



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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Make IBC Plans Soon, Rooms Selling Quickly; Early Bird Ends May 15th

If you are contemplating attending the upcoming International Bison Conference, don't hesitate and lose out. Lodging is limited, so call 800-548-4486. Select option 2 and request the National Bison Association room block to reserve your room today. Rates start at \$119/night for single/double occupancy. See a full list of lodging options at www.ibc2017.com.

Also, the early-bird conference registration rate ends May 15th so please be sure to register before rates go up significantly. Register online at <https://bisoncentral.com/2017-international-bison-conference-registration-form/>, or call the NBA at 303-292-2833 to register by phone.

Each upcoming edition of Weekly Update will highlight the activities during one of the days of the IBC. But don't wait for the full series before reserving your space at Big Sky, and at the conference.

Flying D to Welcome IBC Gathering

Bison producers and enthusiasts attending the fifth-ever International Bison Conference, scheduled July 4-8 in Big Sky, MT, will enjoy a day of hospitality at Ted Turner's Flying D ranch, nestled in the Gallatin Valley, north of Yellowstone National Park.

The schedule for the July 7th trip to the Flying D were finalized yesterday, as the members of the IBC planning committee fine-tuned the agenda for the upcoming event scheduled during the first week of July in the area surrounding Big Sky, MT during the first week of July.

A 113,613-acre ranch, the Flying D ranges from steep, wooded land on the south end, to rolling meadows in the central portion, to high-rolling bench topography on the north end. A good habitat for a variety of native wildlife, the Flying D is home to established populations of mule deer, white-tailed deer, Rocky Mountain elk, Rocky Mountain gray wolf, Shiras moose, pronghorn antelope, black bear, mountain lions and badgers, among others. In addition to these species, golden and bald eagle sightings are made throughout most of the year.

Conference participants will take the one-hour trip to the Flying D from Big Sky on Friday morning, July 7th, where they will be welcomed by ranch manager Danny Johnson, who will provide an overview of the ranch, including its history and current operations.

Laurie Demeritt, CEO of the Hartman Group market research firm, will address the group on changing consumer dynamics that will influence the continued growth of the bison business in North America. Leaders of the Center for Rural Affairs, the Quivera Coalition and the National Young Farmers' Coalition will present information on new strategies to bring young and beginning producers into bison production. And the formal program will conclude with the formal unveiling of an ambitious initiative to restore one million bison to North America.

Following a luncheon at the Flying D, participants will have an option to tour the remainder of the Flying D, or to return to the Big Sky Resort.

The Friday event at the Flying D will cap a three-day series of educational sessions at the IBC. On Wednesday, July 5th participants will delve into the impacts of a changing climate on bison health and habitat. On Thursday, sessions will focus on marketing all-things bison.

July 4th is set aside for a day of relaxation and celebration at the historic 320 guest ranch near Big Sky. And conference participants can stay over through July 8th and enjoy an optional day-long tour of Yellowstone National Park.

Correction: Bison Carcass Prices at \$489.58/cwt. in February

The NBA Weekly Update last week incorrectly listed the USDA-reported price of young bull carcasses at \$499.58/cwt. in February. The actual prices for February was \$489.58/cwt. The data in the NBA's five-year tracking report, and the comparisons to the previous month, were correct.

Those darned fat-typing fingers....

Ralphie IV Dies at Age 19

(From 9news.com)

Ask anyone who has ever seen a CU Buffs football game, and they'll tell you the best entrance in all of college football is Ralphie.

Or at least, almost anybody. (And if they say it isn't - pray tell ask them who can beat a thundering buffalo running in the shadows of the Rocky Mountains)

As a Buff myself, I may be biased, but there is nothing quite like the roar of the crowd when the PA announcer's baritone echoes across Folsom Field, "HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE COMES RALPHIEEEEEEEEE!" and the fiery beast is unleashed, trampling across the gridiron, chased wildly by men and women in jeans and cowboy hats (which rarely stay on their heads for more than a few yards).

I get chills every time I hear those three words.

She was the Buffalo I first watched at Folsom as I became a Buff myself. She's the buffalo whose first run was against in-state rival Colorado State in 1998. The same foe would see her final run, 10 years later, on Aug. 31, 2008. She led the team to victory on both of those days.

"She had a great career- the buffs were a very strong football team then - Ralphie IV brought them a lot of luck. it's a very sad day and we're all sad to miss her," said one of her handlers, John Graves, who is also the program manager of the Ralphie live mascot program at CU Boulder.

We asked what he loved about Ralphie IV, there is a lot to love about her, but he boiled it down to her personality and one very distinct trait

"All the fans will know Ralphie IV because of her crooked right horn she had. It just always grew crooked I don't know what it was, but that's just something that happens. She was very distinguished just by that crooked horn, but you know she had a lot of spunk and a lot of fire in her. She loved to take the field with the team behind her. We just had a blast running with her. It was always great running with her," said Graves.

Full Story and Video Here: <http://www.9news.com/sports/college/retired-cu-mascot-ralphie-iv-passes-away-at-19/423949185>

More than 1,200 Yellowstone Bison Killed this Winter *(From the Missoulian)*

Operations to kill bison in Yellowstone National Park for slaughter have come to an end, with more than 1,200 bison culled this winter.

The Bozeman Daily Chronicle reports (<http://bit.ly/2nfbL8A>) the park released figures Wednesday showing 748 bison were consigned to slaughter this year. Another 453 were killed by hunters from Native American tribes and the state of Montana.

The total winter death toll marks the highest number of bison killed in the Yellowstone area since 2008. It also falls just short of the removal goal bison managers set in the fall.

Bison are taken from the area each year because of a management plan established in 2000 that calls for a population of 3,000 bison in the region. Park biologists estimate there are 5,500 bison there now.

Source: http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/more-than-yellowstone-bison-killed-this-winter/article_0b33f087-844f-55fc-8bb8-e85e962cbd6b.html

Meet the Father-Son Team Importing Bison to Siberia *(From FastCompany)*

In May, Russian scientists plan to load six American bison on heavy-duty trucks near the city of Perm, and then drive until the roads end in Siberia—a distance roughly twice the length of the drive from New York City to San Francisco. Their destination: Pleistocene Park, an experimental reserve that's attempting to partially recreate an ecosystem that last existed more than 10,000 years ago.

"If you have animals who would be introduced to degrading permafrost early, they can stop the erosion. Animals have the capacity to slow it down and stop, and freeze it back."

At the time, woolly mammoths, bison, moose, yaks, and other herbivores grazed on massive grasslands. When the wildlife suddenly disappeared at the beginning of the Holocene Epoch—possibly because human hunters moved into the area—so did the grass. If animals come back, the reasoning goes, so will vegetation. And that restored ecosystem could protect the permafrost, a thick layer of frozen soil beneath the surface, from melting and releasing more emissions than all of the world's fossil fuels.

"In 20 or 30 years, the permafrost will start melting everywhere if current trends persist," says Nikita Zimov, director of Pleistocene Park. "It's already starting to happen in some places." As permafrost melts, releasing tens of thousands of years' worth of plants and animals frozen in the ice, the emissions from the rotting organic matter could rival the worst climate impacts from humans.

"I'll give you a few numbers to put it in perspective," says Max Holmes, the deputy director of Woods Hole Research Center, who studies climate change, particularly the impacts from the permafrost. "Right now, in the atmosphere, there are about 850 billion tons of carbon. In all the vegetation on earth, there are about 500 billion tons. And in the permafrost there are around 1,500 billion tons."

Full Story: <https://www.fastcompany.com/3068929/meet-the-father-son-duo-importing-american-buffalo-to-siberia-to-save-the-planet>

Zinke Pressed by Opponents of Bison Refuge Transfer

(From the Missoula Independent)

It's been less than a month since Ryan Zinke rode a horse named Tonto to his new gig as Secretary of the Interior, and already one D.C.-based nonprofit has heaped quite a bit of pressure on him. Last week, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility announced that the fate of the National Bison Range near Moiese now rests in Zinke's hands. The group was referring to the potential transfer of the popular refuge to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes—an effort that PEER is attempting to block in federal court.

"Secretary Zinke has repeatedly pledged to oppose the transfer of any federal lands," PEER Senior Counsel Paula Dinerstein said in a statement. "Now he has a prime opportunity to make good on that promise."

PEER's declaration came mere days after it filed a motion for summary judgment against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is currently in the midst of reviewing public comment on a comprehensive conservation plan that could open the door for such a transfer. The decision to shift the bison refuge into trust ownership for CSKT will ultimately fall to Congress, and the tribes have already drafted legislation to that effect. However, as the overseer of both the

National Wildlife Refuge system and the federal government's relations with Indian Country, Zinke's position on the issue is one that transfer proponents acknowledge will prove important. His office did not respond to a request for comment on the proposal by press time.

Source: <http://missoulanews.bigskypress.com/missoula/zinke-pressed-on-refuge/Content?oid=3686755>

Purdue Pressed on Budget Cuts at Confirmation Hearing

(From U.S. News & World Report)

Sonny Perdue, the former Georgia governor tapped by President Donald Trump to head the Department of Agriculture, on Thursday voiced disapproval of his potential boss' recent federal budget proposal, which would slash his department's funding by 21 percent.

Perdue, who appeared before the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee on Thursday for a confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill, indicated he wasn't completely on board with Trump's plan to cut the USDA's budget by \$4.7 billion.

When asked by Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., to share some of his thoughts on the budget, Perdue didn't give a glowing endorsement.

"I also have some concern. Obviously, as a member of the administration, I view this budget similar to what, as governor, when I'd get a revenue estimate I didn't like, as well. I didn't like it, but we managed to [deal with] it," Perdue said. He also noted that he "had no input into the budget" since he had yet to be confirmed.

Stabenow, for her part, said she was "deeply concerned about the budget" and that it "signals" a "lack of understanding of agriculture" from the administration.

"I've always said, 'To have an economy and to have a middle class, you have to make things and grow things.' It's clear the president has focused on making things, which I appreciate in Michigan, but not growing things, which is equally important," she said. "And so when we look at a 21 percent cut in the budget, it's extremely concerning to me and to so many of us who care about small towns."

Full story: <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2017-03-23/sonny-perdue-voices-concern-about-donald-trumps-budget>

USDA Announces \$6 Million In Aid To Farmers And Ranchers

(From the High Plains Journal)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is making \$6 million in funding available to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners affected by recent wildfires in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. The funding was announced March 21.

The money will be available by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, to assist producers as they begin to restore grazing lands, rehabilitate landscapes, rebuild fencing and rebuild damaged watersheds.

U.S. Sens. Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran applauded the action.

"I am pleased USDA has acted swiftly to aid producers recovering from the largest wildfire in state history," said Roberts. "For many Kansans, the impacts are devastating because the fires not only consumed livestock, grazing lands, and fencing—but in some cases, homes, machinery, and equipment, too."

Roberts added that lessons learned from last year's Anderson Creek fire in neighboring Barber County would be helpful in the recovery effort of this year's Starbuck Fire.

Moran said the assistance from USDA toward this year's recovery effort is appreciated. "I have asked USDA to provide maximum flexibility in administering the federal assistance programs in response to the disaster, and will continue to make clear the urgent need for more immediate assistance to those impacted."

EQIP, administered by USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to help plan and implement conservation practices that address priority local and state resource concerns.

States will begin accepting applications in the near future. Producers in the affected counties are encouraged to check with their local NRCS service centers for additional information. Step-by-step assistance can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted>.

Source. http://m.hpj.com/ag_news/usda-announces-million-in-aid-to-farmers-and-ranchers/article_6009ad8a-0e49-11e7-b55e-cb267d9db0fb.html

A Herd Of Bison Was Donated To The Bronx Zoo By Native American Tribes

(From Time Out New York)

Long a symbol of the great untamed west, a herd of bison has found a new home in a pretty unexpected place: The Bronx.

Two Native American tribes—the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux—presented the Bronx Zoo with eight genetically pure American bison from the Yellowstone National Park bloodline back in November. That herd is now on display.

Tribal leaders visited the zoo on November 18 to conduct a sacred pipe ceremony, blessing the animals after they had been transferred from the Fort Peck pastures in Montana to the Bronx. "Our delegation accompanied our buffalo to the Bronx Zoo. When we arrived we offered a prayer and a traditional ceremony of thanks," said Fort Peck Tribal Elder Dr. Ken Ryan in a statement.

You can see videos of the Bronx Bison adjusting to their brand-new life in the city below.

See the video at <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/blog/a-herd-of-bison-was-donated-to-the-bronx-zoo-by-native-american-tribes-032317>

WY: State veterinarians conducting Tuberculosis investigation

(From Tri-State Livestock News)

Wyoming Livestock Board (WLSB) and USDA APHIS veterinarians are currently investigating and testing cattle that were potentially exposed to Tuberculosis (TB) in South Dakota.

Wyoming State Veterinarian Jim Logan was notified March 13 that South Dakota's Animal Industry Board and USDA APHIS are investigating a beef herd with TB located in Harding County, S.D. This herd was identified in late February after routine slaughter surveillance discovered three cull cows with lesions. During the epidemiologic investigation, South Dakota found there were 86 heifers purchased from the TB-affected herd and imported into Wyoming prior to the discovery of the infection. The animals were imported legally into Wyoming.

WLSB state veterinarians immediately began an epidemiologic investigation to determine where any exposed heifers from the affected South Dakota herd are currently. Many of those animals still belong to the Wyoming producer who originally purchased them. The veterinarians are also working with a couple of other Wyoming producers who purchased animals from the original importer/producer. Logan noted all producers involved have been very cooperative.

"In order to protect the Wyoming cattle industry from TB, we are taking every precaution to assure that, if it happened to come into Wyoming in these purchased cattle, we will get it found and eliminated before there is disease spread," said Logan. "This involves herd testing and removal of all of the heifers that came from the South Dakota herd direct to slaughter with regulatory veterinarian examination at slaughter."

TB surveillance testing involves an injection of Tuberculin in the caudal fold of the tail followed three days later by a palpation of the injection site for a response.

Testing to date has found no evidence of infection in Wyoming.

Additionally, WLSB veterinary staff is working with the state veterinarians of Montana, Nebraska and Colorado, where small numbers of the original 86 heifers imported into Wyoming were subsequently sold prior to anyone being aware that TB was in the South Dakota herd.

Full text:

<http://www.tsln.com/news/wy-state-veterinarians-conducting-tuberculosis-investigation/>

NOTICE: Animal Disease Traceability Public Meetings Schedule - 2017

(From USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Bulletin)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), in collaboration with local State Animal Health Officials, is hosting seven public meetings across the country this spring to discuss animal disease traceability (ADT) with the primary focus of traceability in the cattle and bison sectors.

The initial ADT framework contained basic traceability components and was supported by the January 2013 regulation, "Traceability for Livestock Moving Interstate." APHIS and State Officials will provide information on what has been accomplished as well traceability gaps or shortfalls. The purpose of these meetings, however, is to hear from the industry on their experiences with ADT: What areas are working well? What aspects are challenging, confusing, or problematic? How can these obstacles can be rectified? In addition APHIS would like to obtain stakeholder views on the longer-term issues; in particular, what is the level of traceability that should be considered if we are to move beyond the basic traceability framework.

The public meetings will be held in the following locations:

April 11: Tower Hotel Oklahoma City, 3233 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City, OK

April 13: USDA Center at Riverside, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD

April 20: Renaissance Nashville Hotel, 611 Commerce Street, Nashville, TN

May 2: Embassy Suites Minneapolis Airport, 7901 34th Avenue South, Bloomington, MN

May 4: Doubletree by Hilton Denver, 3203 Quebec Street, Denver, CO

May 11: Sacramento Marriott Rancho Cordova, 11211 Point East Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA

May 24: Hilton Garden Inn Billings, 2465 Grant Road, Billings, MT.

If you plan to attend a meeting, we ask that you register in advance by visiting <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/adt-meeting-registrations>. Same-day registration will also be available at each meeting site.

Source: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/bulletins/18ec1d7>

NRCS South Dakota announces new request for proposals for 2017 conservation innovation grants

(From the Farm Forum)

Huron – The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing a new request for state proposals for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) that must be received by May 15, 2017.

NRCS South Dakota will award two new state level proposals and has designated \$150,000 for FY2017 with each proposal limited to a \$75,000 maximum.

Learn more at the national CIG Webpage <http://bit.ly/2mCly7O>. All opportunities for grant applications are listed on the national web site at www.grants.gov. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/2nfKBMB> or contact the State Program Manager Jay Cobb, located at USDA NRCS

South Dakota, 200 Fourth Street SW, Huron, SD 57350, by email jay.cobb@sd.usda.gov or call (605) 352-1260.

Source. <http://www.farmforum.net/2017/03/08/nrcs-south-dakota-announces-new-request-for-proposals-for-2017-conservation-innovation-grants/>

NRCS Announces Free Conservation Planning Pilot in Six North Arkansas Counties

(USDA NRCS Press Release)

Landowners in Baxter, Fulton, Izard, Marion, Searcy and Stone counties can request a free conservation plan through a pilot program offered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The project, designed to combine the farming or ranching skills of the operator with the science-based knowledge of an NRCS conservation planner, runs March 3 through April 3, 2017.

“Conservation plans are the basis for all assistance NRCS provides to clients and the basic tool for clients to manage their natural resources,” said Mike Sullivan, NRCS state conservationist in Arkansas. “The greatest value comes by having the client engaged in every step of the planning process. Through participation, the client develops an understanding of the natural resource issues, interactions and treatments necessary for resource sustainability.”

The voluntary plan is developed with input from the producer and prepared by NRCS. The plan addresses resource concerns dealing with soil, water, air, plants and animals.

A conservation plan includes producer/landowner determined objectives and goals; an aerial photo or diagram of the farm; a soil map and soil description of the property; resource inventory data which can include forage or crop production potential, or potential livestock carrying capacity; a list of treatment options; the location and schedule for applying conservation practices; and a plan of operation and maintenance of conservation systems.

Benefits of a conservation plan include:

- Identifies problems or potential problems overlooked on a day-to-day basis
- Protects soil along with the farm’s productivity
- Helps comply with environmental regulations
- Helps to qualify for various USDA programs that can help implement the plan
- Flexible to the farms changing operational goals
- Provides for on-site technical assistance

To sign up for a free conservation plan, visit your local USDA field service center. To locate the local office, visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.