



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 25, 2017

IBC Memorabilia Still Available

The National Bison Association has excess International Bison Conference memorabilia now available at the association's online store: <https://bisoncentral.com/bison-store/> that includes the IBC Comemorative Belt Buckle and the IBC Commemorative T-shirts. We also have just three of those beautiful IBC Sharps-replica rifles left as well. See details below.

The custom, American made belt buckles were created for the IBC by historic western wear maker, Rockmount Ranch Wear. The buckles feature a bronze bison on the front of a 4" x 2 3/4" buckle plate. The back of the buckle features an engraving of "International Bison Conference 2017". [Order here.](#)

Don't miss out on this very rare opportunity! Just three of these Shiloh Sharps-replica Rifles remain. Handmade in Big Timber, Montana, the 1874 replica Sporter #3 is a 45/70 caliber black powder cartridge rifle that the NBA commissioned to be made for the event. Just 15 of the rifles were produced, which includes a full bison engraved on the hammer-side, 30" full-heavy barrel with semi-fancy wood and full Buckhorn and Blade Front. Email david@bisoncentral.com to inquire. Just three remain!

Straight from the 2017 International Bison Conference, the official commemorative t-shirt is available in gray or light blue, though quantities and sizes are limited. The t-shirts are "DryBlend" - 50% cotton, 50% polyester and offered in large, x-large and xx-large. [Order here.](#)

Carter to Conduct Bison Advantage Session at MI bison Bash

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter is headed to Cheboygan, MI tomorrow to conduct a Bison Advantage workshop in conjunction with the Michigan Bison Association's annual Bison Bash celebration at New Beginnings Ranch.

The event will begin with a noon luncheon, followed by a brief business meeting at 1 p.m. the formal workshop will begin at 1:30 p.m.

Everyone in or out of the business is welcome to attend.

Nominations due by Sept. 8th for Regional Board Seats

NBA members interested in running for election in Regions II, IV, VI and VIII have until September 8th 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 2018.

In this election cycle, directors will be elected for two-year terms from Regions II, IV, VI and VIII.

The regions up for election for, and the states included are:

- Region II, representing Colorado and Wyoming. Ray Thieman, the current director is term-limited and ineligible to stand for re-election.
- Region IV, representing Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Gerald Parsons, the current director, is eligible for re-election.
- Region VI, representing Illinois, Indiana, Kansas and Missouri. Keith Yearout of Kansas, the current director, is eligible for re-election.
- Region VII, representing Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Sherry DiSimone, 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 by September 8th.

Comment Period for Grass Fed Definition Open Through September 4th

September 4th is the deadline for NBA members to submit comments regarding a proposed definition to guide the use of Grass Fed on the website, in newsletters, ads, marketing, and communication referencing "Grass Fed" bison.

In a preamble to the formal request for comments, Grass Fed Producers' Committee Co-Chair Lee Graese said, "We feel a definition is needed to create clarity in the marketplace for the sake

of fellow ranchers, marketers, and most importantly consumers. There has been a history of confusion over this term, which prompted the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to establish a definition that was endorsed by all affected parties. It took several years and multiple attempts to achieve a consensus on the term's definition."

The proposed definition reads:

Grass (Forage) Fed-Grass and forage shall be the feed source consumed for the lifetime of the ruminant animal, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. The diet shall be derived solely from forage consisting of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g., legumes, Brassica), browse, or cereal grain crops in the vegetative (pre-grain) state or other native plants (e.g., cacti, sedges). Animals cannot be fed grain or grain byproducts and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season. Hay, haylage, baleage, silage, crop residue without grain, and other roughage sources may also be included as acceptable feed sources. Routine mineral and vitamin supplementation may also be included in the feeding regimen. If incidental supplementation occurs due to inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs or to ensure the animal's well-being at all times during adverse environmental or physical conditions, the producer must fully document (e.g., receipts, ingredients, and tear tags) the supplementation that occurs including the amount, the frequency, and the supplements provided.

Comments should be submitted to info@bisoncentral.com.

5 questions with ... Travis Steele, bison rancher and direct meat sales, New Rockford, N.D.

(From AgWeek)

Q: What is your role in agriculture today?

We grow food for people. It's our responsibility to use production methods that ensure food is safe to eat, natural resources are conserved and not poisoned, animals are treated humanely, and we leave the earth in better shape than we found it.

Q: How did you decide to raise bison and why?

I enjoyed being around bison as a teenager when my dad raised them. Despite my interest, I was discouraged from returning to the farm, and the door always seemed to be closed. My parent's farm was auctioned off. My dad was killed in a motorcycle accident.

Then the door seemed to open. I got a loan 12 years ago and bought 100 acres of that farm I grew up on, including the farmstead and some pasture from the new owner. I spent the next five years building a bison herd and purchasing equipment while I worked for a couple different farmers. I also started renting cropland from my grandparents.

My wife, Amy, and I strive to raise the best quality meat possible. For us, that means no hormones or antibiotics. We provide quality hay and raise our own feed, which is mostly oats and peas. We are not using synthetic herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, or anything not approved

under the National Organic Program standards. We are in our first year of transition into organic farming with the goal of obtaining organic certification for the 2019 crop year.

We stopped growing GMO crops a few years ago due to the high seed costs, tight restrictions, ever-evolving weed and pest resistance and questions about safety, which didn't fit with our farming philosophy. In addition to pursuing organic crop production, we are relying on cover crops to build soil fertility and organic matter and to provide weed suppression and soil conservation.

Q: Who are your most common customers and how are you marketing to them?

Our customers are diverse. Most people choose bison for its combination of great taste and nutritional aspects. It's low in fat, cholesterol and calories and high in protein, iron and Omega 3 fatty acids compared to other meats. It's also increasingly important to people to know where their food comes from, how it was produced and who raised it. We offer all of that, and you usually can't get that at the supermarket.

Our marketing and advertising started with a large sign in our pasture that read, "Bison Meat."

Next we started a Facebook page and finally added a website so we could reach more people and allow customers to order online. We also started doing drop-site deliveries to Carrington, Jamestown, Valley City and Fargo, N.D., to make it easier to serve our customers. Repeat customers and word of mouth is the lifeblood of our business.

Q: What is the greatest challenge you face right now in agriculture?

It's tough for a small farm like ours to make it financially, especially when commodity prices are depressed. Our focus is on adding value to what we produce, like direct marketing our bison meat, and by producing high value crops, while lowering input costs.

Q: What are the benefits of raising your family on a farm?

Our kids get to grow up with a big yard to play in and no busy streets nearby. Life on a farm fosters the development of a deeper connection and respect for nature and animals, as well as first-hand knowledge of where food comes from and the work that goes into producing it.

Source: <http://www.agweek.com/people/4317312-5-questions-travis-steele-bison-rancher-and-direct-meat-sales-new-rockford-nd>

Prairie visitors "whoop" it up for eclipse; just another day for bison

(From The Kearney Hub)

ALDA — Visitors watching the solar eclipse Monday at the Crane Trust headquarters along the Platte River south of Alda let out a big "whoop" of excitement as the once-in-a-lifetime event reached totality.

Meanwhile, in a prairie a half-mile to the southeast, most of the trust's 76 genetically pure bison were taking their regular midday rest. They couldn't have cared less when the moon's shadow over the sun created sunset-like light and then near-darkness.

A few raised their heads when the excited humans expressed joy at the sight.

"It's nap time," Crane Trust researcher and volunteer coordinator Kelsey King said about usual bison behavior after grazing most of the morning. "They kind of nap in shifts. Some will just stand there and chew. Some will wallow ... some will go to sleep."

That's what they did Monday, although other prairie species did seem to notice the eclipse. Read more. http://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/prairie-visitors-whoop-it-up-for-eclipse-just-another-day/article_437b8fb6-86c2-11e7-92a3-4f2add9feef1.html

USFWS Reopens Public Comment On Future Of National Bison Range

(From Montana Public Radio)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says they are reopening the public comment period on the future of the National Bison Range. That's in response to feedback the agency got earlier. Service officials will hold a public meeting in Missoula next week.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokesperson Ryan Moehring says the meeting is part of an ongoing scoping process for the National Bison Range's Comprehensive Conservation Plan. "That CCP as we call it, is a 15 year plan that sort of guides the way that each refuge is managed."

This will be the third meeting hosted this year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help the public learn about management plans that are being considered for the [National Bison Range](#) and areas within that refuge complex including the Lost Trail, Ninepipe and Pablo National Wildlife Refuges.

"We would recommend anyone that has a vested interest in the future of how the National Bison Range is managed to come out to this meeting," says Moehring.

The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 30, at 6 p.m. at the Missoula Public Library. [Two similar meetings were held in June](#) in Polson and Kalispell, each with a turnout of only about 15 people. At both meetings, people raised concerns about understaffing at the bison range, invasive weed management and the status of special agreements between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes regarding co-management opportunities.

Read more. <http://mtp.org/post/usfws-reopens-public-comment-future-national-bison-range>

Park officials suggest 'licensed hunting' to combat bison problem at the Grand Canyon

(From AZ Central)

Bison are popular among tourists at the Grand Canyon, but not so much with conservationists.

Environmental groups say the growing population of land mammals is stampeding over watering holes, vegetation and other resources – a problem that has been going on for more than a decade.

Many people agree there are too many bison in the park, but agreeing on a solution hasn't been so easy.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission has come up with a plan to reduce the herds, which is stirring up some controversy.

The proposed plan is to kill hundreds of bison.

“Clearly the bison are having ecological impact on the park,” Craig McMullen, Flagstaff district regional supervisor for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, told [KNAU Arizona Public Radio](#). “That’s not something we’re happy about.”

The non-native animals descended from [bison that were brought to northern Arizona and cross-bred with cattle in 1900s](#).

There were about 100 animals back then. Now there are 400 to 600 bison roaming the North Rim, more than twice the number the Park Service recommends.

There could be 800 Grand Canyon bison in three years and as many as 1,500 in a decade if nothing is done, according to [the Park Service’s Environmental Assessment](#).

Park officials say the bison herds damage the habitat for other species by adding to erosion, compacting soil and contaminating water sources while depleting park resources and archaeological sites.

“In a nutshell, we want to reduce the number of bison in the population as quickly as possible in the next three to five years, to a level under 200 animals,” said Greg Holm, wildlife manager a Grand Canyon National Park told KNAU.

Read more. <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2017/08/19/z-arizona-park-officials-suggest-hunting-bison-combat-overpopulation-grand-canyon/576515001/>

Bison Bones Presentation Planned at Knife River Indian Villages

(From the Minot Daily News)

Visitors to Knife River Indian Villages on Saturday will have a unique opportunity to learn about North Dakota’s bison-related history.

At 1 p.m. central time, Theodore Roosevelt National Park science intern Hazel Galloway will present “Discover the Hidden Secrets of Bison Bones.” The program will share results from an ongoing study that compares bison DNA, past and present, and discuss how that information can be used to ensure the survival of our national mammal.

“By studying DNA from the bison at Theodore Roosevelt National Park alongside historic samples like the bones and teeth collected at last year’s ArcheoBlitz at Knife River we can track how bison have changed over the last 200 years. This history helps us understand the threats that bison are facing today, and what the next 100 years might hold for them,” said Galloway. Opportunities to learn more about North Dakota’s bison from the presenter will be available before and after the program.

The park Visitor Center and reconstructed earthlodge will be open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Guided tours of the earthlodge and additional ranger programs will be offered throughout the day. As always, Junior Ranger activities are available to add to the park experience. For more information visit the park’s website at nps.gov/kia or call 701-745-3300.

Source. <https://www.minotdailynews.com/news/local-news/2017/08/bison-bones-presentation-planned-at-knife-river-indian-villages/>

Bison a Symbol of the Old West

(From the Scottsbluff Star-Journal)

Anyone who has visited Fort Robinson State Park mentions the bison. Inside the 22,000 acre park, the bison roam, feeding on prairie grass, tumbling around in the dirt and lounging in the warm summer sun. Park visitors will travel as far as they need in order to catch up the symbol of the Great Plains.

At one point in time, there were hundreds of millions of bison (sometimes called buffalo) in North America. In one century, a few dozen remained. Man nearly wiped out the American bison (Bison bison). Through conservation efforts, their numbers have grown.

The National Bison Legacy Act, signed by President Barack Obama on May 9, 2016, made the bison the first national mammal of the United States. According to the Washington Post, the bison represents the country’s first successful foray into wildlife conservation.

Native Americans slaughtered what could be eaten and used the hair and bones. By the 1800s, the introduction of horses from the 1500s and guns meant certain doom for the thundering beasts on the plains. Westward expansion displaced Native Americans and killing bison was a tactic used by the U.S. government to control tribes. The introduction of cattle, and their associated diseases, reduced bison herds. Hides, which were worth a lot of money, tourists paying to shoot bison from train windows and the encroachment of farming on bison habitat all contributed to its demise.

Full Story: http://www.starherald.com/news/local_news/bison-a-symbol-of-american-west/article_4f608541-60b6-56d9-9dc0-86e3a0903e60.html

Ted’s Montana Grill Wants to Save the Bison

(From Charlotte Magazine)

“Ted’s was really a marketing ploy,” George McKerrow Jr., who owns [Ted’s Montana Grill](#) with media mogul Ted Turner, tells me over lunch. It’s a phrase that would usually make a food journalist want to lay down her fork, but not here. Even noble causes need good marketing. And behind this restaurant is the respectable mission of saving America’s bison.

The 47th location of Ted's opened in south Charlotte's Waverly development this spring. McKerrow had been looking for a space to open Ted's in Charlotte for years before finding the right fit in Waverly, which is underserved in terms of eating options. Across the way from the restaurant is a new Whole Foods, where you can buy bison meat, both ground and by the filet.

An estimated 20 million to 30 million bison used to roam North America, before European settlers arrived and decimated the herds. Ted Turner wanted to bring them back on his two million acres of land in states including Nebraska, Montana, South Dakota, New Mexico, and Kansas. Since 2012, he's slowly done that, increasing his herd of American bison from 30,000 to 60,000 animals. The number of bison worldwide doubled, too, from 300,000 to 600,000. It's become a marketable commodity, with ranchers commanding five times as much for bison today as they could five years ago. All this from a marketing ploy, McKerrow explains: Simply by putting it on a menu, bison became a desirable food.

At Ted's, you'll find bison used in dishes from nachos to mains. The filet looks similar to beef, but has a slight gaminess and is more lean. When cooked right, though, it's still tender. The lower fat content lends itself well to slow-cooked dishes, such as the bison pot roast, and the burgers—which can be ordered as beef or bison patties—are covered with a dome during cooking to maintain moisture. The menu also contains seafood and chicken dishes, as well as a lengthy list of sides and starters.

Full Story: <http://www.charlottemagazine.com/Charlotte-Magazine/September-2017/Teds-Montana-Grill-Wants-to-Save-the-Bison/>

Standard Way to Trace Livestock Needed, Experts Say

(From US News & World Report)

Without a standardized, mandatory system for tracing livestock from farm to slaughter, industry experts say U.S. farmers and ranchers face the possibility of diseased cattle getting into the food system and the potential disruption of Chinese export markets.

U.S. beef exports to China are expected to increase by 42 percent over the next 10 years - if the U.S. is willing to meet certain conditions set by China.

In June, China reapproved U.S. beef imports, but said tracing livestock to the birth farm is an important part of stricter import rules. For cattle born and slaughtered in the U.S., the new Chinese rules say the cattle must be individually identified with a tamper-resistant ear tag that has a unique number. It may be an electronic ID, a radio frequency identification or a program-compliant visual tag, but the unique numbers must be accessible by the USDA in order to determine compliance.

With only 13 percent of U.S. beef exported globally now, some ranchers see it as an unnecessary expense and nuisance, according to Erin Borrer of the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

Kansas Animal Health Commissioner Justin Smith expects that attitude to change as the Chinese market opens. Last year alone, China imported 601,000 tons of beef, according to the

Farm Bureau Federation. Since 2003, the U.S. has been playing catch-up to leaders Australia and Uruguay, who have claimed the lion's share of exports to China.

The United States is the only major meat exporter without a standardized system for traceability. The beef cattle industry is especially vulnerable because half of all feed lot cattle are not being officially tagged, and data recorded by states about where they come from and where they go is often unreliable.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y96qwdg9>

Anthrax Kills Cattle In Western South Dakota

(From Tri-State Neighbor)

Anthrax is responsible for dead cattle in southeastern Pennington County, South Dakota, State Veterinarian Dr. Dustin Oedekoven confirmed Monday, Aug. 21.

At least nine adult cattle in the herd that had not been vaccinated against anthrax died suddenly last week.

Anthrax spores survive indefinitely in contaminated alkaline soils. All areas of South Dakota are susceptible to an outbreak, especially when there are significant climate changes such as drought, floods and wind, which can expose anthrax spores to grazing livestock.

The state advises producers to consider anthrax if their cattle die suddenly. Affected animals are often found dead with no prior illness detected. Suspicious cases should be reported immediately to a local veterinarian or to the state veterinarian at the South Dakota Animal Industry Board.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/yb4tyjrk>

Former USDA Officials Say Feds Critically Short Of Veterinarians

(From Food Safety News)

Sometimes when a door swings open, opportunity for change has the chance to enter. That's what some members of the National Association of Federal Veterinarians are hoping will happen now that two top food safety positions at the U.S. Department of Agriculture are in line for new leadership.

On July 31, Al Almanza retired from his job as the head of USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS). He is now head of global food safety for Brazil's mega meatpacker JBS SA. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue selected Paul Kiecker, an FSIS career employee, to serve as acting administrator for the sub-agency.

At the same time, Perdue named Carmen Rottenberg to serve as acting deputy undersecretary for food safety. There's not been an undersecretary for food safety for more than three and a half years. Rottenberg began working for FSIS in 2007 and has served in various positions.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y7hm3dkt>

Police Preparing to Handle Livestock Issues After Cuts in Wyoming

(From The Associated Press)

Wyoming police are preparing to investigate cattle rustlings after lawmakers decided to cut three out of four full-time state livestock officer positions.

The livestock officers are responsible for investigating cases involving livestock theft and animal health violations. Lawmakers voted to cut three positions earlier this year.

State Sen. Ogden Driskill says the team typically responds to one to two calls per week. Because of the state's tight state budget, Driskill says it would be better to have local law enforcement step in.

According to the bill, the positions will be eliminated starting Oct. 1.

Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police Director Byron Oedekoven says law enforcement agencies will need to begin training their officers on livestock issues.

Source: <http://k2radio.com/police-preparing-to-handle-livestock-issues-after-cuts-in-wyoming/>

Texas Department of Agriculture battling the cattle fever tick

(From KRISTV.com)

Back in December, the Texas Animal Health Commission confirmed the presence of cattle fever ticks in Live Oak County. That led to more than 500,000 acres in Texas to be under fever tick quarantines.

State and federal animal control officials say the outbreak of fever ticks is a troubling and costly burden for ranchers, government agencies, and the cattle industry.

The Department of Agriculture has allocated an additional \$3.7 million to be added to an already existing \$8.5 million in funds to combat the spread of the cattle fever tick in South Texas. "That money is used to pay the tick inspectors, the patrol along the border; it helps pay for control treatment of animals and for corn that is being used to treat wildlife. It is being paid for feeders to hold the corn. There is a lot of different ways that money is being used. That \$12.2 million is stretched pretty thin considering all the activities it's funding right now," said Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Livestock Specialist Joe Paschal.

Full text:

<http://www.kristv.com/story/36197712/the-department-of-agriculture-battling-the-cattle-fever-tick>