



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 8, 2019

NBA to Facilitate Bison Advantage Webinar to Educators and Lenders Tuesday

The National Bison Association on Tuesday will expand its outreach to Ag educators and lenders by conducting a one-hour webinar providing an overview of bison production and the economic fundamentals of the business.

“At both the FFA National Convention and the National Agricultural lenders Conference, we gathered the names and contact information of individuals who were interested in learning more about the business,” said Dave Carter, executive director of the NBA. “This information is designed to provide ag teachers with information to use in the class room, and to equip ag lenders with a better understanding in working with borrowers in the bison business.”

Carter will conduct the webinar via a Go-to-Meeting app.

“We are hoping this is the first in a series of such webinars to help us continue to build allies and advocates for bison,” he said.

Developer Selected for Bison Producer’s App – Coming Soon

The National Bison Association this week selected a developer to produce the forthcoming Bison Producer’s App, which will be offered to NBA members upon completion at a highly discounted rate.

HerdDogg, Inc., which some members may recognize from their presence at past NBA trade shows, was awarded the contract this week. From their proposal:

“The Producer’s Mobile app that we can offer National Bison Association members is based upon several years of acquired knowledge and product development in this specific domain: in-field animal technology and data management. The company’s patented technology was built to support animals and producers from within the field. HerdDogg’s animal data platform is comprised of smart tags & readers and mobile & web applications which have been entirely designed around tracking individual animal health and ID in the field.”

The project is being funded by a grant received by the NBA from the USDA Risk Management Agency through their risk management education partnership agreement that was awarded to the NBA in late 2018.

The Bison Producer's App will be the first market-ready bison-specific production and management app that users will be able to utilize on their smart phone or tablet critical herd health data, herd movements, and more. Further, HerdDogg, Inc. will be able to roll their smart tags and readers into the program, resulting in a very powerful tool to help protect and grow your herd. The NBA hopes to launch the app at this summer's Summer Conference in Bismarck, ND.

56,800 Bison Processed in 2018

The 56,800 bison processed under federal and state inspection during 2018 was the smallest number harvested since 2012, according to data from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The number of animals processed was 2.8 percent lower than in 2017, and was down 6.6 percent from the peak processing year in 2015.

The number of bison processed in non-federally inspected plants accounts for most of that drop. According to the NASS data, 51,000 bison were processed under federal inspection in 2018, and 5,800 head were harvested under non-federal inspection. The highest number of federally-inspected bison harvested was 52,600 in 2016. The highest number of bison processed under non-federal inspection was 10,600 head in 2013.

According to many bison processors, heavier carcass weights over the past two years have played a significant factor in the reduction of actual animals processed.

USDA to Initiate Effort to Open Mexico for U.S. Bison Meat

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) office in Mexico City has informed the National Bison Association that it is prepared to initiate the process to open that market for U.S. bison meat exports.

While live bison can be exported to Mexico, that market has been closed to U.S. produced bison meat.

USDA's FAS Mexican office informed the NBA today that it will be working with the appropriate Mexican agricultural authorities to establish an "HRZ" (known as an import requirements sheet) for bison meat exports to Mexico. That sheet would list the specific phytosanitary requirements for bison meat shipped into Mexico.

"Dave Carter, NBA executive director, said, This is a very positive development for our business. The NBA, and several of our marketers, have been contacted by companies in Mexico seeking U.S. bison meat. And, the Mexican consumers utilize a lot of cuts of meat that will help our marketers balance carcass utilization."

Carter noted that the process to finalize this market expansion will take several months.

Nearly 150 Years Later, The Buffalo Slaughter Hangs Over American Indian Wealth, Study Finds

(From The Star Tribune)

Eight years ago, an economist produced a new theory that international trade played a major role in an American tragedy: the immense killing in the late 19th century that brought the North American bison close to extinction.

The idea challenged the narrative that the slaughter of the bison, or buffalo, was mainly caused by the eagerness of American and European settlers to turn grasslands into farms and move American Indians off the land.

Donna Feir, an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis was a graduate student in Vancouver when the new theory emerged, and it still left a big question for her: "My first thought was what happened to the people that were relying on this animal?" she said

She and two colleagues at her Canadian teaching institution, the University of Victoria, recently published an answer that seems obvious on the surface, yet bold and provocative in its detail. The bison slaughter, they concluded, created so great a loss of wealth for the tribes that most relied on the animals, that it has lasted up until now.

Read more. <http://www.startribune.com/nearly-150-years-later-the-buffalo-slaughter-hangs-over-american-indian-wealth-study-finds/505905932/>

Yellowstone Bison Culling Under Way

(From National Parks Traveler)

Work began this week to reduce the number of bison in Yellowstone National Park's herds, though whether the target reduction of 600-900 animals will be attained is hard to predict.

Until February, winter was relatively mild in the park, and so there was no great push of animals to lower elevations in the Gardiner Basin of Montana just north of Yellowstone's boundary. On Wednesday the park culling operation began, with 23 animals captured and about 500 more north of Mammoth Hot Springs, according to park staff.

Each fall the Interagency Bison Management Plan, which is based on input from tribes, federal officials, and Montana officials, sets a rough number for reducing the park's herd. Late last summer the bison population was estimated at 4,500 animals, and in November the IBMP partners settled on the 600-900 reduction, explained Tim Reid, the park's bison program manager.

Read more. <https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2019/03/yellowstone-bison-culling-under-way>

Monarch Prime will serve dry-aged bison for one night only

(From The Omaha World Herald)

A new dinner limited to 20 seats at Monarch Prime will feature, for its debut, 75-day dry-aged bison.

Chef Patrick Micheels and chef de cuisine Drew Statz plan a new “Archive Dinner” series at the restaurant, 316 S. 15th St. The bison ribeye will be one of the main courses in a seven-course meal, paired with espresso, carrot and dill.

Tickets are available now for \$95 a diner before tax or tip. Wine pairings are available.

The dinner will take place March 29 at 7 p.m.; for more information, or to reserve a seat, call 402-933-7437.

Read more. https://www.omaha.com/omahadines/monarch-prime-will-serve-dry-aged-bison-for-one-night/article_db34cfc3-9acc-5c07-8ef9-0efba95f5177.html

Yellowstone Bison Capture And Slaughter Begins

(From Montana Public Radio)

The capture of hundreds of bison in Yellowstone National Park began Thursday as part of a continuing effort to manage the herd's population in the park. Park officials planned to capture 600 to 900 bison, which will be sent off to slaughter, this winter.

About 4,500 bison were counted this summer in Yellowstone. Most reside on the northern end of the park and migrate into Montana where they can be trapped for shipment to slaughter or hunted once they exit the park boundary.

The practice has drawn opposition. Some protesters have tried to interfere with the capture and slaughter by chaining themselves to chutes at the Stephens Creek holding pen where the captured bison are held, and others have broken into the holding pen to let captured bison escape.

Read more. <https://www.mtpr.org/post/yellowstone-bison-capture-and-slaughter-begins>

State Parks Worker Honored For Role In Bison Herding

(From The Jefferson City News Tribune)

A Missouri State Parks maintenance worker has been named State Employee of the Month for February.

Ron Jeffreys works at Prairie State Park in Dadeville. The park is home to a bison herd that ranges between 40-100 animals. Each year, staff from the Southwest Management Unit (Stockton State Park, Prairie State Park and Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site) are responsible for gathering the animals and working them through a corral system so a veterinarian can perform a health check and vaccinations.

According to Jeffreys' supervisor, Justin Adams, his staff is dealing with wild animals that can weigh upwards of 2,000 pounds, which can be a dangerous endeavor.

"In previous years, several staff members were required to get into the corral area with the animals to try and convince them to enter the runway area that leads to the sorting pens and ultimately the head chute," Adams said. "This is the most dangerous part of the operation, as the animals are unpredictable, can turn on a dime and are extremely quick."

Jeffreys has been involved with the bison roundup for the last 13 years and, according to Adams, "has provided a lot of helpful insight to make the operation as safe as possible."

Read more. <http://www.newstribune.com/news/local/story/2019/mar/10/state-parks-worker-honored-for-role-in-bison-herding/769248/>

Restaurant news: The Local Bison opens in downtown Tulsa

(From Tulsa World)

The Local Bison Kitchen & Bar has opened at 522 S. Boston Ave. in downtown Tulsa.

Owners Emily and Tony Galvez offer a menu that features a variety of burgers, soups, salads, flatbreads, entrees and sandwiches under the direction of executive chef Joey Guns.

Some highlights include jackfruit al pastor sandwich, achiote pork sandwich, bison burger, coconut corn chowder and Southern shrimp and grits.

The Local Bison, which faces Sixth Street across from Chapman Green, is part of The Meridia, a mixed-use development that also includes two other eateries — Poke Bowl Love and Boston Title & Abstract.

The Local Bison has full bar service and is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. The phone number is 918-561-6114.

Read more. https://www.tulsaworld.com/entertainment/dining/restaurant-news-the-local-bison-opens-in-downtown-tulsa/article_71fe376c-0d49-5be5-8793-8609735a549c.html

Revolving Loan Fund to Support Local Food Systems

Idea Foundry, a Pittsburgh-based economic development organization, has created a pilot revolving loan fund designed to support local entrepreneurs innovating around connecting consumers with local foods, reducing regional food insecurity, increasing on-farm sustainability, and increasing jobs in local farming.

The revolving loan fund pilot program is being supported with a grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation and will provide funds to as many as six businesses in year one. The loans will directly address the financial needs of food and agriculture startups and innovative regional farms required to generate profits that contribute back into both the loan fund and the local economy.

Read more. <https://attra.ncat.org/revolving-loan-fund-to-support-local-food-systems/>

NRCS Invites Public Comment on Conservation Practice Standards

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced that it is seeking public input on its 150-plus existing national conservation practice standards as part of implementing the 2018 Farm Bill. These standards provide guidelines for planning, designing, installing, operating, and maintaining conservation practices.

NRCS is requesting public comments on how to improve conservation practice standards that support programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program. The comment period ends April 25, 2019. Comments may be submitted online or by mail.

Read more.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1447828>

Environmental Quality Incentives Program in Texas

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas has announced the first funding application deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Applications are accepted year-round for NRCS programs, but deadlines are announced to rank and fund eligible conservation projects. EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers.

The first funding application deadline is March 15, 2019.

Read more.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/tx/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1441821>

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant Program

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin competitive grant program is designed to strengthen Wisconsin's agricultural and food industries by working to reduce the marketing, distribution, and processing hurdles that impede the expansion of sales of Wisconsin's food products to local purchasers.

A total of \$200,000 is available in grant funding each year through the program; the maximum award for each project is \$50,000, and grant applicants must provide a cash or in-kind match of at least 50% of the total project budget.

Generally, qualified applicants include individuals, groups or businesses involved in Wisconsin production agriculture, food processing, food distribution, food warehousing, retail food establishments, or agricultural tourism operations. Applications will be accepted until March 20, 2019.

Read more. <https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/BuyLocalBuyWisconsinGrants.aspx>

Lawmakers Reintroduce Bill To Reform ELD Rules For Agricultural Haulers

(From SafetyandHealthMagazine.com)

Washington - Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) have reintroduced bipartisan legislation that would require the secretary of transportation to create a working group to determine obstacles to safe operation for livestock, insect and agricultural haulers in an effort to reform federal hours-of-service and electronic logging device regulations.

Introduced Feb. 28, the Modernizing Agricultural Transportation Act (S. 600) would establish a group comprising representatives from the Department of Agriculture and those with expertise in the fields of highway safety; commercial motor vehicle transportation; animal husbandry; and livestock, insect and agricultural transportation.

Once formed, the group would - within one year - submit to the secretary a report outlining its findings as well as potential regulatory and legislative changes the group "identifies as necessary to protect the safety of highways and allow for the safe, efficient and productive marketplace transport of livestock, insects and agricultural commodities."

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y2ey9byb>

USDA Launches Youth and Agriculture Website

The U.S. Department of Agriculture joined the nation on March 14 in celebrating National Ag Day, which highlighted agriculture's crucial role in everyday life, and honors the farmers, foresters, scientists, producers, and many others who contribute to America's bountiful harvest. As part of this effort, the USDA announced the launch of a new **Youth and Agriculture website** to connect young people and youth-serving organizations with department-wide resources that engage, empower, and educate the next generation of agricultural leaders.

The USDA Youth and Agriculture website features three key components of agriculture-focused youth engagement — classroom studies, experiential learning, and leadership training. Educators can find ways to include agriculture in the classroom and beyond. Young people can learn about USDA summer outreach programs, youth loans for business projects, and outdoor volunteering. Community leaders can get tips on starting leadership development clubs and education programs. The site also highlights USDA partners, such as 4-H, the National FFA Organization, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences, Agriculture Future of America, and many others working with the Department to connect young people with opportunities in agriculture.

For the career curious, the **website** provides information on internships and scholarships, USDA employment, and information on agriculture career fields, such as forestry, robotics engineering, biochemistry, and food sciences. Storytelling will help young people learn from peers about youth-led innovations and success stories in agriculture.

USDA to Host Farm Bill Listening Session on Research, Education, and Economics

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area will host a listening session on Thursday, March 21, at USDA Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The purpose of the listening session is for REE to hear from stakeholders and other interested members of the public about the programs that are being implemented or revised by REE as required by the 2018 Farm Bill. REE consists of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Economic Research Service (ERS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS).

We invite you to participate in the listening session in-person or by submitting written comments to the *Federal Register* at (**link forthcoming; URL will be listed soon at <http://ree.usda.gov>**).

Please refer to the name of the ARS, ERS, NASS, NIFA, or OCS program in your comments and the relevant section number in the 2018 Farm Bill. In your oral or written comments, provide your input about program changes, and anything else that may be helpful to USDA.

LISTENING SESSION INFORMATION

- Pre-registration is required to attend the listening session.
- You must register by 5 p.m. EDT on March 20 to attend the listening session by emailing REElistens@usda.gov
- If you are attending the listening session there is an expectation that the organization you are representing will be presenting oral comments.
- Attendance is limited to three individuals per organization; all individuals must register, but all three are not required to speak.
- Individual speakers providing oral comments will be limited to 3–5 minutes each.
- In addition to presenting orally, you are encouraged, but not required to submit written comments to the *Federal Register* by 5 p.m. EDT March 29.

USDA ARS Study Finds Beef Producers Not Major Contributors To Climate Change

A new USDA Agricultural Research Service study finds greenhouse gas emissions from U.S. beef production and inputs are not “significant contributors” to climate change.

The [study](#), which began in 2013, measured the use of fuel, feed, forage, electricity, water, fertilizer and other inputs to raise beef cattle from birth to slaughter in seven major cattle-producing regions over five years.

The goal was to establish a baseline for the beef industry to measure any potential changes to the sector's environmental footprint and improve sustainability. ARS Agricultural Engineer Alan Rotz led the study and used data from 2,270 survey responses and site visits across the nation. "We found the greenhouse gas emissions in our analysis were not all that different from what other credible studies had shown and were not a significant contributor to long-term global warming," Rotz said in a release.

The results found:

- Total beef cattle production accounted for 3.3 percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. By comparison, transportation and electricity generation accounted for 56 percent while agriculture in total accounted for 9 percent.
- Fossil fuels used in cattle production accounted for less than 1 percent of total consumed nationally.
- Cattle consumed 2.6 pounds of grain per pound of beef, a figure comparable to pork and poultry figures.
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"The environmental footprint of producing beef has long been debated," Marlen Eve, ARS deputy administrator for natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems, said. "One challenge is the impacts extend beyond just those associated with growing the animals and include the impact of producing feed and other inputs."

The study noted water use and reactive nitrate losses could be improved. Water use in the West increased where beef cattle are concentrated. Reactive nitrate losses accounted for 15 percent of the U.S. total, in the form of ammonia, which could lead to public health concerns.

Rotz's team looked at reactive forms of nitrogen from manure and urine through the "Integrated Farm System Model" (IFSM). Over the next six months, ARS will combine IFSM data with postharvest data to provide a national assessment of the beef industry specifically looking at resource use, economics, net losses of GHG and other emissions.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association provided partial funding for the study.

USDA Whittles Down ERS, NIFA Relocation Possibilities

The Department of Agriculture has whittled down a list of locations still in the running to house USDA's Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Some 136 interested parties in 35 states initially hoped to be considered. Today's announcement brings that list down to 67 potential locations.

Relocating the two agencies has been a priority for Ag Secretary Sonny Perdue, who said such a move "allows us to be closer to our stakeholders and move our resources closer to consumers." But the plan has faced opposition from those worried a relocation would lessen the standing of ag research in government. The opposition includes several key House Democrats asked in yesterday's [White House budget proposal](#) to provide \$25 million for relocation costs.

The states with the most applications include Illinois (9), Virginia (8), Ohio (6), and Iowa (5). The department says the final decision will be made based upon factors like USDA travel requirements, labor force statistics, and work hours compatible with all USDA office schedules.

"The announcement of this middle list shows that we are committed to the important missions of these agencies and transparency in our selection process. USDA will make the best choice for our employees and customers," Perdue said.

To see the complete list of locations still in the running, click [here](#).

80% Ready To Buy ‘Regenerative’ Products, Says Consumer Survey

(From Sustainable Food News)

More than 80 percent of consumers are ready to buy products from companies delivering regenerative product solutions, according to a new study.

The study is based on a February survey of more than 1,500 adult shoppers of food, clothing, personal care, household goods, and technology, aimed at understanding what they know about “regenerative” principles.

The 2019 ReGenForTheNextGen consumer survey was conducted by [Whole Health Marketing](#), based in Sausalito, Calif., which said “a general population group and organic shoppers were selected via an online survey” in the United States.

“When we presented the principles of regenerative business, focusing on ‘doing good’ and ‘true accountability’ the consumers were overwhelmingly in favor of regenerative business as a complement to sustainability,” said Nils-Michael Langenborg, CEO of Whole Health Marketing. “When we took it even further to describe the benefits of regenerative agriculture, they embraced it with a vigor we haven’t seen before.”

The full report will be available for purchase on May 1.

Results of the survey will be presented at the [ReGenFriends Customer-Centric Business Summit](#) on March 21 in San Francisco.

Tyson Takes Next Step In Traceability

(From Food Business News)

DAKOTA DUNES, S.D. — Tyson Fresh Meats, the beef and pork subsidiary of Tyson Foods, Inc., is partnering with IdentiGEN to use DNA technology to trace beef back to the individual animal of origin. Tyson will use IdentiGEN’s DNA Traceback system to trace the cattle raised for Tyson’s Open Prairie Natural Angus Beef.

All cattle entering Tyson’s Open Prairie program will have a DNA sample taken that will be used to trace the origin of individual cuts of beef as they move through the supply chain, Tyson said. The DNA TraceBack process is intended to assure customers that the Open Prairie beef products they purchase are sourced from ranches where the cattle were raised to meet specific requirements, such as no antibiotics ever and no added hormones.

“We’re excited to partner with an industry leader like Tyson Fresh Meats,” said Kent Partida, vice-president of North American business development for IdentiGEN. “Our DNA TraceBack program is the most advanced meat traceability system available and uses nature’s barcode to link meat from the point of sale back to the source. It will enable retail and food service customers of Open Prairie beef to confidently share their traceability story with shoppers.”

The Open Prairie brand's product specifications — which are third-party verified — include no antibiotics, no added hormones, no artificial ingredients, 100% vegetarian diet, traceability to the birth ranch, Angus beef, U.S.D.A. Prime and Choice and rigorous animal welfare standards.

"This is about meeting growing demand for more transparency about how food is produced," said Kent Harrison, vice-president of marketing and premium programs at Tyson Fresh Meats. "Through DNA TraceBack, we're providing our retail and food service customers with scientific evidence that they're getting high-quality, natural beef from animals raised the way we promised."

IdentiGEN provides DNA identification solutions to the international agri-food industry. The company operates laboratories in the United States, Ireland, U.K. and Europe, with its North American headquarters in Lawrence, Kas.

Source: <https://www.foodbusinessnews.net/articles/13480-tyson-takes-next-step-in-traceability>

Agriculture Reacts To Proposed USDA Budget Cuts

(From the Capital Press)

President Trump's budget for 2020 includes cutting USDA's discretionary funding by 15% - \$3.6 billion - to \$20.8 billion.

It also requests a nearly \$2 billion decrease in mandatory funding for USDA's rural and agricultural programs and slashes \$17.4 billion in funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Trump's "skinny budget" goes even further to reduce all government spending by \$2.7 trillion over 10 years to rein in the \$1 trillion budget deficit and get a handle on the \$22 trillion national debt.

His 10-year budget plan would reduce spending on mandatory programs at USDA by \$61.3 billion by 2029 - including a \$26 billion cut to crop insurance - and an additional reduction in nutrition program spending of \$219.8 billion.

While the proposal is only a "wish list" and unlikely to garner congressional approval, it's enough to raise concern in farm country and on Capitol Hill.

In addition to reducing subsidies for crop insurance premiums and limiting crop insurance eligibility based on income, the proposal would limit eligibility for commodity program payments, reduce funding for conservation programs and government commodity purchases and eliminate the Livestock Forage Program.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y44yx6yy>