



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 24, 2017

NBA To Attend NDBA Meeting This Weekend

Members of the North Dakota Buffalo Association will be gathering this weekend in Bismarck to conduct their annual winter meeting, which was postponed in January due to the severe weather conditions at the time.

The official activities kick off at 2 p.m. at the Ramada Bismarck Hotel in Bismarck with a presentation from North Dakota State University, followed by a discussion with the State Board of Animal Health. The official annual meeting will be at 4 p.m.

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, will update the North Dakota association members on NBA activities during the evening dinner.

Wanted: Grassroots Bison Lobbyists

Your email in-basket this morning should have included a message from NBA Executive Director Dave Carter and Government Affairs Committee Chair Donnis Baggett encouraging you to enlist to be on-call to contact your Representative or Senators on issues important to the bison business.

Carter explained, "The email message sent out this morning contains the names of all of the Senators and Representatives who are on the Agriculture Committees and the Agricultural Appropriations subcommittees. We want to identify NBA members who have a representative and/or senator on those committees, and to create a database so that we can connect those members with their elected officials whenever key issues come up affecting bison."

NBA members are urged to look over the list, and to send an email to david@bisoncentral.com identifying their Representative and or Senator.

Carter also noted that members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees will soon start holding field hearings regarding the 2018 Farm Bill. "We will be working to see if we can schedule a hearing on a working bison ranch," Carter said.

A Thank You on the Checkoff Challenge Success

National Bison Association Past President Bruce Anderson, who coordinated the “Checkoff Challenge” fundraising effort at the January NBA winter conference, sends along this note of thanks and encouragement for the program:

What a great response we got at the Winter Conference for the checkoff challenge. For those of you that weren't there, a challenge was issued to the general membership to donate \$1,000 towards the checkoff fund. We were able to raise \$17,000 for the NBA with half of it going directly to further buffalo production and sales and the other half going into the general NBA budget. We need this money to keep our industry on this crest of success that we are all benefiting from. I feel that the NBA has been a huge part of our industry's success. We have a great product and a great association.

The checkoff fund is generated by animal volume. The shortage of volume (resulting in higher prices) has caused a bit of a shortfall in the checkoff budget. It was gratifying to see that membership “step up” and cover this shortfall. It was also very satisfying to see that membership was willing to share some of the success we are all experiencing with our association. It tells me we are doing a good job.

Finally, I would like to thank all who met the challenge. I had hoped that we could raise \$10k and we did way better than that raising nearly \$18k. We even had a few folks that didn't want to give \$1,000 that stepped up and gave less, but all the contributions were welcome. Also, anyone else who couldn't make the conference that would like to meet the challenge are welcome to send in whatever they can afford. All of us in the buffalo business are doing well. It is time for our association to truly benefit financially from our success.

Please send to

NBA
C/O Check Off Challenge
8690 Wolff Ct. #200
Westminster, CO
80031

Or email Barb@bisoncentral.com to be invoiced for a contribution, or call the office at 303-292-2833.

Get in Early for the IBC!

While checking your email in-basket, be sure to open the message on the International Bison Conference and peek at the great line-up of fund and education. Then, get on-line and register for the fifth-ever IBC at <https://bisoncentral.com/international-bison-conference/>.

Participation in the International Conference this year will be limited only by the lodging and meeting facilities at the Big Sky Resort in Montana's beautiful Gallatin Valley.

"Big Sky is a beautiful location for this gathering of the international bison community, so it is critical that attendees register early to make sure that they are a part of the action, and to take

advantage of early-bird rates, which goes up on May 16th." said Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director.

An overview of the IBC agenda, and related activities, is also available on-line at www.ibc2017.com. Registration is \$325 for the first person and \$250 for additional registrants for members of NBA, Canadian Bison Association and Montana Bison Association.

Sponsorships for the conference are still open. To find out more about the sponsorship opportunities, contact NBA Executive Director Dave Carter at david@bisoncentral.com

*****disclaimer*****

Wanna Buy a Bison? Part of the I-70 Herd Is for Sale

(From The Denverite)

One of the only nice parts about traffic on Interstate 70 is that you might get a good, slow glimpse at the herd of furry beasts wandering the fields of Genesee Park.

If you want an even closer look, though, you could buy one to take home, assuming your home is on the range or in some other bison-appropriate place. The city of Denver on March 3 will auction off 23 of its young specimens from the Genesee Park herd and another herd near Sedalia to the highest bidders.

And, yes, some of them will probably get eaten.

Genesee Park was the first of Denver's "mountain parks" system. It has hosted American bison since 1913 or 1914, when the city first acquired bison from Yellowstone, reportedly as part of an effort protect the animals from extinction.

Since then, the species has recovered from near extinction. More than 500,000 today are part of livestock herds in North America, while another 30,000 are managed for conservation.

"They'll always have that genetics from Yellowstone. That's kind of like their building blocks," said Matt Brown, operations supervisor for Denver's herds.

Denver has been particularly successful with its herd lately. Back in 2014, the young bull Edson sired 20 calves, [as The Denver Post reported](#).

This will be the 32nd year the city has auctioned bison from the herd, according to Brown. "There is some attachment to these animals — just because we care for them so much. We take care of them from the day they hit the ground to the day we sell them," he said. "... And we would love to keep them all but unfortunately we don't have the acreage to keep them all."

Read more. <https://www.denverite.com/wanna-buy-bison-herd-70-sale-30105/>

Progress Made On Reducing Yellowstone Bison Herd

(From KSL.com)

BOZEMAN, Mont. (AP) — Wildlife managers estimate that more than 570 Yellowstone National Park bison have been killed so far this winter.

[The Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#) reports that the numbers show that bison managers are making progress on their goal to eliminate 1,300 bison from the Yellowstone herd. A 2000 management plan calls for a population of 3,000 bison in the region, but about 5,500 live there now.

A Yellowstone report says 179 bison have been [transferred to Native American tribes for slaughter](#) and 359 have been killed by hunters as of last Friday.

A Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks report on the bison hunt compiled last week shows a lower number of confirmed bison kills but says officials believe the total number of bison hunted and killed is already above 400.

The reduction in herds is in response to concerns by the livestock industry over a disease that can be carried by the animals, brucellosis. Since the 1980s, worry over brucellosis has prompted the killing of about 8,200 park bison, most of them sent to slaughter. In recent years, officials have tried to emphasize public hunts that occur just outside the park's boundaries.

Source. <http://www.ksl.com/?nid=157&sid=43259187>

Cody Game and Fish to Begin Collaring Elk for Brucellosis Study

(From Wyoming Public Media)

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will begin collaring elk in the Bighorn Mountains as part of a study on brucellosis, a disease found primarily in elk and bison that can spread to livestock and result in animals aborting their young.

Starting Saturday, the Cody Regional Office will attempt to capture and collar 52 elk in order to better understand the rate of exposure of the disease in the area and how it spreads. Each animal will have blood drawn, an ear tag put in place, and be fitted with a GPS collar. Last year the department collared 58 elk in the Bighorns, but many of the collars ended up being defective.

Brucellosis habitat biologist Eric Maichak said the data will help them figure out how best to manage the disease.

"It'll give us some idea of where does it occur right now, and then also how to potentially incorporate it into some of the models that can predict spatial spread of the disease," Maichak said.

Right now the Bighorn Mountains have a relatively low rate of exposure to brucellosis with less than one percent of elk. In certain feeding grounds in western Wyoming the prevalence of brucellosis is closer to 25 percent of animals.

Full text:

<http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/cody-game-and-fish-begin-collaring-elk-brucellosis-study>

Four Senators Ask Trump to Implement GAO Food Safety Recommendations

(From National Law Review)

Four democratic senators wrote President Donald J. Trump on February 13, the same day that the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report on federal oversight of food safety, asking that the Administration work with Congress to implement the recommendations in the report. The report is titled, *Food Safety A National Strategy Is Needed to Address Fragmentation in Federal Oversight*, and is dated January 2017.

The GAO report states that while FDA and FSIS have taken actions since 2014 to address fragmentation in the federal food safety oversight system, more needs to be done. GAO calls for a national strategy to identify short- and long-term actions to improve the food safety oversight system.

The four senators-Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY), Richard J. Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)-requested that efforts begin immediately to establish the recommended national strategy to address the shortcomings in food safety oversight. The letter also asks the Administration "to work with Congress to request any additional statutory authority or budgetary consideration that is required in order to enhance the implementation of the government performance plan."

The senators concluded by stating that if the Administration does not feel that their recommendations are justified, they would like "detailed responses from the appropriate agency and department authorities as to why the current food safety system is considered adequate to address the Nation's food safety needs."

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/jl5q7jw>

New Feed Directive Applies to All Farm Animals

(From AgriNews)

Just as many people make New Year's resolutions about dietary changes to improve health, so the veterinary world began this year with a health-oriented change to the diets of farm animals. This change, called the veterinary feed directive, took full effect starting Jan. 1.

"The veterinary feed directive is the result of a new set of federal rules that, for the first time, has veterinary oversight of antibiotics used in livestock feed," said Dr. Jim Lowe, associate professor and section head of the Integrated Food Animal Management Systems at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine in Urbana. "Now all feed containing medically important antibiotics must be approved and prescribed by a veterinarian."

"Producers with large herds have known that these new regulations were coming, so the change will not be a big shock for them," Lowe said.

However, people with hobby farms, kids with 4-H and FFA animals, or who keep farm animals as pets may be caught by surprise.

"Even people with a pet goat or pet pig, who will never slaughter their animal, must comply with these new standards," Lowe said. "For example, kids involved in 4-H will need a veterinarian's approval in order to buy medicated feeds for their calves or other animals."

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/hsg8eaq>

Montana Brucellosis Program Is Lacking, Audit Says

(From The Billings Gazette)

Changes have been recommended in two state programs that are meant to lessen the chances for cattle to be exposed to the disease brucellosis.

Monitoring of brucellosis testing compliance for livestock near Yellowstone National Park is "lacking in two key areas," according to a Montana Legislative Audit Division review.

The agency does not "systematically monitor whether or not brucellosis testing is occurring within" a 30-day window prior to sales "nor do they include information on brucellosis testing that should occur with the movement of (Designated Surveillance Area) livestock between in-state areas that are not within the DSA boundary."

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/zb4xe35>

Farm Bill Coalition Asks for No Cuts to Farm Bill Programs

(The Fence Post)

A broad alliance of hundreds of farm, conservation, nutrition and rural groups sent House and Senate Budget and Appropriations committee leaders a letter Feb. 21, urging them not to re-open the 2014 farm bill through the budget or appropriations process.

"The undersigned organizations, representing America's agriculture, nutrition, conservation, rural development, finance, forestry, energy, trade, local government, plant/animal health, agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine, labor, outdoor recreation, equipment manufacturing, cooperatives, hunters, anglers and crop insurance sectors, strongly urge you to reject calls for additional cuts to policies within the jurisdiction of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry or the House Committee on Agriculture," the letter says.

The signers also point out that the 2014 farm bill promised to save \$23 billion and that January 2017 baseline estimates from the Congressional Budget Office project that nutrition and crop insurance alone will spend nearly \$100 billion less, while mandatory federal spending outside the Agriculture Committees' jurisdiction has risen over the same time period.

The letter says the groups have started preparing for the 2018 farm bill.

Full text:

<http://www.thefencepost.com/news/farm-bill-coalition-asks-for-no-cuts-to-farm-bill-programs/>

Penn State Research Suggests New Vision for Future of Agriculture

Penn State research published in *Bioscience* suggests that world food production likely will need to increase between 25% and 70% to meet 2050 demand, rather than needing to double as is frequently posited. However, according to the researchers, review of recent trends in agriculture's environmental impacts shows that they are increasing and must drop dramatically to maintain clean water and stabilize the climate.

Mitch Hunter, doctoral student in agronomy in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, explains, "In the coming decades, agriculture will be called upon to both feed people and ensure a healthy environment," said Hunter. "Right now, the narrative in agriculture is really out of balance, with compelling goals for food production but no clear sense of the progress we need to make on the environment. To get the agriculture we want in 2050, we need quantitative targets for both food production and environmental impacts." The authors argue for research and policy efforts to help identify production methods that can meet growing global food demand while also hitting sustainability targets.

Read more. <http://news.psu.edu/story/452218/2017/02/22/widely-accepted-vision-agriculture-may-be-inaccurate-misleading>

Cropland Grazing Exchange Introduced in Minnesota

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture, NRCS, and Sustainable Farming Association have developed a website intended to match up livestock farmers with crop farmers who have forage to harvest. Incorporating livestock into a cropping rotation can benefit both the crop and livestock farmer in many ways, and the new website serves as a starting point for crop farmers and livestock producers to form partnerships which can benefit both parties.

The Cropland Grazing Exchange is a public, interactive map. Users with an account will have the option to contact other operators via a web-generated email address to begin a conversation. Templates for grazing agreements are provided to aid producer discussions.

Read more. <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/cge>

USDA Seeks Local Food Grant Reviewers

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is seeking reviewers to evaluate grant applications for the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP) and the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP). All interested agricultural professionals are invited to apply by March 20, 2017, to become a grant reviewer.

Reviewers will apply their knowledge and expertise to score the grant applications. FMLFPP reviewers are expected to have operational knowledge of local food direct-to-consumer marketing and background in agriculture, retail, or farm-to-table marketing. FSMIP reviewers can include individuals from the federal government, state universities and colleges, state departments of agriculture and other appropriate state agencies. Reviewers are expected to have general knowledge of agricultural marketing, applied economics or marketing experience for farmers and ranchers. Also, FSMIP reviewers should have specialized knowledge on topics such as food safety, consumer economics, foreign market development, labeling, post-harvest

handling and/or transportation. Non-federal reviewers for both programs will be compensated for their service.

Read more. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/press-release/usda-seeks-local-food-grant-reviewers>

Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund

The Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund provides direct assistance to veterans in their beginning years of farming or ranching. The Fund does not give money directly to the veteran, but rather to a third-party vendor for any items that make a critical difference in the launch of a young farm business.

Applicants must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, currently be on active-duty, or serving in the military reserve/National Guard. Applicants must be members of Farmer Veteran Coalition. In addition to monetary awards, the Fellowship provides support in the form of guidance in production, business planning, and marketing. Awards are also made in the form of a scholarship to study for a career in agriculture at a college, university or farm-training program.

Applications must be received by March 20, 2017.

Read more. <http://www.farmvetco.org/about-us/our-programs/farming-fellowship/>

Steakhouses are back, with a twist

(From meatingplace.com)

The steakhouse is back, according to the market research firm Packaged Facts, and chances are, the steak on your plate will come with a story.

Today's steakhouse menus increasingly feature grass-fed cattle, locally raised animals, heritage varieties, meat butchered and dry aged in-house, and dishes that stem from the whole animal, not just the premium cuts, according to the firm's new report, "2017 Forecast: Culinary Trend Tracking Series."

"The steakhouse is back and will capture our attention in 2017. Not that the classic restaurant style ever disappeared, but a renewal of the model is taking place in response to new sources of beef and new flavorful expressions of the concept that get chefs and diners excited," says David Sprinkle, research director, Packaged Facts.

Chefs and consumers both want their meat to taste delicious and to feel good about its consumption, too. This new breed of steakhouse broadcasts its mission to support local ranchers, factor in sustainability and animal welfare, and create a dining experience that showcases culinary flair, not just a grill master's skill at cooking steak to the requested doneness. These operations are also designed to be more inclusive, more of a place for all kinds of people to dine well, not just tradition-minded men on expense accounts.

As a result, the modern steakhouse is increasingly similar to other modern restaurants with a focus on distinctive and sustainable sourcing, local and seasonal produce, and global flavors and forms, all done within the steakhouse format showcasing cuts of meat as entrées with a

choice of sides. Moreover, new menu categories (such as flatbreads) and service elements freshen the concept.

Additional information about the report is available [here](#).