



## 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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**April 7, 2017**

### Speakers Set to Challenge IBC Audience

Speakers with international expertise in ecosystems, international marketing, consumer trends, and holistic management will challenge attendees at the upcoming International Bison conference in Big Sky, MT July 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>.

With each day's sessions carrying individual themes, the speakers on July 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>. Will cover a wealth of topics important to producers, marketers, and others involved in the bison community.

With July 5<sup>th</sup> dedicated to "Bison in a Changing Climate," two noted speakers will bookend the day's formal sessions. Opening as keynoter on July 5<sup>th</sup> will be Dr. Jim Hurrell, director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, CO. He is the former Chief Scientist of Community Climate Projects, and the NCAR Earth System Laboratory. His research has centered on empirical and modeling studies and diagnostic analyses to better understand climate, climate variability and climate change.

Breakout sessions throughout the morning will explore the evolution of bison, and the potential impact of bison production in a changing global climate. The formal working sessions will end with a presentation from Daniela Ibarra-Howell, executive director of the Savory Institute.

Thursday's Theme is, "All Things Bison." Keynoting that day will be Dr. David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at Imperial College London, and Visiting Professor at the University of Kent Business School and at the Royal Agricultural College, U.K.

Dr. Hughes is a much sought-after speaker at international conferences and seminars on global food industry issues, particularly consumer trends, and is a strong proponent of building vertical alliances between key chain members in the food industry – farmers, life science and input companies, ingredient firms, food and beverage manufacturers, retailers and food service. He has lived and worked in Europe, North America, the Caribbean, Africa and South East Asia.

On Friday, when the conference moves to the Flying D Ranch, the theme will be "Building for the Future." Keynoter that day will be Laurie Demeritt, CEO of the Hartman Research Group. The Hartman Group is internationally recognized for breakthrough perspectives on emerging and evolving consumer behaviors in health and wellness, sustainability, and food culture. Since its foundation by Harvey Hartman in 1989, The Hartman Group has helped clients apply the knowledge of the "why behind the buy" to brand development, innovation, categories, retail,

marketing, experience, and more. Demeritt will talk about the importance of continuing to develop relationships with consumers as a key to building bison herds.

## **Just over a Month Left to Register for IBC and Save**

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](http://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.

Also for those with little ones, please note that we'll be offering children's' activities during the morning sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. Big Sky Resort has reasonably priced children's' activities for those 4 years of age and up. Youth registration, for those 4 to 16 years old, is available for \$100/child and includes a child's meal (not bison) at the conference meals. Please see this document which describes Big Sky's youth activities and prices, which are from last summer but should not change much, if at all, this summer. For those 4 years and younger, we're working on a volunteer-children's activity room while parents can take in speaker sessions, etc.

See a full conference agenda here. <https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/IBC-2017-Agenda-4.3.17-1.pdf>

## **Annette Graener, Bison Pioneer, Dies at Age 89**

*By Kim Zimmerman*

Annette Graener loved the bison. In 1964, a family friend, intrigued by Annette's ability to spin yarn and weave, brought her a sample of raw bison hair to see what she could do with it. Thus began Annette's lifelong relationship with bison and her pursuit of the perfect bison hair yarn.

She would hand-shear the hair just after slaughter, spend hours washing it, consult with Native American weavers, and mix the hair with alpaca and sheep's wool to discover the softest and most durable blend. She convinced Bill McFarland, the owner of the Denver Buffalo Company, to preserve as much hair as possible from the processed bison so she would have a steady supply. She became famous at the Company and at National Bison Association conferences for her beautiful unique bison hair woven blankets with her trademark rows of sparkling and colorful hand-dyed yarns. Many of us proudly wear vests of bison hair fabric woven by Annette combined with bison leather created in collaboration with Frank Makray.

Annette was born in Leipzig, Germany. She was raised by her maternal Grandparents in Salzburg, Austria, after her Mother died. She began weaving, taught by her Aunt Annie, when

she was 7 years old. Her Grandfather was the Director of the Vienna Symphony and eventually Annette performed as a master cellist. She survived living in Nazi occupied Austria; as a young teen, she was once beaten and her cello stolen by a Nazi brown-shirt because she gave up her seat on the trolley to an older Jewish woman. She married an American Air Force pilot and moved to the United States in 1950.

Annette was always hard-working and adventurous. She had careers as a lodge owner, restaurateur, and community organic gardener (before organic was "in"!) and played cello with the Denver Symphony. She was an avid skier. She was mother to four children and had 8 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. She shared her indomitable spirit, talent and never-ending laughter with everyone she met.

Annette was 90 years old when she died, as she wished with a splash of wine on her shirt, on March 3, 2017. A pioneer and first expert in using and refining bison hair fiber, Annette was an extraordinary artist. During her final days, she continued to emphasize the importance of honoring the bounty of the magnificent bison by creating beauty and sharing bison fiber with the world. Annette Graener loved the bison.

## **NBA Leadership Gathers this Weekend to Plan for Future**

Members of the National Bison Association Board of Directors are gathering at the Renaissance Hotel in Denver today for a two-day strategic planning session to help equip the organization to continue to lead the growth of the bison business.

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, said, "The bison business is enjoying strong, sustained growth, and the association is growing as well. But it is important that we look ahead to the opportunities and challenges ahead, and deploy our resources as efficiently as possible to make sure that we continue to grow."

The last strategic planning for the NBA was conducted in 2014.

Carter said, "It's important that we periodically step back and take the long view of our association, and the constituency we represent. Developing a good road map will help keep us on track in the coming years."

## **Hometown Farmer: Broken Kettle Bison**

*(From Siouxland News)*

NEAR WESTFIELD, IA — There's a different kind of ranch just up the road from Sioux City, where the livestock aren't being raised for slaughter, but to help the land they live on. Sometimes when you're on a peaceful prairie or a remote road, you've got to cause a commotion to bump into some bison.

"It's amazing how easy it is to lose a bunch of bison on a place this big," said Emily Hohman, Western Iowa Land Steward for the Nature Conservancy.

She's sort of a guide to the bison, which are roaming 1,800 acres at the Broken Kettle Grasslands north of Sioux City.

It took about ten minutes of riding to find a small group of about ten animals, which were still off in the distance.

"This little group is being pretty calm here today," said Hohman. "We're back enough of a distance that they're not too afraid of us."

Roughly 160 bison live on the grassland altogether.

"They're livestock, these are considered legally livestock, even though they really are a wild animal for us," said Hohman. "We try to maintain them as wild as possible, in a fenced area." And those buffalo help maintain the prairie, by eating it.

"We can do cattle, but bison are a little lower intensity for us, there's not as much maintenance that goes into this herd," said Hohman. "They're out here year-round, grazing pressure that we can't get with cattle."

The bison also help by laying around, literally.

"This is a wallow," said Hohman, pointing to a bare spot of dirt that was starting to be worn into the ground. "This is where the buffalo roll to fluff their fur up, to get dust in their fur, to get insects out."

## **Blackfeet Tribe Continues Push for Bison Reintroduction Near Glacier Park**

*(From Montana Public Radio)*

Last fall, the Blackfeet Tribe announced plans to reintroduce [free-roaming bison](#) to federal land outside its reservation. On Wednesday, the tribe met with state and federal agencies for the third time this year to hash out what that would look like.

Bringing bison back to the reservation and their historic range on land that now belongs to the U.S. Forest Service, like the Badger-Two Medicine and Chief Mountain, is a vision eight years in the making.

Ervin Carlson directs the tribe's buffalo program.

"There's no models that we can look at to guide us, so we're kind of building that model, and that's what these working groups are about, is building that, so we'll be the model," he says. Representatives from Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Parks, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Geological Survey, the tribe and conservation groups attend these meetings to develop a management plan that classifies bison as wildlife and allows them to migrate across agency boundaries. But some key players, like the U.S. Forest Service and Montana's Department of Livestock, haven't been participating in the talks.

The tribe has no concrete plans for when it might reintroduce bison to non-reservation lands.

Source. <http://mtp.org/post/blackfeet-tribe-continues-push-bison-reintroduction-near-glacier-park>

## **Before Cars Come In, Bikes Accompany Bison in Yellowstone**

*(From National Public Radio)*

This weekend bicycles are ruling the road in Yellowstone National Park. Most park roads are closed until later this month, but every spring Yellowstone opens about 50 miles of its main thoroughfares to bikes only.

After riding about two miles into the park I pull over for a minute and leave my bike by the side of the road. Walking about 20 yards over to the edge of the river, I can see a herd of bison on the other side of the water. They're in a brown meadow spiked with rocks and silver sagebrush. There's some snow on the ground, a backdrop of evergreen trees, and a couple of really huge bull bison.

It's so quiet, the only sound is the water in the river.

"We think of quietness as a resource here," says Park Ranger Julie Hannaford. "Silence as a resource."

Hannaford has worked in Yellowstone for 24 years.

"Those quieter experiences, just to provide an opportunity to have them, we're pleased to be able to do that," she says.

But Hannaford also wants to make sure that quiet-seeking visitors know what they're getting into. Riding a bicycle into Yellowstone this time of year isn't something to be taken lightly.

"It's not a zoo," Hannaford says. "This is a wilderness area that just happens to have a road through it. It's a wild place where the animals and the weather and the environment are in their natural state, and so you have to be flexible and capable and willing to change your plans at any time, because things will change."

Flexible and adaptable pretty much describes the Grizzle family, who are enjoying their spring break at the park.

Read more. <http://www.npr.org/2017/04/02/522326431/before-cars-come-in-bikes-accompany-bison-in-yellowstone>

## **Minneopa Trains Bison Ambassadors**

*(From The Mankato Free Press)*

Visitor curiosity hasn't diminished at Minneopa State Park since a herd of bison was introduced in fall 2015.

If anything, interest in the animals has grown, prompting park staff to seek the help of volunteers to keep up with the droves of new visitors.

To meet the demand, the Department of Natural Resources started offering "bison ambassador" training last year.

The training teach volunteers basic facts about the sizable beasts who roam the park, from how long they've been at Minneopa to where onlookers might see them on a given day. The park had about 10 ambassadors already, but enough interested parties came to the training Saturday to potentially double that number.

Scott Kudelka, Minneopa area naturalist, said the park certainly needs the help. "We've gone from a middle of the road park for visitation to a top 10," he said of the effect the bison have had at Minneopa.

Thankfully, he said there's been no shortage of people hoping to get involved at the bison range.

Read more. [http://www.mankatofreepress.com/news/minneopa-trains-bison-ambassadors/article\\_ba58acb0-1721-11e7-8e4c-634ac9635eeb.html](http://www.mankatofreepress.com/news/minneopa-trains-bison-ambassadors/article_ba58acb0-1721-11e7-8e4c-634ac9635eeb.html)

## **North Dakota Officials Testing Cattle for Bovine Tuberculosis**

*(From ValleyNewsLive.com)*

State and federal officials have started testing cattle in North Dakota for bovine tuberculosis. The move comes after cases of the disease were found in herds in South Dakota. So far, bovine TB has not been found in any of the cattle tested in the state. Tuberculosis is a disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans and from humans to animals. The full press release from the state can be seen below.

BISMARCK - The State Board of Animal Health and the North Dakota Department of Agriculture are working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) to investigate and test cattle in North Dakota related to herds in South Dakota affected by bovine tuberculosis.

Testing to date has found no evidence of tuberculosis infection in North Dakota.

Tuberculosis was recently found in a Harding County, S.D., beef herd after routine slaughter surveillance discovered cows with lesions. The herd has been under quarantine since the discovery and will be depopulated. A second adjacent herd has confirmed TB in one cow that was originally from the initial herd. Additional investigation into that herd is continuing.

North Dakota State Veterinarian Dr. Susan Keller said that appropriate movement restrictions have been put in place to protect the state's livestock industry. "It is important for anyone moving livestock to follow all import and export requirements of their state," Keller said. "Producers should work with their veterinarians to get health certificates and to ensure they are following correct protocol."

It is unknown at this point how the South Dakota herds were infected. Tuberculosis is a zoonotic disease and can be transmitted from animals to humans and from humans to animals. It is caused by three specific types of bacteria that are part of the Mycobacterium (M.) group: M. bovis, M. avium and M. tuberculosis.

More information regarding Tuberculosis is available at <https://www.nd.gov/ndda/disease/tuberculosis>.

Source: <http://www.valleynewslive.com/content/news/418243143.html>

## **USDA Authorizes Emergency Grazing**

*(From USDA Press Release)*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), acting in response to a directive from President Donald J. Trump, today authorized emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands located in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas - the three states which were most heavily impacted by ongoing wildfires which began on March 6, 2017. USDA Acting Deputy Secretary Michael L. Young issued a memorandum authorizing the emergency grazing of cattle by ranchers, who are facing the ruination of their herds due to lack of sufficient grazing land. The authorization is pursuant to appropriate restrictions and conservation measures, which can be found in the Acting Deputy Secretary's memorandum.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/lwc39p9>

## **USDA Report Highlights Changes in Community Supported Agriculture Business Model**

*(From USDA Press Release)*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today released a report, Community Supported Agriculture: New Models for Changing Markets, highlighting six case studies of farmers using the community supported agriculture (CSA) direct-to-consumer business model and how that model has changed since the 1980s.

Many CSAs still use the traditional business model of a farmer or network of farmers offering consumers regular (usually weekly) deliveries of locally-grown farm products, particularly fruit and vegetables, during the growing season on a subscription or membership basis. The report shows that some CSAs have modified this model to include new products, partnerships and technology to create sustainable local food businesses.

The report was prepared through a cooperative research agreement between USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the University of Kentucky. In addition to preparing the case studies, University of Kentucky researchers, led by principal investigators Timothy Woods and Matthew Ernst, conducted a national survey of CSA managers and operators and convened focus groups in the six states where the CSAs highlighted in the case studies are located.

The case studies included in the report are: Elwood Stock Farm, Georgetown, Ky.; Penn's Corner Farmer Alliance, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Farmer Dave's Northeast Organic Farming Alliance-Massachusetts, Boston, Mass.; FairShare CSA Coalition, Madison, Wis.; Innovations in Denver Urban and Urban Fringe Markets, Denver, Colo.; and Fair Shares Combined CSA, St. Louis, Mo.

Among the report's findings:

CSA operations represent only one portion of a farmer's diversified marketing strategy. For many CSAs, sales of farm products through the CSA portion of their farm business account for less than half of their total sales value. Surveyed CSA managers and operators reported that their CSA represented 53 percent of the value of their farm sales on average per year, with only one-third of respondents indicating that their CSA represented 75 percent or more of their farm sales.

Read more. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/press-release/usda-report-highlights-changes-community-supported-agriculture-business-model-new>

## **Forget Fruit Bars and Pretzels, Meat Snacks Are Trending Stronger**

*(From Meatingplace.com)*

The meat snack category has posted compound annual sales growth of more than 7 percent over the past four years, with sales growth of 3.5 percent for the year ended Feb. 25, 2017, according to recent research by Nielsen Company.

A \$2.8 billion category, meat snacks are bucketed into jerky and sticks, each of which contributes about half of total sales. Jerky had a particularly strong recent year, boasting sales growth of nearly 7 percent. Sales growth in the meat stick sub-group was flat in the recent year, after dramatic ups and downs in the previous three years.

American households spend an average of \$25.81 per year on meat snacks. Their per-trip spend on sticks and jerky is also about twice as much as it is on popular staples like potato chips and popcorn (\$7.42 vs. \$3.61 and \$4.01, respectively).

In looking across generations and ethnicities, Asian-American households spend the most each year (\$31.61 on average) and are more than 22 percent more likely to buy meat snacks than the average shopper.

In terms of age groups, Baby Boomers are the biggest buyers, spending \$28.48 per year, making them 10 percent more likely to buy meat snacks than the average shopper. When consumers shop, they're likely to buy meat snacks at the same primary three channels where they buy salty snacks, but they buy significantly less at conventional grocery stores. While meat snacks have experienced stable sales growth over the past few years, it's important to take note of other up-and-coming protein snack varieties. Though much smaller than the larger meat snack category, pork snack products have been trending down since climbing above 6.5 percent for the year ended March 1, 2014. In fact, sales growth was just under 1 percent for the most recent 12-month period.

Whether acting as meal replacements or a stopgap between meals, snacks play a critical role in the American diet. Total salty snack category accounted for more than \$27.5 billion in sales across Nielsen-measured U.S. retail stores this past year.

According to Nielsen, despite consumers' drive to lead more healthy lifestyles, snacking trends appear to be shifting away from snack bars, cereal snacks and dried fruits. Even the potato chip category, responsible for more than \$7.2 billion in annual sales, posted dollar growth of just 1.7 percent for the recent year while pretzels lost 0.5 percent in sales in the last year, pulling in just under \$1.5 billion.

## **NIFA Announces \$2.4 Million to Relieve Veterinary Shortages**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) today announced \$2.4 million in available funding to relieve veterinarian shortage situations and support veterinary services. Funding is made through NIFA's Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP), authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

"Veterinarians play significant roles in assuring animal health and wellbeing, food safety and security, public health, and producer profitability, especially in rural areas of the country where most livestock production occurs," said NIFA Director Sonny Ramaswamy. "VSGP supports education and extension activities that will help veterinarians, veterinary students, veterinary technicians, and veterinary technician students gain specialized skills and provide practices with additional resources."

The Veterinary Services Grant Program supports development, implementation, and sustainability of veterinary services to relieve veterinarian shortage situations in the United States and insular areas. Grants will be made available on a competitive basis to:

- Establish or expand accredited veterinary education programs, veterinary residency and fellowship programs, or veterinary internship and externship programs carried out in coordination with accredited colleges of veterinary medicine.
- Provide continuing education and extension, including veterinary telemedicine and other distance-based education, for veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and other health professionals needed to strengthen veterinary programs and enhance food safety.
- Cover travel and living expenses of veterinary students, veterinary interns, externs, fellows, and residents, and veterinary technician students attending training programs in food safety or food animal medicine.

Eligible applicants for education, extension and training programs include: state, national, allied or regional veterinary organization or specialty board recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association; college or school of veterinary medicine accredited by the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges; university research foundation or veterinary medical foundation; department of veterinary science or department of comparative medicine accredited by the Department of Education; state agricultural experiment station; or state, local or tribal government agency.

Eligible applicants for rural practice enhancement programs include for-profit or nonprofit entities or individuals operating veterinary clinics in rural areas and veterinarian shortage areas as specified in the request for applications.

The deadline for applications is May 19, 2017.

Full text:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANIFA/bulletins/191d9b7>

**From National Agricultural Statistics Service: Get Ready for 2017 Census**

In just a few months, America's farmers and ranchers will have the opportunity to make a positive impact on their operations and communities by taking part in the Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the census captures a complete count of all U.S. Farms and ranches and those who operate them. You can find the results of the 2012 Census of Agriculture at <https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>.

The Census of Agriculture provides a unique picture of U.S. agriculture since it shows the contributions of farms of all sizes at the county, State, and national level. It is also the main source for demographic data (age, sex, race/ethnicity) of U.S. farmers.

NASS is in the final stage for preparing the 2017 Census of Agriculture mailing list. If you are new to farming or didn't receive a 2012 Census of Agriculture questionnaire there is still time to be counted by signing up at <https://www.agcounts.usda.gov/cgi-bin/counts/>. Simply click on the 'Make Sure You Are Counted' button below and provide the requested information.

For those of you that work with immigrant or refugee farmers and ranchers and language may be an obstacle, I encourage you to work with your Regional or State Statistician. You can find contact information at <https://www.nass.usda.gov/>, locate your State in the drop-down box in the U.S. map, then follow the Contact link on the left side of the page. For those of you in the New England State, I plan to be contacting you in the next couple of weeks or you can contact me at the [gary\\_keough@nass.usda.gov](mailto:gary_keough@nass.usda.gov).

All individual information provided to NASS is confidential and only used for statistical purposes. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection provisions of Title V, Subtitle A, Public Law 107-347 and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed in identifiable form to anyone other than employees or agents. By law, every employee and agent has taken an oath and is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation.