



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 11, 2018

Less Than One Month to Register for the NBA Summer Conference!

June 4th is the deadline to reserve your Summer Conference lodging and June 8th is the deadline to register for this exciting event! Lodging is filling quickly, so please be sure to take advantage of the NBA's discounted group rate by calling (888) 627-8538 and request the National Bison Association room block. Register for the conference and get all the details at <https://bisoncentral.com/nba-summer-conference/>

The host association, the Kansas Buffalo Association, has worked diligently with the NBA to put together a great conference that will cover vital topics to all producers, including bison conformation challenges, parasite control and management, soil management, and much more. See a full conference agenda at <https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SCAagendaJM4.17.18.pdf>

But we have not forgotten about the fun by any means. We have live entertainment planned, our always-fun benefit auction and dinner, and an amazing Kansas City culinary cook-off, in which four teams will vie for the top bison BBQ dish at our Thursday luncheon.

We have dedicated Friday to the new producer, but that's not to say there's something for everyone to take back to the ranch. We'll have longtime bison innovator and rancher, Ken Klemm give his introduction to the bison business. The National Bison Association will also offer it's Bison Advantage presentation as well. We'll then head to Hanna Buffalo Co. about an hour north of the city for an optional ranch tour. Hanna Buffalo Co. is a working bison operation, with working owners who run a successful bison operation on the side. This is an operation built from the ground up and provides an excellent example of what is possible for the budding, or seasoned, bison rancher.

Please join us!

NBA Staff Meets to Train and Plan

The National Bison Association “expanded” staff met Tuesday and Wednesday this week in the NBA office in Westminster to provide an orientation session for new communications director Karen Conley, and to set a summer workplan for the crew.

Conley, NBA Executive Director Dave Carter, Assistant Director Jim Matheson and Bookkeeper Barb Dowdy discussed Growth Fund priorities, membership development, and communications programs over the course of the two-day session. Design consultant Anita Shaver and outgoing *Bison World* editor Marilyn Bay Drake participated in Tuesdays’ discussion as well.

“This was a good time for all of us to sit down together and go over everything step by step,” noted Conley. “As the newest member of the staff, I appreciated everyone’s willingness to help me get up to speed and the opportunity to discuss future plans. I’m excited to be a part of the NBA staff and play a role in promoting not only the NBA, but sharing the story of the bison and bison producers.”

Growth Fund: Harnessing the Power of the Herd

The National Bison Association will soon be unveiling a new logo and making a promotional push for its Growth Fund. Formerly known as the Checkoff Fund, the name was changed last year to better reflect the mission of the program.

Just as our member’s herds are growing, so too are the needs for mission-specific outreach and the ability to tell our story to the general public. Contributions to this voluntary fund assists in two ways. Half of the funds go to support the ongoing work of the National Bison Association and the other half is targeted specifically to product promotion and producer recruitment programs.

Past outreach activities funded by Growth Fund contributions include a trade show booth at the FFA National Convention; a booth at the National Association of Farm Broadcasters as well as the National Association of Ag Bankers and promotion of Bison Hump Day, just to name a few.

These efforts allow us to tell our story to consumers as well as potential producers, all while touting the delicious and nutritional benefits of bison meat and the rewards of being a bison producer.

Contributions can be made in any amount, with a suggested contribution of \$1 per head for every animal sold over the year. As this new push gets underway, plans are to create a webpage dedicated to sharing the mission of the Growth Fund, recognizing the donors and highlighting the projects that have been funded with these dollars. As an added convenience, donors will be able to make contributions online via the webpage. For now, contributions can be made at <https://bisoncentral.com/product/nba-growth-fund-program/>

Farmers Market Workshop Set for Texas Tomorrow

Nearly 60 producers are expected to be on hand in Fredericksburg, TX, tomorrow for a farmers’ market workshop being hosted by the National Bison Association in conjunction with the Texas Bison Association’s annual spring meeting.

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 Texas Certified Farmers Market Association Director Cal Brints.

The workshop and curriculum are targeted to bison producers, but the information can be useful for people marketing other products as well.

Carter noted that most bison producers are small-scale and rely on direct marketing as an important part of their business. "The average Texas bison producer has fewer than 20 bison, so they must maximize the return on every animal they produce" Carter said. "Fortunately, there is a strong upsurge in farmers' markets, as people across the state—and across the country—seek food that is fresh, natural, local and delicious," Carter added.

Local Student Meets with Sen. Bennet to Talk Bison

(From the Limon Leader)

On May 1, 2018, U.S. Senator Michael Bennet met with several individuals who are involved in agriculture, including Cannan Bennett from Limon, Colorado. The group met with the senator to discuss the upcoming farm bill. Also, in attendance were Julie Duvall, State Director for Senator Bennet; Lee Swenson, Senior Advisor on Colorado Rural Policy; Dave Wentz, owner of Colorado Natural Bison; Bobby Gill, Director of Corporate Development for Savory Institute, Jim Matheson, Assistant Director of National Bison Association; and Carrie Bennett, representing Prairie Ridge Buffalo.

They met at the West Bijou Ranch south of Byers, Colorado. This land is owned by the Savory Institute and is leased to Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch, which is owned by Ray and Debbie Thieman. Cannan is the grandson of Ray and Debbie and owns a small herd of bison that he runs with his grandparents.

Cannan Bennett, a high school junior, had an opportunity to speak with the senator and share his valuable experiences with the youth loan program through the Farm Service Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. Cannan obtained his first youth loan in 2011 at the age of 10 (the minimum age requirement) when he was able to borrow \$5,000. With this loan, he purchased four beef cows. From this start, he has grown his herd to currently owning 10 buffalo cows and has sufficient equity to finance an additional 60 head of beef replacement heifers at the age of 16.

Cannan has outgrown the limits of the youth loan program and is now able to get his operating loans from a commercial bank, The First National Bank of Hugo/Limon.

Cannan was able to showcase his bison directly to the senator and how they are becoming an important part of an emerging move towards sustainable agriculture. Cannan is a member of the National Bison Association and the Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association and sees a bright future in the bison ranching business.

With the farm bill currently being deliberated by Congress, Cannan encouraged the Senator to continue providing these youth loan programs. These loans offer an opportunity to involve young people in agriculture by lessening the impact of the large capital investment required. Any program encouraging and helping our young farmers and ranchers is vital for the future of agriculture.

Edmonds CC culinary student wins Microsoft, James Beard Foundation EPPIC cookoff

(From Mountain Lake Terrace News)

An Edmonds Community College culinary arts student won first place in a Microsoft and [James Beard Foundation](#) culinary competition for students.

Edmonds CC student chef Irma Jimenez won the first Experienced Professionals/Pupils in Culinary (EPPIC) competition in mid-April. She took home a Microsoft Surface tablet, and her dish will be a featured h'ordevvre during the [James Beard Foundation's Celebrity Chef Tour](#) Seattle in July.

Jimenez's winning dish featured Mexican mole marinated bison, in which she used a mole rub instead of a more traditional sauce. More about her dish below.

"My dish reflected my Mexican heritage," Jimenez said. "I'm deeply rooted in my heritage, and I wanted to showcase that there's more to Mexican food. It can be elevated."

The competition was a collaboration and partnership between [Dining at Microsoft](#), Microsoft's on-site dining operation, and the James Beard Foundation (JBF). It paired eight community college culinary arts students – four from Edmonds CC and four from South Seattle College – with eight Dining at Microsoft chefs for a two-day whirlwind competition with celebrity chef judges.

Judges included: John Flocchini, Durham Bison Ranch owner; Mark Freeman, Microsoft's RE&F senior manager, Global Dining Services; Mimi Hillenbrand, 777 Bison Ranch owner; Maria Hines, JBF award-winning chef and owner of three Seattle restaurants; Kim Marshall, chef and Slow Food Seattle Executive Director; Katherine Miller, JBF senior leader; Todd Rawlings, Microsoft senior quality engineer; and Gerry Warren, Slow Food USA regional governor.

The [National Bison Association](#) and [Slow Food USA](#) also sponsored the competition, and the students prepared each of their signature dishes with bison sirloin provided by Durham Ranch of Wyoming.

Full story here: <http://mltnews.com/edmonds-cc-culinary-student-wins-microsoft-james-beard-foundation-eppic-cookoff/>

10th Annual Bison Release Takes Place May 19

(From Press Pubs)

Belwin Conservancy is excited to announce a host of new activities as part of its annual Bison Release, this year being held on Saturday, May 19. Everyone is invited to attend this free community festival, taking place at Belwin's Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields (15601 Hudson Road, West Lakeland, Minnesota).

In celebration of bison's critical role in helping Belwin maintain and improve its restored prairie, NorthStar Bison will release a herd of juvenile male bison to their summer home at 12 p.m.

"The sight and sound of the animals thundering out of their trailers and across the prairie is an amazing experience," says Lynette Anderson, Belwin's interpretive naturalist. "They also have a complex and profound relationship with the prairie ecosystem that once covered much of Minnesota."

Food trucks will be on site offering food and drink for sale. Bison Release festivities will be held rain or shine. Attendees are encouraged to bring a chair or picnic blanket, and to consider carpooling.

Read more. http://www.presspubs.com/st_croix/article_54d7f2b0-5488-11e8-9031-3f7d7d5b3b80.html

Surplus Bison Up for Auction in Western Oklahoma

(From Fox 23)

If you have some extra space, consider adding Bison to your family.

An entire heard of American Bison are listed on the State surplus auction site.

The bid at the time of publication is \$9,200, with 7 people currently vying for the herd.

The bison are free-range and have been wormed but do not have vaccines or vet records. The winner will have to move the bison themselves.

The state encourages potential bidders to get a look at the bison before bidding.

Read more. <https://www.fox23.com/news/surplus-bison-up-for-auction-in-western-oklahoma/747035666>

Bison Meat Is Overtaking Cow's Milk in America's Dairyland

(From Saveur)

A herd of bison is grazing in a field in southeast Wisconsin, and Pat Kummrow of Battle Creek Beef & Bison is warning me not to get too close. These animals are nearly six feet tall and can weigh up to 2,200 pounds. They're massive and shaggy, adorable and intimidating at once. Most of all, they're something of a rarity in the Dairy State, though that's changing.

Bison used to roam North America, especially the Great Plains, in the millions, but by 1883 there were fewer than 1,000 left. Thanks to conservation efforts in the early 1900s, today there

are about 550,000 bison across North America, mostly concentrated in western states. In Wisconsin, America's Dairyland and home to 285,000 cattle, there are about 7,000.

"When I got involved in it they were an endangered species," says Ron Lester of Lester Farms in Salem, Wisconsin, who studied bison as a training tool for survival while in the Marines, then bought four when he retired from the military in 1972. "I had to sign paperwork you wouldn't use them for meat, but I just loved the animal and wanted to raise them," he says.

Bison were raised for breeding stock, but once the population started climbing, people started thinking about the meat. Initially they were crossbred with cattle in efforts to get a leaner product, but eventually farmers realized bison meat was marketable on its own.

Full Story: <https://www.saveur.com/bison-wisconsin>

Flood Waters Threaten Young Bison

(From NBC Montana)

MISSOULA, Mont. — Flood waters are tough on more than Missoula homeowners -- they are particularly dangerous for young livestock.

On a ranch off Mullan Road to the west of Missoula workers at the Medicine Bull Bison Ranch are faced with additional work and tough times because of the flood.

Owner Lieutenant Colonel Tim Gardipee has about 20 head on his land right now.

It's spring calving season at the ranch. Gardipee and caretaker Layne Spence know the water can be dangerous for young calves when they're just barely getting their legs under them. Right now flood waters are cutting into about half their roaming and grazing space. Spence had to use a four-wheeler Thursday to rescue a calf outside the fence.

"They're staying on high ground right now. They don't like this. I don't think anybody likes this. It's overwhelming, and it's too much," said Spence.

He explained how the herd's been able to find higher ground, but the water's rising and taking more every day. It's already pushing toward sheds where the workers keep equipment and food.

Spence put it in perspective. "Yesterday I put 250 80-pound sandbags to try to staunch the flow right through here, and just from last night, yesterday evening's rain, it's come all the way up to the shed."

Full story: <http://nbcmontana.com/news/local/flood-waters-threaten-young-bison>

Meet Freddy, the Runaway Bison Who Inspired a Choral Arrangement

(From the Smithsonian)

In southern Manitoba, a bison keeps escaping a ranch. The locals call the escapee Freddy, and

he's something of a minor celebrity. Now the rebellious bison has a song dedicated to him, reports Cara Giaimo for Atlas Obscura.

Inspired by media attention surrounding Freddy and the history of bison in Manitoba, Toronto-based composer Elliot Britton crafted a renaissance-style choral arrangement to Freddy, complete with contemporary pop-chord progressions accompanied by traditional fiddle and electronically distorted bison noises.

The piece premiered in late April at a celebration of Manitoba's Métis culture called Red River Song. The Métis people are descendants of intermarriage between French-Canadians and First Nations people. Dating back to the early 1600s, native women, mostly from the Cree, Ojibwa and Saulteaux nations began marrying early Scottish and French-Canadian fur trappers who'd arrived to the lands of southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, according to the website Canada's First Peoples.

Annual buffalo hunts were an important part of Métis culture, which provided an opportunity for extended families to catch up and strengthen ties.

Read more: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/theres-choral-arrangement-all-about-runaway-bison-named-freddy-180969036>

Yellowstone Has New Magic Number for Bison

(From the Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Two years ago, there were more than 5,000 bison in Yellowstone National Park. Then came two big winter migrations, resulting in more than 1,100 bison being killed by hunters or shipped to slaughter in each year.

Bison are calving now, and after all the calves drop, biologists expect the overall number will end up near what the park considers a magic number: 4,200.

Tim Reid, the bison program coordinator at Yellowstone, said that number is a long-term average for the population, and that it seems to balance all the demands on bison and prevent conflict at the same time.

"This is really about maintaining the sociopolitical balance here," Reid said.

Read more. https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/yellowstone-has-new-magic-number-for-bison/article_85a76889-b8cc-5718-9395-5008705ec4a7.html

Every Day is Earth Day at Woodland Farm

(From Louisville Magazine)

Stephanie Tittle's Subaru Outback with 180,000 miles on it is in the shop, so today's stand-in is a Jeep Renegade. A 77-pound Great Pyrenees named Eloise snores in the back, and the tires disturb the gravel roads as Tittle winds through the 1,000-acre farm in Goshen. On this early April morning the sky is spitting snow (the previous day: sunny and 77).

At Woodland Farm, the home of 21c owners Steve Wilson and Laura Lee Brown that's also a bison, hog, chicken and cow farm, farm store and sculpture display (surely you've seen photos of those giant hot-pink snails), Tittle does all things horticulture.

We get out to walk around the farm and up trots Eloise's brother, 127-pound Ferdinand, whose white coat is more of a faded pink from a Kool-Aid dye job in celebration of Wilson's 70th birthday. The three-story brick house, which dates to 1814, looks out over a bend in the Ohio River.

Brown and Wilson bought the farm in 1996 when it was slated to become a golfing community. They wanted to protect the land with something more sustainable, so they decided to raise bison.

Full story: <https://www.louisville.com/content/woodland-farm-earth-day>

House Spending Bill Repeals Obama WOTUS Rule

(From AgriPulse)

A draft fiscal 2019 spending bill for the Army Corps of Engineers would repeal the Obama-era waters of the United States rule, ensuring it can't take effect while the Trump administration finishes developing a replacement.

The Environmental Protection Agency and Corps of Engineers have taken longer than anticipated in writing a replacement rule, which would re-define what streams and wetlands fall under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act.

The repeal provision is included in the [FY19 energy-water appropriations bill](#) released by a House Appropriations subcommittee on Sunday. The subcommittee is due to consider the legislation Monday.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt told House appropriators last June that he expected to have a new rule finalized no later than the first quarter of this year, [but the agencies have been struggling with responding to comments on the proposed repeal of the Obama WOTUS rule](#). They are also facing court challenges to [a separate move](#) to delay the Obama rule's effective date until February 2020.

Congressional repeal of the rule would give the agencies more time to finalize the replacement. The House bill also would fund the Corps of Engineers at \$7.28 billion, an increase of \$451 million over this year.

The bill would provide \$3.3 billion for navigation projects and studies, including \$1.6 billion in funding from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, and full use of estimated annual revenue from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, which funds construction and rehabilitation projects on locks and dams.

Mindy Brashears Nominated to Lead USDA Food Safety

(From PorkBusiness.com)

President Trump this week selected Mindy Brashears to be the U.S. Department of Agriculture's undersecretary for Food Safety, reports the National Pork Producers Council.

Brashears is a professor of food microbiology and food safety and serves as director of the International Center for Food Industry Excellence at Texas Tech University. NPPC reports that she has conducted research on interventions in pre- and post-harvest environments and on the emergence of antimicrobial drug resistance.

"Food safety is at the core of USDA's mission, because it directly affects the health and well-being of millions of Americans every day," Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said in a statement. "President Trump has made an excellent choice in Dr. Mindy Brashears, and I am excited to have her join the team.

"Dr. Brashears has spent decades finding ways to improve food safety standards through innovation, invention, and leadership on research missions across the globe," he continued. "I look forward to her bringing that wealth of expertise and track record of results here to USDA.

NPPC noted that Brashears research efforts resulted in commercialization of a pre-harvest feed additive that can reduce E. coli and Salmonella in cattle.

Full text:

<https://www.porkbusiness.com/article/mindy-brashears-nominated-lead-usda-food-safety>

Good News for Veterinarians in Early Draft of Farm Bill

(From AVMA Blog - AVMA@Work)

In April, the U.S. House Agriculture Committee took the first step in crafting the 2018 Farm Bill by introducing its draft - the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2) - and sending it for consideration by the full House of Representatives. The AVMA is very pleased to see priority animal health programs included in this legislation, which covers a five-year span and is needed for U.S. farm and agriculture programs to continue.

AVMA is championing a proactive approach to improving animal health and mitigating pest and disease outbreaks in this Farm Bill. We're also supporting additional programs and research impacting veterinary interests and animal health, as outlined in our Farm Bill priorities.

The draft legislation pending in the House recognizes the importance of animal health by including several of these priorities, including:

A three-pronged approach to animal disease prevention and response:

A National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program to develop and implement strategies and technologies to combat animal pest and disease threats.

Mandatory funding for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), along with reauthorization of \$15 million in appropriations.

A U.S.-only National Animal Health Vaccine Bank for high-consequence animal disease outbreaks, with immediate priority to Foot and Mouth Disease. The bill provides full funding of \$250 million for these programs in fiscal year 2019: \$70 million for the National Animal Health Program, \$30 million for the NAHLN, and \$150 million for the Vaccine Bank. Unfortunately, only \$50 million per year is provided in fiscal years 2020-2023 (\$30 million for the National Animal Health Program and \$20 million to be divided at the agriculture secretary's discretion).

Reauthorization of programs benefitting veterinary medicine within the National Institutes of Food and Agriculture, including the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank, Animal Health and Disease Research Program Grants, and competitive research grants within the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

This Farm Bill also would allow for development of a program to maintain veterinary emergency teams as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Accreditation Program.

Full text:

<https://atwork.avma.org/2018/05/03/good-news-for-veterinarians-in-early-draft-of-farm-bill/>

WY Governor's Brucellosis Coordination Team to Meet

(From Univ. of Wyoming News)

A brucellosis surveillance update and the latest research information at the University of Wyoming are among topics at the Governor's Brucellosis Coordination Team meeting Tuesday, May 22, in Lander.

The session is open to the public and is 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at The Inn, 260 Grandview Drive.

Wyoming State Veterinarian Jim Logan will give the brucellosis surveillance update, and brucellosis cases in cattle and bison herds in Montana and Idaho will be discussed.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will present 2017-18 results of its surveillance for hunter-harvested and feedground elk.

Full text:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/uw/news/2018/05/governors-brucellosis-coordination-team-to-meet-in-lander.html>

Farm Bill Could Face Veto Threat

(From AgriPulse)

President Trump will meet with the chairmen of the House and Senate Agriculture committees on Thursday and is expected to insist that the final farm bill include tighter work requirements for food stamp recipients, according to a source familiar with the meeting plans.

The source said the president's "leaning in" on the issue is primarily aimed at putting pressure on vulnerable Democratic senators such as Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Donnelly of Indiana whom Republicans hope to defeat in November.

Ahead of the meeting on Thursday, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said the president wouldn't issue a veto threat but would tell the lawmakers he "looks forward to some form of work requirements in the farm bill."

He added, "We know from president's campaign and from his remarks that what he believes is that the believes the American generosity and and compassion of American people and the American taxpayer should not be abused with a permanent entitlement program which was designed to be a transitional program back back to restore people to independence." House Agriculture Chairman Mike Conaway, R-Texas, declined Wednesday afternoon to say what he expected from Trump but said a veto threat could help win over some House conservatives.

"The president's full-throated support for work requirements would be a huge help to some of our folks who are conflicted by wanting to do what we are trying to do on the SNAP program but have some lingering anxieties over the non-SNAP portions of the farm bill," Conaway said.

Proposed Management Plan Shared for Elk, Bison at Great Sand Dunes

(From the Valley Courier)

Elk and bison herd management is necessary to maintain the landscape at the Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve and expanded former Medano Zapata Ranch area, dunes staff and contractors reported during a Wednesday evening meeting concerning the proposed management plan.

Another public meeting will be held tonight (Thursday, May 10) from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Baca National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, 69812 County Road T, Crestone. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve Ungulate Management Plan are accepted through May 31.

Chief of Resource Management Fred Bunch explained that this plan was a consequence of the 2000 park expansion and also necessary for management of the bison population that the park service will acquire when the purchase of the Medano Ranch from The Nature Conservancy is completed, probably by the end of this year.

Although the park has several ungulates (hooved animals), the two primarily addressed in the proposed plan are elk and bison.

"We have to be very cautious and good stewards of the land and land managers," Bunch said Wednesday evening. "We are in the landscape business so we want a healthy national park."

The goal of the park, which the ungulate plan will help accomplish, is to move away from impacts on the landscape, Bunch explained.

Read more. <https://alamosanews.com/article/proposed-management-plan-shared-for-elk-bison-at-great-sand-dunes>

