



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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May 4, 2018

Senators Request Adjustment of 2017 Livestock Indemnity Rates

U.S. Sens. Michael Rounds (R-SD) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) today sent a letter to USDA Undersecretary Bill Northey requesting an increase in the Livestock Indemnity Program compensation rates offered to producers suffering losses in 2017.

The Senators' action came at the request of the National Bison Association. Last fall, the NBA worked with the USDA Farm Service Agency to address the low compensation rates offered to bison producers filing claims under the LIP. That program is designed to provide producers with 75 percent of market value from losses incurred from covered events, such as drought or fire. However, the rates offered to bison producers had been about 25 percent of market value.

FSA significantly increased the compensation level for 2018 losses but did not address the 2017 rates.

In their letter to the Undersecretary, the Senators wrote, "We write to request that you take action to address the unfair compensation rates for bison claims filed under the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) in 2017. Without action, bison producers may face challenges due to the USDA's multi-year delay in updating bison compensation rates.

"Last fall, the National Bison Association notified the Farm Service Agency that the compensation rates offered for eligible bison losses were far below the LIP's stated goal of 75% of the actual market value. The compensation rate for bison calves, for example, was less than 25% of actual market value, and bred females were compensated at 32% of the actual market value. In response, the Farm Service Agency used current market information to adjust the compensation rate for 2018, and also establish new methodology to ensure compensation rates reflect actual market values in future years.

The letter continued, "Despite this change, bison producers incurred significant losses in 2017 and now face the prospect of receiving outdated compensation rates (demonstrated in Table 1, below). This includes significant losses in December from the Legion Lake fire in South Dakota. However, the FSA's newly developed model includes calculations that fairly reflect the compensation that should have been provided last year. Therefore, we urge you to use the agency's new model to adjust the rates for claims filed in 2017 that are now pending.

“Congress recognizes that agriculture is a complicated enterprise and has provided USDA and the Farm Service Agency in particular equitable relief authority and other flexibility to correct discrepancies such as the out-of-date tables. We encourage you to use such authority here, instead of requiring producers to appeal on a case-by-case basis.”

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter said, “We deeply appreciate the commitment that Senators Rounds and Bennet are making to the nation’s bison producers. Their bipartisan leadership on our behalf reflects the strong working relationship that the National Bison Association has developed with key policymakers.”

NBA Expanding Social Media Outreach

The NBA has ramped up our social media outreach and we want our members to help spread the word and interact with us!

We have a presence on Facebook, Instagram and now, Twitter! We are excited to be sharing information, fun facts, photos, video and live video on our social media platforms. Our members have been sharing their calf photos with us of late and we are excited to be able to showcase those on our sites.

You can find us on all three platforms by searching for National Bison Association or @nationalbison. We are working to establish a regular presence on these platforms so we can keep you all informed and entertained.

We have lots of things planned, so check us out, share, like and comment and help us grow our presence on social media. Your input is vital to help us spread the word about bison and our business.

Be watching for Summer Conference updates and sneak peeks as more details are finalized in the coming weeks.

If you have any feedback or suggestions, please feel free to send them to our Communications Director, Karen Conley, at Karen@bisoncentral.com.

Sen. Bennet Tours NBA Member Herd, Discusses Ag Policies



U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) visited an eastern Colorado bison ranch earlier this week to learn about holistic management practices, and to discuss farm policy issues with NBA members and leaders of the Savory Institute.

Bennet traveled on Tuesday to the 7,800-acre West Bijou Ranch, east of Denver for a tour and meeting. The ranch is owned by the Savory Institute, which leases ground to three NBA members, including executive director Dave Carter.

The small group toured the ranch and showed the Senator the newborn calves that dotted the landscape. The group also had a chance to sit down with Senator Bennet to discuss the forthcoming farm bill and the importance of including and expanding conservation programs that benefit responsible producers, support for beginning farmer and rancher assistance as well as lending programs.

NBA members Cannan Bennett, Carrie Bennett, David Wentz, Savory Institute's Bobby Gill and assistant director Jim Matheson joined the tour with Bennet and his state director. Cannan, a local high school junior and grandson of NBA Board member Debbie Thieman and her husband, Ray, was able to explain to the Senator how his USDA Farm Service Agency youth loan allowed him to start his herd at the age of 10 and continues to contribute towards his college fund.

Wentz explained to the Senator how USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service EQIP (Environmental Quality Improvement Program) funding helped develop the bison fencing on the ranch in a sustainable manner.

Gill provided an overview of the holistic management practices on the ranch, and the positive impact of ruminant grazing on restoring grasslands.

Matheson provided the Senator with information on key issues impacting the bison business.

After the tour, Matheson noted, "With the Senate preparing to debate the next Farm Bill, and with Senator Bennet serving on the Senate Agriculture Committee, this was a great opportunity to demonstrate how programs supporting bison production also support healthy lands and rural communities."

NBA President Convening M bovis Working Group

With *Mycoplasma bovis* continuing to grow as a threat to bison herd health and bison ranching viability, National Bison Association President Dick Gehring, in conjunction with Dakota Territory Buffalo Association, has initiated a process to convene a working group to help the association identify information and resources to help producers minimize their losses to the disease.

Mycoplasma bovis is different from other bacterial diseases in that it has no cell wall components for the bison immune system to recognize, making them slow to respond to infections. The onset of observable disease may be slow or relatively rapid. Herds across the western portion of North America have been severely affected, some losing 40-50 percent of their animals.

The disease has been a major point of discussion at recent state/regional association meetings, and at the NBA winter conference.

Last month, the NBA executive committee authorized the establishment of a working group to address this issue. The working group is intended to include key veterinarians, state animal health officials, USDA researchers, and others who are dealing with the disease.

University of Central Missouri Studies Bison Parasites

Researchers from the University of Central Missouri, UCM, have partnered with local bison owners, Michael and Amy Billings from Kingsville Missouri, to study tick-borne pathogens and fecal parasite prevalence in their herd. Anaplasmosis is an ongoing and increasingly prevalent disease in domestic bison herds. Prevalence can be impacted by land area, density of bison as well as ticks, and pasture management. Researchers at UCM are looking at the presence of anaplasmosis in the herd via bright-field microscopy and PCR. These results can aid owners in management of bison but can also give insight into the ecology of ticks, and geographic expansion of tick-borne diseases. Future studies can be conducted to look at different potential vectors and co-infections that may be occurring with different pathogens such as *Ehrlichia* and *Babesia*.

Blood was obtained from the bison through the tail vein. Blood smears were performed and DNA isolated. The DNA was quantified, and PCR was performed using primers for *Anaplasma*. DNA isolation and subsequent PCR confirmed the presence of *Anaplasma marginale* and *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* within eight animals. *Ehrlichia* and *Babesia* species were also found in 10 and two bison, respectively via microscopy. Four bison were co-infected with both *Anaplasma* and *Ehrlichia*. Other interesting results showed that the females were infected more frequently than males, and a higher prevalence of *Anaplasma* was seen in adults, and animals under one year were more likely to be infected with *Ehrlichia*. Researchers are seeing differences in presence of these pathogens based on age and gender, even in herds with an almost 1:1 ratio of males to females.

Researchers hope to continue surveying herds for these pathogens and to determine why females are infected more frequently and also why younger animals harbor *Ehrlichia* instead of *Anaplasma*.

Yellowstone: 72-Year-Old Woman Head-Butted by Bison

(From Newsweek)

An elderly visitor to Yellowstone National Park was headbutted by a bison and thrown off the trail, the National Park Service said on Wednesday.

The incident is the first injury to a visitor from a bison in 2018. NPS said that there was one incident during the whole of 2017 and five in 2015.

72-year-old Virginia Junk was visiting the park on Tuesday May 1 when she turned a corner and came across the animal around the Old Faithful geyser. According to the NPS, she did not see the animal and was unable to move out of the way before the bison rushed her.

She was butted in the thigh and pushed from the trail, NPS said. She was treated for minor injuries by the park's rangers and transported to Madison Memorial Hospital in Rexburg, Idaho by ambulance.

NPS said that no citations were issued relating to the incident.

"Animals in Yellowstone are wild and unpredictable, no matter how calm they appear to be," the park service said. They recommend that visitors stay at least 25 yards from most animals, including bison, while leaving at least 100 yards between any bears and wolves visitors might across.

Read more. <http://www.newsweek.com/yellowstone-bison-visitor-headbutt-909127>

Bison Drive Road reopens at Minneopa

(From The Mankato Free Press)

Motorists once again may use the bison drive road to view Minneopa State Park's small herd.

The road is open to park visitors between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Gates are in place on Wednesday, when maintenance projects are scheduled in the 331 park acres used by the free-roaming herd.

Visitors need to exit the range before closing time, since the road gates close at 7 p.m. sharp.

Park staff offer these tips for viewing bison:

- Bison may be difficult to spot at times; take advantage of the Seppmann Mill overlook to help spot them.
- Remain inside your vehicle at all times while within the bison range. Hiking is not allowed inside the range, but there are hiking trails all the way around the outside of the range.
- Always give bison clearance of at least 75 feet. Bison can be dangerous animals, especially when calves are present.
- Pets must be kept on a leash at all times.
- Respect the bison fence, do not climb or pull on fence wires.
- Bison get nervous around loud noises or lots of activity, keep your voices down and movements to a minimum.

Source. http://www.mankatofreepress.com/news/local_news/bison-drive-road-reopens-at-minneapolis/article_b5f2f38e-4e4c-11e8-a9ec-dbd5bd8bd71d.html

BLM Extends Comment Period on American Prairie Reserve's Bison Grazing Permits

(From the Billings Gazette)

The Bureau of Land Management will extend the scoping period by a month to allow the public more time to submit comments on the American Prairie Reserve's proposal to modify its grazing permits in Eastern Montana to allow bison.

An estimated 400 people attended four scoping meetings the BLM held this spring. Some people told agency officials that the timing of the meetings was difficult because they were scheduled when many ranchers were calving.

American Prairie Reserve controls private properties tied to 18 BLM grazing allotments in Chouteau, Fergus, Petroleum, Phillips, and Valley counties. The nonprofit group is seeking permission to: change the class of livestock from cattle to bison; allow for season-long grazing; fortify existing external boundary fences by replacing the second strand from the top with an electrified wire; and remove interior fences.

The BLM plans to analyze all 18 grazing allotments in one environmental assessment to consolidate efforts across the district and therefore asked the public to provide input on what needs to be analyzed in the document. The most helpful comments are those that describe specific issues of focus.

"We have already seen generous engagement and public support across the state for our application," said Betty Holder, land manager for American Prairie Reserve, in a statement. "A comment extension provides additional time for the public to request a fact-based analysis of our proposal's public benefits for wildlife, economic diversification, access, and recreation."

The scoping period has been extended to June 11. After scoping comments are received and reviewed, a draft environmental assessment will be released to the public for a 30-day review. During that time the BLM will host meetings to gather input from the public. Scoping comments can be emailed to blm_mt_scoping_ncmd@blm.gov or mailed to: APR Scoping Comments, BLM Malta Field Office, 47285 Highway 2, Malta, MT 59538. For more information, go to <https://go.usa.gov/xQWBw>.

Read more. http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/blm-extends-comment-period-on-american-prairie-reserve-s-bison/article_05965650-f992-51d7-a927-2b34a79e6b9e.html

Two Baby Bison Join the Herd at Riverside Discovery Center

(From The Scottsbluff Star Herald)

The American Bison has been in America for thousands of years. On Saturday, the public will be able to see two more on a regular basis.

Visitors to the zoo in Scottsbluff know they can drop by anytime and see Doc, a 14-year old bison. Doc enjoys his time at the zoo, but he is looking forward to spending time with the two female bison who arrived at the end of April. For now, he is separated from the two yearlings, but he has been trying to get a better look at the calves to learn more about them.

“So far, they can see each other through a fence,” said Anthony Mason, zoo director. “He (Doc) has been trying to nuzzle and lick them through the fence.”

Mason said he wanted to bring in more bison for the zoo’s group because they are herd animals and need to be kept in groups to thrive.

“Our goal is to grow the herd to five or six total over a couple of years,” he said.

The two bison calves already have Native American names, Makani and Chinook. Makani shares a birthday with Doc. The calves arrived from Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kansas. The staff at that facility contacted Mason shortly after he began looking for bison. They quickly agreed on a plan that was best for the animals, but waited several months until the bison were older before traveling.

“We’ve known for a while that they were coming here,” he said. “We also wanted to get out of winter and driving.”

Read more. http://www.starherald.com/news/local_news/two-baby-bison-join-the-herd-at-riverside-discovery-center/article_e356eb31-ed5f-55a8-afa5-2d0055853631.html

Robots Help Artist Bring Fine Bison Hair to Pricy Paintings

(From Reuters)

American artist Barnaby Furnas has turned to a custom-made robot to help him with paintings that can sell for more than \$100,000 at New York galleries.

Furnas and several artists are using digital printing robots that use techniques in paintings that were previously impossible or too labor intensive. The machines are guided by inputs from artists and optical sensors to paint in fine detail in lines thinner than a human eyelash.

“I literally think of that robot as a friend,” Furnas said in an interview. “More than a pet, less than an art assistant - somewhere in there.”

He has used a robot called “sozo,” which means imagination in Japanese, for tasks such as painting thousands of hairs on a bison in one of his artworks.

It leaves marks on a canvas according to his instructions that he communicates through an optical tracking system attached to a paintbrush-like rod.

It records a painter’s movements, allowing artists to edit brushstrokes before putting an image on a canvas. Those digital images can be combined with brushwork from an artist to bring new dimensions to a painting.

Sozo was created by technology startup Artmatr, whose CEO Ben Tritt is a painter. He sees the company as an open-source community that will help artists merge digital technology with traditional painting methods.

Besides Sozo, Artmatr also has a variety of machines that use ink jet heads found in printers.

“It lowers the risk threshold for individual mark making,” Furnas said.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-technology-robot-art/robots-help-artist-bring-fine-bison-hair-to-pricey-paintings-idUSKBN1I4223>

CFIA Investigation into Bovine Tuberculosis Officially Closed

(From CHAT News Today)

OTTAWA - The investigation into the outbreak of bovine tuberculosis in Alberta and Saskatchewan nearly two years ago is now closed.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency made the announcement on Monday after receiving the final laboratory culture results from the investigation. All of the results came back negative.

The outbreak began on a farm near Jenner in 2016. Six animals, all from the same ranch in Jenner, were found to have the disease. The agency tested herds in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba during the outbreak.

Approximately 11,500 animals were destroyed, and \$39 million in compensation was paid to producers.

According to the CFIA, the producers whose herds were depopulated and have completed the cleaning and disinfection of their premises have restocked their herds.

All farms have been removed from quarantine.

The CFIA says the final report into the outbreak will be released in June.

Source:

<http://chatnewstoday.ca/article/556323/cfia-investigation-bovine-tuberculosis-officially-closed>

Analysis Shows FSA Loans Important to Beginning Farmers

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is continuing its analysis of FSA loan-program usage. The latest results, released in a blog post, show that FSA loan programs have been crucial for beginning farmers, who often have difficulty securing credit elsewhere because of limited assets and experience. FSA provides both direct and guaranteed loans, for both land purchase and operating expenses.

This analysis showed that guaranteed lenders are falling short of meeting statutory lending targets for new farmers. In addition, it revealed that operating loans are more popular with

beginning farmers than ownership loans, and, of these, direct loans are more popular than guaranteed loans.

The analysis also shows that access to FSA loans remains uneven across different agricultural regions, indicating a need for additional outreach regarding program offerings.

Read more. <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/fsa-lending-fy2017-series2/>

NAFTA Talks Will Resume May 7

(From The Hill)

After weeks of intense negotiations, trade officials agreed continue their talks on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) next month.

Representatives from the United States, Mexico and Canada will meet again on May 7 in Washington.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Canada's Chrystia Freeland and Mexico's Ildefonso Guajardo have been meeting regularly in Washington over the past couple of weeks in a push to wrap up work on an updated NAFTA deal.

In the intervening week, Lighthizer is headed to China with several other Trump administration officials, including Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, to discuss a slew of issues in the trading relationship.

The three nations' trade teams — which have held a series of technical meetings between April 4-27 in Washington — are expected to keep working on the deal during next week's break for the leaders.

"During more than three weeks, the teams deepened their technical work on all issues in the negotiations," the Mexican Embassy said in a release.

While progress is being made, negotiators say there are still major hurdles to overcome.

Full story here. <http://thehill.com/policy/finance/385279-nafta-talks-will-resume-may-7>

Millennials Enjoy Customization in Food

(From Food Business News)

ROCKVILLE, MD. — Customization is key for the millennial generation, which comprises 69 million U.S. adults ages 18-34, according to market research firm Packaged Facts. Their pursuit of personalized, unique and novel offerings has created a ripple effect throughout the U.S. food and beverage industry.

"As the new slogan from Burger King has it, it's not just 'Have It Your Way' — it's 'Be Your Way,'" Packaged Facts said.

The shift toward fresh, creative and customized made-to-order meals has been a “game changing” development especially in the fast-casual food service segment, Packaged Facts said.

“The impact goes beyond the limited ‘white, wheat, or rye’ custom options of yesteryear to encompass restaurant meals that are bespoke in their entirety,” Packaged Facts said.

To meet millennials’ demand for food tailored to their tastes, restaurateurs are expanding into areas such as create-your-own-salad concepts, new-wave Asian and adaptable global cuisine. Salad concepts such as Sweetgreen, Tossed and Mean Greens have sprouted up as a response to millennials’ desire to experiment with healthy alternatives to fast food, Packaged Facts said. Customers may choose their own greens, vegetables, toppings and dressings, often paired with a fresh-squeezed juice or smoothie. Such restaurants boast locally sourced, fresh and natural ingredients as well as vegan and gluten-free options. Additionally, they appeal to millennials’ social consciousness with their eco-friendly design and community building efforts via social media.

“If the menu includes a manifesto or statement of core values, you’re in the right place,” Packaged Facts said.

The personalization movement is rewriting the playbook for Chinese, Japanese and South Asian cuisine, Packaged Facts said. The trend is spurring a new wave of Asian fast-casual restaurants that offer customized meals with more sophisticated ingredients and authentic flavors, all within a framework of pan-Asian culinary tradition.

“From stir-fry to noodle bars to sushi, it’s not entirely about authenticity,” Packaged Facts said. “It’s about new flavors and custom-built meals.”

Less familiar global cuisines, such as Indian and Korean, may also see success from adopting the customization-oriented fast-casual format, Packaged Facts said. In these concepts, customers may control their experience even as they experiment with new flavors and ingredients.

“Salad bars and self-service hot food stations set the stage in both food service and retail for a full-fledged customized dining lifestyle,” Packaged Facts said. “Once customers get a taste of customization, they won’t look back.”

Read more here. <https://www.foodbusinessnews.net/articles/11729-millennials-sparking-customization-movement>

Missouri Considers Mandatory Label for Plant-Based “Meat”

(From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch)

The Missouri House has approved a bill requiring plant-based and lab-grown meat companies to clearly note that their products do not contain meat, reports the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The bill seeks to ensure consumers don’t mistake a plant-based product such as meat-like tenders for real chicken. The proposal is supported by the state’s pork producers, the Missouri Farm Bureau, and the Missouri Cattlemen’s Association, which contend the state’s livestock industry has spent considerable time and money educating consumers about the benefits of eating meat.

Jessica Almy of the Good Food Institute claims companies that produce plant-based meats are already prohibited by federal law from misrepresenting their products and passing a labeling law specific to Missouri would "create an untenable situation" in which manufacturers would need to create separate labels just for that state, according to the report.

Full story: http://www.stltoday.com/news/state-and-regional/missouri-considers-nation-s-first-label-for-plant-based-meat/article_57dacc79-6284-527f-b380-812bd40ffc66.html

Scientists Make A Case for Sustainable Cattle Grazing

(From Meatingplace.com)

A study of on-farm beef production indicates that specific grazing practices do more to help soil recover and limit greenhouse gas emissions than other grazing models, according to researchers at Michigan State University.

The report, published at ScienceDirect, noted that beef cattle are the largest livestock-sector contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and beef production also can lead to land degradation. But the researchers found that by managing for more optimal forage growth and soil recovery, adaptive multi-paddock grazing can improve animal and forage productivity more than continuous grazing.

The research involved both adaptive multi-paddock and feedlot-finished grazing scenarios at an MSU research center. The former system also was found to sequester more soil organic carbon than the grazing method, and lowered greenhouse gas emissions by cattle.

Researchers acknowledged that feedlot-finished grazing production required only half as much land as adaptive multi-paddock grazing, but the study suggests that multi-paddock grazing ultimately can contribute to climate change mitigation. The findings challenge existing conclusions that only feedlot intensification reduces the overall greenhouse gas footprint of cattle through greater productivity.