



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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March 3, 2017

U.S. Bison Sales Hit \$350 Million in Retail, Restaurant Sales

(NBA News Release)

The U.S. bison business has notched \$350 million in sales at the retail and restaurant level in 2016, with tight supplies of market-ready animals limiting additional growth in the business, according to information compiled by the National Bison Association this week.

The analysis released this week was based on the association's latest *Economic Size of the U.S. Bison Business* model, along with its most recent survey of commercial bison marketers in the United States and Canada.

According to the association's model, the bison business grew from \$340 million in sales in 2016 to \$350 million in sales last year. That increase, though, was due almost entirely to additional prices for bison meat, rather than from increased production. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 61,300 bison were processed under federal and state inspection last year, which was only 1,000 more than were processed the previous year.

Meanwhile, 85 percent of the marketers responding to the association's latest survey in November reported that they were unable to fill all their customers' orders, with the majority of marketers saying they could sell at least 15 percent more product at the current prices if supply was available.

"The bison market is enjoying strong stability and profitability, with growth projected to continue as long as we can expand herds across the country," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. "Our primary focus today is reaching out to producers to build the herds of bison across the country."

"The growing popularity of bison meat is providing a strong, stable foundation for our business," Carter said. "Bison today is perhaps the strongest growth area in American agriculture, and a growth area that is bringing back our National Mammal to more of its historic rangelands and pastures."

The National Bison Association is actively reaching out to prospective producers, agricultural lenders, and others with a series of comprehensive resources to encourage new entrants into the bison ranching and marketing business. Information on those resources is available at www.bisoncentral.com.

The National Bison Association has regularly surveyed major commercial marketers since 2011 to gauge issues that are impacting the bison business in the marketplace. The participants in the survey represent more than 85 percent of the bison meat sold in the United States.

The association's assessment of the economic size of the bison business is based on a model using U.S. Department of Agriculture data, along with information provided by the major marketers.

IBC Trade Show Booths Now Available

We're pleased to announce the 2017 International Bison Conference (IBC) Trades Show, this July 5th and 6th in beautiful Big Sky, Montana!

The IBC only occurs once every five years, switching the border between Canada and the US intermittently, and celebrates the international effort to continue to restore this magnificent species. This results in a highly anticipated event in the buffalo world with consistently great attendance. We expect between 500 - 600 attendees at this summer's event.

The IBC runs from Tuesday, July 4th to Saturday, July 8th, but we'll only be at the Big Sky conference center on the 5th and 6th. If you are interested in attending the other days, we have single day passes available for \$150/day which includes all meals on that day. The conference features internationally renowned speakers, great side trips - including the 320 Guest Ranch on July 4th, Ted Turner's amazing Flying D bison ranch on July 7th and a bus tour of Yellowstone National Park on Saturday, July 8th.

Booth fees are \$300 for the two-day event which includes all meals provided on that day and an 8' table booth space is provided for you. Please note, the booth space is approximately 8' x 3', including an 8' skirted table. Please plan accordingly and have respect for your neighbors.

We'll have approximately 20 booth spaces in the lower level of the Yellowstone Conference Center, where most presentations will be held, and an additional 20 spaces available just upstairs, where other presentations will take place. All booth spaces are offered on a first come, first serve basis.

Reserve your booth space and single day registrations [here](#).

See all the details; lodging options, agenda, etc., of the conference [here](#), or scroll down this email to view.

Pre-register for IBC by May 15th and Save

NBA members are reminded to take advantage of the Early Bird discounts available for registering for the International Bison conference at <https://bisoncentral.com/2017-international-bison-conference-registration-form/>.

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.

NBA Begins Developing Farm Bill Priorities

As the leaders of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees convene their initial hearings on the next farm bill, the National Bison Association is developing a targeted list of priorities to urge lawmakers to assure that federal policies will continue to foster growth and profitability in the buffalo business.

"The debates over the big-ticket items like commodity supports, crop insurance and nutrition programs tend to dominate the discussion during the development of Farm Bills," said Dave Carter, executive director of the national Bison Association. "However, the 2014 Farm Bill contained several key provisions to support the development of alternative agriculture initiatives like bison production. We want to encourage lawmakers to build on those successful initiatives.

Carter said that the NBA recommendations would focus on the following key areas:

- Providing financial and other resources for young and beginning producers;
- Assuring that bison producers continue to have access to key programs such as livestock disaster assistance and Environmental Quality Incentive Program.
- Target agricultural research resources to addressing bison herd health issues;
- Assuring that marketers have access to funding to promote bison meat sales overseas;
- Continuing to support farms' markets and other direct marketing initiatives; and
- Expanding the ability for Risk Management Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other agencies to partner with nonprofit organizations, educational institutions and other entities to develop new resources for alternative agricultural producers.

Trump Sets WOTUS Repeal in Motion

(From Meatingplace.com)

Much to the delight of most agriculture industries, President Trump signed an executive order on Tuesday that kicked off the process of revisiting the controversial Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, with an eye on dismantling it altogether.

WOTUS, an Obama-era regulation, expanded the definition of the types of water features that fell under federal jurisdiction. Farmers and livestock operations complained that it made them responsible for fertilizer or manure run-off into incidental streams and puddles that they could not possibly control.

Trump's order simply instructs the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider whether federal jurisdiction extends to non-navigable streams. It is the first step in a lengthy process of repeal, as the rule was finalized in 2015.

The Waters of the U.S. rule, however, has been blocked by a federal appeals court and has not gone into effect. The executive order [reportedly](#) also asks the Justice Department to put that legal appeal on hold while the administration reconsiders the rule.

In response, the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) said in a news release that it "applauds an executive order issued today."

"America's pork producers are very pleased that the president ordered EPA and the Corps of Engineers to repeal or rewrite this ill-conceived, overbroad regulation," said NPPC President John Weber, a pork producer from Dysart, Iowa. "The WOTUS rule was a dramatic government overreach and an unprecedented expansion of federal jurisdiction and control over private lands.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association echoed the sentiment. Organization president Craig Uden said in a news release that, "This extremely flawed rule would force ranchers and feedlot operators to get permits or risk excessive federal penalties despite being miles away from any navigable water. It would be one of the largest federal land grabs and private-property infringements in American history, and the President should be applauded for making EPA and the Corps reconsider."

Bison Settled In, Multiplying in Home Near Hugh Butler Lake

(From the McCook Gazette)

Darrell Meister and Randy Woitaszewski are expecting babies in May.

Seven of them, actually.

The seven new bison calves will carry on Darrell's dreams of building his own herd of American bison and perpetuating the legacy of magnificent bison on the Golden Plains.

Darrell, of Honolulu, Hawaii, and Randy, his local manager, released the first seven bison to native grass pastures near Hugh Butler Lake north of McCook on April 22, 2016. The bison -- one bull, one heifer and five cows -- stood expectantly inside the oilfield-tubing corral that had confined them for six weeks, sniffed at the grass just outside the open gate, and then bolted across the canyon and up the west bank of their new pasture.

The heifer and cows came from Jerry Kautz of rural Culbertson, and the young bull came from the Sandhill Crane Trust at Wood River.

Darrell reported in mid-May last year that the bison were settling into their new pasture quite well, establishing routines of eating, resting and drinking. After Darrell returned to Hawaii, Randy checked daily on the herd.

Going into the summer, Darrell said that the animals seemed very content. "They tend to graze three to four times a day for an hour or so and then they rest for two to three hours, with a visit to the water tank after grazing." he said.

This winter, Darrell said, the colder the weather, the better the bison like it.

The 160 acres that Meister purchased are encircled by seven strands of barbed wire, three of which can be electrified. Inner pastures are divided by three-wire electric fencing. Darrell said the bison "respect the three-wire high tensile fence faithfully."

Darrell had native grasses and forbs seeded into two former wheat fields along Highway 83 in January 2016, and the herd of bison will have access to that new pasture when it becomes established after two to three years. Darrell also planted trees and shrubs along a trail that borders the newly-seeded fields, and native wildflowers and ornamental corn and pumpkins under a sign in the southeast corner of the pasture along Highway 83 and the lake road.

Eighty-five acres of corn stubble nearby became winter grazing for the bison. Darrell said Randy supplements with range cubes, mineral blocks and alfalfa, and giving the herd free choice of switch grass. They plan to graze milo on that area next winter.

Before returning to his adopted home of Honolulu, Hawaii, in late April 2016, Darrell put up additional fencing to allow the bison to graze the grass in a small ravine right next to Highway 83.

Darrell said at that time, "I hope that folks traveling along Highway 83 or going into Hugh Butler Reservoir this summer can enjoy seeing the bison graze in the natural similar setting that the first European migrants experienced in the late 1700 - 1800's."

Full story: <http://www.mccookgazette.com/story/2391231.html>

Bison Cull in Yellowstone Nearing 1,000 on the Year

(From The Bozeman, Daily Chronicle)

A truck backed a trailer up to a loading chute as the sun crept over the Absaroka Range here Wednesday at this set of corrals just inside the northern edge of Yellowstone National Park.

Hooves plodded through an alleyway toward the trailer. A park ranger standing on a catwalk above the alleyway counted the individual units of Yellowstone's population of the country's national mammal as each entered the trailer. When the trailer filled, a representative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service placed locks on the trailer doors, a legal requirement and symbol that the trucks could travel on Montana's roads.

This routine played out three times, and when the final trailer was loaded and sealed, the trucks took off. Another 45 Yellowstone bison off to slaughterhouses, where they'll become meat for

various Native American tribes. But that wasn't the end of the day for the workers here — there were another 60 or so to prepare for shipment.

It was just another day at the park's Stephens Creek Capture Facility, where bison are caught for slaughter each year. Park officials brought a group of bison advocates here Wednesday to watch. This season has been busier than the last, as harsh winter conditions have pushed more bison downhill from Mammoth Hot Springs than in recent years. The number of bison killed is approaching 1,000.

"And the winter's not over," said Rick Wallen, a Yellowstone bison biologist.

This all happens because of an agreement between the state of Montana and the park that calls for a population of 3,000 bison in the Yellowstone area. About 5,500 live there now. Officials want to remove as many as 1,400 from the population this year.

They cull the herd through public hunting and shipping bison to slaughter. Whether enough bison can be killed to reach the goal depends on how many bison migrate into the Gardiner basin — where the trap is and one place where they can be legally hunted.

Read more. http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/bison-cull-in-yellowstone-nearing-on-the-year/article_1cd19d8a-570e-5683-bd01-b9a2a658dcc2.html

How Scientists Brought Bison Back to Banff

(From PBS NewsHour)

Now to our NewsHour Shares, something that caught our eye, that might be of interest to you, too.

More than a century after they disappeared, bison have been reintroduced to Canada's oldest national park. The operation took a decade of planning, but went off without a hitch earlier this month.

We reached out to the man in charge for insights on the project and where it goes from here. **KARSTEN HEUER**, Banff National Park: My name is KarstenHeuer. And I am the bison reintroduction project manager for Banff National Park.

Banff is Canada's first national park. It's a very mountainous, rugged landscape. You know, it has glaciers and spectacular peaks, not unlike Glacier National Park in the U.S.

So, bison, plains bison particularly, were here over 140 years ago, before they went locally extinct, at the same time as bison went extinct across the Great Plains. And, obviously, with one big major player, Canada's largest land mammal missing, we wanted to try to restore that animal onto the landscape.

Our seed herd was from Elk Island National Park. There's 400 animals there, in a plains bison herd. They are probably the most genetically pure plains bison after Yellowstone in terms of their wildness.

We targeted 16 animals, the vast majority of which are young females, all of whom are pregnant, and then we brought in six young bulls as well. And so we have a breeding herd, because we have been told the single most important thing you can do to really make those animals anchor to their new home is to have them calve there successfully.

One of the logistical constraints we had to overcome in this translocation from Elk Island to Banff was the fact that there is no road access into the backcountry of Banff National Park. Where we are staging this reintroduction, we could get fairly close with vehicles, you know, within 20 miles, but we couldn't get right into the reintroduction zone.

So we opted to do some modifications on 10-foot-long shipping containers. They could be plucked off the back of these trucks one at a time and then flown into the backcountry. And that flight was new for everybody, the bison and us.

So, we had to do things like develop a parachute system with a helicopter company that would drag behind the containers and prevent them from spinning while they were in the air. And then the helicopters left, and it was nice and quiet and settled, and not a lot going on, and then the containers were all opened.

Read more. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/scientists-brought-bison-back-banff/>

Senate Ag Committee Holds First Farm Bill Field Hearing in Kansas

(From WNAX Radio)

The Senate Agriculture Committee hosted its first farm bill field hearing yesterday at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. The hearing featured farmer panels giving input on what they feel needs to happen with the next farm bill. Members consistently told lawmakers farm bill funding levels need maintained, or even increased, after the 2014 farm bill featured \$23 billion worth of funding cuts. Before the panel testimony got underway, Committee Chairman, Kansas Republican Senator Pat Roberts laid the groundwork for the next farm bill.

Ranking Democrat on the committee, Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow, says it's time to address the needs of farmers and ranchers. She points out that the current farm bill has a total estimated savings of nearly \$100 billion, but those savings cannot be transferred into funding in the next farm bill.

More field hearings are on the schedule and Roberts says the committee also has an email form online to gather input from farmers and ranchers on farm bill programs and considerations for the next farm bill.

The committee will hold its second farm bill field hearing in Michigan.

Source: <http://wnax.com/news/180081-senate-ag-committee-holds-first-farm-bill-field-hearing-in-kansas/>

Minnesota State Parks Get 2 New Campgrounds, New Chance to See Bison

(From Minn. Public Radio)

New campgrounds, a new water trail and a new chance to see bison are coming to the Minnesota State Parks and Trails system this year.

The [Department of Natural Resources](#) says two new campgrounds will open this summer at the Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine State Park in northeastern Minnesota and Whitewater State Park in the southeast.

A yearling bull has joined the bison herd at Minneopa State Park in south-central Minnesota. The animals can often be seen on a two-mile drive through the park's new bison range. For paddlers, the new 20-mile Shell Rock River State Water Trail begins at Fountain Lake in south-central Minnesota.

Minnesota state park visits hit a record 10 million in 2016. Gov. Mark Dayton's budget includes fee increases to help maintain the system.

Source: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/03/02/minnesota-state-parks-get-2-new-campgrounds-for-2017>

State COOL Legislation Fails in South Dakota

(From NAFB/Tri-State Livestock News)

The South Dakota legislature has stopped a move to require country-of-origin labeling on beef sold within the state.

Only 13 senators voted in favor of rewriting the state's COOL law, according to online publication Meatingplace. While those in favor of the law say consumers have the right to know, voters against the bill say federal regulations would supersede an amended South Dakota law. South Dakota's State Cattlemen's Association also said the measure would not be enforceable. The U.S. repealed COOL in December 2015 after Canada and Mexico convinced the World Trade Organization that the rule was discriminatory and violated international trade laws.

The South Dakota Stock Growers Association supported the measure, along with the South Dakota Farmers Union.

While the original bill called for an actual label, some organizations worried that this would violated federal rules for meat labeling that require federal labeling to pre-empt state labeling so the Senate State Affairs committee amended the bill to require a placard in grocery stores' meat coolers or shelves rather than individual labels on meat.

Full text:

<http://kticradio.com/agricultural/218390/>

USDA Makes A 10-Year Guess

(AgWeek.com)

If you're interested in agriculture -- and enjoy big-picture, long-range projections -- the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a report for you.

USDA has released its 10-year projections for the food and agriculture sector, covering major ag commodities, ag trade, and indicators of the U.S. farm sector, such as farm income. Among the conclusions of the report:

- Lower crop prices results in decline in planted acres.
- Lower feed costs encourage expansion in the livestock sector.
- "Steady world economic growth and continued global demand for biofuel" will help to support longer-run increases in consumption, trade and prices of ag products.
- A strong U.S. dollar will "constrain growth in U.S. agricultural exports somewhat, (but) the United States remains competitive in global ag markets and export values grow over the next 10 years."
- Net cash farm income and net farm income continue to fall from recent record highs before increasing over the latter part of the 10-year projection period.

The full 106-page report -- which includes sections on the major crops and livestock raised in the Upper Midwest -- can be read at: www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/oce20171/oce-2017-1.pdf?v=42788.

Source:

<http://www.agweek.com/news/nation-and-world/4226374-usda-makes-10-year-guess>

Grazing Systems: What to Understand and What to Avoid

(From Farm Forum)

What a great February we've had! The ice fishing is just about done as I write this, but the snow geese are flying and it is always a great time to get outdoors in South Dakota. On a recent sunny Sunday afternoon, I took my three youngest kids antler hunting on a nearby farm. As we explored the fields, grasslands, and shelterbelts I was reminded how great it is just to be out in the grass with curious kids. By the end of the hike, all three had wet feet from breaking through the last bit of ice on a prairie marsh. With only one small antler as a trophy, their smiles and laughter were what made the day special.

As we walked and I watched them explore, it reminded me how valuable our grass resources are. So, to that end, I'm recycling an article I wrote at this time last year that provides some general guidance on what it means to have a healthy grazing 'system'. As we are getting closer to spring turnout, always remember that the job of the manager is to manage, cattle won't necessarily make sound decisions on their own. Pay attention to the land and the impacts the livestock are having by considering these points (taken from a talk given by Dr. Tim Steffens of Texas A&M at the 2016 Society for Range Management Meeting).

Regardless of where you are in the world, these principals hold true.

- Severe defoliation impacts plants. If too severe, too continuous, or too repetitive, a plant's root system will suffer. Plants need time to recover from grazing.
- Stocking rate determines grazing impacts. Even if the grazing manager understands the concepts behind take $\frac{1}{2}$, leave $\frac{1}{2}$, the grazing animal does not. Animals will graze more or less

than 50% on individual plants depending on many factors. So it is up to the manager to manage the grazing, not the animal.

- Timing of grazing is important. The worst timing or impact to the plant is removing the growth point. With timing of grazing, one must consider plant recovery time as well.
- Recovery period after grazing is important. Length of the necessary recovery period is dependent on timing of grazing and severity of the defoliation that occurred. Simply stated, a plant that is grazed hard needs more recovery time than a plant that is lightly grazed.
- Erratic periods of growth due to environmental conditions can cause plants to recover at variable rates. Recovery may be slower during periods of drought or extreme heat and faster during periods of adequate precipitation and mild temperatures. • Grazing animals do not use landscapes evenly. A 'landscape' can be a large or small pasture and animals will change their grazing habits based on exposure to heat, cold, wind, vegetation, topography, water, minerals, and other factors available in the grazing unit. These factors will impact how and when an animal grazes.
- To change an animal's grazing behavior, the manager has to impact how the animal uses the landscape or pasture. In simple terms, the manager must manage barriers (such as fences, steep topography, etc.) or opportunities (such as desirable forage, water, shade, etc.), or both.
- The ability of the grazing animal to meet its nutritional requirements depends on both the quantity and quality of the forage.
- Grazing intensity is a function of the interaction of available land, herd size, available forage, and grazing duration. A high density of animals on small paddocks doesn't necessarily equate to more 'intensity' as the impact is dependent on timing. A smaller herd on larger pastures over long periods can equate to more 'intense' grazing than a larger herd on a small paddock if the forage base of the large pasture is poor, even if the duration of grazing is relatively short.
- If the manager can achieve a state where the grazing animals utilize more of the land area or more of the vegetation, stocking rates can be increased. Higher stock densities can encourage more uniform use in some situations. Too high of stock density can negatively impact the vegetation, hurting both total production and recovery time.

Read more. <http://www.farmforum.net/2017/02/28/grazing-systems-what-to-understand-and-what-to-avoid/>

6 Weeks Later, Senators Question Delay on Agriculture Pick

(From the Minneapolis Star Tribune)

President Donald Trump picked former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue to be his agriculture secretary six weeks ago, but the administration still hasn't formally provided the Senate with the paperwork for the nomination.

The delay is frustrating farm-state senators, who represent many of the core voters responsible for helping elect Trump.

The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee needs the paperwork before the chairman, Sen. Pat Roberts, can schedule a confirmation hearing.

"I don't know yet," Roberts, R-Kan., said Wednesday when asked about Perdue's information. "I wish to hell I did. We need a champion for agriculture, we need him on board."

Roberts also complained about the delay at a committee hearing in Kansas last week. He predicted that Perdue would be confirmed quickly once the Senate can get started on the nomination.

The White House said the paperwork, including ethics forms and an FBI background check, is coming soon. The only other nomination that hasn't been sent to Capitol Hill is that of Alexander Acosta, who was nominated to be labor secretary on Feb. 16 after the withdrawal of the original nominee, Andrew Puzder.

Senators say they haven't been given an explanation for the delay involving Perdue.

"They don't seem to have a reason as to why his name hasn't come up," Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, told reporters after asking around about the Perdue nomination.

The delay comes as some farm-state lawmakers question whether Trump is paying enough attention to rural areas, which overwhelmingly voted for him.

After Trump's address to Congress on Tuesday night, Democratic Sens. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Jon Tester of Montana both noted that the president didn't specifically mention rural America in his hour-long speech. Both senators are up for re-election in 2018.

"There wasn't a mention of rural America, a farm bill, or agriculture workers, and these should be focuses for any leader of our country," Heitkamp said, noting that President Barack Obama often omitted farm country in his speeches to Congress as well.

"You wonder why people in rural America feel left out and feel disenfranchised? Because they never hear anything about them," she said.

Tester said lawmakers need to keep rural issues "front and center" for the new president, who is from New York City.

"The tendency is to go where you know, and I'm not sure he knows rural America very well, so it's just an opportunity to remind him that you've got to pay attention," Tester said.

Read more. <http://www.startribune.com/6-weeks-later-senators-question-delay-on-agriculture-pick/415184914/>

N.C. Senator's Aide Named Trump Special Assistant for Agriculture

(From AgriPulse)

Ray Starling, a key aide to Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, has been named to the senior staff of the National Economic Council where he'll serve as President Trump's special assistant for Agriculture, Trade and Food Assistance.

Starling has been serving as Tillis' chief of staff. He previously was the first term senator's general counsel and senior policy advisor. From 2012 to January 2015, he was general counsel to Tillis who was then Speaker of the House in the North Carolina Legislature. Before that he was general counsel to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

The White House also noted that Starling has private practice experience from several years at the Hunton & Williams law firm and has taught numerous agricultural and food law courses. After growing up on a Century Family Farm in southeast North Carolina, Starling received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Education from North Carolina State and a law degree from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Starling's appointment to the National Economic Council was one of [13 announced today](#) by NEC Director Gary Cohn.

"We have assembled a best-in-class team of policy advisors to drive President Trump's bold plan for job creation and economic growth," Cohn said in a release. "With their diverse backgrounds and deep knowledge of key policy issues, they will make significant contributions to the Nation."

Several agricultural organizations were quick to applaud Starling's appointment. National Pork Producers Council President John Weber, noting that Starling was filling a position left vacant for most of the Obama administration, called him a "true champion of American agriculture."

"President Trump is sending a clear signal of his commitment to reverse unnecessary regulations inhibiting pork producers and all U.S. farmers from doing what they do best: supplying the world with the most nutritious, affordable and abundant food available," Weber said.

The National Cotton Council also approved of the appointment. NCC Chairman Ronnie Lee said this is the first time in his memory that a president had filled this position so early in his administration.

"I believe this is a clear sign of President Trump's commitment to agriculture and rural America. We look forward to working with President Trump as we try to develop an effective and comprehensive safety net for cotton producers and as Congress develops a new farm bill."

Colin Woodall, senior vice president of government affairs with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said the appointment was "great news, not just for America's cattle producers, but for America's entire economy."

"In short, Ray Starling gets it," Woodall said. "He has a sharp understanding of how the economy works, and especially how the agricultural sector operates and benefits the citizens of every state in the nation, while also providing the world's safest and most prosperous food supply. This is an A-plus appointment, and we look forward to working with Ray and the rest of the president's team on behalf of the American beef industry."

Other Generations Catching up to Millennials in Online Grocery Shopping

(From FoodNavigatorUSA.com)

It's no news that digital purchases for groceries lag behind other industries, and while many industry analysts and polls suggest Millennials and urban dwellers to be the primary e-shoppers, Clavis Insight's data found that they aren't alone—the suburban working mom or homemaker, aged 35-54, has a greater tendency to browse and research online, "even when it comes to grocery categories."

"The typical 'online grocery shopper' is not restricted to young professionals...with older demographics (35-54yr olds) also heavily engaged – 84% of this age group shop online at least once a month," according to the report.

This shopper profile, which Clavis Insight nicknamed 'Price Conscious Caroline,' is one of the three general shoppers the company extracted from its survey (the other two are 'Mobile Millennial Melissa' and 'BestBuy Bob').

There were 500 respondents in the survey, conducted in August 2016, where 30% of respondents were aged between 18-34, 37% aged 35-54, and 33% above 55.

Weekly-shopping Millennials still dominate online

The Millennial group, generally used to describe the population born between 1982 – 1997, "will continue to dominate the 2017 online grocery landscape," the report said, adding that 62% of this age group in the US shops online weekly.

Retailers that Millennials frequent were Amazon (used by 81% of the respondents in this age group), Walmart (405), and Target (215). Additionally, the survey found that these shoppers are more likely to use mobile as their primary device for online shopping, driven by the breadth of choice/assortment, convenience, and presence of shopper ratings and reviews.

Less important to them was price, which contrasts the Generation X group. Also down the priority list was home delivery, with Millennial shoppers more likely to pick-up the order from a click and collect point on their way home from work, which means multiple and flexible fulfillment options are key, the report said.

Personalization, Mobility: What to expect in 2017

Based on the survey results, Clavis Insights forecasted that there are two very different core shopping missions between the two age groups (Millennials and Generation X) that are heavily engaged with the grocery category.

Millennials valued assortment and ratings and reviews, while the older group valued price and convenience. Therefore, retailers are encouraged to deliver an omnichannel shopping experience, the report said.

Additionally, the number of shoppers who use their phones as their primary shopping device will continue to increase (today, over 40% of 18-34-year-olds use smartphones as their primary online shopping device).