



## **National Bison Association**

8690 Wolff Court, Suite 200 Westminster, CO 80031-3646  
www.BisonCentral.com Phone: 303-292-2833 Fax: 303-845-9081

### **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 13, 2018***

### **Microsoft Hosts Bison-Themed Culinary Competition**

NBA Board member Mimi Hillenbrand and former President John Flocchini are in Seattle, WA today to help judge an EPPIC (Experienced Professionals/Pupils in Culinary) culinary competition that Microsoft Corporation is hosting in collaboration with the James Beard Foundation, Slow Food USA, Edmonds College Culinary Program and South Seattle Community College (SSCC).

Each SSCC culinary student will be paired up with a Dining at Microsoft Executive Chef to compete as a team and create dishes to be judged for taste, quality, safety and appearance. One winner will be selected from each college.

One of the sustainable ingredients the chefs will be using is bison meat provided by Durham Ranch and it is featured as the “secret ingredient” in the competition.

The culinary competition is a reflection of the growing collaboration between the NBA and Microsoft. The Corporation began serving bison in its corporate dining facilities last fall. Those facilities serve the company’s 60,000 employees.

### **NBA Presents Farmers Market Workshop in Indiana**

Nearly 60 producers are on hand today for a farmers’ market workshop being hosted by the National Bison Association in conjunction with the Illinois-Indiana Bison Association spring meeting in Bloomington, IN.

The workshop, which is underwritten through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service, is covering subjects regarding planning, merchandising,

marketing, and leveraging a presence at farmers' markets. And it is also covering agritourism and other direct marketing opportunities.

Helping to facilitate the workshop will be National Bison Association Executive Director Dave Carter, and Hoosier Farmers Market Association Director Christina McDougall. Tomorrow, the meeting participants are scheduled to tour the Bloomington Farmers Market.

## **Summer Conference Registration Opening Next Week, Sponsorships Available Now**

Mark your calendars for the 2018 NBA Summer Conference, hosted by the Kansas Buffalo Association, in Kansas City next June 27 – 29th! The NBA will open online registration early next week, so keep an eye out for an email inviting you to register for this great conference.

The conference planning committee is currently finalizing the agenda, but plan to enjoy presentations on pertinent topics that will range from today's bison conformation challenges, to soil conservation, to bison-specific parasite management. All attendees will have valuable knowledge to take home, and that's not to mention the fun to be had. We'll have a bison culinary cookoff on Thursday, live entertainment on Wednesday, bison themed dinners both nights, a virtual ranch tour of five plus Kansas bison ranches all professionally filmed, and an optional ranch tour on Friday afternoon. We're even auctioning off a six head bison herd! This will be a very producer-friendly bison conference that is not to be missed.

And don't miss these great sponsorship opportunities - <https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Summer-Conference-Sponsorships-2018.pdf> - that will show your support for today's bison industry while leveraging the summer conference itself. We have a sponsor level for everyone!

Our host hotel is the Kansas City Westin Crown Center - <http://www.westincrowncenterkansascity.com/> - in the old Kansas City downtown, close to a variety of attractions and a stop on the free trolley system that will take you all over KC! Rooms are available to attendees at the special discounted rate of \$159/night – double occupancy. The deadline to reserve your room is May 28, 2018. Reserve your room by calling (888) 627-8538 and request the National Bison Association room block.

## **USDA Food Purchase Program Seeks Bison Meat**

The US Department of Agriculture Ag Marketing Service (AMS) announced this week a new round of plans to purchase meat and fish products for the National School Lunch Program and other Federal food nutrition assistance programs, including ground bison.

The National School Lunch Program regularly purchases proteins to subsidize public schools in need and have included bison in recent years.

Learn more about the program at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/content/usda-meat-and-fish-purchase-program-announced>

Deliveries of awarded applicants will take place between July 1, 2018 June 30, 2019.

Please direct questions to AMS point of contact Andrea Lang who can be reached by phone at (202) 720-4237 or by email to [NewVendor@ams.usda.gov](mailto:NewVendor@ams.usda.gov). Details of these requirements are available online at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food/becoming-approved>.

## **Clostridial disease is fatal in bison, so prevention is vital**

*(From The Western Producer)*

I have run across several clostridial (blackleg) outbreaks in bison over the years.

I will use the term blackleg to refer to most of the clostridial diseases bison get, even though only one specific one causes the true blackleg.

It is a spore-producing bacterium and the spores remain infective in the soil for more than 50 years.

Most clostridial diseases have similar clinical signs, which are severe depression, high fevers and lameness if the true blackleg has affected the muscles in the leg.

Most bison producers will find an animal dead. Death is rapid, often within 24 hours of the animal showing clinical signs.

Animals can survive another clostridial disease called redwater, because of red-coloured urine, for a few days.

All clostridial diseases are fatal and contrary to popular belief that mature bison cannot get blackleg, they can.

Producers should have autopsies carried out on any bison deaths and especially sudden deaths. The post-mortems must be conducted quickly because bison autolyze (break down) fast, which could make it difficult to determine cause of death.

While there are fewer bison deaths than cattle deaths caused by clostridial diseases, mature bison do get sick and die from it. That is a shame considering the vaccination has proven over the years to be very protective, achieving close to 95 to 100 percent effectiveness.

You will be using the cattle vaccine at the same dose for your bison. This is considered using it extra label in Canada and I believe it is used under the minor species status in the United States. It is best to check with your herd veterinarian and the specific vaccine they recommend for your area.

Read more. <https://www.producer.com/2018/04/clostridial-disease-is-fatal-in-bison-so-prevention-is-vital/>

## **Bison Helping Illinois Landscape**

*(From The Alton Daily News)*

Nature explorers in or near Illinois looking for some weekend fun now have the chance to look for bison at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington

Veronica Hinke, public affairs officer with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service at Midewin, said the bison were first introduced in October 2016 as a conservation experiment lasting 20 years to see if other native prairie animals would be attracted to the prairie because of the bison grazing patterns.

“We are hoping that we will determine at some point down the road if the grazing of the bison is helping with that, if they are helping heal that lost landscape,” Hinke said, adding that Illinois once had 22 million acres of prairie.

Hinke said interest in the bison is typically high in spring, which is when calves are typically born.

“Late spring, early summer is when we start to see the bison calves being born and that is what we are really excited about for our event on May 5,” Hinke said.

Hinke said about 50 bison roam about 1,000 acres. Volunteer rangers will help visitors look for the bison from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday until November.

“(The volunteers) will take people to look for the bison,” Hinke said. “A good starting point is the Iron Bridge Trailhead. That is the area nearest where they have most frequently been seen grazing.”

Not everyone gets to see the bison.

“We can’t ever promise that people will see them, but what we have experienced is that people have a lot of fun looking,” Hinke said. “They see native Illinois.”

The program was not without controversy. The program was criticized by cattle owners who had spent decades leasing the grassland from the government. Bison carry diseases they worried would spread to their herds.

Source. [http://altondailynews.com/news/details.cfm?clientid=17&id=263349#.Ws\\_eL5dMHb0](http://altondailynews.com/news/details.cfm?clientid=17&id=263349#.Ws_eL5dMHb0)

## **One of America's bison herds just welcomed a newborn. Watch this calf take its first steps** *(From The LA Times)*

If you're looking for a spring trip and love baby animals, you may want to head to Custer State Park in South Dakota's Black Hills. The park welcomed its first baby bison in late March — and about 450 more are expected to be born this spring.

The video above shows the cinnamon-colored calf take its first clumsy steps as it bonds with mom and other members of one of America's largest publicly owned herds.

Millions of bison, sometimes referred to as "buffalo," once roamed North America. By the late 1800s, only a few hundred were left. Europeans settling in the West had hunted the creatures and destroyed their habitat.

Custer State Park maintains its herd of 1,300 by having a roundup each fall (Sept. 28 this year). It's a chance to watch cowboys, cowgirls and park staff saddle up to rally the herd. Most return to the park; some are auctioned off.

Spring also brings baby elk, deer and bighorn sheep that you can view in a drive along the park's 18-mile Wildlife Loop Road.

Read more. <http://www.latimes.com/travel/la-tr-south-dakota-custer-state-park-welcomes-its-first-bison-calf-20180411-story.html>

## **Weekend Getaway: Enjoy a unique getaway at bison ranch**

*(From Lake News Online)*

Elkhead Ranch has a lot of history, scenic views and roaming bison and elk. It's an adventure for those who enjoy spending time enjoying nature and wildlife.

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The Bruner, Missouri area ranch was purchased in 2012 by Randy and Jane Miller of Nebraska. The ranch is home to their Missouri bison operation. The Millers have been raising bison since 1995 from their home ranch in Nebraska.

Bison herds in America are growing and thriving. While it's true that at one time bison were near extinction due to westward expansion and recreational killing of the American Bison during the days of the Wild West, there has been a resurgence in recent years, putting the iconic American symbol well out of danger of extinction.

The roaming bison and other animals provide a unique backdrop for a day or a weekend. The ranch is named after a road that once cut through the property. Guests will find an old cemetery, as well as remnant from old homesteads.

Source: <http://www.lakenewsonline.com/news/20180408/weekend-getaway-enjoy-unique-getaway-at-bison-ranch>

## **Descendants of a famed bison herd headed to Oakland Zoo**

*(From The Mercury News)*

Fourteen female bisons, part of the historic Pablo-Allard herd, are on their way to Oakland Zoo, where they eventually will be joined by two males from Yellowstone National Park.

The end goal? Restore a herd of a few thousand living in an open-range setting on Blackfoot tribal land, Glacier National Park and Waterton National Park, which straddle the border between Montana and Alberta, Canada.

The bison will live in the zoo's new California Trail on 12 acres of rolling grassland and oak trees. The area also has a 25-foot long pond and a dust wallow to allow the bison to live as they do in the wild, as well as a state-of-the-art corral and chute system for management and medical care.

The Pablo-Allard herd began when four to seven orphaned calves were captured by Samuel Walking Coyote of the Pend d'Oreilles tribe and three Blackfeet companions. The calves were orphaned during a hunt on Blackfeet land. With their mothers killed, the calves shadowed the hunters' horses for security, making them easy to capture.

The herd grew to 13 in 1884, and 10 of the bison were sold to Michel Pablo and Charles Allard, forming the Pablo-Allard herd on Montana's Flathead Reservation. This herd eventually became the largest in the United States, numbering 300 head, and played a key role in the preservation of bison by restocking and supplementing many public conservation herds, including those at Yellowstone National Park and the National Bison Range herd in Montana.

In 1906, when the U.S. government opened the Flathead Reservation to homesteaders, Pablo sought a land grant for his herd, but was denied. He eventually sold the bison to the government of Canada and the animals were shipped to Elk Island National Park by train. The last of the herd arrived north of the border in 1912.

Read more. <https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/04/11/descendants-of-a-famed-bison-herd-headed-to-oakland-zoo/>

## **Disease Of Cattle And Bison Has ... Butting Horns Again** *(From Wyoming Public Media)*

Bison carry brucellosis which causes miscarriage in cattle. Slaughtering bison who wander out of Yellowstone National Park to protect livestock has been a controversial management practice for decades. Superintendent Dan Wenk spoke out on the issue this week.

Dan Wenk talked to the Mountain Journal, a non-profit and public-interest watchdog. In the video Wenke said there's another reason that ranchers support killing bison.

"I think competition for grass, especially on public lands with grazing allotments et cetera. I think that people do not want to see bison have a bigger part of the landscape," said Wenke.

The Montana Stockgrowers Association sees things differently. Jay Bodner said ranchers would support more bison on grazing lands if there was a proper management plan in place.

"You simply can't just turn them out and expect them to be managed just like every other kind of wildlife," said Bodner.

There are no documented cases of bison transmitting brucellosis directly to cattle.

Read more. <http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/disease-cattle-and-bison-has-butting-horns-again#stream/0>

## **Students spur animal health innovation at hackathon [GA]**

*(From UGA Today)*

At the first-ever animal health-focused hackathon conducted in Georgia this past weekend, nearly 100 students applied inspiration and expertise spanning multiple disciplines to develop a number of potential solutions for the care and welfare of pets and livestock.

Ideas ranging from a fitness tracker for owners and their pets to a thermo-detection drone for early identification of sick livestock were developed into four-minute pitches, many of which even featured prototypes developed over the course of the weekend. The grand prize-winning team, PetSense, developed an Alexa-compatible intelligent feeding and weight monitoring system for cats and dogs.

Three other teams were recognized for their projects in three categories: Animal Human Bond; Disease Diagnostics, Preventive Measures and Tracking; and Sustainable Agriculture. The AutoMat team was recognized in the category of Animal Human Bond for their non-slip, self-disinfecting, reusable mat that provides a more comfortable examining table surface for pets.

The Third Arm team was recognized in the category of Disease Diagnostics, Preventive Measures and Tracking for their innovation of a surgical tool to enable precise placement of screws during surgery. In the Sustainable Agriculture category, the Chirp Alert team was recognized for its work on a mobile app-based screening test for five major poultry pathogens commonly seen in backyard chicken flocks.

Full text:

<https://news.uga.edu/students-spur-animal-health-innovation-at-hackathon/>

## **Conservation Innovation Grants in California**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California is now accepting proposals for \$375,000 in funding through its Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program. The maximum award amount for any project will not exceed \$75,000 in FY 2018. Projects should augment existing NRCS technical tools (planning, assessment, and/or delivery) to better facilitate conservation on farms and ranches.

In 2018, NRCS California is prioritizing proposals that improve the "technical toolbox" to address the following on-farm resource concerns: soil and water quality, wildlife habitat, water conservation, forest health, air quality, waste recycling, and energy conservation. Eligible applicants include state and local government, nongovernment organizations, Tribal governments, eligible private business and individuals.

Proposals are due by April 17, 2018.

Read more.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ca/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1384013>

## **Conservation Innovation Grants in South Dakota**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) serving South Dakota is accepting state proposals for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). NRCS South Dakota will award two new state level proposals and has designated \$150,000 for FY2018 with each proposal up to a \$75,000 maximum.

Proposals must be received by April 20, 2018.

Read more.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/sd/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1385211>

## **Canada unveils \$3 billion ag growth initiative**

*(From Meatingplace.com)*

The Canadian government recently announced the launch of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a C\$3 billion commitment that will help chart the course for government investments in the sector over the next five years.

The partnership aims to help the sector grow trade, advance innovation and strengthen public confidence in the food system, the government said. In addition, business risk management programs will continue to help producers manage significant risks that threaten the viability of their farms and are beyond their capacity to manage.

"Our goal is to help Canadian farmers, ranchers and processors compete successfully in markets at home and around the globe, through this strong collaboration between provincial, territorial and federal governments," Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Lawrence MacAulay said in a statement.

The Partnership includes C\$1 billion for federal activities and programs, and C\$2 billion in cost-shared programs delivered by provinces and territories on a 60:40 basis. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have been working collaboratively since 2016 to develop the policy framework. Ministers of agriculture will convene in Vancouver in July for an annual meeting.

## **A Grass-Roots Movement For Healthy Soil Spreads Among Farmers**

*(From NPR)*

In American farm country, a grass-roots movement is spreading, a movement to keep more roots in the soil. (Not just grass roots, of course; roots of all kinds.) Its goal: Promoting healthy soil that's full of life.

I met three different farmers recently who are part of this movement in one way or another. Each of them took me to a field, dug up some dirt, and showed it off like a kind of hidden treasure.

"You can see how beautiful that soil [is]," said Deb Gangwish, in Shelton, Neb. "I'm not a soil scientist, but I love soil!"

"You can pick it up and it smells like dirt," Bryce Irlbeck told me, as we stood in a field near Manning, Iowa. "You can go on a lot of farms in Iowa and the dirt doesn't smell like dirt anymore."

And in Pleasant Dale, Neb., Del Ficke was practically ecstatic. "Look at this! And the smell! It smells beautiful! It's alive!"

For years, talk of "healthy soil" was mostly limited to organic farmers and others on the fringes of mainstream American agriculture. No more. Articles about soil health fill major farm [publications](#). It's the subject of [several recent books](#). Big food [companies](#) are on board, and some of them are discussing a new [eco-label](#) for food, alongside "organic" and "fair trade," that would reward farmers for adopting practices that build healthy soil — what many are calling "regenerative agriculture."

Full story: [https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/04/09/597617822/a-grass-roots-movement-for-healthy-soil-spreads-among-farmers?utm\\_source=Daily+Harvest+2018&utm\\_campaign=b3f8f78fc3-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_04\\_10&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_6978e27d37-b3f8f78fc3-48790993](https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/04/09/597617822/a-grass-roots-movement-for-healthy-soil-spreads-among-farmers?utm_source=Daily+Harvest+2018&utm_campaign=b3f8f78fc3-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_04_10&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6978e27d37-b3f8f78fc3-48790993)

## **Brazil's Marfrig acquires control of National Beef in \$969 million deal**

*(From Reuters)*

SAO PAULO -- Brazil's Marfrig Global Foods SA ([MRFG3.SA](#)) has acquired a controlling stake in U.S. beef processor National Beef Packing Company LLC for \$969 million, the company said in a statement on Monday.

Marfrig has purchased 51 percent of National Beef Packing Company shares, in a transaction valuing the target at \$2.3 billion including debt, Marfrig said.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-national-beef-m-a-marfrig-gl-foods/brazils-marfrig-acquires-control-of-national-beef-in-969-million-deal-idUSKBN1HG1T4>