



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 26, 2017

Carter Promotes IBC in Montana

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter was in Bozeman and Big Sky, MT this week to meet with area media representatives to promote the upcoming International Bison Conference, scheduled for the July 4-8, in Big Sky and surrounding areas.

“It was very helpful to meet with the Montana journalists to discuss the IBC,” Carter said. “The reporters have been covering many stories through the years regarding bison-centered conflict in the Greater Yellowstone Area and eastern Montana. The prospect that the IBC will be bringing people together around a common commitment to the future of bison was a ‘new angle’ that caught their attention.”

Carter also met with the management of the 320 Ranch near Big Sky to review the plans for the July 4th kickoff; event at the IBC.

Reserve Ad Space now in IBC Program

Now's your chance to advertise to nearly 600 International Bison Conference attendees this 4th of July!

“These conference Programs are a keepsake that attendees take home and keep on their coffee tables for a long time,” said Dave Carter, NBA executive director. “This publication allows businesses to showcase their products and services with the key gatekeepers of the bison business from Canada and the United States.

Carter added, that some producers want to support the IBC, but cannot afford the \$1,000 minimum sponsorship level.

“Placing an ad in the conference magazine is another way to help support the program, speakers, and activities being lined up for the IBC,” Carter said.

Cost-effective ads start at just \$125 for a business card sized ad, with full page ads still available for \$600. See a full selection of ad rates, with specs, [here](#). Reserve your ad today by emailing david@bisoncentral.com, or by calling 303-594-4420. The deadline for the advertisements is June 10th.

Marketers' Survey Closes Tonight

Today is the last chance for commercial bison marketers to complete the twice-yearly survey of market conditions and outlook.

All members of the NBA Commercial Marketers' Committee have been emailed a link to the SurveyMonkey site used for the twice-annual poll. That survey will remain open through today.

"This is an extremely valuable tool for the NBA, and for the bison business," said Dave Carter, NBA executive Director. "This survey helps us direct our resources to the areas that are identified as priorities in the marketplace."

IBC Sponsors to Receive Recognition Belt Buckles

All sponsors of the 2017 International Bison Conference will receive unique commemorative belt buckles, produced exclusively for the NBA by Rockmount Ranch wear.

The buckles will be brushed pewter, featuring an image of the IBC bison logo. Sponsors supporting the IBC with support at \$2,500 and above, will receive the buckle with the bison in bronze, as indicated in the mock-up illustration below:



Everyone signing up for a Friend of the International Bison Conference sponsorship of \$1,000 will receive a one-tone version of the buckle, with the IBC bison in pewter.



Sponsorship opportunities are still available, so contact NBA Executive Director Dave Carter to sign up at any level from \$1,000 - \$10,000.

IBC Speakers: Please Submit Bios and Photos

All scheduled speakers at the upcoming International Bison Conference will be receiving a reminder via email today to submit their biography, and a summary of the presentation topic, to be used in the official Program Guide.

Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director, noted, "Some speakers have already submitted their information. For those that haven't, please complete the short bio form and send it back to us by June 9th."

Holistic Management Methods Pay Off for Bison Ranchers

(From Holistic Management International)

In 1988, Rancher Ken Klemm took his first Holistic Management course and began applying the methods he learned to the 157 sections of ground he was managing in the San Luis Valley of Colorado. He saw enormous benefits to the land, wildlife and finances. Ken participated in some seminars, showing people the results of Holistic Management of the ranch.

From there, Ken went to manage another ranch south of Laramie, Wyoming and applied the same Holistic Management methods and had good success. Then in 1999, he decided to go out on his own and bought his own ranch along with his partner Peter Theiriou called the *Beaver Creek Buffalo Ranch* near Goodland, Kansas. Ken and Peter call themselves "The Buffalo Guys" and raise bison for a growing niche market in which consumers enjoy healthy meat. Starting with 320 acres, fences and stock water developments were put in place to provide the necessary tools to effectively manage the grass and farmland – to ensure the conservation of natural resources could be accomplished. The ranch now consists of nearly 4,000 acres of high plains country. Around 500 acres are farmed, and the balance is native prairie or recovered farmland. The ranch was almost exclusively short grass prairie when Ken first started there, but has been transformed to mid and tall grass prairie with a wide variety of forbs. No seed was purchased because the raw materials for transformation were lying dormant in the soil and only needed a chance to express themselves.

The *Beaver Creek Buffalo Ranch* lies in the heart of bison range and is prone to drought. According to Ken, the ranch has been able to expand and prosper despite the long-running drought due to Holistic Management principles. "We have proven that good conservation practices do not cost; they pay," says Ken.

When the *Beaver Creek Buffalo Ranch* enterprise began in 1999, the market prices for bison plummeted, and the epic drought had begun. Ken devised a plan whereby the ranch could benefit from the great buyers' market for low-cost buffalo by starting a meat marketing company known as "The Buffalo Guys."

Read more. https://holisticmanagement.org/uncategorized/holistic-management-methods-pay-off-bison-ranchers/?utm_source=Covering+Ground+E-Newsletter%2C+May+2017&utm_campaign=Covering+Ground+E-Newsletter%2C+May+2017&utm_medium=email

Bison release at Belwin May 20

(From The Stillwater Gazette)

Although they once roamed the Midwest in numbers estimated in the millions, bison are now a rare find on the prairie. As part of its ecosystem restoration, the Belwin Conservancy in Afton has brought bison back to the prairie.

A herd of 40 bison from NorthStar Bison in Rice Lake, Wis., will be released onto Belwin's prairie at a free public event on Saturday, May 20. This is the ninth year that a herd will spend their summer grazing 120 acres of prairie at Belwin.

Each year since 2008, a crowd has gathered to welcome the bison to their summer home. Last year, more than 1,000 people turned out to witness the bison release and celebrate the United States' first national mammal.

"Our relationship with Belwin is really the heartbeat of NorthStar and what bison, as a species, is all about: restoration and regeneration. Restoring healthy ecosystems, healthy people and, ultimately, a healthy, thriving species. When you have that, everyone wins," said Sean Graese of NorthStar Bison in a press release.

Since the bison first came to Belwin, the prairie grasses the bison feed on have seen an improvement.

"Since I became the land and facilities manager at Belwin, I've seen that the bison actually do a better job managing the prairie than anything we humans can do," said Justin Sykora in a press release. "The response of the flowers and grasses has been better than we could have hoped. The diversity of the prairie has greatly improved since the bison have been coming. They are modifying our management strategy."

Read more. <http://stillwatergazette.com/2017/05/19/bison-release-at-belwin-may-20/>

Calf Gets a Chance at Life

(From the Jamestown Sun)

Volunteers from the National Buffalo Museum are giving a 3-weekold bison calf a chance at life, according to Don Williams, president of the museum board and a volunteer feeding Rosebud.

Rosebud, a heifer, was smaller than its twin, a bull calf, when they were born on May 5. The instincts of a bison cow are to concentrate its efforts on raising just one calf, Williams said. "The mother rejected her," he said. "It was the natural thing for it to do. They almost always reject one."

Williams initially called the calf his "buddy," which was expanded by the staff of the National Buffalo Museum to the name Rosebud.

"She's doing good," he said, after Rosebud had consumed two quarts of warm milk replacer from a bottle Tuesday morning. "She is fine now."

Jim Matheson, assistant director for the National Bison Association, said instances of twin bison calves are relatively rare.

“Typically, we hear about a few cases every year,” he said. “It depends on the condition of the cows. Twins are a sign of good nutrition.”

Most bison cows that give birth to twins reject one of the calves, Matheson said.

“Occasionally you hear where the cow takes on both,” he said. “That doesn’t happen very often.”

Williams said Rosebud was weak when first discovered within a few hours of birth.

“She’s a survivor,” he said. “She tried to keep up with the herd but she was so weak. She’d take 10 or 15 steps and then have to lay down.”

Read more. <http://www.jamestownsun.com/news/local/4272219-calf-gets-chance-life-bison-rejected-its-mother-raised-national-buffalo-museum>

After Nearly 200 Years, Bison Return in Prairie Restoration

(From WVPE.com)

The last bison in Indiana was killed in the 1830s in French Lick. But in October 2016, the Nature Conservancy released 23 from a herd in South Dakota onto Kankakee Sands. Many of those cows are currently having calves – nine have been born so far.

The bison are here, near Morocco, Indiana, because The Nature Conservancy is restoring nearly 7,000 acres of short grass prairie at Kankakee Sands. Prior to European settlement, prairie dominated the Great Plains. The ecosystem stretched from the Rocky Mountains east, past the Mississippi River, into western Indiana.

Short grass prairie has to be cultivated, like a garden. The grasses, if left unchecked, can grow over six feet tall because Indiana gets so much rain. So, to keep the prairie short, The Nature Conservancy is using North America’s largest lawnmowers: bison.

They’re the national mammal and one features on Indiana’s state seal, hopping a felled tree. Bison used to number over 60 million in the United States, but they dwindled to just 1,000. Through ranching and restoration, though, the bison population has risen to over 500,000.

Audio available Here: <http://wvpe.org/post/after-nearly-200-years-bison-return-prairie-restoration>

Midwin Releases Photos of Newborn Bison

(From The Herald News)

There are newborn bison calves grazing at the U.S. Forest Service’s Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service branch, which operates Midewin, announced the news Wednesday. Bison were introduced at Midewin in October 2015 as a 20-year experiment to see if their grazing pattern, which creates more varied grass lengths, helps attract birds that are native to Illinois tallgrass prairies.

The original herd of four bulls – genetically 100 percent pure bison from Yellowstone National Park – and 23 cows – from a ranch in South Dakota – produced several baby bison last year. When the herd was introduced to about 1,200 acres of prairie at Midewin, each female already was pregnant.

That means the latest newborns are the first ones created on-site.

The bison range can be accessed via the Iron Bridge Trailhead on Route 53 at the intersection of South Chicago and Hoff roads. For a longer trek, the range also can be accessed via the Wauponsee Glacial Trail. There is fence system that keeps the herd within the 1,200-acre pasture.

Read more. <http://www.theherald-news.com/2017/05/24/midewin-releases-photos-of-newborn-bison/at32086/>

Congress and Farmers Are Shocked by Proposed USDA Cuts

(From NPR)

Top officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture didn't even try to act enthusiastic as they unveiled details of their agency's proposed 2018 [budget](#), which includes drastic cuts in spending. "We're going to do the best we can," said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. "It's my job to implement that plan."

The broad outlines of this budget, with its 20 percent cut in the USDA's discretionary spending, had been released two months ago. This week, it became clear exactly what the Trump administration wants to cut: agricultural research, food aid for the poor, and programs that benefit small rural communities.

The budget also includes a surprise that's particularly unwelcome to big Midwestern farmers. It proposes new restrictions on government-subsidized crop insurance, a program that is particular favorite of grain farmers. The changes, which would require congressional approval, would limit the ability of large farmers to take advantage of those programs and cut government subsidies by more than \$2.5 billion each year.

In a statement, the American Farm Bureau Federation said that "this budget fails agriculture and rural America." Similar criticism came from the [American Soybean Association](#) and the [National Corn Growers Association](#).

The impact of those cuts, however, is dwarfed by proposed restrictions on the SNAP program, which helps the poor buy food. Those changes would cut SNAP spending by \$4.6 billion in 2018, increasing to more than \$20 billion annually by 2022.

The budget reduces funding for the Agricultural Research Service by \$360 million, or 26 percent. This would mean closing the doors at 17 research centers.

It also completely eliminates the country's flagship program of international food aid, called Food For Peace. The current USDA budget includes \$1.7 billion for that program.

Read more. http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/05/23/529685787/congress-and-farmers-are-shocked-by-proposed-usda-cuts?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=npr&utm_term=nprnews&utm_content=20170524

New Research Probes Human History in High Elevations

(From the Billings Gazette)

A small group of archaeologists are blazing a path into places like Wyoming's Wind River Range, the Tetons and Montana's Beartooth Plateau, rewriting the understanding of prehistoric people's use of what are now high elevation wilderness areas.

"We really need to be thinking about the Rocky Mountains in a way that we haven't been thinking about them," said Bonnie Pitblado, an anthropological archaeology professor at the University of Oklahoma.

"By Clovis time (about 13,500 years ago), we have clear, clear evidence people are in the New World and they are in the Rocky Mountains and know them intimately," she added.

Pitblado was one of 11 researchers gathered at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West earlier this month to speak at a conference of scientists who share an interest in high altitude archaeology. Their work is shedding light on what had long been a dark spot for investigation of prehistoric sites in North America. What they are documenting — from stone tools and arrow points to soapstone bowls and woven cordage and basketry, to large campsites, animal traps and even bison jumps — are forcing academics to rethink long-held theories — namely that the high country was too inhospitable to be inhabited.

"You need to change the way you think," said Todd Guenther, professor of history and archaeology at Central Wyoming College in Riverton, Wyoming.

Guenther's study of a bison jump found at an elevation of about 10,500 feet, which he said has received "a lot of push back," is not inconceivable given other cultures' activities at high elevations.

"My dad's family came from the highest places in Norway," he said, a harsh, extremely cold climate where hunters survived by following migratory reindeer herds. Why couldn't early Americans have lived similarly?

"If you had food stored up, it's not a scary thing. It's just being outdoors," he said.

Full story: <http://www.postregister.com/articles/outdoors/2017/05/25/mountain-history#>

Bovine TB Summit set for late July

(From The Farm and Ranch Guide)

USDA is planning a Bovine TB (tuberculosis) Summit to highlight the chronic bacterial disease that has seen a recent bump in cases over recent months with reported infections in five states including South Dakota.

Scheduled for July 26-27 in Fort Collins, Colo., the Bovine TB Summit will bring industry and regulators together to discuss how to modernize the TB program and work toward eradicating the disease from the United States, said Dr. Jack Shere, Chief Veterinary Officer of the United States, USDA/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

"We have seen a slight increase in TB cases in the past year, and we remain committed to eliminating TB from domestic herds. Close collaboration between APHIS, states and industry is needed to reach this goal," he added.

Bovine TB was confirmed in northwestern Minnesota in 2005 and after an extensive surveillance and control effort, the state attained TB-free status in 2011.

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

Livestock groups trying to sell Congress on FMD vaccine bank plan *(From Agri-Pulse.com)*

WASHINGTON - American livestock organizations have joined in a plea for Congress to commit three-quarters of a billion dollars in the upcoming farm bill for a five-year plan (see box) to get ready for a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak by vastly expanding USDA's vaccine stocks.

An obvious question seems to be: "Why not?"

The FMD virus is extremely contagious and infects all types of cloven-hooved domestic livestock and wild species, often killing young animals. When it drifted into the United Kingdom 16 years ago, it spread to more than 2,000 locations, and about 5 million sheep and a million cattle and pigs were culled or died before Britain's outbreak was arrested.

FMD is endemic in many parts of the world, as close by as northern South America, but the U.S. vaccine readiness to deal with an outbreak is sorely wanting, says Dan Kovich, deputy director of science and technology for the National Pork Producers Council. USDA has limited stocks of antigens against nine FMD serotypes (strains) at its off-shore laboratory on Plum Island, N.Y. In case of a U.S. outbreak, the antigens would have to be shipped to labs in Europe to manufacture vaccine, he explained, and weeks would elapse before enough vaccine could be available to treat even the livestock in a single North Carolina or Iowa swine-producing county.

What's more, "pretty much all current FMD vaccine production worldwide is spoken for; it's already being produced for other countries," Kovich said. "There is no one ready and geared up to produce that vaccine for the United States." With a vaccine bank, he said, "it is really critical to have enough to start an immediate response."

Livestock sector support for the FMD vaccine bank isn't, however, unanimous. Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey, whose state's feedlots hold a million steers and heifers, says, "I fully support a major expenditure through USDA for FMD response. But, from Kansas' perspective, we think there is a lot more discussion that has to take place" about what

is the best path to FMD readiness.

Full text:

<https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/9279-livestock-groups-trying-to-sell-congress-on-fmd-vaccine-bank-plan>

Leopold Conservation Award in North Dakota

If you, or someone you know, is a North Dakota landowner who is committed to land management practices that increase conservation, Sand County Foundation invites your application for the Leopold Conservation Award. In North Dakota, Sand County Foundation presents the Leopold Conservation Award in partnership with the North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, and the North Dakota Stockmen's Association.

The Leopold Conservation Award recipient receives an Aldo Leopold crystal and \$10,000. Leopold Conservation Awards recognize extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation, inspire other landowners through their example, and help the general public understand the vital role private landowners can and do play in conservation success.

Applications are due by June 15, 2017.

Read more. <https://sandcountyfoundation.org/uploads/ND-2017-Call-for-Apps-FINAL.pdf>

White House's Proposed Budget Cuts Threaten Key USDA Programs

(From American Farm Bureau Federation)

Proposing to carve more than \$4 billion out of the Agriculture Department's budget, the administration's 2018 spending blueprint fails to recognize agriculture's current financial challenges or its historical contribution to deficit reduction, according to American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall.

"The American Farm Bureau Federation and its members are concerned about the federal budget deficit. However, we also know that agriculture has done its fair share to help reduce the deficit. Going back to the early 1980s, agriculture often has been targeted to generate budget savings, from the reconciliation bills in the late 1980s and 1990s to farm bill reforms as recently as 2014," Duvall said in a statement.

When it was passed, the 2014 farm bill was estimated to contribute \$23 billion to deficit reduction over 10 years. Notably, the farm bill was the only reauthorization measure that voluntarily offered savings during the 113th Congress.

It is difficult to think of another sector of the economy that has contributed so much, so consistently, over the last several decades.

Among the budget reduction targets are several programs and services critical to farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

The proposed budget "would gut federal crop insurance, one of the nation's most important farm safety-net programs. It would drastically reshape important voluntary conservation programs and negatively impact consumer confidence in critical meat and poultry inspection," Duvall warned.

Full text:

<http://www.fb.org/news/white-houses-proposed-budget-cuts-threaten-key-usda-programs1>