



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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September 1, 2017

Board Nominations Due Next Friday

Next Friday, September 8th is the deadline for NBA members interested in running for election in Regions II, IV, VI and VIII 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 Illinois, Indiana, Kansas and Missouri. Keith Yearout of Kansas, the current director, is eligible for re-election.
- Region VI, representing Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Gerald Parsons of Oklahoma, the current director, is eligible for re-election, and has been nominated as a candidate.

- 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. Kristopher Kelley of Kentucky has been nominated as a candidate.

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

Monday is Deadline for Grass Fed Definition Comments

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

How to Help Those Impacted by Hurricane Harvey

The NBA has not heard from any members directly affected by the hurricane this week. Please notify the NBA if you have heard of any members impacted by the storm by emailing jim@bisoncentral.com.

The NBA has heard from some members who supported The STAR Fund (State of Texas Agriculture Relief Fund), which is managed by the Texas Department of Agriculture, and encouraged others to do so:

The STAR Fund (State of Texas Agriculture Relief Fund) was created solely with monetary donations from private individuals and companies. STAR Fund money may be used to assist farmers and ranchers in rebuilding fences, restoring operations and paying for other agricultural disaster relief. If you'd like to help folks impacted by the wildfire, floods or tornadoes, consider making a donation to the State of Texas Agriculture Relief, or STAR Fund. Learn more and donate at

<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/ProductionAgriculture/DisasterAssistance/STARFund.aspx>

Holistic Ranching Seminar Offered in Kansas

Well-known bison ranching pioneer Ken Klemm and internationally-recognized Holistic Management consultant and educator Kirk Gadzia offer here a unique opportunity to learn cutting-edge management practices and a behind the scenes look at a well-established bison and cattle ranch in NW Kansas. You can expect 3 days packed-full of information and hands-on experiences.

Thursday:

A full day of Holistic Management instruction with Kirk and Ken. Holistic Management is most easily defined by simply adding W to the word holistic. This describes what the process does - helps us manage Whole situations rather than perceived parts. Managing the whole gives better results and fewer unexpected problems. Many publications today are filled with gloomy forecasts about agriculture and the environment. Yet, there are few who offer realistic solutions that strengthen both our economy and communities. To reverse this trend we must do it with people already on the land. Holistic Management gives human values a priority, while creating profit through proven financial planning procedures and ecosystem enhancement techniques.

Upon completion of the day, you can expect to have a clear introduction of how to put the principles of Holistic Management into practice to achieve your goals. Understanding and managing the ecosystem is emphasized, as well as the tools available to you to influence your financial, land and people resources. You will also be introduced to specific techniques you need to help you significantly improve your ability to make better decisions in your business.

Friday: (2 track with a switch-up after lunch)

One group will spend a half day with Kirk doing actual rangeland monitoring on well-established, real-world monitoring transects. See how Holistic Management principles have almost tripled

the stocking rate of this ranch and greatly increased the biological diversity and health of the land.

The second group will spend time in the field with Ken learning the ins and outs of bison management, pasture fence and corral design and construction. Hint: Pasture fence, if done right, is low cost and very effective. Also, Ken will share the why and the how of his co-grazing of cattle and bison. Also, see the results of 15+ years of cover-crop research, its application and farmland soil regeneration progress. This will be a show-all, tell-all time to learn and shorten your learning curve.

Learn more at <https://bisoncentral.com/calendar-event/holistic-ranching-seminar/>.

Bison Bones — And A Mystery — Lie Beneath Hudson Meng

CRAWFORD — You might already know that the Hudson-Meng Education and Research Center sits over a trove of ancient bison bones. It also presides over a lingering controversy that has divided scientists who've studied the site for decades.

Some believe about 600 bison were driven over a cliff about 10,000 years ago by ancestors of modern Native Americans, known as the Alberta Culture, as part of a hunting venture. They employed groups of hunters, or perhaps fire, to stampede the animals and later processed the meat near the site.

Some believe the bison stampeded due to natural causes, such as lightning or a grass fire, and the lucky hunters came upon the freshly killed animals.

Still other believe the kill was a natural event, and that spear and arrow points found at the site — some piercing bone — were lost by later hunters who used the area as a campsite.

“We still have a mystery,” said Ranger Eric Alt. “There are a lot of theories, but nothing confirmed. I like to think of it as science in progress.”

Visitors to the center will find all three theories explored by exhibits at the bonebed, part of which is enclosed in a quonset-style building. A video explains all the theories in detail. The site has interpretive displays and hosts regular science-related activities. It maintains a link on www.fs.usda.gov/nebraska where you can check for a schedule of events. It's open Memorial Day through Labor Day, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. There's a \$5 fee to get in (less for seniors and kids), which includes a guided tour.

“Because we're small, we're able to do more one-on-one interaction with people,” Alt said. Alt, who has worked at the center for two years, said his most memorable day came when a group of 70 hearing-impaired campers arrived to view the site and learned about its mysteries from site Manager Ryan Means, who is also hearing-impaired.

“We threw the atlatl (a primitive spear-throwing device) with them,” Alt said. “It was a really fun time.”

The site, part of the Oglala National Grasslands, is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, which includes a history of the studies on its website. Rancher Albert Meng discovered the site in the 1950s while building a pond to water his cattle in an area surrounded by hills that funnel rain and snowmelt into a ravine. He shared the discovery with neighbor Bill Hudson, and they alerted Chadron State College about the unusual collection of bones. Beginning in 1971, Dr. Larry Agenbroad began excavating the area, which turned out to be the largest Alberta Culture bison kill site ever discovered, containing bones of a predecessor to the modern American bison. He found stone projectile points and theorized that the bison were driven off a steep cliff by hunters, who moved carcasses to the nearby bonebed site.

The bonebed, which is about the size of a football field, later underwent two other studies. Researchers in the 1990s disputed evidence of manmade butchery and came to believe the bison died at the bonebed site of natural causes. Researchers in 2005 found evidence of other Paleo-Indian cultures at the site, suggesting that it was used over a long period by nomadic hunters.

http://www.starherald.com/out_yonder/bison-bones-and-a-mystery-lie-beneath-hudson-meng/article_7ebcffd1-7440-531e-9684-cb7e5fe5ecf8.html

Bison welfare standards updated in code of practice

(From Western Producer)

An updated code of practice for the care and handling of bison was released Aug. 9 by the Canadian Bison Association and the National Farm Animal Care Council.

Like codes of practice for other Canadian livestock, it contains requirements and recommendations on how bison should be fed, managed and handled throughout their lives. Saskatchewan bison producer Mark Silzer chaired the 11-member code development committee, which undertook the update more than a year ago. The committee included bison producers, animal welfare representatives, researchers, veterinarians and government personnel.

“The updated Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Bison will be a useful tool for both current and new producers,” Silzer said in a news release.

“It will also give the public a better understanding of all that’s involved in raising bison.” Committee members have provided updates on the code contents and progress at regional, provincial and national bison meetings over the past year.

Kaley Pugh, who represented the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies on the committee, said the code has “progressive new standards for bison welfare.”

Code preparation involved consultation with a separate scientific committee that identified priority issues. The committee, chaired by Dr. John Church of Thompson Rivers University, provided information on bison nutrition, confined feeding, behaviour, handling and euthanasia. It also suggested that further research on bison would be useful.

The finalized code has seven sections: animal environment; feed and water; animal health; herd management; handling; transportation and on-farm euthanasia.

It also has appendices dealing with pasture stocking rates, preventing bison escapes, dealing with orphaned calves and deciding when and if to transport animals.

The bison code is the 10th code updated through the NFACC's consensus-based process. Printed copies are limited but the full bison code can be found at www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/bison .

Graves Leads Ralphie Program Into 50th Year

(From cubuffs.com)

University of Colorado alum **John Graves** should have guessed he had found his calling when he was awarded "Rookie of the Year" in 2007 — a title earned by running alongside one of college athletics' most famous mascots.

Ten years later, Graves is now program director of the Ralphie Program at CU, where he coaches handlers to run with Colorado's 1,200-pound female buffalo.

Ralphie has gained national attention as the one of the best live mascot in collegiate athletics, a tradition that has proven hard to beat as fans rush to their seats to make sure they don't miss the best entrance in college football. As the team prepares to run onto the field behind their beloved mascot, the loudspeaker announces, "Heeeeerrree comes Rallllphieeee!" and the Buffs rush onto Folsom Field, trailing Colorado's most beloved buffalo and her fearless handlers, trained to match her powerful stride while guiding her around the stadium in her custom-made harness, accompanied by the cheers of thousands.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Ralphie tradition. Graves has had a firsthand look at the tradition for 10 of those 50 years. He started as a fan in the stands.

"I was up in the stands with my girlfriend at the time — she is now my wife — and we were watching the football game and she was like, 'You should run with Ralphie' ... So, the following year I tried out and made it," Graves said. "I ran with Ralphie IV during the 2007 season, then trained Ralphie V, and ran with Ralphie V in 2008 and 2009."

Running with Ralphie wasn't Graves' first rodeo. He grew up around horses and his father is in the agriculture industry. He has always had a passion for animals and has continued to foster this love ever since.

"Each day and each year when I work with Ralphie I tell them one thing: I am here," he said. "I'm here for the buffalo. I'm here for you guys. That's really why I do it, because I care so much for the buffalo and I care so much for the handlers on the team and how much they enjoy running with Ralphie."

Ralphie is in good hands, as Graves has extensive knowledge of buffalo. After graduating from CU, he went on to earn his Master's of Agriculture at Colorado State. Outside of being the program director, he also works closely with the National Bison Association and the Rocky Mountain Buffalo Association.

Full Story <http://www.cubuffs.com/news/2017/8/30/graves-leads-ralphie-program-into-50th-year.aspx>

Bison Euthanized on Catalina Island After It Charged at Deputies, Officials Say

A Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy recently shot a Catalina Island bison after the animal reportedly charged, ultimately requiring the animal to be euthanized.

The deputy in question fired at the animal on two separate occasions on the evening of Aug. 18 in the area of Little Harbor Campground, sheriff's Avalon station Capt. John Hocking said. The shootings are under investigation, and Hocking's remarks suggested the probes could not only reveal whether the shootings were legally justified, but what kinds of tactics may be most advisable when deputies observe a bison that may be acting in a manner that threatens humans.

"I am very sorry that this bison had to die," Hocking said. "I love these animals."

The death of the bison [caused some debate on social media](#), with some questioning whether the lethal force was justified.

Hocking declined to identify the deputy involved in the shootings, saying he did not want to do so while the investigation is in progress.

Little Harbor Campground, in the area of the more recent shooting, is on the western shore of Catalina Island and is roughly a 6-mile drive south of the small island community of Two Harbors. A deputy was patrolling the area in a pickup truck about 6:30 p.m. when he observed two large bison near the campground and felt concerned that the animals may have presented a danger to campers.

The deputy attempted to use his truck to scare the animals away, but one of the animals rushed toward him, Hocking said.

"One of the bison charged at him and he was forced to shoot the bison, in fear of his life," Hocking said. "These animals are 1,600 to 2,000 pounds. They have horns like a bull."

The bison was still alive after the shooting and proceeded to graze in a nearby grassy area, Hocking said. The deputy reported the shooting and Hocking himself traveled to the scene. Some time between 8:45 and 9 p.m., Hocking said he was present when the bison charged a second time, which resulted in the deputy firing upon the animal a second time.

Following the second shooting, sheriff's personnel called the [Catalina Island Conservancy](#) for assistance in euthanizing the animal. Hocking said this act was accomplished with "a high-powered weapon that wouldn't allow the animal to suffer."

Source: <http://www.presstelegram.com/general-news/20170826/bison-euthanized-on-catalina-island-after-it-charged-at-deputies-officials-say>

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(From The Press Telegram)

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Read more.

<http://www.presstelegram.com/general-news/20170826/bison-euthanized-on-catalina-island->

[after-it-charged-at-deputies-officials-say](#)

Bison 'Are Doing Just Fine' In Montana's Severe Drought

(From Montana Public Radio)

More than half of Montana is currently in the grips of a severe drought, according to [the latest numbers released by the U.S. Drought Monitor](#) Thursday. And, as pastures shrivel up in the heat, ranchers are trucking in bales of hay and selling their cattle early.

But there's another big, horned animal out there on the range. Bison.

"Yeah, you know, they seem to be holding on," says Damien Austin, supervisor for the American Prairie Reserve.

It's a sprawling, 350,000 acre private wildlife sanctuary in northeastern Montana located near the epicenter of the drought. The reserve is home to nearly 1,000 bison.

"They're well adapted to the heat and stress that they are seeing this year, and see every year, out on the prairie," he says.

Austin says there's enough hardy, drought-resistant native grasses on the reserve to keep the animals well fed. So, at least for now, there's no need to truck in hay. Instead, his biggest concern is water.

"Coming into the fall, if we don't get any more precipitation, we could be looking at diminishing water sources for the bison," he says.

Jeff King, with the National Bison Range north of Missoula, echoes that concern.

"Water availability is the one thing that we really stress during these times because they do take a lot of water," he says.

[Bison drink more water than most cattle in Montana](#) do, but so far, the sudden droughts here aren't depleting aquifers and streams the way a prolonged, multi-year drought would.

King says they haven't seen any bison mortalities due to the drought. Other wildlife on the range, such as pronghorn antelope and elk, are also doing fine.

"We've got calves on the ground, and the deer are fawning and the elk calves are out there, so again, we really stress that providing water, making sure that all our water tanks are clean and running, then they're able to take the available forage and they seem to be doing just fine," King says.

Read more. <http://mtpr.org/post/bison-are-doing-just-fine-montanas-severe-drought>

APHIS Provides Animal Assistance in the Wake of Hurricane Harvey

(From APHIS Press Release)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is providing emergency assistance in caring for animals – livestock and domesticated – in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. APHIS is working to aid producers and positioning staff in key areas in Texas and Louisiana where flooding may cause further damage. In addition, APHIS is helping to meet the emergency needs of pets and their owners, as inspectors are coordinating closely with zoos, breeders, and other licensed facilities in the region to ensure the safety of animals in their care.

“APHIS has a long history of providing emergency support in the wake of hurricanes and other natural disasters to help producers as well as members of the public and their pets,” said Kevin Shea, Acting Under Secretary for USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs. “While we always hope our services will not be needed, we have a trained cadre of first responders who stand ready to support our partners on the ground and assist local communities in times of crisis.”

On the livestock front, APHIS veterinarians are working alongside the [Texas Animal Health Commission](#) (TAHC) to conduct on-site assessments to document the needs of producers whose ranches were in the path of the storm. All needs assessments are being shared directly with the joint [State-Federal Emergency Operations Center](#) for tasking in order to provide prompt assistance. Information about protecting household pets and service animals can be found on APHIS' [Animal Care Emergency Programs](#) webpage.

Read more. <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/bulletins/1b3a1f5>

1.2 million beef cows in 54 Texas counties affected by Hurricane Harvey

(From AgriLife Today)

COLLEGE STATION - The 54 Texas counties declared a disaster area due to Hurricane Harvey contain over 1.2 million beef cows, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture inventory report.

"That's 27 percent of the state's cowherd," said Dr. David Anderson, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service livestock economist in College Station. "That's a conservative estimate of beef cow numbers because 14 of those counties only have cattle inventory estimates."

Anderson noted since it is late August, a lot of calves in the affected areas are either close or ready to be marketed. The disaster area also includes a large number of livestock auction markets and Sam Kane meat processing.

Full text:

<https://today.agrilife.org/2017/08/28/1-2-million-beef-cows-54-texas-counties-affected-hurricane-harvey/>

MU veterinary professor awarded \$460,000 to study tick disease affecting cattle [MO]

(From ABC17News.com)

COLUMBIA, Mo. - A University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine professor has been awarded nearly half a million dollars to study an infectious blood disease in cattle caused by ticks.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded \$460,000 to Bill Stich, professor of parasitology for the MU vet school. The project allow Stich and his team to develop immunizations to fight the disease.

Anaplasmosis, which is passed by ticks through their bite and saliva, infects red blood cells in cattle and can ause anemia, fever and weight loss. It can also be fatal. It's been estimated more than 80 percent of beef cattle are affected by ticks.

The current prevention and control of the disease involved chemical pesticides and antibiotics. However, ticks are developing resistance to these methods.

"Chemical pesticides, while effective, often leave residues in food products from cattle and cause contamination to the environment, so these methods aren't sustainable," Stich said. "Therefore, we are examining other, more natural methods to control this disease that causes hundreds of millions of dollars in losses each year."

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/yaj5ph6t>

Texas Young Farmer Grant

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers the Young Farmer Grant program to provide financial assistance in the form of dollar-for-dollar matching grant funds to young agricultural producers that are engaged or will be engaged in creating or expanding an agricultural business in Texas.

Applications are accepted from individuals 18 to 46 who are engaged or will be engaged in creating or expanding agriculture in Texas. Grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$20,000.

Applications are due by September 20, 2017.

Read more.

<http://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasAgriculturalFinanceAuthority/YoungFarmerGrant.aspx>

Oklahoma Agriculture Enhancement and Diversification Program

The Oklahoma Agriculture Enhancement and Diversification Program provides funds in the form of 0% interest loans or grants for the purpose of expanding the state's value added processing sector and to encourage farm diversification. Funds must be used to produce alternative ag products or process and/or market Oklahoma ag products.

Farm Diversification Grant projects should deal with the diversification of a family farm, ranch, or agritourism venue to non-traditional crops or livestock, on-farm processing of agricultural commodities, or development of an agritourism venue that will promote access to a new market.

Applications are evaluated quarterly.

The next application deadline is October 2, 2017.

Read more. <http://www.oda.state.ok.us/mktdev/aedp.htm>