.

"This is their natural environment and we have kind of displaced them ... Let's look collectively at how we can heal our people, Mother Earth and the environment."

Full story: <http://www.thecragandcanyon.ca/2017/02/01/aboriginal-leaders-bless-bison-bound-for-banff>

Deal Allows Yellowstone Bison Slaughter

(From ABC News)

A deal disclosed Thursday will allow the mass slaughter of hundreds of wild bison migrating from [Yellowstone National Park](#), while sparing 25 animals that American Indian tribes want to start new herds.

The Associated Press obtained details on the deal between [Montana](#), the park and the U.S. Department of Agriculture prior to its public disclosure.

It resulted from two weeks of intensive negotiations and removes a political obstacle for the park after Montana Gov. Steve Bullock on Jan. 19 temporarily blocked Yellowstone's plan to kill up to 1,300 of Yellowstone's 5,500 bison this winter.

The terms are likely to dampen public outcry by averting slaughter for most of a small group of bison that had been earmarked for a conservation effort intended at establishing new herds elsewhere.

Bullock lifted the slaughter ban in a Thursday letter to Yellowstone Superintendent Dan Wenk that outlined the agreement to spare the 25 bison.

"My intent in invoking the (ban) was to prevent the slaughter of these bison and preserve them for transport to Fort Peck (Indian Reservation)," Bullock wrote. "The parties have committed that these animals will be quarantined and safeguarded until they are ready for shipment."

Read more. <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/apnewsbreak-deal-yellowstone-bison-slaughter-45233199>