



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 8, 2017

Board Nominations Due Today

Today, 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. Debbie Thieman, Greg Nott and John Graves have been nominated as candidates.
- 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.

NBA Strategic Plan Posted on bisoncentral.com

The National Bison Association board of directors in April met in Denver for three days to hammer out a strategic plan to guide the association forward in the coming years.

This week, the NBA posted the strategic plan that was developed on its website, www.bisoncentral.com. Members and the public can view the plan [here](#).

In 10 Years We're Gonna Have 1 Million Bison

(From Gourmet News)

Montana is called “Big Sky Country,” but to most Americans, this is Flyover Country – part of the wide expanse of the U.S. that they’ll most often see only from the window of an airplane while they’re passing over it. Down on the ground, the Rocky Mountain landscape just northwest of Yellowstone National Park is breathtakingly beautiful. This is a land of moose, wolves and grizzly bears as well as pine forests, the Gallatin River and the Madison mountain range, whose bald gray peaks were still splotted with the remnants of winter’s snows as late as the Fourth of July weekend. When I arrived from my home in the Sonoran Desert, it was astonishingly green as well as blissfully cool.

But beautiful as it is, you can’t eat scenery, and on a landscape with too few frost-free nights and too much up and down to be suitable farmland, agriculture often implies the raising of large bovines, and that’s what 650 of us, mostly from around the U.S. and Canada but a few from Europe and Australia, were there in the shadow of Lone Mountain to talk about.

The International Bison Association, which had invited me to attend its 2017 conference, wants to increase the number of bison in North America from around 400,000 to 1 million animals by 2025. Maybe sooner, if they can manage it, which they plan to do partly by persuading the American public to think of Wednesday as “Bison Hump Day,” a weekly reminder to celebrate America’s national mammal.

Montana is home to just over a million people, and they’re outnumbered two to one by the cattle grazing on the tallgrass prairie that slopes east from the Rockies. More than half of the state’s total acreage is classified as farm and ranch land, with well over half of that used as pasture and range. It’s every city-dweller’s idea of the real West, complete with broad-shouldered men dressed in blue jeans, plaid shirts, western boots and their summer straw hats that stay on indoors.

In prehistoric times, though, this land was roamed by wild bison. It’s been estimated that before European immigrants and their descendants made their way onto America’s high plains, up to 30 million bison might have lived in North America. The arrival of the railroad put a last spike in that, and by the late 1800s, the number of bison throughout the U.S. had been reduced to less than a thousand animals. The species was in danger of extinction.

In 1902, the population of the bison herd in Yellowstone National Park was counted at just 22 animals, according to David Forgacs, a PhD student at Texas A & M University who is using genome analysis to study the past and present of the Yellowstone herds. Today, the Yellowstone herd has recovered enough to require intensive management and population control, Forgacs said. "Bison are resilient and can seemingly get past any kind of barrier," he said. "It's a conservation success."

Read more. <http://www.gourmetnews.com/10-years-gonna-1-million-bison/>

Quapaw Tribe opens beef and bison plant

(From Four States Homepage)

QUAPAW, Okla. - The Quapaw Tribe opens the first ever USDA inspected beef and bison plant that is owned and operated by an Indian Tribe.

The tribe held the Grand opening today for the 5 million dollar facility. many federal and private agencies helped with developing the plant. Several Universities also assisted in designing the building to include a training classroom for students studying agriculture.

The plant will process bison and cattle, and distribute that meat as well. The facility is one of a kind in that it will process and produce the meat, which is unlike any other in Oklahoma.

Jim Reese, Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture, says, "We produce eight billion dollars worth of Ag products, but we don't process nearly enough of it. So, this is really a great project. It's actually one of our goals for the state of Oklahoma is to increase Ag processing."

Along with a training classroom, the facility includes a test kitchen and a food safety laboratory.

See video at <http://www.fourstateshomepage.com/news/quapaw-tribe-opens-beef-and-bison-plant/806379893>

Denver airport is letting the bison roam free

(From The New York Post)

Denver International Airport is part of a plan to allow bison from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge to roam on 200 acres of land belonging to the airport.

The proposed deal would allow the bison to roam up to Pena Boulevard – the road travelers take to the airport's terminal, [the Denver Channel reported](#).

"Having that wildlife refuge next door is an unbelievable opportunity for us," airport manager Kim Day said, according to the Denver Channel.

But, the main concern is keeping the bison contained to a certain area and making sure they don't interfere with the nearby roadway.

“How do we keep them enclosed and still allow you to see them from the road?” Day said.

To solve that, Governor John Hickenlooper has suggested viewing stations to overlook the 16,000-acre refuge.

This stems from an attempt to protect the wild bison and restore the animals to the West’s natural landscape – over a century after hunters had nearly decimated the species.

The bison herd is up to 122 after 18 calves were born this year, the news channel says and there are 25 expected to be imported to the refuge in October.

Bison being able to roam freely has been compromised by the decrease of open prairie land due to widespread city expansion and agriculture.

Source. <http://nypost.com/2017/09/06/denver-airport-is-letting-the-bison-roam-free/>

Grand Canyon will cull, trap North Rim bison to reduce herd size

(From AZ Central)

Grand Canyon National Park will reduce the size of its bison herd through culling, trapping and moving the animals to other locations, the National Park Service said in a press release.

The bison were brought here in the early 1900s by [a rancher who cross-bred them with cattle](#), then abandoned the project. The Arizona Game and Fish Department later took control of the herd and offered bison hunts in House Rock Valley, in the high desert of northern Arizona just east of the park border.

The herd, which once numbered around 100 animals, has since moved into the park, where it has grown. Estimates range from 400 to 600 animals. The animals are hard on vegetation, water sources and archaeological sites. Some fear the herd could grow to 800 animals in the next few years and as high as 1,200 to 1,500 in the next decade if nothing is done.

The park has weighed [various options to thin the herd](#), such as culling it with sharpshooters or trapping and moving the animals. The Arizona Game and Fish Department wanted to expand its buffalo hunt into the park

Read more. <http://www.azcentral.com/story/travel/arizona/grand-canyon/2017/09/06/grand-canyon-bison-herd-culling-trapping/640132001/>

Fall flowers in bloom, bison may bellow

(From The Daily Journal)

If lately you've been feeling as if you're in a rut, then stop by Kankakee Sands to be uplifted by the colors of the fall flowers in bloom.

During your visit, you might see our bison in a rut of their own, which is altogether something very different. From late July through September, male bison are in "rut," which means they are

hormonally charged and interested to mate with female bison who come into estrus during this time of the year.

During rut, dominant males tend to cows who are nearing estrus. You might see the males "flehming," or scenting the air with their upper lip curled upward, to see if the female is ready to mate. Similar to the behavior of white-tailed deer, males will stay near the female until she is willing to mate.

So far this year, the males have not been dramatically challenging one another for access to the cows. Rather, our bulls have been only lightly sparring with one another. When in rut, male bison sometimes will have bellowing contests, calling with low grunts and groans across the pasture to one another. They may wallow — rolling on their side — to show off their strength. Most dramatically, males occasionally charge and head-butt one another.

Rut rarely results in serious injury. Most disputes between bulls are settled through bellowing and wallowing, but charging and head-butting do occur.

Bison skulls and horns have evolved to give and take the abuse of rut. Bison heads are designed for the impact. A bison's skull has two layers of bone, covered by skin that is 2 inches thick, on top of which is fur that is 4 inches thick, all to protect that precious brain.

Fights between bison sometimes can result in goring of one animal by the horns of another. Even in these instances, the animals usually recover. The curved nature of the horn tips, as well as the thick fur and skin, all help to minimize deep and serious cuts.

The Kankakee Sands herd recently has been moved to the 345-acre pasture to the north for the fall and winter months so the 715-acre southern pasture can remain open for the duration of the regular hunting season.

Read more. http://www.daily-journal.com/sports/outdoors/fall-flowers-in-bloom-bison-may-bellow/article_941fa4b4-34f5-58b3-9454-02a9dd277962.html

Konza Prairie receives NSF funding to upgrade bison grazing experiment

(From The Mercury)

The National Science Foundation has awarded Konza Prairie Biological Station and the Division of Biology nearly \$225,000 to upgrade facilities for the Long-Term Bison Grazing Experiment. The last time the facilities received an update was in 1997.

The award will provide funds to replace certain sections of the Konza Prairie corral area, build eight additional working pens, provide easier access for researchers along the bison perimeter fence, and additional remote scales to increase frequency of measurements to document seasonal dynamics of body weight for approximately 280 bison, North America's largest native ungulate.

“The new equipment and facilities will assure that we will be able to continue our existing and extensive bison research and to open new opportunities for future researchers,” said John Briggs, co-principle investigator for the project and Konza Prairie director.

The bison experiment examines the direct effects that bison grazing has on tallgrass prairie and measures bison performance, such as seasonal weight gains, in response to grassland conditions. According to Briggs, the experiment simulates the natural patterns of bison grazing and impacts on the tallgrass prairie ecosystem, including interactions with key ecosystem drivers — fire and climate.

“Understanding the ecological role of bison in tallgrass prairies has been considered an essential overarching research goal at Konza Prairie since its inception,” Briggs said. “The experiment, initiated in 1987, has the longest continuous database of individual weight gains of a native ungulate population in the world.”

Read more. http://themercury.com/news/konza-prairie-receives-nsf-funding-to-upgrade-bison-grazing-experiment/article_d0c6c45e-d262-50e3-92cb-5f7c4ad0fda9.html

Writing next chapter in disease traceability

(From AgriNews.com)

DENVER - Animal health is a noncompetitive issue, said Terry Fankhauser, executive vice president of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, an affiliate of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and moderator for the upcoming Strategy Forum on Livestock Traceability hosted by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture and the U.S. Animal Health Association.

"Good animal management and stewardship should be on the same page," Fankhauser said. "It's a team sport."

The strategy forum will be held Sept. 26-27 at the Denver-Stapleton North DoubleTree by Hilton. Register at www.animalagriculture.org.

Fankhauser brings a producer perspective to the table, as well as a strong understanding of how animal health crosses so many entities.

He noted the forum is very timely. After several months of various outreach activities, including public meetings and working sessions on the Animal Disease Traceability program, feedback and suggestions from a state and federal working group addressing current traceability gaps will be presented.

Forum participants will have an opportunity to discuss those preliminary recommendations and suggestions, which will help the U.S. Department of Agriculture when considering how to move forward with animal disease traceability from a program perspective.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/y72d2w5z>

Ibach will be nominated for key role with USDA

(From The Lincoln Journal Star)

President Donald Trump intends to nominate Greg Ibach as the USDA under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs, according to a release from the White House. Ibach is the director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

Sen. Deb Fischer said in a release that she's happy with Trump's decision and is "pleased the president accepted my recommendation of such an impressive Nebraskan."

Ibach is a University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumnus who spent much of his career at Farm Credit Services before holding several roles within the state Department of Agriculture. He's spent the last 12 years as the department's director.

He runs a cow/calf and grain operation in Sumner.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/ydez8v6l>

AgriLife Extension experts offer advice on livestock safety, care after Harvey

(From AgriLife Today)

COLLEGE STATION - Livestock in the wake of Hurricane Harvey are still at risk for lack of feed, injury or disease, said Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialists.

"Water is the first priority with livestock, so producers should try and find a safe drinking water source and make sure their animals have an adequate supply," said Dr. Jason Cleere, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, College Station.

"Some animals may not eat wet forage as readily as dry, but will still eat it if hungry," he said. "But with substantial flooding, cattle often become stranded and forages may be unavailable or ruined. In such instances, supplemental sources of feed may be necessary."

Cleere said hay is the most important feed source for stranded or displaced cattle.

"It's acceptable for animals to eat clean hay, even if it's wet, especially if that's the best option available," he said. "But don't give livestock moldy feed as it may contain toxins. And while processed feed can usually be taken into affected areas more easily than hay, be sure it has some roughage in it to help stave off any digestive issues the livestock may have."

Experts suggest moving livestock to higher and drier ground to alleviate foot problems and more easily inspect them for injury. (Texas A&M AgriLife Communications photo by Blair Fannin)
Cleere said moving livestock to higher ground will allow better care and help alleviate foot and skin problems.

Full text:

<https://today.agrilife.org/2017/09/01/agrilife-extension-experts-offer-advice-livestock-safety-care-harvey/>

Barnraiser Campaign to Provide Sustainable and Organic Farmers Aid after Hurricane Harvey

Hurricane Harvey had a devastating impact on farms and ranches in Texas and Louisiana. Although the full extent of damage will not be known for weeks, many relief efforts are getting underway.

One rapid-response campaign that's already up and running on Barnraiser aims to raise \$40,000 in 26 days to support 80 sustainable and organic farmers with emergency cash of \$500 each to help them with immediate expenses such as gas, groceries, and building materials.

Farmers impacted by the storm may submit applications [here](#). Donations to the campaign can be made through the [Barnraiser website](#) at <https://www.barnraiser.us/projects/texas-farmer-rancher-disaster-relief>.

Montana Armed to Farm Helps Veterans Focus on Sustainable Agriculture

The week-long Armed to Farm program presented by the National Center for Appropriate Technology helps military veterans examine farming as a viable career, reports *The Prairie Star*.

Participants in last year's training say the program provided a wealth of information and helped them launch and/or refine farming enterprises. This year the Montana training will be held in October in the Mission Valley. The application period for this training has closed, but another training will be offered in 2018.

During the week of classroom and on-farm instruction, participants are taught business planning, budgeting, recordkeeping, marketing, livestock production, vegetable production, and small-grain production by NCAT sustainable agriculture specialists, USDA staff, and experienced crop and livestock producers.

Read more. http://www.theprairiestar.com/military-farming-opportunities-focus-on-small-scale-enterprises/article_f6976ae4-89d7-11e7-bb96-57f7ce0fc7a9.html

Value Added Producer Grants

USDA is accepting applications for the Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program, which helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of new products. Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-

based business ventures, as defined in the program regulation are eligible to apply for this program.

Applicants may receive priority if they are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain. Grant and matching funds up to \$75,000 can be used for planning activities or for working-capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product.

Applications must be received by January 24, 2018.

Learn more. <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>

EQIP in Wisconsin

USDA-NRCS in Wisconsin is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for 2018. EQIP is the primary program available to farmers for farm and woodland conservation work, offering payments for more than 110 basic conservation practices.

Special sign-up opportunities are also open for On-Farm Energy, Organic, Specialty Crops, and Seasonal High Tunnel conservation practices, as well as a number of landscape-based initiatives.

The cutoff date for consideration for 2018 funding is October 20, 2017.

Learn more.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/wi/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEP RD1339615>