



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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With Water Buffalo Meat Appearing in U.S. Retail Market, NBA Board Targets Labeling Truth as Top Priority

After the National Bison Association learned recently that packages ground water buffalo, labeled as “Wild Buffalo, Free Range,” are appearing in some retail grocery outlets on the East Coast, the NBA Board of Directors this week voted unanimously to establish the issue of identifying “water buffalo” properly on product labels as a top priority for the association.

The NBA has scheduled a meeting with Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety Carmen Rottenberg during the association’s Washington, D.C. Policy Roundup D.C. September 11-14, and is requesting a similar meeting with the Deputy Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration to also discuss this topic.

Dick Gehring, president of the NBA, said after Wednesday’s board meeting, “The National Bison Association, regional associations, marketers, and individual producers have worked hard for more than two decades to introduce the public to the great taste and nutritional benefits of our meat. That hard work has resulted in a strong, profitable market. Now, we’re seeing imported water buffalo trying to exploit the image of bison by bringing in product labeled in a manner to leads the public to believe their meat is actually bison.”

“The NBA board unanimously agreed that we must act quickly to stop this potentially deceptive marketing in its tracks,” Gehring added.

Earlier this year, the NBA initiated a campaign to request that the pet food industry require any water buffalo ingredients to be labeled as “water buffalo,” and not just “buffalo.” The Association of American Feed Control Officials, the body that guides the development of pet food regulations, has established a working group to look at new rules. NBA Executive director Dave Carter is serving on that working group.

The emergence of water buffalo in the human food market isn’t a complete surprise. In 2015, the NBA filed formal comments with USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) requesting that the agency require full labeling of water buffalo in food products. Those comments were filed after the FSIS and FDA published a notice in the Federal Register that they agencies were updating the Food *Standards and Labeling Policy Book*, which identifies the nomenclature that can be used in food product labels. The agencies have since shelved the process of updating that book.

Carter noted that the NBA staff will be developing a campaign to engage bison producers, and their customers, in lobbying to implement the changes requested by the association.

Board Nominations Due Sept. 7

Friday, September 7th is the deadline for NBA members interested in running for election in Regions I, III, V and VII to submit nominations to the NBA office. The elections will be conducted from September 14 – 30.

According to the NBA bylaws, regional directors "shall be elected by a mail in, or electronic ballot during September of each year prior to the expiration of the regions' directors' terms. If after the initial ballot, no one person in any region has more than 50% of the ballots cast, then a run-off election will occur during November, involving the two persons having the most votes cast in the September balloting. In case of a tie, a coin will be tossed to determine the winner. Only active and lifetime members residing within a region may vote in each region's election." Regional directors are eligible to serve two two-year terms.

The directors elected in September will begin serving in January 2019.

In this election cycle, directors will be elected for two-year terms from Regions I, III, V and VII. The regions up for election for, and the states included are:

- Region I, representing AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA. Alan Douglass, the current director is eligible for re-election.
- Region III, representing MT, ND, SD. Mimi Hillenbrand of South Dakota is the current director and is eligible for re-election.
- Region V, representing NE, IA, MN, WI. Jeremy Allemann of Wisconsin, the current director, is eligible for re-election.
- Region VII, CT, DC, DE, MA, ME, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT. Brian Grubb, the current director, is eligible for re-election.

Nominations for candidates to serve as regional director can be submitted to the NBA at david@bisoncentral.com.

Bulls Lower, Heifers Higher in Latest Market Report

Market-ready dressed bull carcasses were slightly lower, and heifer carcasses slightly higher in the latest wholesale market report issued this week by the USDA Grain and Livestock Market News Service.

According to the USDA report for July, dressed young bulls averaged \$485.10/cwt. in July, which was \$4.59/cwt. lower than in June, and \$2.32 lower than the previous July. Dressed heifer carcasses were priced at an average of \$479.08/cwt in July, which was \$7.18/cwt. higher than in June, and \$14.34 higher than in July 2017.

Year-to-date, bulls accounted for 61% of the younger animals processed under federal inspection. That is the same percentage as was recorded, on average, over the previous eight years. The YTD federally-inspected slaughter of 32,253 head is 978 animals behind the pace

from 2017. The average bull carcass, however, is 38 lbs. heavier than the previous July, and the average heifer carcass is 29 lbs. heavier.

Gold Trophy Show and Sale Classes Announced

It won't be long before the show season is upon us! The NBA would like to encourage all producers to start looking through their herds for those standout animals they want to enter into the Gold Trophy Show and Sale (GTSS) in January of 2019.

Since it's never too early to plan, the GTSS committee has been busy reviewing classes and gearing up for the event. As many of you will recall, the show and sale last year was near capacity and while that is a great "problem" to have, it did cause organizers some concern going into the next year. "We were just about at capacity with regard to the number of animals," noted GTSS Chairman, Boyd Meyer. "As we looked at planning for the 2019 event, it became apparent that we needed to put some number limits on some of the classes for the safety of the people working in the yards as well as the animals."

For the coming year, the class offerings will stay the same, with classes as follows: Two-Year-Old Bred Heifers; Two-Year-Old Bulls; Yearling Heifers; Pen of Five Ranch Ready Yearling Heifers; Yearling Bulls; Heifer Calves; Pen of Five Heifer Calves and Bull Calves.

New this year will be a cap on the number of entries in the Two-Year-Old Bulls at 12 head and the Yearling Bull class at 16 head. Entries will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis with all the details included in the entry forms and information that will be available later this fall.

Additionally, the group previously approved weights for the Ranch Ready Pen of Five Yearling Heifer class. Entries will need to have a cumulative average weight between 635 and 875 pounds. The committee felt this would help ensure the animals stay true to the "ranch ready" theme of the class.

Entries will be available online later this fall. Start looking at those herds to pick your next winners!

Hobart Bison Ranch Lets Guest Roam with the Buffalo

(From The Chicago Tribune)

When Bud Koeppen and his wife Ruth decided to start a bison farm in Northwest Indiana they agreed their mission would be "to bring back America's past."

Their first call was to Bud's older brother Wally, who had recently retired, and shared the same love of his family's farming roots.

By Thanksgiving 2003, the Koeppen clan had their first 10 bison. They welcomed "seven breeding cows and two heifer calves along with a yearling herd bull they named Big Bad John," for the official launch of Broken Wagon Bison Ranch at 563 West 450 North in Hobart.

Today, they have 114 bison in their herd living on 160 acres, which is now a growing destination in Northwest Indiana, with an expansive food market and gift shop as well as public tours from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. every Saturday from June 1 to Sept. 30.

Christine Livingston, assistant director for Indiana Dunes Tourism, describes the bison ranch as one of her favorite hidden “past meets the present Region gems” in Northwest Indiana.

“I’ve been in my position at Indiana Dunes Tourism for nine years, and just in this span, it’s amazing how much this family has grown their ranch and the experience for those who visit them,” Livingston said.

“I was born and raised in Gary and then lived in Porter County for 15 years before moving to where I now live in LaPorte and I’ve never seen anything quite like what Bud, Ruth and Wally have been able to accomplish in such a short time and their care and dedication to animal husbandry.”

Read more. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/lifestyles/ct-ptb-ent-bison-tours-0831-story.html>

It's Bison, Not Buffalo. And Other American Bison Facts

(From The Smithsonian)

Are bison and buffalo the same?

Though the terms are often used interchangeably, buffalo and bison are distinct animals. Old World “true” buffalo (Cape buffalo and water buffalo) are native to Africa and Asia. Bison are found in North America and Europe.

Both bison and buffalo are in the bovidae family, but the two are not closely related.

How did the names get so mixed up? Historians believe that early European explorers are to blame, though the details are a bit murky. According to the National Park Service, it’s possible it stemmed from the French word boeuf, meaning beef. Others posit that bison hides resembled buff coats commonly worn by military men at the time, inspiring the name. Whatever the case, the misnomer stuck.

So how do you tell the difference between buffalo and bison?

Bison have large humps at their shoulders and bigger heads than buffalo. They also have beards, as well as thick coats which they shed in the spring and early summer.

Another simple way to tell a buffalo from a bison is to look at its horns. Cape buffalo horns resemble a handlebar mustache; they have a thick, helmet-like base and curl down, then back up.

A water buffalo’s horns are large, long and curved in a crescent, while a bison’s horns are typically sharp and shorter than the average buffalo’s.

What do bison eat?

These year-round grazers primarily eat grasses but also consume flowering plants, lichen and woody plant leaves. In winter, bison sweep their large heads from side to side like a plow to clear away snow to find food.

Read more. <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/news/its-bison-not-buffalo-and-other-american-bison-facts>

Oregon Man Gets 130 Days in Jail for Harassing Yellowstone Bison

(From The Billings Gazette)

An Oregon man who said he and his buddy were on a "last hurrah" tour through national parks before he entered alcohol treatment was sentenced Thursday to 130 days in jail for his drunken behavior, including harassing a bison that had stopped traffic in Yellowstone National Park.

Raymond Reinke's crimes drew national attention when at least one Yellowstone visitor caught his interaction with a bison on video.

Reinke, of Pendleton, Oregon, pleaded guilty during a federal court appearance in Mammoth, Wyoming, where cases from Yellowstone park are heard.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Carman sentenced him to 60 days in jail for harassing wildlife, 60 days for interfering with law enforcement and 10 days for disorderly conduct. He was given credit for 21 days served.

Reinke, 55, is banned from Grand Teton, Yellowstone and Glacier national parks for a five-year probationary period during which he is not allowed to drink alcohol. His planned chemical dependency treatment is now court-ordered.

"I'm sorry to the buffalo. He didn't deserve what I did to him," Reinke said, ABC Fox Montana reported.

Read more. https://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/oregon-man-gets-days-in-jail-for-harassing-yellowstone-bison/article_dbe768bb-aa2e-56a1-9870-ab77c06bc343.html

Research Aims to Assure Bison's Survival in N.D.

(From My ND Now)

Theodore Roosevelt National Park, ND - A visit to Theodore Roosevelt National Park often includes a sighting of bison.

There are hundreds of the animals roaming there - after being introduced in the park in the 1950s in the South Unit, and the 1960s in the North Unit.

But there's concern that over the long term, a lack of genetic diversity could threaten the herds.

Jim Olson reports on research designed to head-off that threat.

120 years ago, the bison was nearly extinct in North America. But that's all changed.

(Dr. Blake McCann, Wildlife Biologist) "Over time we've grown to about 10,000 animals."

Dr. Blake McCann is part of an effort to make sure that success story doesn't reverse course. He's a key player in research to find out how to make sure herds of bison managed by the Department of Interior and National Parks don't stay isolated - genetically speaking.

(Dr. Blake McCann, Wildlife Biologist) "We're going to have a problem eventually. In 50 years? Or is it 100 years? We don't know exactly."

That's why, when you drive through the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park these days, you may catch a glimpse of a bison with a colored ear tag. A green tag is one of ten local bison fitted with GPS collars, while orange tags were placed on a dozen female bison introduced into the herd from Badlands National Park in South Dakota.

Read more. <https://www.myndnow.com/news/minot-news/research-aims-to-assure-bison-s-survival-in-nd/1384981433>

Judge Revives Obama WOTUS Rule, Blocking Trump Suspension (From AgriPulse)

A federal judge ruled that the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers improperly suspended the Obama-era "waters of the U.S. rule," allowing it to take effect in 26 states where it has not been blocked by court order.

The ruling adds a new frustration to the administration's efforts to replace the 2015 rule, which expanded the definition of what wetlands and streams are regulated by the Clean Water Act. U.S. District Judge David Norton in South Carolina agreed with environmental groups that the agencies failed to follow the public-comment requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act in implementing a suspension rule this year that was intended to delay enforcement of the 2015 rule. The APA requires agencies to take public comment on regulatory actions before implementing them.

Norton's order, issued Thursday, applies nationwide which means that the Obama rule is in effect in 26 states where the rule has not been stayed by other judges. Those 26 states include California, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Washington.

EPA issued a statement saying the agencies would review the order as they "work to determine next steps."

Zippy Duvall, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, called on the agencies to "take immediate steps to limit the impact of this dangerous court decision."

He said the ruling "creates enormous regulatory uncertainty and risk for farmers, ranchers and others in the 26 states that are not already protected from the unlawful 2015 rule by previous court decisions."

Scott Yager, chief environmental counsel for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said the ruling "effectively brought WOTUS back from the dead in 26 states, creating a zombie version of the 2015 rule that threatens the rights of farmers and ranchers across the country."

Norton wrote in his ruling that the agencies' "refusal to consider or receive public comments on the substance of the WOTUS Rule ... did not provide a 'meaningful opportunity for comment,'" as required by the Administrative Procedures Act.

The Furry Friends of Fermilab: Batavia's Bison on Science's Frontier (From WGN TV)

Fermilab is the country's premier particle physics and accelerator labs. It's home to some of the foremost scientists from around the world who study the smallest particles in the universe on some of the most advanced accelerators known to man.

But it's also home to bison.

American Plains Bison have roamed Fermilab's lands now for nearly a half century, brought in 1969 by its first director Robert Wilson. Wilson was from Wyoming and said science is the frontier.

They are arguably, lab employees and the public's favorite attraction.

Dave Shemanske is Fermilab's roads and grounds manager and said the bison are fast. "They're extremely fast," he said. "They can run up to 25-30 miles per hour. They're not tame. They're extremely wild. They're extremely protective of their newborns. The bulls can be aggressive at times."

32 bison, including 14 calves, roam the grounds. In the heyday, 150 bison made up this herd, roaming 75 acres of land on the Batavia site.

They are fed and watered daily and given annual vaccinations. But at a max weight of 2500 pounds they are largely left to do their own thing behind a series of fences and enclosures.

Full story here. <https://wqntv.com/2018/08/23/the-furry-friends-of-fermilab-batavias-bison-on-sciences-frontier/>

International Study Shows More Sustainable Agricultural Systems Increase Food Production

(From Univ. of York Press Release)

A major new study involving researchers from the University of York has measured a global shift towards more sustainable agricultural systems that provide environmental improvements at the same time as increases in food production.

The study shows that the sustainable intensification of agriculture, a term that was once considered paradoxical, delivers considerable benefits to both farmers and the environment.

The study, published in the leading journal Nature Sustainability, involved researchers from 17 universities and research institutes in the UK, USA, Sweden, Ethiopia and New Zealand.

Progress

Their assessment shows considerable progress has been made towards the sustainable intensification of agriculture, with sustainable approaches now being implemented on 163 million farms worldwide.

Co-author of the assessment, Professor Sue Hartley, who is director of the York Environmental Sustainability Institute and University's Research Champion for Environmental Sustainability and Resilience, said: "It has long been thought that increased food production would have to come at the expense of the agricultural environment and its biodiversity, but this paper shows that this trade-off is not inevitable and the sustainable intensification of agriculture is both possible and increasing globally."

Read more. <https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2018/research/food-for-thought/>

Farm Bill Conference Committee to Meet Sept. 5

(From The Capital Press)

Agriculture Committee Chairmen Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., and Rep. Michael Conaway, R-Texas, and Ranking Members Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn., are moving ahead in negotiating the next farm bill.

"We are committed to working together on a farm bill that delivers certainty and predictability to our farmers and families as quickly as possible," they said in a joint statement to the press on Wednesday.

They have set a public meeting of the farm bill conference committee for Sept. 5 beginning at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will be webcast live on www.agriculture.senate.gov.

The conference committee consists of 56 members, including nine senators and 47 representatives.

Read more. http://www.capitalpress.com/Nation_World/Nation/20180823/farm-bill-conference-committee-to-meet-sept-5

DOT seeks comment on revising trucking rule

(From Meatingplace)

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announced that it is seeking public comment on revising four specific areas of current hours-of-service (HOS) regulations, which limit the operating hours of commercial truck drivers.

The upcoming Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), which will be published in the Federal Register, responds to widespread Congressional, industry, and citizen concerns and seeks feedback from the public to determine if HOS revisions may alleviate unnecessary burdens placed on drivers while maintaining safety on highways and roads. The comment period will be open for 30 days.

The four specific areas under consideration for revision are:

- Expanding the current 100 air-mile “short-haul” exemption from 12 hours on-duty to 14 hours on-duty, in order to be consistent with the rules for long-haul truck drivers;
- Extending the current 14-hour on-duty limitation by up to two hours when a truck driver encounters adverse driving conditions;
- Revising the current mandatory 30-minute break for truck drivers after 8-hours of continuous driving; and
- Reinstating the option for splitting up the required 10-hour off-duty rest break for drivers operating trucks that are equipped with a sleeper-berth compartment.

• In addition, the ANPRM seeks public comment and relevant data on two recently submitted petitions requesting regulatory relief from HOS rules (1) pertaining to the 14-hour on-duty limitation (filed by the Owner-Operators Independent Drivers Association) and (2) pertaining to the 10-hour off-duty requirement (filed by TruckerNation).

Earlier this year, the congressionally mandated electronic logging device (ELD) rule, which required most FMCSA-regulated motor carriers to convert their records from paper to an electronic format, became effective. While compliance with the ELD rule has reached nearly 99 percent across the trucking industry, it has also brought focus to HOS regulations, especially with regard to certain regulations having a significant impact on agriculture and other sectors of trucking.

USDA Prepares to Unveil Massive Trade Aid Package

(From AgriPulse)

The USDA appears to be on track to unveil on Friday details of a \$12 billion assistance plan for farmers hurt by the international blowback from President Donald Trump’s trade battles with China, Mexico, the European Union, Turkey and elsewhere.

The USDA is keeping implementation details for the program close to the vest, but *AgriPulse* has learned that the payment rate for soybean farmers has been preliminarily proposed at \$1.65 per bushel and 1 cent per bushel for corn farmers, according to officials close to the decision-making process. Those officials stressed that those numbers could change under the White House Office of Management and Budget, where the package is currently being reviewed, so they may not reflect the final proposal. USDA would not confirm or deny these proposed payment rates.

Those payments, which USDA has said will be based on production multiplied by a payment rate, will be part of the Market Facilitation Program portion of the program. The agency also pledged to make payments to producers of sorghum, wheat, cotton, dairy and hogs.

The assistance plan will be split into three parts, one of which is a Food Purchase and Distribution Program that allows the USDA to purchase surplus commodities that would have been exported if not for tariffs. The third part is a Trade Promotion Program, in which USDA officials say the department will lean on the private sector to help develop new foreign markets to replace the ones the U.S. is losing in its trade wars.

The \$1.65 for soybeans that USDA has preliminarily proposed to OMB is in line with farmers expectations, said Grant Kimberley, director of market development for the Iowa Soybean Association.

“I’ve heard it will be \$1.50 to \$1.90 per bushel,” Kimberley told *Agri-Pulse*. “That’s been about what the impact of prices have been since the trade war went into effect. It would make sense that it would be in that range. The impact on prices has been about a 20 percent hit since the tariff went into effect.”

A USDA spokesperson said: "USDA will not confirm what Agri-Pulse is reporting, because it is based on preliminary information, is incomplete, and lacks context. The final rule is still undergoing the rule-making process, and so any information reported at this stage may turn out to be inaccurate. Further, it may do a disservice to stakeholders to supply them with information that is not in its final form."

NAMI, Memphis Meats Offer Regulatory Suggestions For Cell-Based Meat

(From AgriPulse)

A Washington lobby group representing the meat sector and a major player in cultured protein development sent a joint letter to the administration Thursday outlining suggested steps in terminology and governance of a technology that has vexed regulators and producers alike in the early days of its growth.

In the [letter](#) sent to the White House, the leaders of the North American Meat Institute and Memphis Meats jointly call on the administration to acknowledge roles for both the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture in the regulation of cell-based meat. The technology – which has been dubbed things like cultured meat, clean meat, and fake meat during the regulatory debate – uses existing animal cells in cell culture to produce meat products. As such, NAMI and Memphis Meats suggest the term “cell-based meat and poultry” as the proper terminology for products of the technology.

The letter also suggests FDA should be charged with ensuring the pre-market safety evaluation of cell-based meat and poultry with USDA input. Once pre-market safety is established, regulatory oversight can be shifted to USDA, which can apply "relevant findings from FDA’s safety evaluation to ensure products are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled.”

“Such a regulatory framework is not new and plays into the strengths and experience of FDA and USDA,” the letter states. “FDA has extensive expertise regarding products produced using cell culture technology and USDA has a longstanding role in inspecting meat and poultry products.”

Mark Dopp, NAMI’s senior vice president for regulatory affairs, tells *Agri-Pulse* this approach has been used before with additives and processes.

“This happens all the time,” he said, using irradiation as an example. “Direct and indirect additives, they’re all approved by first by FDA for food safety purposes. After that, FSIS makes sure that they’re used in the proper form or fashion in USDA federally-inspected establishments.”

“Why would we treat these products – or regulate them any differently – than how ground beef is made or how hot dogs are made or how ham is processed,” he argued.

Funding for Cover Crops to Provide Livestock Drought Relief in Missouri

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is assisting Missouri livestock producers affected by drought with \$2 million to help farmers plant cover crops to address inadequate feed and forage and other natural resource concerns. Cover crops established under this emergency initiative offered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) may be grazed or hayed.

Farmers and ranchers with operations in any of the counties impacted by drought can apply for assistance at local NRCS offices. The U.S. Drought Monitor Report will be used to determine eligibility, and applications for assistance in counties with the more severe drought conditions will be given priority.

Applications are due by August 31, 2018.

Read more. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mo/newsroom/releases/9cb3c5a7-d3a4-470f-8fa0-cb132f8e07ab/>