



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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NBA Unveils Campaign to Address Mycoplasma bovis

The NBA's Science and Research Committee, in cooperation with South Dakota State University, unveiled a plan to address Mycoplasma bovis in bison herds. M. bovis is a respiratory disease that can decimate infected bison. While a vaccine is available to producers through Newport Labs - <http://www.newportlabs.com/> - the primary treatment today is management including providing a low-stress environment for your herd with quality water and feed and avoiding overcrowding.

South Dakota State University's Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Lab has agreed to collect and DNA test samples of infected bison as the first step in identifying an isolate as to develop an effective vaccine and treatment program. We are seeking 100 samples to be submitted. To do so, producers will have to submit a completed form along with the necropsied sample, which you can do with or without your veterinarian. Please submit this form - https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/General-Request-Necropsy_2mycoplasma-bovis-PCR-and-culture.pdf - if your veterinarian is submitting the sample, or this form - https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/General-Request-Necropsy_1mycoplasma-bovis-PCR-and-culture.pdf - if you are sending it on your own. The samples will then be DNA tested by South Dakota State University and you will be charged \$65 for the testing. Learn more about the SDSU Diagnostics Lab at <https://www.sdstate.edu/veterinary-biomedical-sciences/animal-disease-research-and-diagnostic-laboratory>.

Also, as NBA Science and Research Committee Chair Dr. Dave Hunter reports, the US Department of Agriculture Ag Research Station in Ames, IA is currently finalizing a M. bovis vaccine for cattle, which is proving very effective, and will begin to develop a bison vaccine(s) upon completion of the cattle vaccine. This underscores the importance of participating in this program, as to accumulate the needed 100 samples to identify the isolate.

Please email jim@bisoncentral.com with any questions.

Bison Delegation Heads to D.C. Next Week

Nineteen bison ranchers and marketers from 11 states are set to head to Washington, D.C. next week for three days of meetings at the W.S. Department of Agriculture and on Capitol Hill.

Truth in labeling issue is the paramount issue on the agenda during the annual National Bison Association Policy Roundup, but the attendees will also be meeting with policymakers to discuss research priorities, trade, and the priorities in the 2018 Farm Bill.

“We’ve picked the ideal time to get to D.C. to tackle the key issues for the bison business,” said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. “The House-Senate Conference Committee is hammering out the details of the next farm bill, and recent developments in the marketplace make it imperative that we meet with the appropriate leaders at USDA and FDA.”

The NBA members arriving in Washington D.C. on Tuesday, will kick off the roundup with a briefing session at the Washington Hilton that afternoon. On Wednesday, most of the activities will unfold at the USDA, with meetings scheduled with the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, the Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Agricultural Marketing Service. On Thursday, the group will divide into teams to cover 23 separate meetings with Senators, Representatives and their staff members.

On key meeting scheduled during the Roundup with a session with Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety Carmen Rottenberg and Deputy FDA Commissioner Stephen Ostroff to discuss the NBA’s push for clearer labeling of water buffalo products in the food marketplace.

Candidates File for Regional Board Seats

Board Nominations Due Today

The four incumbent NBA regional board members eligible for re-election have all filed their candidacy intentions to seek a second term. The elections will be conducted from September 15 – 30.

The candidates in this election are:

- Alan Douglass of Oregon for Region I, representing AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA.
- Mimi Hillenbrand of South Dakota for Region III, representing MT, ND, SD.
- Jeremy Alemann of Wisconsin for Region V, representing NE, IA, MN, WI; and
- Brian Grubb of New York for Region VII, CT, DC, DE, MA, ME, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT.

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.

Meat Without the Animal? Not a Great Idea

(Blog Post by Dave Carter)

It takes quite a bit to shock me these days, but a recent quote by the CEO of one of the world's largest meat producing and processing companies set me back on my heels.

"If we can grow the meat without the animal, why wouldn't we?," this CEO said in a recent interview with *Bloomberg Businessweek*.

Pretty shocking statement for someone at the pinnacle of the meat and poultry production and processing business, right? Well...perhaps not quite so shocking.

This CEO, mind you, two years ago took the helm of a company that played a major role over the past half century in the industrialization of the chicken industry, and then the hog industry. Manufacturing meat without the involvement of animals may simply be the next step in that industrialized journey.

As the contract production system swept through the chicken industry in the 1960's, and then the pork industry in the 1990's, independent chicken and hog producers virtually disappeared from the landscape. Today's poultry and pork growers still provide the capital and labor, but the animals under their care are owned by the processor. The farmers simply receive a fee based upon their ability to produce animals that meet the processors' specifications and schedule. Animal husbandry has been transformed into a type of assembly-line production system.

So, perhaps it's not surprising that the CEO of a meat manufacturing company would see a financial advantage in producing that meat without the animals...or the farmers and ranchers...or the workers in the processing plants. George Jetson, here we come.

Let's look at that statement once again: "If we can grow the meat without the animal, why wouldn't we?" Set aside for a moment the disruption this concept presents to agricultural producers and meat processing workers. There are other reasons to dispute "Why wouldn't we?"

Read more here. <https://bisoncentral.com/meat-without-animal-not-great-idea/>

No Weekly Update Next Week

The NBA will be wrapping up the annual Policy Roundup in Washington, D.C. next Friday, so there won't be a Weekly Update on September 14th. However, be sure to look for full coverage of all of the Roundup meetings and activities in the next Weekly Update on September 21st.

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Bison Association Launches Petition Against 'Buffalo' Labeling for Water Buffalo Meat

(From the Fence Post)

The National Bison Association this week launched an online petition asking the Agriculture Department's Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration to immediately develop new labeling policies to stop water buffalo products sold in the U.S. from being labeled only as "buffalo."

The petition effort was launched after the Westminster, Colo.-based association learned of a growing number of retail stores carrying water buffalo meat labeled only as "Wild Buffalo" or "Free Range Buffalo."

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, said, "Our ranchers and marketers have worked hard over the past two decades to build a relationship with our customers that is built upon quality and trust. That trust is threatened by water buffalo products coming into the market disguised as bison."

Carter noted that North Americans have been describing bison as buffalo for more than three centuries.

"The buffalo nickel, Buffalo Bill Cody, and buffalo soldiers are all terms that illustrate how deeply embedded the word 'buffalo' is to describe North American bison," Carter said. "Customers deserve to know whether the products they are buying are bison or water buffalo."

Read more. <https://www.thefencepost.com/news/bison-association-launches-petition-against-buffalo-labeling-for-water-buffalo-meat/>

Bison Bliss: Grazing Shapes Diverse Western Iowa Prairie

(From Iowa Public Radio)

Bison are helping sustain a diverse native prairie in western Iowa through grazing.

More than 200 bison call The Nature Conservancy's Broken Kettle Grasslands Preserve in the north end of the Loess Hills home. As Scott Moats, the Iowa conservancy's director of stewardship puts it, "We don't have the prairie to maintain the bison. We have the bison to maintain the prairie."

In herds of at least a couple dozen, the bison roam freely around 1,900 acres of the roughly 3,000-acre preserve, munching on various grasses and sedges at any given time of day.

"I always equate it to a buffet," Moats said. "If I go to Pizza Ranch for lunch, for instance, there's a salad, there's sprouts, there's carrots, but there's also fried chicken, there's biscuits, there's also dessert pizza..."

He continued, "Depending on what looks good to me and tastes good to me that day, I'm going to make those choices that day. That's exactly what the bison...are doing as a grazing animal."

As bison graze on their own buffet of grasses like big bluestem, little bluestem and Indian grass, their work opens up the area, providing sunlight and moisture for plants to grow and setting up habitat for other species. The conservancy's Western Iowa Land Steward James Baker said some birds that like to nest in the grasses prefer short grass; others prefer tall grass.

"Different animals like different things and by having the bison here, we provide hopefully as many species as possible what they like," Baker said.

Since the conservancy introduced a herd of 28 bison to the preserve in 2008, grazing has helped milkweeds thrive, attracting monarch butterflies to the area. The preserve has also attracted birds like killdeer that nest in areas that have short grass.

Read more. <https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060095683>

Most of Escaped Bison Herd Back at Northern Indiana Farm

(From the News and Observer)

An owner of a bison herd that escaped from a northeastern Indiana farm says nearly all of the animals have been recovered after several days on the run.

Steuben (stoo-BEN') County officials warned residents to avoid approaching any of the 58 bison that escaped from Sunday from a fenced-in area at a farm near the rural community of Pleasant Lake about 30 miles north of Fort Wayne.

Co-owner Mary Ann Shaefer tells WANE-TV that about 50 of the animals were back after around 30 walked into their pasture early Thursday.

Farm owner Cathy Sanders says the bison have been in mating season and she suspected the bulls broke down a fence while fighting.

Read more here:

<https://www.newsobserver.com/news/business/article217572150.html#storylink=cpy>

Senate Leader Prods Farm Bill Negotiators for Quick Deal

(From Agir-Pulse.com)

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell pressed farm bill negotiators to finalize an agreement as quickly as possible, but House Republicans used the conference committee's first formal meeting to continue to press senators to accept tighter work requirements for food stamp recipients.

McConnell, who appointed himself to the conference committee, said at Wednesday's meeting that he wanted to send "a bipartisan, bicameral bill to the president's desk that he'll sign before the end of September."

If that doesn't happen, McConnell warned, "it's going to be a bipartisan failure of extraordinary notice to the farmers and ranchers of our country."

Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan., indicated during his opening remarks that the negotiators have yet to settle a number of key differences.

"We're very close to the finish line but we still have a lot of work to do. Quite frankly, a lot of compromise remains to be done," he said.

Full text:

<https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/11408-senate-leader-prods-farm-bill-negotiators-for-quick-deal>

Livestock Haulers Receive Another Extension for ELD Rules

(From High Plains Journal)

The continual electronic logging devices mandate for livestock haulers has received another extension—a year-long this time.

Sen. Deb Fischer, R-NE, introduced the amendment on Aug. 1, to extend the ELD waiver for livestock haulers until Sept. 30, 2019, and continues to work to make the hours-of-service requirements more flexible for the livestock haulers since they deal with different challenges hauling live animals.

"Nebraskans who transport livestock face unique challenges. The Senate passed my amendment to delay electronic logging device requirements for livestock haulers for one year. With this extension, we will have more time to bring common-sense to these rules and provide additional flexibility," Fischer said.

Additional work has been done by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Hours of Service regulations.

Meetings by FMCSA led to an extension through Sept. 30, 2018. With no specifics made for the HOS regulations, another extension was needed.

Allison Rivera, executive director of government affairs for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association said in a statement, "We are grateful for FMCSA's willingness to consider options for flexibility on Hours of Service rules. NCBA will continue to work constructively to find a long-term solution that gives livestock haulers the flexibility they need within Hours of Service to protect the welfare of animals in their care. The proposals released today are a positive step towards focusing on needed changes to Hours of Service, but more specific changes that address the unique realities of the livestock hauling industry are still needed. We will continue to work with FMCSA to provide flexibility for the livestock hauling industry."

http://www.hpj.com/carrico/livestock-haulers-receive-another-extension-for-eld-rules/article_66f7ba88-ad49-11e8-82bb-2bcb1c73a6d8.html

Domestic Bison in Banff Project Euthanized

(From Rocky Mountain Front)

BANFF – A sick domestic bison used to train horses and riders as part of a \$6.4 million bison reintroduction program in Banff National Park has been put down.

The animal was one of four domestic bison kept at Parks Canada's Ya Ha Tinda Ranch to help train riders in stockmanship skills to herd wild bison and get horses used to being around the new herd.

Parks Canada officials say a necropsy on the bison ruled out serious diseases such as tuberculosis and brucellosis – diseases ranchers fear could be passed on to cattle – but samples have been sent to a lab for further testing to try to determine cause of death.

“Over time its body condition was deteriorating and it wasn't maintaining body weight. The other three domestic bison remain perfectly healthy,” said Bill Hunt, resource conservation manager for Banff National Park.

“The reason for body condition remains uncertain, but samples were collected and sent for analysis. It could be genetic. It could be what you call a runt. We just don't know and we may get inconclusive results.”

Read more. https://www.rmoutlook.com/article/_trashed-5-20180906

Highlights of the Surviving Drought Workshop for Ranchers

(From The Fence Post)

Ranchers in western Colorado might feel like they are between a rock and a hard place with current drought conditions. Should they feed livestock, even as hay prices soar? Or sell livestock when prices are low?

Despite the challenges, ranchers can be strategic in how they respond. Two recent workshops for ranchers, "Surviving Drought," aimed to provide information on strategic decisions and resources and bring people together around this issue. As rancher and co-organizer Janie VanWinkle pointed out, "It's easy to get isolated. We don't work around a lot of people all of the time. But, we are all in this together. I don't want people to think 'I'm the only one in this boat - what am I going to do?'" The workshop was hosted by CSU Extension and Colorado Cattlemen's Association, in conjunction with the Delta County Livestock Association and Mesa County Cattlemen's, and sponsored by US Tractor and Grand Valley Bank.

Here are some highlights from the workshop:

Understand the Economics of Decisions You Need to Make: Thinking about buying hay or selling cows? How about trucking cows to rented pasture? Decision tools developed by the Agriculture and Business Management team at Colorado State University Extension can help clarify the dollars and cents aspects of these choices. Jenny Beiermann, regional specialist in Ag and Business Management for CSU Extension, demonstrated two decision tools, "Buy Hay, Sell Cows" and "Drought Strategies." Users can download these two tools, as well as many others, and input numbers for selling price, hay prices, days on feed, and more, and the tool returns estimated costs of keeping a cow versus selling her. As Beiermann pointed out "these tools don't make the decision for you" and there are other factors influencing decisions but

keeping the economics in mind can help ranchers be more strategic with their decisions, and experiment with different scenarios before they decide in their operations.

Full text:

<https://www.thefencepost.com/news/highlights-of-the-surviving-drought-workshop-for-ranchers/>

AI-Powered Technology Will Help Farmers Health-Check Soil and Water

(From IBM)

Agriculture consumes more than 70 percent of the world's annual water usage. With small farms producing nearly 80 percent of food for the developing world, ensuring the quality and safety of our water supply is critical. Environmental analysis for agriculture often relies on expensive and time-consuming laboratory tests performed far away from the farm. As a result, chemical analysis is quickly outdated and limited to small sample numbers.

My team set out to find a way to simplify the testing process and make it affordable for small farmers to monitor the health of their soil and water. Our prototype, the AgroPad, enables real-time, on-location, chemical analysis of a soil or water sample, using AI.

A drop of water or soil sample is placed on the AgroPad, which is a paper device about the size of a business card. The microfluidics chip inside the card performs on-the-spot a chemical analysis of the sample, providing results in less than 10 seconds.

The set of circles on the back of the card provide colorimetric test results; the color of each circle represents the amount of a particular chemical in the sample. Using a smartphone, the farmer would then take a single snapshot of the AgroPad by using a dedicated mobile application and immediately receives a chemical test result.

Read more. <https://www.ibm.com/blogs/research/2018/09/agropad/>

SDSU Extension & Partners Form the South Dakota Agritourism Work Group

(From SDSU Extension)

Recently SDSU Extension and partners formed a South Dakota Agritourism Work Group to explore opportunities to encourage, promote and support agritourism across South Dakota. In addition to SDSU Extension, the other partners include: the South Dakota Dept. of Tourism, South Dakota Dept. of Agriculture, South Dakota Value Added Agriculture Development Center, South Dakota Specialty Producers, Southeast Tech and USDA Rural Development.

"Is agritourism a good fit for South Dakota?" asked Peggy Schlechter, SDSU Extension community vitality field specialist. "I think there are opportunities South Dakota's agriculture producers should explore that may increase their business profits."

She goes on to list several facts to support the suggestion:

- Agriculture is our top industry.
- According to the SD Department of Agriculture website, agriculture generates 20 percent of our state's economic activity, with an economic impact of \$25.6 billion each year.
- The SD Department of Tourism website shares that visitor spending generated \$6.2 billion in total business sales in 2017.

"For our state, those are big numbers and it might make sense to find opportunities to combine the two industries," she said.

Read more. <http://igrow.org/news/sdsu-extension-partners-form-the-south-dakota-agritourism-work-group/>

Sioux Chef Inspires Healthful Eating in Native American Community

(From Twin Cities Pioneer Press)

He remembers being a kid, growing up on the Oneida Indian reservation in Wisconsin. He remembers helping open the commodity boxes sent by the government. They were filled with canned meats, canned vegetables, powdered milk, bottles of corn syrup and big blocks of cheese.

Now, nearly half a century later, Frank Haney understands that most of those things were not very healthful. "None of it had much nutritional value," he said. "But sometimes, that's all we had to eat."

It wasn't always that way. In precolonial times, Native Americans ate healthful foods they could hunt and gather, foods that nature and the seasons provided. Before Europeans arrived in North America, indigenous tribes grew, harvested and ate corn, wild rice, squash and beans. For protein, they had wild game such as bison, venison or rabbit. This lifestyle is uncommon now, almost nonexistent in the United States, where most food is bought at a grocery or convenience store.

The Sioux Chef, a Twin Cities-based catering company, is not following the fast-food trend. Instead, it's going back to the basics, reclaiming the diet of native ancestors. Founded in 2014 by Shaun Sherman, The Sioux Chef goes beyond dining services. It is a business run by Native American people to help the indigenous community improve their health and connect to their history.

Full story here. <https://www.twincities.com/2018/09/01/sioux-chef-inspires-healthy-eating-in-native-american-community/>

MO Delays Plant-Based Meat Labeling Enforcement

(From St. Louis Post Dispatch)

Gov. Mike Parson's administration is giving companies that sell plant-based and lab-grown meat until Jan. 1 to make sure they comply with a controversial new labeling law.

In a statement issued Thursday, the Missouri Department of Agriculture said it was giving companies time to ensure their labels comply with the law that went into effect on Tuesday.

The new law was part of a package of changes to state agriculture and conservation laws approved by wide margins in the House and Senate last spring.

The meat provision states that if a product isn't derived from an actual cow, chicken, turkey or some other animal with two or four feet, it can't be marketed as meat.

Supporters said the measure will protect ranchers, pork producers and the state's chicken and turkey farmers. But companies that produce plant-based patties, sausages and deli meat filed suit arguing that the law violates their free speech rights.

Full story here. https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/missouri-ag-officials-offering-fake-meat-companies-a-reprieve-on/article_a2d9b6a8-115e-5abd-874a-45f3f4b26133.html

U.S. farm sector profits forecast at 2nd lowest since 2002

(From Sustainable Foods News)

Inflation-adjusted U.S. net farm income in 2018 is forecast to decline 14.8 percent to \$65.7 billion, its second lowest level since 2002.

That's according to the [latest U.S. farm sector income data](#) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Meanwhile, inflation-adjusted U.S. net cash farm income is forecast to drop 13.8 percent to \$91.5 billion, its lowest level since 2009. Net cash farm income measures cash receipts from farming as well as farm-related income, including government payments, minus cash expenses.

The net income forecast declines are largely due to a 3.3 percent increase in production expenses to \$365.9 billion, including:

- fuels/oils - up 17.8 percent
- interest expenses, including dwellings up 17.3 percent
- hired labor expenses up 5.1 percent
- feed expenses up 4.8 percent