



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 31, 2018

One Week to Register for the NBA Summer Conference!

The deadline to register for the NBA's Summer Conference in Kansas City, in conjunction with the Kansas Buffalo Association, is **June 8th**. That's just two weeks away! You can register quickly at our convenient online registration available at <https://bisoncentral.com/2018-nba-summer-conference-registration-form/>.

The deadline to reserve your lodging for the NBA Summer Conference is this Monday, June 4th! **Please note that the hotel cannot honor our discounted rate after the June 4th deadline.** Reserve your room by calling (888) 627-8538 and request the National Bison Association room block. All conference activities, with the exception of the optional Friday afternoon ranch tour, will take place at the Westin.

And why attend this summer's NBA conference? Here's a few reasons to consider:

- Close to ten educational presentations that will benefit each and every bison producer in attendance, with a majority of presenters being active bison producers themselves.
- Four bison feasts all included with conference registration, including our much anticipated Bison BBQ Cookoff on Thursday afternoon. An outdoor event that will feature four professional culinary teams battling it out for best bison dish, to be judged by attendees.
- The NBA Summer Conference Trade Show, which features ten exhibitors showcasing their products and services that range from feed supplements to fine bison art.
- The chance to bid on the NBA Summer Conference Starter/Expansion Herd! Six top calves - five heifers and one bull - will be handpicked by some of Kansas' top producers. Must be present and registered for the conference on Thursday evening to bid. Other great items to be auctioned off include a commemorative buffalo rifle, bison paintings and much more.
- Friday will be focused on the new and prospective producer, with a presentation from one of the most successful operations in the bison business today, Ken Klemm's Beaver Creek Ranch, on how to get your herd started for longevity and success. The NBA will

also conduct its well-regarded Bison Advantage Workshop before heading out for an optional ranch tour at Hanna Buffalo Company in nearby Baldwin City, KS.

And the fun! The Summer Conference is a family-friendly event with entertainment each evening and the best bison networking in the industry.

Please take a moment to check out the [conference agenda](#) and see why you won't want to miss out on this very producer-friendly bison event. Please [register online](#), or by calling the NBA at (303) 292-2833, by **June 8th** and see all the details on our [conference web page](#).

So don't forget to register by next Friday and we hope to see YOU in Kansas City soon!

Spotlight on Our Summer Conference Expansion/Starter Herd Donors

The highlight of the 2018 Summer Conference will be an expansion/starter herd being auctioned off at the Thursday evening Benefit Auction. This hand-picked herd will consist of five heifer calves and one bull calf in the herd. The animals will be selected from the donating ranches later this fall and will be grouped together at one ranch and made available to the buyer around the end of November or the beginning of December. Potential purchasers must be registered for the conference and present at the auction to bid on this unique herd.

Featuring some unique genetics, these calves have the potential to get a new producer started in the bison business or will make an excellent addition to any existing herd. In the weeks leading up to the Summer Conference, we will take a look at these donor ranches and share a little about their program.

Today, we will be spotlighting Thunder of the Plains Buffalo Ranch, owned by KBA President, Reese Gehring and his wife, Meghan as well as Hanna Buffalo Company, owned by Ryan and Ramie Hanna. Each ranch will be selecting a heifer calf to contribute to the herd.

Thunder of the Plains Buffalo Ranch

Located near Ashland, Kansas in the western part of the state, Thunder of the Plains Buffalo Ranch has the diverse genetics you're looking for in female breeding stock. This herd gets no supplementation except for gathering purposes. Our cows put out great replacement heifers on their own that are at the top of their class. You won't be disappointed in the quality of our females.

Hanna Buffalo Company

Ryan and Ramie Hanna began Hanna Buffalo Company in 2007. Located near Baldwin City, Kansas, the herd consists primarily of 40 head of buffalo mother cows located on two small ranches just a few miles apart.

The National Bison Association and Kansas Buffalo Association have helped the Hanna family learn from some of the best in the business. They are appreciative of the opportunities to learn about animal health, nutritional management and how to build an overall productive operation.

Summer Conference Raffles Feature Unique Items

Throughout the Summer Conference, attendees will have the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets on two unique items. The drawings will be held on Thursday evening. Raffle tickets will be available all week at the registration desk and volunteers will be selling them during the event and at the banquets.

The first raffle item is a handcrafted, wooden bench donated by Kansas Buffalo Association member Keith Yearout. Keith donated a similar bench at the Winter Conference and it was such a hit he decided to do another one for the summer event. Many hours of work went into this beautiful bench and it could be yours if your ticket is the winner!

The second raffle item is a premium nylon Ruiz Buffalo Stars and Stripes rug. Designed by artist Tamara Ruiz, the rug is fade and stain resistant and made in the USA. The colorful rug will certainly catch your eye!

NBA Issues White Paper on Finishing Protocols

The National Bison Association this week issued a new white paper entitled, *Different Methods, Many Reasons*, which explains the myriad of factors that bison producers consider when determining how to finish their animals.

The paper notes that public discussion on finishing protocols used for bison tends to be categorized in terms of *grass vs. grain*.

The document notes, “Rather than focusing on “*how* my bison was finished,” this paper looks at “*why* are my bison finished...” That’s because every responsible bison producer makes finishing protocol decisions based upon a complex set of factors, including animal stewardship, climate, soil conditions, land base, drought, customer expectations, and the biology of our animals.

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter, noted, “The discussion on bison finishing tends to get oversimplified. We wanted to develop a document that helps journalists, bloggers, and others to understand how ranchers work to balance the stewardship of our resources, the health of the animal, and the quality and healthfulness of the meat our animals produce.

The NBA White Paper was initiated by the association’s board of directors as a part of the organizational strategic plan. It has been posted on the NBA website and is available for download here.

https://bisoncentral.com/wpcontent/uploads/2018/06/DifferentMethodsManyReasons_5_2018.pdf

The white paper is the subject of Carter’s latest blog, also posted on the website today (see below)

Bison Finishing: It’s Complicated

(Blog by NBA Director Dave Carter)

In today’s hyper-polarized world, complex issues often get lumped into simple, black-and-white perspectives. It’s either good, or it’s bad, with nothing in-between.

So it is with the finishing protocols used for bison. In recent years, intense debate has emerged over livestock finishing methods. Most of that debate has centered on cattle, but it's starting to spill over into the world of bison as well.

Unfortunately, the debate has devolved into two simple, stark descriptions. Many in the public today have the impression that livestock are either crammed into feedlots and stuffed with grain or are produced exclusively on wide-open pastures. The phrases "grain-fed" versus "grass-fed" have become shorthand for those viewpoints.

It's not that simple.

Animals can be fed a grass-fed diet while in corrals or finishing facilities. Corn is a member of the grass family, so a grass-fed animal can graze in a field of green corn plants. The assumption that "grain-fed" includes a diet solely of corn is misleading because nearly all feed rations include a mixture of grains, including barley, oats, or wheat, along with alfalfa and other roughage.

The equation is more complicated with bison because we are still learning about this animal under our care.

For a start, the biology and undomesticated nature of bison make feeding and finishing bison more difficult than for most other ruminants. We also know that Mother Nature did a great job in perfecting this animal over thousands of years, so we need to be very careful in how we intervene.

When our business sprouted a few decades ago, producers largely applied cattle industry feeding practices to finish their animals. Through the years, we learned that bison are unique, and that—while there are some similarities to cattle—there are many important differences.

Today, finishing practices utilized by bison producers are as varied as the producers who utilize them. Decisions on finishing protocols are driven by a myriad of factors, including animal health, biological rhythms, consumer expectations, available land mass, species of available grasses and forage, climate, and more. Many ranchers throughout our industry are experimenting with new practices, and then sharing their knowledge with fellow bison producers.

The National Bison Association released a report this week entitled "*Different Methods, Many Reasons*". That white paper delves into the complexity of this issue, and attempts to answer the questions that journalists, policymakers and others are asking regarding why ranchers finish bison under differing methods. It's available for download at https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DifferentMethodsManyReasons_5_2018.pdf

Nearly a century ago, the famed journalist H.L. Menken wrote, "For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, *and wrong*."

The world has gotten much more complex in the years since Menken penned those words. Yet, the desire for clear, simple (and wrong) answers perseveres.

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Building healthy herds, maintaining vibrant pastures, and producing a delicious, nutritious product is a complex process. Responsible bison ranchers know there is no clear, simple answer. The best answer will always be a work in progress.

That work continues.

To Preserve the Species, Eat It

(From Flatland Magazine)

A decade ago, Leawood native Amy Dunn was living in Kansas City, Missouri, and selling books at Barnes & Noble. And even though she was apprenticing as a horse trainer, she was no more country than a suburban horse.

Her boyfriend, Michael Billings, wasn't much different. He was a city-dwelling software engineer who also boarded horses.

But both of them yearned to have open space for their dogs and horses. So, when they married in 2008, they purchased 80 acres in Kingsville, Missouri, a small township about 30 miles southeast of Lee's Summit.

Not hunters like the previous owner, the Billingses delighted in the slow return of creatures: ducks landing on their pond, deer grazing the perimeter of their yard, and occasional coyote or bobcats rounding out the picture.

Then, in 2011, as the couple was brainstorming how they could preserve the surrounding ecosystem, Michael half-jokingly threw out the idea of raising bison.

It sounded crazy until the software engineer whipped up a spreadsheet. They ultimately bought a 13-bison "starter kit," as Amy called it, for what is now a full-fledged business. And they serve as an example of how conservationists are taking an unexpected approach to bringing back this symbol of the American West.

Full Article: <http://www.flatlandkc.org/news-issues/preserve-species-eat/>

Bison Calving Season Winding Down at Custer State Park

(From The Rapid City Journal)

Last weekend marked the unofficial kickoff to summer, and with that, tourism season in the Black Hills.

Many come to the Hills every summer, and a staple of a trip to the Black Hills is the Custer State Park wildlife loop to take in one of the west's most majestic creatures, the bison.

Just don't get too close.

The start of tourism season coincides with the tail-end of bison's calving season. It's a time of the year when the very large, fast and unpredictable animals become even more protective, and sometimes aggressive.

CSP bison herd manager Chad Kremer said that calving season isn't the only time when people should keep a safe distance from the animals. While they appear big and cuddly from far away, get close enough to one and the opposite becomes true.

"If they wanted to get you or anyone in that spot, they could get you before anyone would know it. That's one thing I express quite a bit with visitors, they preconceive that they are pretty docile," he said. "Over the years when I see someone approaching a situation where they should be concerned I'll stop and visit with them and start telling them the facts."

The facts are that a bison can outrun a horse for a quarter mile, reach top speeds of 35 miles per hour and can easily jump a five- or six-foot fence.

Read more. http://rapidcityjournal.com/lifestyles/local/bison-calving-season-winding-down-at-custer-state-park/article_d39fdf1a-6538-541d-96a7-f1f090472bc8.html

Jogger Gored By 2,000-Pound Bison While on Morning Run

(From Fox News)

A marathon runner was left with a huge gash after a 2,000-pound bison charged and dug its horn into his backside while he was out jogging.

Craig Neilson, 26, was enjoying a romantic weekend away with his wife Amberly, 23, when he decided to go for an early morning run before she woke up.

The farm supervisor was making his way back to the campsite when he came across a plains bison grazing by a ditch in Elk Island National Park in Alberta, Canada.

Although Neilson initially thought it was "cool" to see a bison in real life, his first impression quickly turned when the bulky animal began to charge.

Quick-thinking Neilson began to run toward a cluster of trees, which he knew the bison wouldn't be able to fit through.

Read more. <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2018/05/31/jogger-gored-by-2000-pound-bison-while-on-morning-run.html>

Where the Buffalo Roam: Auctioned Bison Herd to Stay in Oklahoma

(From newsok.com)

CONCHO — In a first for the state, a herd of more than 60 bison were auctioned to the highest bidder this month — a bidder who has worked for decades to reintroduce the animals to what was once part of their native habitat.

Sold in a state surplus auction, the herd, totaling about 65 head of bison, had roamed the grasslands in Foss State Park but were put on the auction block due to drought conditions in western Oklahoma that left the state to rely on costly purchases of hay to feed the animals. Nearly 110 bids were made for the bison, with the winning bid of \$88,002.01, or a little more than \$1,350 per head, made by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

“It’s been the goal to grow a herd and the Cheyenne and Arapaho have a strong cultural connection to the animals,” said Nathan Hart, the economic development director for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Concho.

Full story here. <https://newsok.com/article/5595857/where-the-buffalo-roam-auctioned-bison-herd-to-stay-in-oklahoma>

Select Agent Violations Ended Bison Research

(From The Standard Journal)

The bacteria that causes brucellosis remains on a federal list of bioterrorism agents, and its place there was part of the reason a bison research project north of Yellowstone National Park was shuttered last year.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s project that was testing a birth control drug on bison was halted last July, months after an inspector found violations of Federal Select Agent Program regulations at the agency’s corrals near Corwin Springs.

Lyndsay Cole, a spokesperson for APHIS, said the project was discontinued because researchers attempted to simulate the risk of brucellosis transmission outside of an approved select agent facility. She said the researchers misinterpreted the regulations.

“Researchers certainly interpreted the regulations a certain way and thought that they were following the regulations exactly,” said Cole, adding that the regulations were clarified a few months after the project was halted.

Read more. https://www.rexburgstandardjournal.com/news/idaho/select-agent-violations-ended-bison-research/article_1a86fdda-26a9-5a20-a86c-4bd9e5e5af51.html

National Park Service Approves Quarantine and Transfer of Bison to Tribes

(From Wyoming Public Media)

Hundreds of bison that leave Yellowstone National Park each year are rounded up and killed to keep them from spreading brucellosis. But tribes have long wanted the disease-free bison to go to reservations.

Now, the National Park Service has signed an environmental assessment that will quarantine animals for six to 12 months before releasing them into tribal care. Public lands are also interested in growing bison herds.

Defenders of Wildlife’s Chamois Anderson said the Fort Peck Reservation spearheaded the effort, but other tribes will receive bison too.

“Fort Belknap for example, Wind River Reservation has indicated they’d like some Yellowstone bison,” Anderson said. “Again, they’re really highly prized for their pure genetics. They’ve had no cattle integration.”

Anderson said every year half the bison rounded up test disease-free but are killed anyway.

Read more. <http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/national-park-service-approves-quarantine-and-transfer-bison-tribes#stream/0>

Return of The Bison: Herd Makes Surprising Comeback on Dutch Coast

(From The Guardian)

Eighty years after they were hunted to extinction, the successful reintroduction of a herd of wild European bison on to the dunes of the Dutch coast is paving the way for their return across the continent.

The largest land-living animal in Europe was last seen in the Netherlands centuries ago and was wiped out on the continent by 1927. Despite successful efforts to breed the species again in the wilds of Poland in the 1950s, and renewed efforts in the last decade in western Europe, the European bison remains as endangered as the black rhino.

The 7,000 bison, or bison bonasus, that exist in Europe today are often given supplementary feed by rangers to get through the winter months.

Yet a study of a herd of 22 bison living in Kraansvlak, 330 hectares of dunes and natural ponds making up part of the Zuid-Kennemerland national park in north Holland, is now offering a more optimistic assessment of the bison's chances of survival.

A series of research papers from the Dutch study further questions the belief that European bison are forest-dwelling creatures, a development that opens up their reintroduction to a whole host of new European environments.

Read more. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/28/return-of-the-bison-herd-makes-surprising-comeback-on-dutch-coast>

Trudeau Says US Demand for Sunset Clause Scuttled Potential NAFTA Deal

(From AgriPulse)

The Trump administration's insistence that Canada agree to add a five-year sunset clause to the North American Free Trade Agreement dashed the potential for a high-level meeting in Washington that could have resulted in a final deal, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Thursday.

Trudeau told reporters in Ottawa that he called President Donald Trump last Friday with an offer to come to Washington on Tuesday this week. Vice President Mike Pence called him back, he said, and told the prime minister that the meeting could not happen unless Trudeau would agree to the U.S. demands for a sunset clause.

"There was the broad lines of a decent win-win-win deal on the table that I thought required a final deal-making moment," Trudeau said. "If they were able to take that (precondition) off, I would be happy to come down, but that was not something that could ever be acceptable to Canada or ... Mexico in the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement."

The sunset clause proposal – a concept pressed emphatically during talks this year by U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross - would dissolve NAFTA after five years unless the three countries acted unanimously to keep it going. It has been broadly panned by Canada, Mexico and U.S. ag groups like the American Farm Bureau Federation. AFBF delegates voted to adopt policy that opposes the sunset provision proposal because of the uncertainty it would create between exporters and importers.

There is already a provision in NAFTA that allows any of the three countries to pull out of the pact after a six-month notification.

Doud Says USTR Is Searching for More Trade Opportunities Outside Of NAFTA

(From Hoosier Ag Today)

There are many irons in the fire when it comes to trade negotiations for U. S. agriculture. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross is headed to China to continue trade negotiations this weekend. A lot of attention is also on an updated North American Free Trade Agreement.

Ambassador Gregg Doud, Chief Agriculture Negotiator in the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR), pointed out that when NAFTA was first agreed upon, the Internet didn't exist. He said that makes it even more important that an updated three-nation agreement is the right fit for American agriculture.

“Our exports are somewhere in the neighborhood of \$138-\$140 billion a year now in US ag exports. NAFTA accounts for roughly \$38 billion of that. So, just about whatever commodity you want to discuss, Canada and Mexico are two of the top four markets.”

While China, NAFTA, and trade potential with Japan and Southeast Asia are important, Doud adds that the USTR continues to search for new and different markets for future opportunities.

“One of the interesting areas of conversation that we're having is with regard to Africa. And it'll be interesting to see where we end up, but definitely some countries on the list in Africa that we're taking a look at. On down the road here, next year obviously, there will be a very, very interesting conversation with the UK.”

Doud made his remarks during last week's farm foundation forum in Washington, D.C.

Read more. <https://www.hoosieragtoday.com/doud-says-ustr-searching-trade-opportunities-outside-nafta/>

Global Animal Health Group Releases New Antimicrobial Standards

(From Meatingplace.com)

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) has released a set of international guidelines and standards that offer concrete definitions designed to help ensure responsible use of antimicrobial products in animals around the world.

OIE introduced the [new guidelines](#) as part of its 86th General Session last week in Paris. They include three main updates and adaptations of previous standards regarding the surveillance and monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in animals.

New definitions also are expected to provide clearer guidelines for data collection on antimicrobial usage and to better differentiate between veterinary medical use and non-veterinary antimicrobial use. Newly defined concepts cover “treatment,” “control” and “prevention” when it comes to antimicrobial use, OIE said.

The update also includes an OIE list of “antimicrobial agents of veterinary importance,” and a manual of diagnostic tests and vaccines for terrestrial animals, including those destined for human consumption.

Women Farmers Creating New Approach to Agriculture

(From The Wisconsin Farmer)

SPRING VALLEY - While the number of farms in the U.S. has been on the decline for many years, the number owned and operated by women is on the rise, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture.

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) supports these women farmers with on-farm “In Her Boots” workshops; the first workshop of the 2018 season is Thursday, June 21 at Wylymar Farms, an organic dairy in Monroe, Wis., run by farmers Emily and Brandi Harris.

This day-long workshop offers an inspiring blend of practical information, skill-building, resource connections and networking to encourage this growing segment of women farmers, entrepreneurs, and agricultural leaders. This session in particular will also cover ergonomics and machinery use for women; farmer Emily Harris was trained in Navy mechanic school and will share details about the tractors and other equipment she uses on her farm.

“We wanted to take this opportunity to share our farming story to help promote and support women in agriculture and educate on what’s happening in the dairy industry,” explained Harris, a fourth-generation farmer who is now running her own dairy operation since 2010 and certified organic. The Harrises milk 50 Jersey cows, care for 105 cows, and sell their milk to area cheese factories.

“Emily Harris is an inspiring example of this new movement of women farmers committed to collaboratively supporting each other,” shared Cara Carper, head of the Green County Economic Development Corporation (GCDC). “We’re excited that this ‘In Her Boots’ session will be in Green County and will showcase this growing movement of women farmers creating new approaches to agriculture and how these innovative entrepreneurs positively impact our local communities and are committed to keeping our region’s agricultural heritage vibrant.”

Various resources will be available at the workshop from the GCDC, MOSES, Wisconsin Farmers Union, FairShare CSA Coalition, and the National Farm Medicine Center. The workshop will also cover a new opportunity for farmers to create additional income by selling non-hazardous baked goods made in home kitchens, now legal in Wisconsin thanks to a judge’s ruling in October 2017.

Full story here. https://www.wisfarmer.com/story/news/state/2018/05/30/women-farmers-creating-new-approaches-agriculture/654512002/?utm_source=Agri-Pulse+Daily+Harvest+2018&utm_campaign=1a9339aa54-

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