



## 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 19, 2019**

### Summer Conference Registration Now open!

The National Bison Association in conjunction with the North Dakota Buffalo Association invites you to [register](#) for the 2019 Summer Conference! Registration is now open for this family-friendly conference to be held July 7 - 10th in Bismarck, North Dakota. Please plan to join us for three days of fun, education, networking and camaraderie with your friends, old and new, in the bison business. Bismarck is easy to get in and out of by plane, train or automobile, and is very close to our friends to the North in Canada. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us!

Register online quickly and securely [here](#).

See all conference details [here](#).

The conference planning committee is currently finalizing the agenda, but the below will give you a good idea of some highlights and how the conference will flow:

### Wholesale Bull Prices Higher, Heifers Lower in March Report

Wholesale prices for dressed bison bull carcasses rose in March, while dressed heifer carcasses dropped, according to the latest monthly wholesale bison price report issued by the USDA's Grain and Livestock Market News Service. Dressed bull carcasses averaged \$464.80/cwt. in March, which was \$11.73 higher than in February, but \$18.00/cwt. lower than the previous March. Dressed heifer carcasses averaged \$423.39/cwt., which was \$14.30/cwt. lower than in February and \$56.60/cwt. lower than in February 2018. Older bulls and cows were both higher over the previous month, but lower than in March 2018.

Year-to-date processing under federal inspection for the first 14 weeks of 2019 was 14,427 bison, which was an increase of 1,46 over the year-to-date volume in 2018.

The USDA monthly price report can be found here.

[https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw\\_ls526.txt](https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw_ls526.txt)

The National Bison Association's five-year tracking report can be found in the members' section at [www.bisoncentral.com](http://www.bisoncentral.com).

## **Spring Bison World Magazine Available Online**

One of the perks of NBA membership is access to the *Bison World* magazine before the printed copies arrive in the mail! Production on the Spring issue has wrapped up and it will be available on the website at: <https://bisoncentral.com/publication/bison-world-magazine/>.

Features in this issue include extensive coverage and photos from the Winter Conference and Gold Trophy Show and Sale; a profile of the Member of the Year, Dr. Dave Hunter and an in-depth feature on one of our members, Red Frazier Bison! Don't miss the great read on the fossil excavation plans for Snake River Farm. We hope you will enjoy this jam-packed edition of the magazine.

The flipbook version of the magazine can be viewed right on your computer. Handy links allow you to open it into a new window, make it larger, magnify certain features and even print pages if desired. The realistic page turning sounds make it feel like you are reading the printed version of the magazine.

The hard copy magazine is currently being printed and will mail later this month.

## **2019 Bison Food Booklet Now Available for Pre-Orders**

As part of the revamping of the *Bison World* magazine, the Spring issue features the popular Bison Food Booklet as an insert and will also be offered as a stand-alone publication suitable for promotional use and distribution to consumers and food enthusiasts! These booklets are perfect for handing out at farmers' markets or at your on-farm store. They also make great promotional tools for your food truck or trade-show booth. We are hopeful that having this publication out earlier in the year will make it a more valuable tool for our members to use in their promotional outreach efforts.

The 8-page booklet contains nutritional, cuts, cooking and preparation technique information as well as plenty of delicious recipes. This year's theme, *Have it all With Bison* features Easy Weeknight Meals and Decadent Dinners. **Price is \$1 per booklet.** If you are interested in ordering booklets, please email [barb@bisoncentral.com](mailto:barb@bisoncentral.com) with your information and the number of booklets you would like to order.

## **Summer Bison World Advertising Available**

Production is just getting underway on the Summer issue of *Bison World*. Articles will cover a wide range of topics and preview our upcoming Summer Conference slated for July in Bismarck, ND.

There are a variety of advertising options available, from 1/8 page all the way to full page. Lifetime and Active NBA members will enjoy discounted rates as part of their membership perks. For those wanting to commit to long-term advertising, contract rates are available.

For more information about advertising your ranch, business or events, contact [Karen@bisoncentral.com](mailto:Karen@bisoncentral.com).

## **National Buffalo Museum Named Best Museum in North Dakota by USA Today**

*USA Today* just released their list of the best museums in every state and the National Buffalo Museum in Jamestown made the top pick for North Dakota. To determine which museum ranked the best in each state, 24/7 Wall St. sifted through the rankings by various sources, considered the top museums from a listing for each state, observed annual attendance figures and weighed visitor comments.

For those of you planning to attend the Summer Conference this July in Bismarck, ND, we'll have an opportunity to visit the museum and see for yourselves why it was a top pick.

## **Next chapter for National Bison Range**

*(From the Montana Missoulian)*

In the 1930s, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes had proposed that the Mission Mountains on the Flathead Indian Reservation be designated as a tribally managed national park. We garnered support from the local superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, but the idea failed to secure support from higher levels of the BIA, which then wielded a more stifling level of control over tribal affairs.

Several decades later, the Tribes unilaterally created the 92,000-acre Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, the first such tribally designated wilderness area in the country. We allow public access to the entire area, but demonstrate our care for the ecosystem by seasonally closing a section of the wilderness to protect important grizzly bear feeding areas. Despite federal resistance to conservation designation for the Mission Mountains, the Tribes enacted such protection on our own.

In another conservation effort, in the late 1800s tribal members brought bison calves over the Continental Divide in order to establish a conservation herd on our reservation. When the federal government opened the reservation to non-Indian homesteading in the early 1900s, the BIA told our tribal members that they must sell their free-ranging bison herd due to the impending fencing of these homesteads. In 1908, the federal government took the lands for the National Bison Range without our consent. Decades later, a federal claims court held this to be an unconstitutional taking.

Over recent decades, the Tribes have attempted partnerships with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Bison Range through Tribal Self-Governance contracting. Our last agreement produced a good partnership in which we helped manage the Range.

In 2016, the Tribes drafted legislation to restore the National Bison Range land to federal trust ownership for the Tribes — which had been the status of the land under the Hellgate Treaty prior to creation of the Range. The Service supported the idea, which included requirements for public access and bison conservation. The Tribes released our draft legislation for public comment, held a public meeting and revised the draft to take into account public input. Many conservation organizations went on record in favor of the draft bill.

We have notified the Montana congressional delegation and the U.S. Department of the Interior that we would like to revisit the proposal to restore the National Bison Range to federal trust ownership for the Tribes.

Restoration of the Bison Range to federal trust ownership for the Tribes remains an elegant solution to the question of Range management. Allowing the Tribes to once again manage the bison herd on our reservation, while maintaining public access, is a forward-thinking solution that respects the history of the land, people and wildlife involved. The Tribes have repeatedly proven ourselves as both partners and wildlife managers.

Full Story here. [https://missoulian.com/opinion/columnists/next-chapter-for-national-bison-range/article\\_47e31b9c-a013-56f9-83b5-fdc4d8b79595.html](https://missoulian.com/opinion/columnists/next-chapter-for-national-bison-range/article_47e31b9c-a013-56f9-83b5-fdc4d8b79595.html)

## **Renovated Red Oak Steakhouse Combines Quapaw Projects**

*(From the Joplin Globe)*

From meat production to greenhouse produce to cultivated honey, the Quapaw Nation's various local farm and ranch operations will all be combined and showcased in the newly renovated Red Oak Steakhouse, the tribe announced this week.

With its renovations complete, the Red Oak Steakhouse, located inside Downstream Casino and Resort, 69300 E. Nee Rd., will be reopened this Saturday.

"It's phenomenal," said Lucus Setterfield, Downstream's director of food and beverage. "The chefs, the team, the front of the house, the servers — everybody gets so incredibly proud of this. So, to be able to see it all come together, it's massive. It's just a great feeling."

Setterfield said that the Red Oak had needed some updating, and Downstream officials decided that when they completed construction, they wanted to make sure that the environment told the unique story of the Quapaw Nation.

"Because the Quapaw Nation does so much agriculturally, and because they do so much in-house and they always want to know where their produce is coming from, we showcase that here," he said.

In a farm-to-table approach, the beef used in the restaurant will be from the Quapaw Nation's cattle and bison ranch and processed in the tribe's own meat processing plant, Setterfield said. Additionally, fresh herbs and produce will come from Quapaw greenhouses.

"Our very talented team of chefs uses both of those items in combination to make sure that we've got the freshest ingredients at the steakhouse," he said. "We also cultivate our own honey, so we want to make sure that that's always part of the showcase too."

Finally, the tribal members brew their own beer and roast their own coffee, Setterfield said. Both are used in the restaurant and bar.

"This is a chef's dream come true," said Saul Paniagua, chef de cuisine at Red Oak. "It's going to be great to be able to see the chefs going out to pick their own herbs and micro greens (in the greenhouse)."

Paniagua said that the menu at Red Oak will change seasonally to reflect the herbs and produce in season, making a diverse and unique selection.

Red Oak renovations include a more open and lightened space, high shelving for wine storage, hardwood floors instead of carpet and interior that features more river rock.

"It all tells the story of being a very special place, where guests will enjoy a very special dining experience," said Jani Cummings, Downstream general manager. "We want it to be unforgettable. It should be something they talk about with their family and friends for a very long time."

Full story here. [https://www.joplinglobe.com/news/local\\_news/renovated-red-oak-steakhouse-combines-quapaw-projects/article\\_f80e1561-7ac8-5df8-b954-3811ce1ba2df.html](https://www.joplinglobe.com/news/local_news/renovated-red-oak-steakhouse-combines-quapaw-projects/article_f80e1561-7ac8-5df8-b954-3811ce1ba2df.html)

## **'Natural' Means Practically Nothing When It Comes to Food**

*(From Eater Magazine)*

A judge in Washington, D.C. Superior court [has dismissed a lawsuit against meat conglomerate Hormel](#) that once again highlights the murky nature of products labeled as "natural" — a term that's become more popular in recent years in grocery aisles. The lawsuit filed by the animal rights group Animal Legal Defense Fund [claimed](#) that Hormel "engaged in potentially misleading advertising of animal products," arguing that the Hormel Natural Choice label lead consumers to believe its meat products do not contain antibiotics or hormones when, in fact, they do. While the ruling sided with Hormel, the lawsuit did reveal that the company's Hormel Natural Choice label uses the same hormone- and antibiotic-treated animals used to produce other conventional Hormel meat products like Spam.

The FDA [has no guidelines for use of the term "natural"](#) and only lightly enforces the term "all-natural," [according to Vox](#). Meanwhile, the [USDA defines "natural"](#) as "a product containing no artificial ingredient or added color" that "is only minimally processed," meaning it's "processed in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the product." That means animals raised with hormones and antibiotics can still fall under the "natural" category, as can [Cheetos](#), [lemon-flavored Oreos](#), and [Skippy peanut butter](#). The Hormel Natural Choice packaging is within the legal bounds outlined by the USDA — it defines "natural" as "minimally processed" with "no artificial ingredients." But the ALDF plans to appeal the ruling.

Although the lawsuit wasn't successful, the plaintiffs showed that Hormel employees acknowledged there isn't a meaningful difference between Hormel Natural Choice meats and other conventional Hormel options. Attorneys for the ALDF cited an email from a Hormel marketing director noting "the fact that many consumer[s] assume Natural=RWOA [Raised Without Antibiotics]." Another employee, Corwyn Bollum, stated in a deposition that there is "no separate manner in which the pigs raised for Hormel Natural Choice products are versus any

other of Hormel's products, so Spam or any other lunch meat or bacon product." Hormel did not deny the statement in its response to the lawsuit.

There's plenty of outside evidence that big food companies profit off consumer confusion. *Consumer Reports* found that [73 percent of respondents sought out products with the "natural" label](#) — a greater percentage than those who purchased more stringently labeled "organic" foods ([another sector that food conglomerates](#) are edging their way into). A [separate survey from Technomic](#) found that one in five consumers are willing to pay more for "natural" and "organic" labeled products — in essence, paying more money for a vaguely defined word.

Full story here. <https://www.eater.com/2019/4/11/18304951/natural-food-organic-meaning-difference-hormel-meat-lawsuit>

## **Agriculture Census Finds That Llamas Are Disappearing. What Happened?**

*(From NBC News)*

The llama population in the United States appears to be disappearing, as an agriculture census released last week found that the pack animals' numbers in the country have decreased dramatically.

There were nearly 145,000 llamas in the United States in 2002. By 2017, however, there were fewer than 40,000, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture publishes every five years.

The decline likely came as the llama market — once an industry that included high-rolling celebrities and athletes — quietly crashed, llama farmers, auctioneers and experts told NBC News.

"You used to go to the major sales and shows, and people would come in these Class A motorhomes. These people owned manufacturing plants, their own jet planes, whatever," said Mark Smith, who has farmed llama in Indiana for 25 years. "They were driving the market when llamas were a good investment."

But these pack animals native to South America seemed to only become valuable because people believed they were valuable. Their functional uses include providing fiber or working as pack animals. Llamas also sometimes guard sheep herds. None of those are particularly lucrative uses, however.

"Once the industry got beyond the novelty and breeding aspects, the question became: what do you do with them?" said Robert Van Saun, a professor of veterinary science at Penn State University who is an expert on llamas and alpacas.

Llama prices skyrocketed through from the 1980s into the 2000s.

Darrell Anderson, an auctioneer at one of the first production sales of llama held in the United States back in 1986 in Salem, Oregon, helped sell a llama that went for a record price of \$220,000. The prices, he said, became unsustainable.

Full story here. [https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/llamas-disappearing-across-united-states-n994181?utm\\_source=Agri-Pulse+Daily+Harvest+2018&utm\\_campaign=6545ec6582-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_04\\_15\\_09\\_41&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_6978e27d37-6545ec6582-48790993](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/llamas-disappearing-across-united-states-n994181?utm_source=Agri-Pulse+Daily+Harvest+2018&utm_campaign=6545ec6582-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_04_15_09_41&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6978e27d37-6545ec6582-48790993)

## 'Prayers And Perseverance' Nebraska Vet Says Worst Of Livestock Health Effects Still To Come

*(From Tri-State Livestock News)*

In a 15 to 20-mile radius around the town of Ashland, Nebraska, it's mucky and wet, but thankfully not flooded. Most everywhere else is a different story.

Dr. Richard Porter, with Porter Ridge Vet Clinic in Ashland, said most of the livestock are still in either mucky or flooded conditions, and they can't and won't be treated until they can escape those conditions. Unfortunately for many, that isn't an option.

"How do you move everything when it's wet everywhere?" Dr. Porter asked. "How do you treat 100 cows? Where do you start?"

The most predominant effect at the moment is getting feed to animals, though much of the hay and silage in the area has also succumbed to the weather, which, according to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA), is not to be fed.

"Cattle and horses have to walk in that deeper mud. It takes a lot more energy; some of these areas have been dealing with it for a period of time," he said. "It's hard to get feed to them, it stressed them out, they lose weight, especially if pregnant."

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y6af3apc>

## World Health Organization Drops Endorsement Of The EAT-Lancet Diet

*(From the New Food Economy)*

*British Medical Journal* reports that the World Health Organization (WHO), the arm of the United Nations charged with monitoring global health, has [dropped its endorsement](#) of the EAT-Lancet Commission's planetary health diet—a much-ballyhooed, well-publicized attempt at saving the planet through the food we eat.

The organization pulled out of sponsoring a launch event in Geneva, Switzerland, on March 28, after Gian Lorenzo Cornado, Italy's ambassador to the United Nations, questioned the diet's impact on public health. The ambassador stated that radical, drastic limitations on animal livestock production—the commission's primary recommendation—would cause economic hardship in developing countries. [In a press release](#), the "permanent mission," as the office is known, also suggested the report was not sufficiently independent, and aimed for nothing less than the "total elimination of the freedom of choice" by consumers.

“A standard diet for the whole planet, regardless of the age, sex, metabolism, general state of health and eating habits of each person, has no scientific justification at all,” Cornado wrote. “Moreover, it would mean the destruction of millenary healthy traditional diets which are a full part of the cultural heritage and social harmony in many countries.”

The launch event still went ahead, but was sponsored instead by the government of Norway—where EAT, the advocacy group that led the study, is based. According to a report that the Italian office posted on their website, it sounds like the study’s authors [got heckled a bit](#)—specifically, about a claim in the report that “inappropriate” foods should be discontinued.

Full story here. <https://newfoodeconomy.org/world-health-organization-drops-its-high-profile-endorsement-of-the-eat-lancet-diet/>

## **Senator’s Bill Would Codify USDA-FDA Regulation Of Cell-Based Products**

(From Meatingplace.com)

Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R. Miss.) has introduced legislation that would give USDA the primary charge to regulate, inspect and label cell-based meat and poultry products.

Amending existing federal meat and poultry inspection laws, the [Cell-Cultured Meat & Poultry Regulation Act of 2019](#) would codify the responsibilities of both the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in their jurisdiction of cell-based food products.

USDA and FDA have [agreed on a joint regulatory approach](#) in which USDA jurisdiction kicks in once a cell-based meat product is produced from the process of culturing animal cells. However, that agreement states it “does not create binding, enforceable obligations against either Agency,” and that it is subject to “the availability of personnel, resources, and funds.”

“While I am encouraged by the USDA-FDA framework, it is nonbinding and subject to modification or termination every three years,” Hyde-Smith said in a [news release](#). “My bill essentially codifies the terms of that agreement. The fact that FDA and USDA have agreed to identify necessary changes to statutory authority confirms the need for a legislative fix as I’ve proposed.”

## **EU Says It Is Ready To Launch U.S. Trade Talks, But Without Agriculture**

(From Reuters)

The European Union is ready to start talks on a trade agreement with the United States and aims to conclude a deal before year-end, European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said on Monday.

The EU approved two areas for negotiation, opposed by France with an abstention from Belgium. But agriculture was not included, leaving the 28-country bloc at odds with Washington, which has insisted on including farm products in the talks.

The EU vote allows the Commission to start two sets of negotiations - one to cut tariffs on industrial goods, the other to make it easier for companies to show products meet EU or U.S. standards.

Malmstrom said she would now reach out to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to see when talks could begin.

“We are ready as soon as they are,” Malmstrom told a news conference.

A spokeswoman for Lighthizer declined to comment.

But U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley, chairman of the tax and trade-focused Senate Finance Committee, said a U.S.-EU trade deal that excluded agriculture would be “unlikely” to win approval in the U.S. Congress because so many lawmakers want farm access to Europe.

Full story here. [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-eu/eu-says-it-is-ready-to-launch-us-trade-talks-but-without-agriculture-idUSKCN1RR0OZ?utm\\_source=Agri-Pulse+Daily+Harvest+2018&utm\\_campaign=8e143e563b-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_04\\_16\\_09\\_39&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_6978e27d37-8e143e563b-48790993](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-eu/eu-says-it-is-ready-to-launch-us-trade-talks-but-without-agriculture-idUSKCN1RR0OZ?utm_source=Agri-Pulse+Daily+Harvest+2018&utm_campaign=8e143e563b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_04_16_09_39&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6978e27d37-8e143e563b-48790993)

## **U.S. Farmers Fear China Trade Deal Will Leave Them Worse Off**

*(From Bloomberg)*

Some U.S. farm groups fear that President Donald Trump’s terms for easing his trade war with China risk leaving large swaths of American agriculture worse off than before the conflict began. Many producers are alarmed by signs that the administration would accept Chinese purchase target pledges for commodities like soybeans and pork without a promise to lift retaliatory tariffs, said industry representatives, some of whom spoke only on condition of anonymity to avoid consequences for publicly criticizing the administration.

“This is of great concern to producers out here facing another year of tariffs,” said Mark Powers, president of the Northwest Horticultural Council, which represents cherry, pear and apple growers in the Pacific Northwest. “We’re disappointed. Clearly the priority lies elsewhere.”

Farmers are unnerved by Trump’s enthusiasm for tariffs and his tendency to pick industry winners and losers, even as he promises in general terms to put “America first” in negotiations with the U.S.’s largest trading partner.

As China and the U.S. aim to finalize a trade truce within the next month, Beijing is considering a U.S. request to shift some tariffs on key agricultural goods to other products, people familiar with the situation said.

Full story here. [https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-15/farmers-fear-china-trade-deal-will-fail-to-erase-counter-tariffs?utm\\_source=Agri-Pulse+Daily+Harvest+2018&utm\\_campaign=8e143e563b-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_04\\_16\\_09\\_39&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_6978e27d37-8e143e563b-48790993](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-15/farmers-fear-china-trade-deal-will-fail-to-erase-counter-tariffs?utm_source=Agri-Pulse+Daily+Harvest+2018&utm_campaign=8e143e563b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_04_16_09_39&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6978e27d37-8e143e563b-48790993)

## **USMCA Would Give Slight Boost To U.S. GDP, Key Report Says**

*(From Meatingplace.com)*

An analysis of the new North American trade pact released Thursday by the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) has determined that the deal would raise U.S. real gross domestic product by 0.35 percent and U.S. employment by 0.12 percent.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), signed by the leaders of the three countries to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, must be ratified by Congress, which mandated the ITC report.

“In light of the size of the U.S. economy relative to the size of the Mexican and Canadian economies, as well as the reduction in tariff and nontariff barriers that has already taken place among the three countries under NAFTA, the impact of the agreement on the U.S. economy is likely to be moderate,” the ITC said.

The small gains in the study’s headline numbers could make it more difficult for President Donald Trump to sell the deal to congressional Democrats, according to a report by [Politico](#), which noted the administration sought to downplay the [379-page study](#) before its release.

## **USDA Announces Cooperative Agreement Funding For Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Project Proposals**

*(From USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Bulletin)*

The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is announcing the availability of \$1 million in cooperative agreement funding to support animal disease traceability (ADT) and electronic identification for cattle.

The money will fund between two to five projects that will help USDA increase the accuracy, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of collecting key pieces of traceability information, while also supporting the cattle industry's management and marketing needs. These projects will document how to link ultrahigh frequency backtags with other identification devices to collect animal movement and disease program data while still maintaining the speed of commerce. Backtags are used extensively in livestock markets, and we need to learn more about how adding radio frequency identification (RFID) functionality will support traceability in these high-volume, fast-paced environments. The projects will gather important real-world data to help USDA, States, Tribes and industry advance animal disease traceability and implement electronic ID.

ADT helps animal health officials know where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they've been, and when. This helps ensure a rapid response during disease events, which can reduce the number of animals and the response time, ultimately reducing the economic impact on owners and affected communities.

States and Tribes can work with industry or academic groups to design and implement their projects and gather the necessary data to advance traceability and benefit the livestock industry. To meet the goals for this funding, the projects will demonstrate capturing of animal

movement data at the speed of commerce and how that data can be stored and shared for traceability purposes.

Full text:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/bulletins/23ec781>

## **Bill To Address Rural Veterinary Shortages**

*(From Feedstuffs)*

Sens. Mike Crapo (R., Ida.) and Debbie Stabenow (D., Mich.) reintroduced bipartisan legislation April 12 to address the veterinarian shortage in rural areas. If passed, the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act (S. 1163) will play a critical role in addressing regional shortages of food animal and public health veterinarians in rural and agricultural communities.

The bill would help meet the growing demand for veterinarians nationwide by eliminating taxes on programs that encourage veterinarians to practice in underserved areas.

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA) designated 190 regions in 44 states as suffering from shortages of food animal or public health veterinarians -- the most in the program's history.

The American Veterinary Medical Assn. (AVMA) said student debt is, unfortunately, a key driver of these shortages: In 2018, average student debt for veterinarians who graduated with loans topped \$180,000. At the same time, food animal veterinary careers typically pay less than companion animal veterinary careers. "This income disparity can make it financially challenging for new veterinarians to pursue opportunities in food animal medicine," AVMA said.

Full text:

<https://www.feedstuffs.com/news/bill-address-rural-veterinary-shortages>