



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

Bison Delegation Headed to D.C. Tuesday

Twenty 23 ranchers and processors, 16 meetings on Capitol Hill, five meetings at USDA, and a meeting at the National Academies of Science that's the mix on schedule for the NBA Washington Policy Roundup next week.

"This is a very important week for the bison business," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. "Unlike the big commodity groups, we don't have a permanent office or lobbying staff in Washington, D.C., But our annual delegations of grassroots producers and marketers have enabled us to develop relationships with policymakers and lawmakers that have given us clout on important issues.

The grassroots delegation includes ranchers and marketers from 12 states. Also participating will be Arnold Abold and Patrick Toomey of the InterTribal Buffalo Council.

"Having private ranchers and tribal representatives together in these meeting really increases the influence that we'll have," Carter said.

The Roundup will kick off on Tuesday afternoon with a briefing session at that Courtyard Marriott Hotel Capitol Hill. Participants will review the issues and discuss the logistics for the meetings scheduled over the next few days.

On Wednesday, the delegation will divide into teams to visit members of Congress and their agricultural aides on Capitol Hill. Those meetings will focus on priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill, funding for development of an MCF vaccine, and passage of a resolution designating November 4th as National Bison Day.

On Thursday, the group will start their work by traveling to the National Academies to discuss the process for developing nutrient guidelines for bison. Then, attendees will head to the USDA for a series of meetings on agricultural research, beginning farmer assistance, meat processing and inspection issues, and international trade.

Most of the participants will head home after Thursday's meetings, but those staying on Friday will have one additional session with the leaders of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture at USDA.

The NBA has prepared a series of briefing papers for the officials in each of the meetings. Those briefing papers are available to all members on the NBA website; www.bisoncentral.com.

No Weekly Update Next Week

Because of the schedule of meetings in Washington, D.C. next week, the NBA staff will not have an opportunity to issue a Weekly Update next Friday. We'll provide full coverage of the Washington Policy Roundup on September 29th.

Ballots out Now for Regions II, IV, VI, and VIII Board Directors

All NBA members in Regions II, IV, VI and VII should have received an email ballot for the election of a director to represent them on the NBA Board of Directors.

The regions, and candidates are:

- Region II, representing Colorado and Wyoming. Candidates are John Graves, Greg Nott and Debbie Thieman, all of Colorado.
- Region IV, representing Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Gerald Parsons, is the candidate.
- Region VI, representing Illinois, Indiana, Kansas and Missouri. David Ruhter of Illinois and Keith Yearout of Kansas are the candidates.
- Region VII, representing Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Kristopher Kelley of Kentucky is the candidate.

Members may also cast a write-in vote on their ballots.

If you didn't receive a ballot, please contact NBA Assistant Director Jim Matheson at jim@bisoncentral.com.

Thirty Comments Filed on Grassfed Definition Proposal

Thirty National Bison Association members filed formal comments on the association's Grass Fed Producers' Committee recommended language regarding the definition of Grass Fed bison meat. The NBA is compiling those comments, which will be reviewed by the board of directors before any formal action is taken on the committee's recommendation.

“This is a very important issue, and we were pleased to see so many members weigh in with constructive and thoughtful comments on the committees’ recommended language,” said Roy Liedtke. “And, it’s important to note that the language being proposed is only to provide guidance regarding what is and isn’t classified as grass-fed. The language doesn’t constitute the association’s endorsement of any specific type of finishing protocols.”

Prices Holding Steady in Latest USDA Wholesale Price Report

Wholesale bison meat prices continued to hover around the historic highs in August, according to the latest monthly USDA wholesale price report issued this week by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Market News Reporting Service.

According to the latest price report, young bull carcasses averaged \$483.10/cwt. in August, which is down \$4.32/cwt from the previous month, but \$24.66/cwt. higher than in August 2016. Heifer carcasses averaged \$488.29/cwt. in August, which was \$3.55/cwt. higher than in July, but \$10.73/cwt. Lower than in August 2016. Older bull carcasses averaged \$411.54/cwt., and older cows averaged \$402.45/cwt.

The federally inspected slaughter of bison year-to-date slaughter through the first 34 weeks was 34,817, which was 673 less than during the same period a year ago. And, heifers accounted for 42 percent of the young animals processed through August, compared to an average of 58 percent over the previous seven years.

The full USDA Price Report is available at: https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw_ls526.txt

The NBA’s rolling five-year average tracking report is available in the Members’ Section at www.bisoncentral.com. <https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Meat8.17.pdf>

NBA Participates in Joint Letter Opposing Withdrawal from Korean Trade Agreement

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter joined leaders from 22 agricultural organizations and retail groups in signing a letter to President Trump opposing his proposal to withdraw the United States from the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement. All the individuals signing the letter are members of the USDA Agricultural Trade Advisory Committees.

The letter reads, in part, “Mr. President, we strongly support your efforts to create American jobs, including in rural America. Trade and free trade agreements like KORUS and NAFTA have been essential to the creation of jobs related to agriculture. We are working with your teams to modernize NAFTA and would like to similarly see lower tariffs and greater market access in South Korea, but not at the expense of damaging the current benefits that KORUS has yielded for America’s farmers, food manufacturers and others across the agricultural supply chain in this country.

“We urge you to maintain KORUS and work with Korea to further improve upon it. Pulling out of this agreement would only hurt those that you want to help.”

The USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service last year petitioned the Korean government to re-open their markets for U.S. bison meat. That petition is currently under negotiation between FAS and the Korean government.

Volunteer Shooters to Help Thin Grand Canyon Bison Herds

(From Associated Press)

The National Park Service plans to thin a herd of bison in the Grand Canyon through roundups and by seeking volunteers who are physically fit and proficient with a gun to kill the animals that increasingly are damaging park resources.

Some bison would be shipped out of the area and others legally hunted on the adjacent forest. Within the Grand Canyon, shooters would be selected through a lottery to help bring the number of bison roaming the far northern reaches of the park to no more than 200 within three to five years.

Some 600 of the animals now live in the region, and biologists say the bison numbers could hit 1,500 within 10 years if left uncontrolled.

The Grand Canyon is still working out details of the volunteer effort, but it's taking cues from national parks in Colorado, the Dakotas and Wyoming that have used shooters to cut overabundant or diseased populations of elk. The Park Service gave final approval to the bison reduction plan this month.

Sandy Bahr of the Sierra Club says she's hopeful Grand Canyon will focus mostly on non-lethal removal.

The Grand Canyon bison are descendants of those introduced to northern Arizona in the early 1900s as part of a ranching operation to crossbreed them with cattle. The state of Arizona now owns them and has an annual draw for tags on the Kaibab National Forest. Nearly 1,500 people applied for one of 122 tags this year, according to the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

The bison have been moving in recent years within the Grand Canyon boundaries where open hunting is prohibited. Park officials say they're trampling on vegetation and spoiling water resources. The reduction plan would allow volunteers working in a team with a Park Service employee to shoot bison using non-lead ammunition to protect endangered California condors that feed on gut piles.

Hunters cannot harvest more than one bison in their lifetime through the state hunt, making the volunteer effort intriguing, they say.

"I would go if I had a chance to retain a portion of the meat," said Travis McClendon, a hunter in Cottonwood. "It definitely would be worth going, especially with a group."

Grand Canyon is working with state wildlife officials and the Intertribal Buffalo Council to craft guidelines for roundups and volunteer shooters, who would search for bison in the open, said Park Service spokesman Jeff Olson.

Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/arizona/articles/2017-09-11/skilled-shooters-will-help-thin-out-grand-canyon-bison-herds>

At A 5,000-Acre Organic Ranch in Nebraska's Sand Hills, The Buffalo Still Roam

(From Truevitralnews.com)

ROCK COUNTY, Neb. – From the high point on Dave Hutchinson's 5,000 acres in the Sand Hills, you can look in any direction and see nothing but waving green grass and vast blue skies.

"This is the last frontier, you might say," Dave says, nodding toward the view. It's the frontier where this rancher, who looks like any other Nebraska rancher in his plaid shirt and work boots, runs his business and lives his life in a fashion that's anything but usual.

Hutchinson's land has been certified organic since 1980 and his animals since 1990. The rolling hills surrounded by even more rangeland have never seen a sprayer or a drop of pesticide, and all the plants are native. His animals are antibiotic-free, free-range and organic.

Dave's way of life, the land he owns and the food he raises have attracted the attention of tourists from as far away as Europe, who want to take in a slice of the Plains; of healthy eaters, who track Dave down to learn his ways; and of chefs, who come to Dave for the bison meat.

"I think it's just his respect for the animals, and the respect for the land," said chef Clayton Chapman of Omaha's Grey Plume on why he first decided to work with Dave. "It's just his overall approach. It's his whole life."

Dave will take visitors on long drives around his property, past his cows and donkeys; his 40 beehives; his chickens and massive vegetable gardens; his artesian springs water, which gurgles into wells in 17 spots; and his favorite old tree, a massive cottonwood.

But the real attraction – what everyone wants to see – are the bison.

The bison are peaceful, standing at attention and staring back, the opposite of skittish. Tails swish. Grass crunches. The brave ones move slowly toward the four-wheeler.

"They can be curious," Dave says.

The herd came from about 27 different locales: some from Canada, some from the Pine Ridge, some from other places. There's Yellowstone blood in the diverse herd, Dave said, and he breeds only within the animals he already owns, about 200 now.

He used to have many more – around 900 in the early 2000s – but after a drought, he cut the herd's size.

“It was a bad economic choice, but a good one for the land,” he says.

The day we visit, the small buffalo calves are starting to change color, from a buckskin brown to the deeper hues of their parents. It’s a hot day – 102 degrees – and the bison are bothered by flies, so Dave and daughter Sarah pour out big bags of white diatomaceous earth, a natural insect eliminator made of crushed freshwater marine organisms.

A big male, almost-black bison lets out throaty snorts and does just what Dave said he would: stomps through the powder, kicking up great white clouds, and then gleefully rolls over on his back, transforming his hide from dark to stark.

Full Story: <http://trueviralnews.com/at-a-5000-acre-organic-ranch-in-nebraskas-sand-hills-the-buffalo-still-roam/>

Montana Bison Roundup Postponed Because Of Fire Danger

(From KTVQ.com)

Incoming rain and colder weather might change the plans, but for now the annual fall roundup at the National Bison Range is on hold.

Traditionally, wranglers and wildlife managers gather every year in late September or early October for the roundup on the range near Moiese. It's a chance for checking and treating some of the animals, counting calves and thinning the herd as needed.

But this year the dry weather hasn't made it a typical summer on the Bison Range, with fire danger a constant concern.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said it will postpone this year's bison roundup, which had been set for early October.

The agency said the persistent fire smoke, and concern about dry conditions and extreme fire danger means it's safer to postpone the roundup, at least for now. There's no immediate word on whether the operation will be rescheduled.

Anywhere from 350 to 500 bison are kept on the National Bison Range.

Source: <http://www.ktvq.com/story/36366069/montana-bison-roundup-postponed-because-of-fire-danger>

An American Safari: Tracking Bison on Ted Turner’s Ranch

(From Financial Times)

Our jeep is sputtering through the dust, trailing a herd of white-rumped pronghorn — an antelope-like creature that is the second-fastest land animal on earth — when a bull bison looms out of the scrub of mesquite. The sheer size of him delivers a primal shock to the senses. The blunt, Paleolithic forehead, the helmet of coarse hair, that formidable

hump of bone and muscle, set in iconic silhouette against the stark afternoon light. A hot wind blows across the desert of southern New Mexico.

As we slow, an army of cicada drumroll our approach and the massive head turns. Even at 100 feet, we're closer than he's comfortable with. He blinks a testy eye and snorts. We exit the jeep and he grows visibly irritated, flicking his tail and defecating — "first sign he's getting ready to run," hisses David Barfield, our guide. As I snap the camera, the bison paws at the ground, positively quivering at the prospect of a good fight. "That's it," David says, firing up the engine, "time to go."

A charging bison can outrun a cowboy on a horse. A female will see off a bear. Bison are stubborn and deeply unpredictable. There are 1,500 of them here on Ladder Ranch, 20 miles west of the small town of Truth or Consequences, some of the 50,000 owned by the CNN founder Ted Turner across his US properties. At 245 sq miles, the riparian Ladder is small by Turner's standards. His 15 other ranches include one, the Flying D in Montana, so vast it has its own weather pattern.

But then Ted Turner has always thought big. Best known for founding the first 24/7 cable news channel in 1980, Turner has also won the America's Cup, owned the Atlanta Braves and donated a billion dollars to the UN. He co-founded the Nuclear Threat Initiative and set up the Goodwill Games to promote links between east and west during the cold war. In 2003, however, he stepped down as vice chairman of Time Warner following its disastrous merger with AOL and, forced to redefine his life, increasingly turned his focus to the environment.

Full story: <https://www.ft.com/content/ca05d650-97ab-11e7-8c5c-c8d8fa6961bb>

Bison Reflect America's Worst – and Best

(From the St. Cloud Times)

Humans have a great ability to both create and destroy. At times, we band together to save or join in destruction. I couldn't help but notice these themes on a trip to North Dakota.

While working in agriculture, my job takes me to some very interesting places. My most recent adventure took me to a bison ranch in the north central region of the state.

No other animal captures the essence of the American West more than the bison. Outside of the eagle, the bison is the next closest thing we have to a national symbol. In fact, just last year Congress and President Obama made the bison the national mammal of the United States.

Destruction

Prior to the arrival of predominantly European settlers, there was an estimated bison population of up to 30 million head roaming across the vast American countryside. By the turn of the 20th century, the species was on the brink of survival with just over a mere 1,000 animals remaining.

What caused this near-extinction? As more settlers moved west, traders killed off large scores of the animal. Bison tongues were considered a delicacy, and often times one of the only parts of the animal that was actually harvested.

The completion of transcontinental railroads only further depleted the population. Passengers would actually shoot the animals from moving trains.

The devastation of bison herds took a toll on the Native American tribes that relied on the animal for food and sustenance. Unlike traders who used only certain parts, Native Americans wasted very little.

According to the National Park Service, the U.S. Army held a campaign in the late 1800s to eliminate bison in an attempt to get Native American tribes to move onto reservations. Years prior to this campaign, an Army colonel was quoted as saying, "Kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone."

Rebirth

Today the bison population is rebuilding thanks to the efforts of many individuals and ranchers across the country the past 120 years. There are over 400,000 bison found within private herds, on public lands and tribal lands.

The revival of the bison can be attributed to the pride ranchers take in the animal. Sure, some may raise them solely for business purposes. However, speak to enough bison farmers and you'll quickly learn it's about much more than just business.

I have witnessed this several times and for good reason. It's hard not to be held captive by an animal that can weigh 2,500 pounds, run 35 mph and clear a 6-foot fence from a standing position.

Beyond that, bison are native to our regional ecosystem. They have a regenerative effect on the environment. Bison are well adapted to the challenging weather patterns found here. The animal is a prime example of a holistic approach to sustainable agriculture.

By 1902, the bison population of Yellowstone National Park – the only location in the U.S. where bison have continually lived since prehistoric times – was only 22 animals. The population that now resides there has increased to 5,500 head.

You certainly don't have to go all the way to Yellowstone to see bison. We have several herds on public lands here in Minnesota. You can visit Blue Mounds State Park near Luverne, or travel to Minneopa State Park outside of Mankato.

Locally there are at least three private bison ranches nearby – outside of St. Joseph, Sauk Centre and Becker. In fact, the annual Minnesota Buffalo Association's fall livestock auction takes place in Albany the weekend following Thanksgiving.

Speaking of associations, they, too, have played a critical role for restoration. The National Bison Association recently set an ambitious goal of increasing the American bison population to 1 million by 2027.

I am hoping they achieve their goal. It was humans who nearly eradicated this great species and it's dedicated humans who are bringing it back.

The bison serves as an example of both the negative and positive side of humanity.

Source: <http://www.sctimes.com/story/opinion/2017/09/12/bison-reflects-americas-worst-and-best/652198001/>

Hay drop to save cattle underway in Southeast Texas

(From Southwest Farm Press)

Hurricane Harvey rescuers have moved from saving people from drowning in their homes to saving cattle from starving to death in flooded fields.

In rural areas stretching from Corpus Christi and over 300 miles up the coast to the Louisiana border, farms and ranches and small communities dot the rural countryside. This is cotton and grain country, and also home to over a million beef cattle and other livestock. The losses have been staggering, up to \$200 million to agricultural interests alone.

And the drama still continues over two weeks after the storm, cattle still lost or stranded, ranchers unable to reach remote areas where flood waters remain standing in fields and roads are still closed and impassable.

Air drops only way

Federal, state and civilian help has been pouring into the area since the storm ravaged the state, including National Guard units from 11 states. State parks and wildlife biologists and rescue workers, animal health rangers and civilian volunteers from across Texas and beyond responding to the livestock drama unfolding across the hardest hit areas.

Many cows and steers have been located, but with no way to reach the animals, they remain stressed, in poor health, many are starving for lack of food. Some are stuck in mud, or sheltered on small patches of dry land surrounded by flood water.

Fortunately, aviation units from the Texas National Guard, from Alabama, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Mississippi and other states are responding, loading bales of hay and launching what promises to be the largest air drop of hay in history, an attempt to provide rescue food for livestock until waters finally recede and herds can be collected, treated, and moved to safety.

Full text: <http://www.southwestfarmpress.com/livestock/hay-drop-save-cattle-underway-southeast-texas>

FDA Animal Drug Safety Communication: Micotil 300 User Safety Alert

(From Ctr. for Veterinary Medicine)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is alerting cattle and sheep owners, farmworkers, veterinarians, physicians, emergency medical technicians, and other health care providers about the potential hazards to people exposed to the animal drug Micotil 300 (tilmicosin). Micotil 300 is a prescription injectable antibiotic used to treat respiratory disease in cattle and sheep.

Since its approval in 1992, there have been more than 2,200 adverse event reports involving people exposed to Micotil 300. These include multiple reports of injury, including death, in people following injection of Micotil 300. Other routes of exposure, including by mouth or skin, have also led to injury. Most of the reported human exposures were accidental and many cases required medical attention. While the circumstances remain unclear in some cases, there have been 25 reports involving human death. Although a majority of the deaths were due to intentional self administration of the drug, some deaths were reported following accidental injection.

People exposed to Micotil 300 should immediately seek medical care. There is no antidote for Micotil 300. This drug has been shown to have toxic effects on the human heart. In some cases of exposure, people required hospitalization and prolonged medical care; some people have died despite receiving medical care. Injections in people of less than 0.5 ml (1/10 teaspoon) have been associated with pain and bleeding at the injection site, while larger volumes have been associated with nausea, dizziness, rapid heart rate, and death.

Elanco Animal Health, a subsidiary of Eli Lilly and Company, distributes Micotil 300 and has made efforts to warn and educate people about the human health risks associated with this product and to provide training to users and veterinarians on safe handling and use of Micotil 300. Elanco is currently working in consultation with the FDA to further address this issue. It is crucial that every person who handles Micotil 300 has been appropriately trained to use the drug safely, and understands the risks to people handling this drug. Livestock environments can be unpredictable and potentially hazardous. This can increase the risk of accidental exposure to Micotil 300. The prescribing information for Micotil 300 includes important information for users in a section called SAFE HANDLING PRACTICES WHEN USING MICOTIL® 300 TILMICOSIN INJECTION.

FDA encourages you to report any adverse events in people associated with the use of Micotil 300. Human adverse experiences should be reported to Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center (RMPDC) at 1-800-722-0987 or Elanco Animal Health at 1-800-428-4441. For information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at <https://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/ReportaProblem/ucm055305.htm>.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/yb39cwnl>

Farmers and Ranchers Affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma Granted Extra Time, Procedures, to Document and Claim Disaster Losses

(From USDA Office of Communications)

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue today announced special procedures to assist producers who lost crops or livestock or had other damage to their farms or ranches as a result of hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Also, because of the severe and widespread damage caused by the hurricanes, USDA will provide additional flexibility to assist farm loan borrowers.

"The impact is shocking and will be felt for many months," said Secretary Perdue. "In addition to efforts being made on the ground to assist producers, we have taken a hard look at our regular reporting requirements and adjusted them so producers can take care of pressing needs first

and mostly deal with documentation and claims later. President Trump's directive is to help people first and deal with paperwork second. And that's what USDA is doing."

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), is authorizing emergency procedures on a case-by-case basis to assist impacted borrowers, livestock owners, contract growers, and other producers. The measures announced today apply only to counties impacted by a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-determined tropical storm, typhoon, or hurricane, including Harvey and Irma that have received a primary Presidential Disaster Declaration and those counties contiguous to such designated counties.

Financially stressed FSA farm loan borrowers affected by the hurricanes who have received primary loan servicing applications may be eligible for 60-day extensions. Full details are available at <https://go.usa.gov/xRe8V>.

A more complete listing of all of the special farm program provisions is posted at <https://go.usa.gov/xRe8p>.

Full text: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAO/bulletins/1b6dd43>