



## 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 17, 2017**

### **Bison Community Plans Historic Rendezvous in Montana in July**

*(NBA News Release)*

The largest gathering of the bison community in the past five years, scheduled July 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> in Big Sky, MT, is being slated as one-part celebration of the growth of the bison business, one part planning for future expansion, and one part rest and relaxation for the estimated 500 participants from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and around the world.

The fifth-ever International Bison Conference, set for July 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, will bring ranchers, researchers, tribal leaders, policymakers, culinary professionals and buffalo enthusiasts to Big Sky, MT for workshops, planning sessions, tours, recreational activities, musical entertainment, and more, according to Aaron Paulson, the Montana bison rancher who is heading the conference planning committee.

“We are excited to host this gathering of the international bison community,” Paulson said. “The theme, Big Skies, Bright Horizons, really sums up the state of the bison community as we prepare to gather this summer.”

The conference is scheduled to kick off July 4<sup>th</sup> with an all-American get-together at the historic 320 Ranch near Big Sky. Attendees will enjoy an old-fashioned chuck wagon, musical entertainment, and recreational activities during the day, before returning to Big Sky for fireworks.

Educational and informational sessions will dominate the morning schedules on July 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>. Keynote speakers each day include Dr. David Hughes of Imperial College in London, Dr. James Hurrell, director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and Laurie Demeritt, CEO of the Hartman Group research firm. Breakout sessions will cover the spectrum of herd health issues, bison meat marketing, and business expansion.

The Wednesday and Thursday sessions will be held at the Big Sky Resort, and attendees will head to Ted Turner’s Flying D Ranch nearby for the Friday events. On

Saturday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, an optional tour of Yellowstone National Park is available for those who want to spend a little extra time in the region.

Full conference details, including on-line registration, are available at [www.abc2017.com](http://www.abc2017.com). Early-bird registration rates apply through May 15<sup>th</sup>.

“The area around Big Sky is steeped in the history of bison, so it’s a fitting location for the International Bison Conference,” said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. “Great herds of bison shaped the landscape of this region and sustained the Native Americans for centuries. When bison perched on the brink of extinction in the late 1800’s, Yellowstone Park housed about 25 the surviving animals, while a handful of Montana ranchers gathered up remnants of the decimated herds to create the basis for the nearly 400,000 bison that now thrive in North America.”

“We have a lot to celebrate, and even brighter horizons ahead,” Carter said.

## **Film Festival and Poster Sessions Added to IBC Agenda**

An afternoon “Bison Film Festival” and poster session have been added to the July 6<sup>th</sup> agenda at the International Bison Conference, scheduled in Big Sky, MT.

“We’ve got a variety of events and activities for attendees, said Jim Matheson, assistant director of the National Bison Association. “There are a variety of recreational activities available around Big Sky, but for those who want to stay around the resort, we’ve scheduled an afternoon film festival and poster presentation.”

The film festival will feature a variety of bison-related documentaries that have been filmed over the past five years. The films will be shown in the on-site theater at the Big Sky Resort.

A nearby room will feature a series of posters covering current research topics related to bison herd health, nutrition, and other topics.

## **Bison Wholesale Prices Continue Upward March**

Wholesale prices for slaughter-ready bison continued upward in March, nosing the \$5/lb. mark for young bulls., according to the latest wholesale monthly price report released by the USDA’s Grain and Livestock Market News Service.

According to the USDA report, young bull carcasses brought \$499.58/cwt. in February, which was \$3.62 above the previous month, and \$57.32/cwt. above the prices in February 2016. Young heifer carcasses brought \$466.48/cwt. in February, which was up \$14.42/cwt. over the previous month and \$49.16 over the previous year. Older bull carcasses brought \$419.09/cwt. and older cows brought \$444.59/cwt.

The year-to-date slaughter of bison in USDA inspected facilities through the first two months of 2017 was 8,928, which is 600 animals lower than the comparable period in 2016, and the lowest

year-to-date slaughter level since 2012. And, heifers accounted for 58 percent of the younger animals processed during the first two months of 2017.

The full USDA price report is available at: [https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw\\_ls526.txt](https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw_ls526.txt)

The NBA's five-year price tracking report is available in the members' section at [www.bisoncentral.com](http://www.bisoncentral.com)

## **History on Display as Bison Exhibit Hits the Trail**

*(From the Ag Journal)*

In an era when people want food with story, bison rancher Ken Klemm is catering to their curiosity by sponsoring a traveling museum exhibit that puts the meat he produces into a rich cultural and historical context.

Before arriving at the High Plains Museum in Goodland, Kansas, the 1,200-square foot exhibit appeared at the National Bison Conference in Denver in January and is scheduled to move to museums in Iowa and Montana in the months to come.

Along with displaying artifacts and informational panels, the museum is also hosting a series of special events. The final session is set for Saturday, March 11, at 2 p.m., with historical accounts and storytelling by John Carson, the great-grandson of Kit Carson and a park ranger at Bent's Old Fort National Historical Site.

"So many people don't understand the history and how these animals literally built the soil we are standing on," Klemm said of his desire to host the exhibit. "I just thought it was a win-win to do this."

Ancient and enduring as the species is, it also fits well with contemporary trends in modern food and dining. It's naturally produced (bison apparently don't take well to artificial insemination), native to North America (rather than imported) and its production helps to enhance ecological and agricultural diversity.

"The trends supporting this industry haven't gone away, they've intensified. It's not a fad," Klemm said during an informational panel held at the museum. "You can't get more natural or sustainable than something that has been part of our eco-system for thousands of years," added Dave Carter, the executive director of the National Bison Association, based in Denver, who also participated at the event.

To highlight the goodwill the animals inspire, the two pointed out that when the bison was designated as the national mammal last spring, the vote by Congress was unanimous, transcending the political rancor in Washington D.C. "The neat thing is how it crosses lines," Klemm said, highlighting another recent case in which he was able to host a group of visitors from the Taos Pueblo to share his interest in sustainable ranching.

The bison story is vivid with survival and resurrection. In the late 1880s, they nearly died out, when reportedly fewer than 800 were left. That tragic arc also played out in the marketplace during the industry's dramatic boom and bust of the late 1990s. Klemm, who also runs grass-fed beef cattle in conjunction with his bison herd on a ranch north of town, said it was Allan Savory's

model of holistic management and an enduring belief in how bison fit the landscape that helped him weather the rollercoaster.

Kevin Rippe, an ag lender based at Atwood, Kansas, said now that the market has stabilized the "comfort level" for financing bison production has increased. "Ten years ago getting financing was more of a challenge than it is now," he said.

Farm Service Agency-backed beginning farmer loans, in particular, are one way for new and younger producers to enter the business. In fact, that's how Klemm himself got started nearly three decades ago.

Having agricultural experience and access to a contiguous land base, which minimizes the need to corral and haul bison between pastures, are factors Rippe said he would look for in a successful loan application.

One challenge traditionally has been establishing a market value for bison, since they aren't typically sold through local auctions the way cattle are, he noted.

Still, Carter was quick to counter that the market's uniqueness has a silver lining. Bison prices aren't tied to cattle prices and have actually moved in an inverse relationship in recent years. "We as an industry wanted to decouple ourselves from that market," he said. "Commodity producers are on one path, but if I'm a rancher I don't want to be a commodity producer. After we made that choice, we really began to evolve as a business."

Full story: <http://www.agjournalonline.com/news/20170310/history-on-display-as-bison-exhibit-hits-trail>

## **A vision for the future of the American Bison**

*(From the Laurel Outlook)*

Recently, the North American Bison has been getting a lot more attention on a national level. Almost a year ago, the buffalo was officially named the first national mammal of the United States following the passage of the National Bison Legacy Act. That decision has brought quite a bit of attention to the large animal, which has a special significance in Montana.

During the settling of the West in the 19th century, bison were slaughtered nearly to extinction, decimating the massive numbers of these creatures that once roamed the prairies. More than a century later, the largest buffalo herd on public land is in Yellowstone National Park. The population of the herd was estimated at about 5,500 in August 2016. The new designation as our national mammal has helped to draw attention to the bison, but there are a few passionate people who have been driving buffalo conservation efforts for decades.

Don 'Doc' Woerner is one of those impassioned individuals who has been involved in bison conservation efforts for many years. After graduating from veterinary school at Colorado State University in 1968, Doc Woerner moved to Billings and got his first job at Billings Veterinary Service. Five years later, Woerner bought some land near Laurel and opened his own practice, Laurel East Animal Hospital, which he still runs today. However, Doc Woerner is working his way towards retirement so that he can focus on his interest in spreading awareness and educating others about the North American Bison.

Doc became interested in the buffalo about 30 years ago, and has since endeavored to help the huge mammal in many ways. He has spent a lot of time recently monitoring the buffalo populations in Yellowstone, where the risk of brucellosis has prevented the transplanting of bison to a quarantine area near Fort Peck. Woerner acknowledges that it is a serious disease, which is why he wants to help find smart and responsible solutions without endangering cattle populations.

“I’m not advocating against the livestock industry at all,” he said, “I just want reasonable solutions to provide better care for these animals than we have been in the past.” On top of those efforts, he is focused on spreading awareness and education about the bison, which is why he plans to open the American Bison Center.

Woerner recently purchased some land south of ZooMontana on Shiloh, which he plans to turn into the future American Bison Center. He hopes to include some informational exhibits, though the main purpose of the American Bison Center will be to work with people on conservation efforts as well as efforts to educate others about the animal. Beyond spreading awareness, educating people about the differences between bison and cattle might encourage ranchers to include bison in their operation.

Bison burger has become increasingly popular lately as well, and is much more expensive than beef. For ranchers that know how to handle bison and have the appropriate resources, bison ranching could be very lucrative. On top of that, bison ranching could help conservation efforts greatly, so it is important to Doc Woerner to provide information about the animal to ranchers and animal lovers alike. Though there is still work to do for Woerner to get the American Bison Center up and running, he already has a great educational tool that he has been using in the meantime.

Several years ago, a pair of bison escaped from the Montana Large Animal Sanctuary after it closed due to lost funding. The pair of bison proved difficult to corral, and Doc Woerner was called to the scene to tranquilize them. Originally, the bison were going to be transported to Texas, but a drought at the time created concerns, so Woerner took the two buffalo in while they searched for a home for them. Woerner ended up keeping the two majestic beasts, affectionately named Bert and Ernie, until they died. Doc then saw a great opportunity to create life-size anatomical exhibits of the buffalo.

With the help of a taxidermist, the two buffalo were transformed into half-skeletal and half-hide exhibits of the species to show how the skeleton fits into their massive frame.

“I had the idea after I saw a dinosaur exhibit at the Museum of the Rockies,” Woerner said. “I just didn’t want them to go to waste.” Bert ended up going to the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyo., while Doc Woerner is keeping Ernie in his Field Museum of the American Buffalo. A trailer houses Ernie and a number of informational displays about the history of bison, creating a mobile museum that Doc has taken all over in his attempts to educate America on their new national mammal. The museum has traveled over 30,000 miles across America and even into Canada, and is probably going to make a trip to Washington, D.C., this fall. Once the American Bison Center opens on South Shiloh, it is likely that Ernie and the museum will have a new permanent home.

Complete story and photos: <http://www.laureloutlook.com/content/vision-future-american-bison>

## USDA Encourages Bison Input at ADT Hearings

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is encouraging bison producers to participate in a series of public meetings being scheduled by the agency to discuss Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) with the primary focus of traceability of the cattle and bison sectors.

The initial ADT framework contained some basic foundation traceability components and was supported by the January 2013 regulation, "TraceabilityforLivestockMovingInterstate". In the upcoming meetings we will provide information on what has been accomplished as well features that lead to traceability gaps or shortfalls. However, we are most interested in hearing from the industry on their experiences with ADT e.g. What areas are working well? What aspects are challenging, confusing, problematic, and how can these obstacles can be rectified? In addition we'd like to obtain stakeholder views on the longer-tem issues, in particular the level of traceability that should be considered if we are to move beyond the basic framework, often referred to a "book-end" system.

Some specific questions and information points for these discussions include:

- Have we made adequate progress in ADT over the last few years? If so, what's been the most significant?
- What aspects of ADT framework work well for you?
- What challenges do you encounter with the current ADT framework? What requirements are difficult and/or problematic?
- Regarding our current disease tracing capabilities, what are the most significant gaps or shortfalls in the ADT framework that you feel need to be addressed in the next phase of ADT?
- What should our primary objective be for ADT in the future? More specifically, what level of traceability is good enough? What should our long-term goal be?
- What are the most significant concerns of producers relative to traceability?
- The USDA APHIS focus of ADT is primarily on disease control. Should ADT place more emphasis on aspects to complement global trade opportunities? If so how?
- Could RFID technology be used more broadly to advance traceability? If so, what options or approaches might increase its utilization and merit to the industry? What are the long-term opportunities?

### ADT MEETING LOCATIONS

- 4/11/17 - Tower Hotel Oklahoma City, OK
- 4/13/17 - 4700 River Road. Riverdale, MD
- 4/20/17 - Renaissance Nashville Hotel, Nashville, TN 37203
- 5/2/17 - Embassy Suites Minneapolis Airport, Bloomington, MN
- 5/4/17 - Doubletree by Hilton, Denver, CO
- 5/11/17 - Sacramento Marriott, Rancho Cordova, CA 95742
- 5/24/17 - Hilton Garden Inn, Billings MT

## **2013 Study Documents Bison's Nutritional Edge Over Beef**

*(Summer 2013 VA Research Currents)*

*Editor's Note – The NBA just discovered this four-year-old study by the U.S. Veteran's Administration.*

Bison meat has been touted as being healthier than beef. Bison typically graze in grasslands and according to the National Bison Association they are not routinely given growth hormones or antibiotics, as are cattle. Also, analyses have shown that bison meat is less dense in fat and calories than beef and higher in certain nutrients, such as iron and vitamin B-12. It also has a more healthful balance of fats—for example, a higher ratio of polyunsaturated fat to saturated fat.

Clinical evidence of the implications for health, though, has been lacking. A team including researchers at the Cleveland and Salt Lake City VA medical centers put the claims about bison to the test: Fourteen healthy men, average age 34, took part in the study. They each ate a single 12-ounce serving of each meat, and then 10 of them took part in a longer-term phase of the trial in which they ate 12 ounces per day, six days per week, of either bison or beef, for seven weeks. After a 30-day "washout period" to clear their system, the men continued for another seven weeks, switching to the other meat.

When all the lab analyses had been done, the researchers concluded that bison poses less risk to cardiovascular health. For example, following a single beef meal, triglycerides and a marker of oxidative stress called hydroperoxides were elevated, as was a harmful form of cholesterol called oxidized LDL. Also, a measure of artery health called flow-mediated dilation was reduced. After a single bison meal, the increase in triglycerides was smaller, and there was no change in hydroperoxides, oxidized LDL, or flow-mediated dilation. After the long-term diet, several markers of inflammation and oxidative stress were worse from the beef but not the bison diet, although neither regimen had an effect on body weight, percent body fat, or lipids.

The researchers concluded that "in terms of vascular health, bison meat appears to provide a healthier alternative [to red meat]."

Source: <http://www.research.va.gov/currents/summer2013/summer2013-10.cfm>

## **For Eileen – What's Up with Bison Meat?**

*(From the Payson Roundup)*

As I sat stewing over my latest blown deadline, our receptionist Paula popped her head into my office.

"There's someone to see you in the front office," she said giving me a significant look.

I sighed, dreading the meeting. Had I misspelled a name? Gotten a date wrong? Hurt someone's feelings? Usually that's what awaits me in the lobby.

I rounded the corner to see a cute-as-a-button older lady with short-cropped white hair wearing a yellow sweater as bright as her darling personality.

With dancing eyes, she threw her arms wide open.

“Can I give you a hug?”

Eileen Newton said she was 81 years old, loves reading “The Healthy Foodie” column and had a favor to ask, “Would you write about buffalo meat? I just bought a bunch of ground buffalo and its delicious!”

How could I refuse?

So, for Eileen — this is what I discovered.

First off, to make sure you’re eating American buffalo, call it bison. Otherwise, you could be eating water buffalo meat — or finding out all sorts of information about water buffalo instead of homegrown bison.

Once I figured that out, I found out that bison meat has more protein and less fat than traditional beef.

And, because those shaggy bison just don’t cotton to full domestication, most of them eat only grass — although sometimes these days they end up in a “finishing lot,” fed grain and such to fatten up.

As I’ve discovered in a previous column, ([http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/health/are-the-benefits-just-hype-grain-fed-vs-grass-fed/article\\_807330e9-3ceb-5af5-a908-c937ec2d3de5.html](http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/health/are-the-benefits-just-hype-grain-fed-vs-grass-fed/article_807330e9-3ceb-5af5-a908-c937ec2d3de5.html)) grass-fed beef has more essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals. On top of that, meat from grass-fed cattle has fewer calories.

Same holds for bison, only more so.

According to the North Dakota State University Animal and Range Sciences Department, ([https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/archive/carringt/bison/nutrients\\_in\\_meat.htm](https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/archive/carringt/bison/nutrients_in_meat.htm)) bison meat is also an excellent source of protein and B12.

B12 is a necessary vitamin needed to maintain healthy nerves and red blood cells. This vitamin also plays a critical role in making DNA.

Studies show that vegetarian and other diets low in B12 cause anemia and in worst cases, nerve changes, which cause symptoms such as numbness, tingling in the hands and feet, balance and memory problems and depression.

Pretty serious stuff.

Does seem kind of ironic — bison being so good for us when we were so bad for them. From a high of 60 million beasts before the 1800s to a mere 541 by 1889, we just about lost this animal to rampant hunting. Moreover, the government supported extermination

Source: [http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/health/for-eileen---what-s-up-with-bison-meat/article\\_3c5a29e5-133d-57a4-b977-7a50dc5b0cb6.html](http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/health/for-eileen---what-s-up-with-bison-meat/article_3c5a29e5-133d-57a4-b977-7a50dc5b0cb6.html)

## **A Start Date for the Bison Invasion of North America**

*(From the New York Times)*

When did North America become a home where the ancestors of buffalo roamed? Between 195,000 and 135,000 years ago, according to a study published Monday that reports on the oldest fossil and genomic evidence of bison on the continent.

Scientists have set out to chronicle when the massive, furry beasts first crossed into North America from Asia via the Bering land bridge because that event was the beginning of a striking change in the ecology of the continent. They refer to it as an invasion because once the bison arrived, they thrived everywhere and began competing with the horses and mammoths that had grazed the Great Plains for millions of years.

“The only other invasion of North America that has had such an ecological and environmental impact has been us,” said [Beth Shapiro](#), an evolutionary molecular biologist at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and a co-author of the paper, which appeared in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#).

In the millenniums that followed, the ancient bison evolved into the iconic American buffalo we know today.

Dr. Shapiro worked with [Duane Froese](#), an earth scientist from the University of Alberta in Canada and the lead author of the paper, to construct the chronology of the bison colonization. One key to narrowing down when the bison arrived came from a serendipitous find made by Dr. Froese’s colleague [Alberto Reyes](#), a geologist from the University of Alberta. In 2006 while studying ancient volcanic ash buried in the northern Yukon in northwestern Canada, Dr. Reyes stumbled across a bone jutting from the frozen mud near the ash layer.

He passed it off to [Grant D. Zazula](#), the paleontologist on the site, and returned to his lab to write a paper on the history of permafrost. It was not until several years later while he was working on the paper that something jogged his memory.

“This light bulb went off as I was going through my old field notes,” Dr. Reyes said. “Oh my God, I forgot about this bone that I gave to that paleontologist. That bone could be pretty important.”

It was.

The fossil was of a bone from the front foot of a steppe bison, an extinct species that came from Siberia, believed to be 130,000 years old. That would make it the oldest bison fossil found on the continent. Dr. Reyes determined its age by using the ancient volcanic ash layer near where it was found, which has a known age, as a reference.

Full Story: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/13/science/bison-buffalo-north-america.html>

## **Wildlife Photographer Lucks into Shot of Season's First Bison Calf at Tallgrass Prairie Preserve**

*(From the Tulsa World)*

PAWHUSKA — After little more than an hour's time on this earth, the first bison calf born on the Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve walked in front of the camera lens of one the natural area's greatest champions on Wednesday.

Harvey Payne, a spokesman and advocate for the preserve for more than 30 years, went to the headquarters for a routine task and ended up experiencing a special moment.

"I had to take some things up there," he said. "Some of the guys were there getting ready to do a (controlled) burn, and Tony Brown, the science director, said 'I thought you'd be down taking pictures of that new calf.'"

Turns out Payne had driven right past the newborn and didn't see it.

"You know, if that calf is lying down on the prairie it's darn near invisible," he said.

With directions from Brown, "I had my camera with me so I boogied down there real quick and found the cow and several others working their way north. ... They crossed the road right there where I was," Payne said.

Bison are used to traffic on the roads, and the best place to be when taking photographs is safely inside your vehicle, he said. A skilled wildlife photographer with many years of experience on the prairie, Payne said that witnessing a newborn moment is always a thrill.

"It couldn't have been more than an hour old," he said. "If you look closely in the photograph you can see the umbilical cord, still red, under the calf."

Typically a cow will move away from traffic areas and other places people frequent, but Payne said he thinks the new mother was headed for a nutritious meal on a nearby field the staff had burned last fall.

"It's growing and green, I'm sure that's where they were headed," he said. "It could have happened anywhere in almost 25,000 acres, but she was right there by the road.

[http://www.tulsaworld.com/homepagelatest/season-s-first-bison-calf-a-lucky-catch-for-wildlife/article\\_26780c2d-7e19-57bd-b0a0-6357146e00cd.html](http://www.tulsaworld.com/homepagelatest/season-s-first-bison-calf-a-lucky-catch-for-wildlife/article_26780c2d-7e19-57bd-b0a0-6357146e00cd.html)

## **SD Legislature Approves Funding for SDSU Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Lab**

*(From WNAX )*

The South Dakota legislature approved a funding measure for the Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Lab at South Dakota State University. Lawmakers decided to increase slightly the general education tax levy on agricultural property for the next 25 years to help pay for the project. South Dakota Cattlemen's Association Executive Director Jodie Anderson says her group is pleased with the legislation as it was their top priority this session.

She says although everyone will be paying a little more in taxes to help fund the lab, it was the best solution possible given the economic climate and state budget.

Anderson says the original legislation brought by the Governor calling for additional ag user fees to fund a majority of the lab just wasn't workable.

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

## **Governors Ask USDA for Wildfire Relief Action**

*(From Drovers CattleNetwork.com)*

The governors from four states affected by wildfires are seeking temporary suspension of grazing restrictions in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for farmers and ranchers because of wildfires.

The governors of Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and New Mexico sent a letter Friday to acting Secretary of Agriculture Mike Young asking that restrictions to the CRP be lifted to provide more land for grazing. The fires have burned more than 2,300 square miles in the four states, forcing farmers and ranchers to move their livestock.

"These fires have also devastated critical infrastructure, including fencing, on farms and ranches in our states," the governors wrote. "The Emergency Conservation Program provides critical financial resources to affected farmers and ranchers to rebuild fences. We urge the Farm Service Agency to expedite the implementation of the Emergency Conservation program in our states."

According to the agency, emergency grazing of CRP land is authorized under certain conditions to provide relief to livestock producers due to some natural disasters.

Cost-share up to 75% will be available to restore livestock fences if the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) is renewed. To get the most benefit from ECP, landowners should contact FSA before rebuilding fence.

The Kansas Livestock Association is urging ranchers to immediately notify their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office of livestock, fence and feed losses. Notification can come in the form of a phone call, email or in person.

Full text:

<http://www.cattlenetwork.com/news/industry/governors-ask-usda-wildfire-relief-action>

## **It's Not the Meat Market Anymore; It's the Protein Market**

*(From meatingplace.com)*

Protein alternatives are getting a lot of press and the competition for protein dollars has never been stiffer; consumers have plenty of protein choices.

In December, Tyson Foods announced Tyson New Ventures LLC, a \$150 million fund that will invest in commercializing alternative proteins. This, just two months after Tyson took a 5

percent stake in plant-based protein maker Beyond Meat. Both moves sparked a lot of media attention.

USDA's MyPlate food choice campaign emphasizes varying choices within the protein food group, which includes meat, poultry, seafood, beans, peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts and seeds. USDA's advice leans toward the latter half of that list and advises at least 8 ounces of cooked seafood per week. Even the photos of protein choices on the MyPlate website are lean on red meat and long on vegetable and seafood proteins.

At the latest Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef conference, David Hughes, emeritus professor of food marketing at Imperial College London, made this global prediction about the future fight for protein dollars, "Over the next 15 years, I think the bare-knuckled, eye-gouging, ear-pulling, slugging fight will be between industrially produced fish and industrially produced chicken.... Beef (producers) should stay away from that fight because they will get their clocks cleaned."

Regardless of which proteins inch up or back each year in terms of per capita consumption, processors must be aware that consumers are only going to ingest so much protein on any given day and they are being directed toward an increasing array of options.

Processors must also be aware that consumers are getting pickier about their proteins, making marketing critical to winning those dollars. And while more available beef and pork are making those proteins more affordable, today's consumers are not shopping on price alone.

## **Over 80,000 Converged at Expo West**

*(From Sustainable Food News)*

More than 80,000 attendees flocked to the [37th annual Natural Products Expo West & Engredea](#), the world's largest natural, organic and healthy products event, which wrapped up Sunday in Anaheim, Calif.

[New Hope Network](#), which produced the show, said in a statement Monday that there were over 3,100 exhibiting companies, including more than 500 first-time exhibitors, on more than one million square feet of space at the Anaheim Convention Center, as well as those exhibiting at the adjacent Marriott (first time this year) and Hilton hotels. Last year, almost 78,000 attendees swarmed about 3,080 exhibits.

Opening the five-day event on Wednesday was the [inaugural Climate Day](#), a day of speakers, panel events, workshops on how companies can take action to reverse climate change. The highlight of the day was the launch of the [Climate Collaborative project](#), a three-year effort to leverage the strength of the \$181 billion natural products industry to reverse climate change. (Watch the archived livestream [here](#).)

On Thursday, pre-show attendees crammed into the Fresh Ideas Organic Marketplace, a business-to-business event in a farmers' market atmosphere for retailers, manufacturers and leaders in the natural, organic and healthy products industries.

Summing up the "State of the Industry," Carlotta Mast, New Hope's executive director of content and insights, cited at a Friday session preliminary 2016 sales and growth estimates from the

company's [\*Nutrition Business Journal\*](#), which showed that U.S. natural products sales grew 7.7 percent to \$195 billion in 2016.

Mast said the breakdown by industry category included: 2016 natural and organic food and beverage sales growth of 8.5 percent to \$74.8 billion; functional food and beverage sales grew 7.6 percent to \$59.7 billion; supplements grew 6.6 percent to \$41.4 billion; and natural and organic personal care (also called natural living products) grew 7.5 percent to \$18.7 billion.

New Hope also tracked the following macro forces and consumer trends this year:

- an erosion of trust - "With unprecedented access to information from computers and mobile devices, consumers are researching brands on the fly, and what they are finding is too often making trust a thing of the past. Savvy brands are changing that dynamic by working to build trust through everything they do.
- a climate of change - "Food enters the climate change discussions as victim, villain and solution - just in time to feed an exponentially growing population and provide consumers with a new way to engage in the climate conversation."
- prioritizing health - "Wellness has evolved from prevention to optimization, and brands are developing new products and platforms that can help consumers thrive rather than just survive."
- Consciousness rising - "As consumers are faced with seemingly infinite choices, they are looking beyond individual products to the companies behind them. Keeping up with the new conscious consumer calls for agility and creativity and asks brands to deliver a new bottom line: purpose."