



## **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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**August 17, 2018**

### **2019 NBA Winter Conference Theme Announced – *Gaining Ground***

Plans are well underway for the 2019 Winter Conference and a recent committee meeting yielded the theme of “*Gaining Ground*”. With all the recent developments in the business as well as a focus on soil and grassland health and holistic management, the group felt the theme was a good fit for where the bison business is today. “With our main speaker being Dave Pratt presenting on *Ranching for Profit* and many other presentations centered around healthy bison and healthy pastures, it’s a natural fit. We are gaining ground in so many areas,” noted conference chairperson, Beverly Brown.

The conference is already shaping up to be jam packed with dynamic speakers, mentoring sessions, committee meetings, the recipe contest, benefit auction and a youth photo contest. Raffle items have been secured and will feature a children’s bison teepee, a hand carved bison-themed knife and a Katie Kaufman framed painting. The recipe contest will feature bison stew, so start getting those ingredients together for your best stew and be ready to enter the contest and show us what makes YOUR stew the best around!

We will continue to update the conference schedule, speakers, sessions and more in the coming weeks on our social media platforms as well as in Weekly Update. Stay tuned...we have a lot of GROUND to cover! Mark your calendars for January 23 – 26 and join us in Denver, Colorado. You do not want to miss this conference!

### **NBA Creates YouTube Channel**

As the NBA works to expand their reach through a variety of social media platforms, we have created a YouTube channel that will feature videos focused on bison production, bison meat, recipes and preparation as well as snippets from conferences, meetings and so much more. This newly created channel is a work in progress at this time, but in the coming weeks we will be adding content and cleaning up some overlap from previously created channels and presentations that never really had a home on the platform. In the meantime, you can check it out and watch as we populate the channel with educational information.

You can find our channel by searching YouTube for National Bison Association, or go to [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=national+bison+association](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=national+bison+association).

## **Don't forget about the NBA's Bison Research Library**

In May, the NBA launched its extensive Bison Research Library, with over 2,000 studies available to NBA members. The scientific literature review initiated by the NBA Science and Research Committee, and underwritten by the National Buffalo Foundation, is available to NBA members-only in the Production Resources section of the website.

The NBA Science and Research Committee has built a Zotero bibliographic database containing almost 2,000 references to scientific literature from scientific journals, university reports, conference and workshop proceedings, and industry publications such as *Bison World*. The database named "Bison references" can be accessed here: [https://www.zotero.org/groups/2186447/bison\\_research/items](https://www.zotero.org/groups/2186447/bison_research/items). This database provides information about the nature and source of bison related material published before May 2018, when the database was created.

NBA members can now access the full documents in the database by logging into the Members' Section of [bisoncentral.com](http://bisoncentral.com) and joining a similar Zotero group named "Bison publications." Instructions on how to join the group are detailed [here](#).

The literature review was conducted by Dr. Gerald Huntington, Professor Emeritus, Department of Animal Science, North Carolina State University. It was initiated by the Science and Research Committee after an NBA delegation met with Dr. Robin Schoen, chair of the Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources for the National Academy of Science in Washington, D.C. last September. Dr. Schoen advised the delegation that a literature review would be the first step in developing formal Nutritional Requirements for Bison through the National Research Council of the National Academies.

## **Bad weather and wolves cut Alaska's wood bison herd**

*(From The Coeur d'Alene Press)*

Dozens of Alaska wood bison succumbed to hard weather and hungry wolves last winter, causing an experimental herd population to drop below where it was when the herd was introduced to the western Interior in 2015.

Wood bison are a larger subspecies of the plains bison found in the Lower 48. They have larger, blockier humps and shorter, pointier beards. They're the largest native land mammals found in North America. Before 2015, wood bison were extinct in Alaska but oral histories and bone records indicate that large herds lived here hundreds of years ago, and a few survived into the early 20th century.

Alaska's current population of wood bison was imported from Canada and released near the village of Shageluk in the Innoko River basin of Western Alaska. For more than 20 years, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game had been planning to reintroduce wood bison to Alaska to

enhance grazing ecosystems, provide another large animal for people to hunt, and help the international effort to restore the sub-species from the near extinction it reached in the 1950s.

The Alaska herd numbered 130 bison when an airplane and a barge transported the animals to their new range in 2015. After this winter's die-off and low birth-rate of new calves, the herd now numbers 91 bison, according to a population survey done by the state Fish and Game department in June. It's "possible, but unlikely" that additional bison weren't counted in the population survey, said wood bison project leader Tom Seaton, a Fairbanks-based biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Read more.

[http://www.cdapress.com/outdoors/20180816/bad\\_weather\\_and\\_wolves\\_cutalaskas\\_wood\\_bison\\_herd](http://www.cdapress.com/outdoors/20180816/bad_weather_and_wolves_cutalaskas_wood_bison_herd)

## **Bison sector offers insights on using top bulls**

*(From The Manitoba Cooperator)*

Since the beef industry adjusts breeding capacity based on libido, semen production, and length of breeding season, I thought it good to review breeding capacity of bison bulls.

While longevity is longer than beef bulls, we rarely talk about breeding capacity. The bison industry does not utilize artificial insemination like the beef industry (although it can and has been done), and so the value of the good breeding bulls has gone up, as they should.

How best to utilize these highly valued bulls with the performance behind them is the key. Just like the beef industry, the bull represents half the genetics in your herd and certain traits, such as performance and carcass qualities, are quite heritable. Breeding season pretty much starts in August so this article is quite timely.

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Read more. <https://www.manitobacooperator.ca/livestock/bison-sector-offers-insights-on-using-top-bulls/>

## **Bison transfer will happen 'in the short term,' Wenk says**

*(From The Livingston Enterprise)*

Outgoing Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Dan Wenk said Thursday the proposed transfer of park bison to the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes on the Fort Peck Reservation in northeast Montana is going to happen — and soon.

Wenk made the comments at a wide-ranging press conference, in which he took questions about his upcoming retirement, which is set for Sept. 29. He reflected on his time at the park and discussed what he hopes to accomplish before his departure.

Among his goals are collecting data for a long-term plan to deal with escalating visitation at the park and finalizing agreements for the quarantine and transfer of Yellowstone bison to Fort Peck, rather than shipping them to slaughter.

“We’re hopeful that we’ll be able to transfer bison to the Fort Peck tribes this calendar year or early next calendar year,” said Wenk.

Wenk also expressed sadness that, because he is retiring early, he will not be able to oversee the transfer himself.

Read more. <https://www.livingstonenterprise.com/content/bison-transfer-will-happen-%E2%80%98-short-term%E2%80%99-wenk-says-0>

## **Research on Catalina’s frisky bison wins award for CSUF grad student**

*(From The Orange County Register)*

Everyone loves the idea of bison roaming Catalina Island after being left behind after a 1924 movie shoot. But the large non-native beasts multiplied to the point they are too much of a good thing.

In 2009, CSUF grad Calvin Duncan — along with Julie King of the Catalina Island Conservancy — started using fertility control to maintain the bison population. It worked, halting reproduction within three years.

But questions about the reversibility of the immunocontraception vaccine, its effects on ovulation and its long-term cost lingered. So Duncan enrolled in CSUF’s master’s program in biology and designed a research project to answer these questions. He conducted fieldwork on the island for several years, demonstrating the vaccine’s safety and effectiveness.

For his research, published in the *Journal of Mammalogy*, Duncan has received CSUF’s 2018 Giles T. Brown Outstanding Thesis Award — one of the university’s most prestigious student awards.

“It is not an exaggeration to state that Calvin is single-handedly responsible for the success of this massive field project,” said Paul Stapp, professor of biological science.

Read more. <https://www.ocregister.com/2018/08/13/research-on-catalinas-frisky-bison-wins-award-for-csuf-grad-student/>

## **Two bison bulls bolt from Banff park project**

*(From Rocky Mountain Outlook)*

After just one week as truly wild animals, two bison bulls in Banff National Park's reintroduction herd have headed for the hills.

Parks Canada confirmed Tuesday (Aug. 14) that two bison bulls have already left the 1,200 square kilometre reintroduction zone in the Panther Valley of Banff National Park to graze on land in the Province of Alberta.

Resource conservation manager Bill Hunt said the majority of the herd – 31 bison – have stayed within the reintroduction zone, but two bulls headed north to the Red Deer Valley and are roaming in and around the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch.

"We have been watching and monitoring their collars and telemetry and they are exploring the ranch area," he said. "We are working closely with and updating the provincial government."

Read more. <https://www.rmoutlook.com/article/two-bison-bulls-bolt-from-banff-park-project-20180816>

## **Rooting for a bison against a tourist**

*(From The San Francisco Chronicle)*

When the video came out last week of the tourist taunting the bison at Yellowstone National Park, a lot of us were rooting for the bison.

This guy was acting deranged, jumping around in stopped traffic, taunting and dancing in front of a bison I'd estimate at 1,400 pounds, about 6 feet tall at the hump.

I found myself wanting the bison to lower its head, hook the guy with a horn and then throw him about 30 feet into the air. Many I've talked to feel the same. It's too bad the guy only ended up in jail, right?

This is part of a change in the outlook of the collective public. You can't fix stupid, we realize, but maybe a bison or a bear can. The guy needed correcting and we wanted to see the bison correct him.

Back in the day, with an encounter like this, most onlookers would be worried about the safety of the guy, or the potential that the bison might slip trying to gallop on the pavement. Now, we want more. We want the wildlife violator punished.

Read more. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sports/article/Rooting-for-a-bison-against-a-tourist-13133640.php>

## **PETA urges boycott of Alberta-filmed 'Alpha' over bison deaths**

*(From Canoe)*

A movie filmed in Alberta opens in theatres on Friday, two years after it was subject to an investigation for using the carcasses of five Alberta bison.

Animal rights activist group PETA is calling for a boycott of the film over the deaths of the animals, which it says were slaughtered and skinned for a hunting scene.

Alpha, which is set in the Ice Age, was partially filmed in Drumheller and Dinosaur Provincial Park in 2016, along with B.C. and Iceland.

Then-titled The Solutrean, the American Humane Association denied the film's "No Animals Were Harmed" end-credit certification in September 2016. That followed an AHA investigation into allegations that an Alberta-based animal wrangler hired by the film's production company violated its standards, "which absolutely and definitively prohibit the killing or injuring of any animal for the sake of a film production."

Read more. <https://canoe.com/news/local-news/peta-urges-boycott-of-alberta-filmed-alpha-over-bison-deaths/wcm/34e0fbbb-0a71-47a6-8c66-7bd56921a4c0>

## **Yellowstone Now Offers Bison Car Wash to Tourists Stuck in Traffic**

*(From Laramie Live)*

Wyoming has many varieties of car washes. There are brush free, do-it-yourself, goat, horse, and now introducing bison. This giant beast decided to rub up on this car stuck in Yellowstone traffic.

Let's be real for a moment. Sometimes tourist put themselves in dangerous places like when some moron tries to ride a bison. Sometimes people find themselves in a bad spot. This video comes from that second category of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. However, the driver of this car did the right thing.

Living in Wyoming, we often expect tourists to do dumb things in Yellowstone. In this video, it is what is not there. Sound. The driver was utterly silent. I'm guessing he stayed still to not to anger the massive mammal. What else could he do? Honk the horn? Scream? Drive away? He just let the bison give his car a dry wash. When it was done, the person slowly drove away. We need more people like this in Yellowstone.

Read more. <http://laramielive.com/yellowstone-now-offers-bison-car-wash-to-tourists-stuck-in-traffic-video/>

## **Bill to further extend ELD exemption for livestock, insect haulers clears Senate**

*(From Safety and Health Magazine)*

Washington - The Senate on Aug. 1 passed legislation that would grant an electronic logging device exemption for livestock and insect haulers until Sept. 30, 2019.

Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) introduced the measure as an amendment to the Senate appropriations "minibus" bill for fiscal year 2019.

"With this extension, we will have more time to bring common sense to these rules and provide additional flexibility," Fischer said in a press release, citing the "unique challenges" affected haulers face.

The current ELD exemption for livestock and insect haulers runs through Sept. 30 - the end of FY 2018 - after the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration issued two 90-day ELD waivers to those groups. The ELD final rule took effect Dec. 18, 2017, and an enforcement grace period expired March 31.

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

## **Study: Discontinuing antibiotics could cost cattle industry billions**

*(From FoodDive.com)*

Dive Brief:

Eliminating metaphylaxis, or the mass administration of medicine to high health-risk cattle to eradicate or minimize disease outbreak, could cost the U.S. cattle industry as much as \$1.8 billion annually, according to a study\* done by Kansas State University agricultural economists and veterinary medicine faculty.

[\*See: [http://www.waeaonline.org/UserFiles/file/JARE432\\_v1.pdf](http://www.waeaonline.org/UserFiles/file/JARE432_v1.pdf) ]

This treatment is used by 59% of U.S. feedlots for 20.5% of all cattle placed on feed, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"We found that if metaphylaxis was not available for high health-risk cattle, it would reduce industry gross revenue by about 1%," said Elliott Dennis, a Kansas State doctoral student who worked on the study. "That's a sizable amount if metaphylaxis was not allowed to be used in feedlots on high health-risk cattle."

Full text:

<https://www.fooddive.com/news/study-discontinuing-antibiotics-could-cost-cattle-industry-billions/529414/>

## **Our Farms, Our Future Conference Proceedings Now Available Online**

*(From SARE)*

"Thank you for organizing what turned out to be my favorite conference," was one participant's response to the Our Farms, Our Future Conference held by SARE and NCAT/ATTRA in April of this year. The three-day event featured over 35 different breakout sessions, bringing close to 110 speakers together to share their diverse ideas about the future of sustainable agriculture.

Now, all of the conference materials are online and available for free to the public, to allow everyone access to the resources and perspectives shared at the event.

Explore the future of sustainable agriculture today at <https://www.sare.org/Newsroom/Press-Releases/Our-Farms-Our-Future-Conference-Proceedings-Now-Available-Online>