



## **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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**October 11, 2019**

#### **Pet Food Companies Urged to Become Partners in Restoration**

Pet food manufacturers, retailers and suppliers attending a sustainability conference in Boulder on Thursday were urged to join with bison marketers as Partners in Bison Restoration.

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter provided a TED-style talk to the 175 people attending the Pet Sustainability Coalition's annual Impact Unleashed conference, a gathering which encourages pet product companies to improve their environmental and social practices in all phases of their business. Carter's talk focused on the important role that companion animals, and their owners, can play in helping restore bison herds across North America.

The NBA sponsored an evening social at the conference on Wednesday evening, and attendees enjoyed a Thursday luncheon with tender tips donated by Rocky Mountain Natural Meats.

The NBA's participation in Impact Unleashed was underwritten by the association's Growth Fund.

#### **Hillenbrand, Bennet Wow Bloggers' Convention**

The audience gathered at the luncheon in the hotel convention center in Atlanta on Saturday was overwhelmingly female, under 40 years old, and tech savvy. The roughly 300 attendees at the Shiftcon luncheon were wrapping up three days of meetings about how to improve their blog sites focusing on food, family, health and the environment.

Many had just taken their first-ever bite of bison as Mimi Hillenbrand of 777 Ranch in South Dakota and Carrie Bennet of Prairie Ridge Buffalo Co. in Colorado, along with NBA Executive Director Dave Carter, took the stage to share the message of "At Home on the Range...and Not Just in the Kitchen."

Carter kicked off the discussion with an overview of what he called, "The greatest story of market-based restoration in the history of North America." He discussed the role that bison played in shaping the North American grassland ecosystem, and stressed that consumers are

partners in restoring bison to that habitat. Carter also encouraged the Shiftcon participants to use the new Buysome Bison add to connect with local bison ranchers.

Hillenbrand shared her more than 30 years of experiences in bison ranching, and talked about the commitment she and her crew have to utilizing bison as tools to restoring healthy soil on her ranch. She also showed the audience a [YouTube video](#) that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service had developed on the 777 Ranch.

Bennet followed with a presentation that highlighted her experience as a working mom on a three-generation bison ranch. She highlighted the importance that each generation played in building their ranch, raising their family and supporting their community.

NBA Communication director Karen Conly live-streamed the event on Facebook, and conducted interviews with many of the attendees before-and after the luncheon.

"The reaction from the women at Shiftcon was amazing. They were overwhelmed by the great tasting meat, and the stories we had to share." Conley said.

The NBA's participation in Shiftcon was underwritten by the association's Growth Fund, which members can support by contributing at least one dollar for each animal weaned or sold this fall. The tender tips for the luncheon were donated by Rocky Mountain Natural Meats, and swag bag snack sticks were donated by Pearson's Ranch and Adams Natural meat. Teds Montana Grill donated several items for the NBA's booth at the conference.

## **NBA, NBF, SDSU Leaders to Meet to Initiate Center of Excellence**

Key leaders of the National Bison Association's Science and Research Committee and the National Buffalo Foundation will travel to Brookings, SD next Friday to sit down with administrators and researchers at South Dakota State University to initiate steps to formally establish a Center of Excellence in Bison Studies.

"We have been laying the groundwork for a Center of Excellence for the past two years, so it's exciting to be at the point where we are taking the tangible steps to get this important initiative established," said Dave Hunter, DMV, chair of the NBA Science and Research Committee.

Dr. Bill Gibbons, Interim Associate Dean for Research at the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at SDSU, added, "Establishing a Center of Excellence will provide a catalyst for bringing together the researchers—and the research—to develop new knowledge that will help bison producers across North America to better manage the health of their herds."

The working group scheduled to meet next week will discuss key logistical items in establishing a Center, including personnel, funding, and partnerships.

A larger gathering of stakeholders is being planned at SDSU in mid-November.

## **Hunting for Bison Just Got Easier with New Mobile App**

*(From NBA News Release)*

Bison hunting—or, at least hunting for tasty bison, just got a lot easier with the introduction of the National Bison Association’s new *Buysome Bison* mobile-app.

The new app, which was funded through a grant from USDA’s Farmers’ Market Promotion Program, allows users to locate local bison ranches and farms that offer meat sales on-farm or at farmers’ markets, and that offer agritourism opportunities.

Dave Carter, National Bison Association executive director, noted, “This app allows users to quickly locate ranchers and farmers who can supply them with deliciously healthy, locally raised bison meat and a variety of bison artisan goods. Many even offer tours, wedding venues, weekend getaways, and other agritourism experiences for the whole family.”

Users can search for local marketers using a variety of easy-to-use search functions.

The app is available for iOS and Android devices at Google Play and the Apple App Store.

Carter said, “More and more people want to feed their families with nutritious, locally grown food. With the Buysome Bison app, they can connect with a local rancher and know exactly where their bison meat is raised.”

“And, Buysome Bison even provides information on ranchers who sell live animals,” Carter added. “This is a great resource for people entering the bison business, or who are looking to expand their herds.”

## **Carter Attends Direct Marketing Conference**

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter was in Chicago, IL, earlier this week, to participate in the annual [National Agricultural Direct Marketing Summit](#), hosted jointly by USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service, Farm Credit, and the Illinois Farm Bureau. The two-day summit features a series of workshops to assist producers involved in farmers’ markets, on-farm sales, and other forms of direct marketing.

Carter also participated in a Monday pre-conference workshop hosted by USDA’s Farmers’ Market Promotion Program (FMPP). That workshop convened grantees for the FMPP to discuss the impact of their individual projects. The NBA is currently administering a multi-year grant from FMPP

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## **Badlands National Park Expands Bison Grazing Area**

*(From The Rapid City Journal)*

Badlands National Park is expanding its bison range by 22,000 acres, thanks to \$743,000 in donations.

A news release from the park said 43 miles of new fence has been installed, along with cattle guards, to expand the bison grazing area in the park to 80,193 acres. The park’s total area is 244,000 acres, which is about 380 square miles.

The park said the expansion of bison grazing will "contribute to the health and genetic integrity of the herd and continued health of the prairie."

"Visitors will also have more opportunities for viewing, photographing, and learning about bison in their native habitat on the badlands' iconic and stunning landscape," the news release said.

The fundraising effort for the project was a public/private partnership, the release said.

Badlands National Park partnered with the National Park Foundation, the World Wildlife Fund, the Defenders of Wildlife, the Nature Conservancy, the Badlands National Park Conservancy and the Badlands Natural History Association to implement the Bison Resource Stewardship Plan and open new grazing areas to the existing herd.

Read more. [https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/badlands-national-park-expands-bison-grazing-area/article\\_f0bc9513-80ab-5fa1-ad50-921ea4b82ae2.html](https://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/badlands-national-park-expands-bison-grazing-area/article_f0bc9513-80ab-5fa1-ad50-921ea4b82ae2.html)

## **A Serving of These Bison Meatballs Has 42 Grams of Protein**

*(From Men's Health)*

Fussy DIY meatball recipes have you blending beef with pork and veal and enough already.

The best meatballs are made with bison, which has more than 30 grams of muscle-building protein per serving.

North American bison are truly massive mammals, with mature males weighing around a whopping 2,000 pounds. But the bison meat you eat comes from smaller animals raised on farms.

The recipe that follows uses a Dutch oven, not a Crock-Pot or InstantPot. That's because sear-and-simmer meatballs are better than slow-cooker meatballs because of the browned bits left behind after searing. A little wine will unlock the flavor of the bits and infuse your sauce with more meatiness.

Read more. <https://www.menshealth.com/nutrition/a29424727/how-to-make-bison-meatballs/>

## **Raising Bison: Dixon Rancher Fulfilling Lifelong Dream**

*(From The Missoulian)*

DIXON – A good portion of the roughly 115 bison on Chris Sullivan's ranch 45 minutes north of Missoula have unique personalities and identifying traits if you spend enough time around them.

"This one's a beautiful cow, with a nice golden coat," he said, grinning and pointing. "She's old. Over here, that's a good-looking bull. He's probably about 1,900 pounds. He's young. He's going to grow a bit more. He's going to get huge."

Sullivan has been raising bison and selling meat since 2002 as Montana Buffalo Gals. The name is an ode to his wife and daughter. Bison ranching was a lifelong dream for Sullivan, and

it's clear he has a deep affinity for the animals whose ancestors once roamed America's western lands in immense numbers.

"They've been good to me," he said on a recent sunny day, feeding apples as a treat to the bright-eyed beasts as they snorted and jostled with each other. "We get along, and we understand each other pretty good."

Sullivan is a fixture at the Missoula Farmer's Market and is hoping to start a food truck next year to sell burgers, burritos and steaks. On 110 acres between Dixon and Moiese, adjacent to the National Bison Range, he lets his animals range free on the pasture almost year-round. He uses no antibiotics, corn or added hormones. Unlike cattle ranching, he said raising bison is less intrusive.

"You know, a lot of guys will go in amongst 'em, but I think that's kinda silly," he explained. "Because they communicate with horns and certain signs, and if they want to and you're in their way, they'll knock you out of the way. Not maliciously, but it's part of their personalities."

His regular job is as a homebuilder, so Sullivan has to make time to manage his animals.

"It's kind of a one-man show," he said. "I don't hire any help. Once in a while, I'll hire help just to help me do fencing or something like that."

Read more. [https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/raising-bison-dixon-rancher-fulfilling-lifelong-dream/article\\_9f9a2dc9-aba5-58bf-8ac0-eea258ff704c.html](https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/raising-bison-dixon-rancher-fulfilling-lifelong-dream/article_9f9a2dc9-aba5-58bf-8ac0-eea258ff704c.html)

## **'What's That?': Adams Natural Meats Opens Store And Ranch In Evergreen**

*(From DenverChannel.com)*

EVERGREEN, Colo. — An Evergreen business that was under construction for nearly three years has finally opened its doors.

Adams Natural Meats, located off of I-70 near Beaver Brook in Evergreen, is an all-natural bison ranch that sells bison and beef products.

But the business' location and barn-like façade is causing a lot of people to ask, "What's that?" The business has bison on site, just a few feet away from the store.

"All the time, we get people that come in just to stop and take pictures of the buffalo. They come in just to see what we're all about because they watched us building it for three years," said Adams Natural Meats Sales and Store Manager Kristin Morrill.

"We sell everything from steaks, to roasts, to rubs, to burgers," she said.

Morrill said they also sell bison bacon, jerky, seasonings, and bison hides.

Morrill said the Evergreen store is the company's second location; their first location is in Arizona.

Full story and video here. <https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/our-colorado/whats-that-adams-natural-meats-opens-store-and-ranch-in-evergreen>

## **Bringing Back The Bison**

*(From Sun This Week)*

Last week, four new bison were brought to Blue Mounds State Park near Luverne, and over 30 members of the herd were genetically tested.

Staff from the Minnesota Zoo participated in those events as part of an ongoing partnership between the zoo and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. For the last eight years, the zoo has been involved with bison preservation and management in Minnesota.

These efforts are putting bison back into part of their historical range and have other benefits, said Diana Weinhardt, Minnesota Zoo northern trail curator.

“It’s educating people, the public, children about what Minnesota looked like years ago. It’s playing a huge part of restoring prairie (habitat),” she said.

According to the DNR, millions of American plains bison were hunted to near extinction in the late 1800s. All American plains bison living today come from less than 100 survivors. “Saved from extinction by a handful of ranchers, bison still face modern challenges to their future. Small herd sizes, crossbreeding with cattle and a lack of prairie to roam create long-term problems for bison,” its website states.

Full story here.

[https://www.hometownsource.com/sun\\_thisweek/community/apple\\_valley/bringing-back-the-bison/article\\_b527ae28-e558-11e9-abea-6ba56da4f173.html](https://www.hometownsource.com/sun_thisweek/community/apple_valley/bringing-back-the-bison/article_b527ae28-e558-11e9-abea-6ba56da4f173.html)

## **Jury Finds Bison Farmer Guilty Of Animal Cruelty**

*(From Peninsula.com)*

PORT TOWNSEND — A jury has found a Chimaquum bison farmer guilty of first-degree animal cruelty.

Denver Lee Shoop, 73, was found guilty on all eight counts Thursday following a four-day trial in Jefferson County Superior Court. He will be sentenced Nov. 1. Each felony conviction could bring a maximum of five years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine.

The verdict was read following two hours of jury deliberations and closing arguments earlier in the day.

It was the second jury trial on the same charges this year after the first was declared a hung jury in February.

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Julie St. Marie [presented the state’s case](#) with six total witnesses between Tuesday and Wednesday, focusing on law enforcement response, the emaciated condition of the bison and a reported lack of hay for them to eat.

Testimony also covered how the bison were moved from Shoop's property and how quickly the animals responded, averaging a weight gain of 20 pounds to 75 pounds in a week after they were treated with vitamins, minerals and nutritious feed.

For the rest of the day Wednesday, attorney Jack Range presented the case for the defense, which focused on other possible factors that could have led to the animals' emaciated condition, including intestinal parasites.

Full story here. <https://www.peninsuladailynews.com/crime/jury-finds-bison-farmer-guilty-of-animal-cruelty/>

## **Buffalo Rock State Park May Be Getting A New Bison Around The First Week Of November**

*(From Mywebtimes.com)*

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is working with the United State Department of Agriculture to get an additional bison at Buffalo Rock to serve as a companion to Pebbles, the 14-year-old resident bison of the park.

Holly, the 20-year-old matriarch bison at the park, had an illness and was euthanized Sept. 5. Holly, who had lived at the park since 2005, gave birth to Pebbles in April 2005.

"We are seeking a 2-year-old female to reside with our 14-year-old, Pebbles, at the park," said Daniel Bell, site superintendent for the Illinois & Michigan Canal State Trail in Morris. "It is anticipated that the bison will come from the herd located at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie near Wilmington. We expect to transport the bison to Buffalo Rock around the first week of November."

Bison were reintroduced to Midewin in October 2015. The Midewin bison herd is a small conservation herd. The herd was introduced as a 20-year experiment in restoring the landscape to native tallgrass prairie. The bison at Midewin roam on 1,200 acres of the grounds. The bison at Buffalo Rock live within a fenced area of the park.

Read more. <https://www.mywebtimes.com/2019/10/09/buffalo-rock-bison-may-soon-get-a-new-companion/asl9lqd/>

## **Wyoming Game and Fish To Eliminate Elk Feed Ground**

*(From The Gillette News Record)*

JACKSON - The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will eliminate the legally embattled Alkali Creek elk feed ground in coming years as the threat of chronic wasting disease looms.

The Bridger-Teton National Forest feed ground, the lowest elevation of three in the Gros Ventre River valley, had been studied and then authorized for long-term use in 2015. But four environmental groups hit the forest with a lawsuit, winning in 2018.

Rather than appealing or spending years studying the feed ground's impacts to address the judge's concerns, the Forest Service and Wyoming wildlife managers came up with a plan that will allow emergency elk feeding at Alkali for five years and then end the operation by 2024. That plan is now being "scoped" and is open for public comment.

Full text:

[https://www.gillette news record.com/news/wyoming/article\\_3607fc76-3b06-509a-a88b-26f1c45717a3.html](https://www.gillette news record.com/news/wyoming/article_3607fc76-3b06-509a-a88b-26f1c45717a3.html)

## **Ranch Group Files Lawsuit to Stop USDA's RFID Ear Tag Mandate**

*(From Tri-State Livestock News)*

Harriet Hageman, Senior Litigation Counsel with the New Civil Liberties Alliance (NCLA), this week filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Casper, Wyoming representing the Ranchers Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) and four ranchers from Wyoming and South Dakota, to stop the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) effort to eliminate all animal identification options other than radio frequency identification (RFID) devices and premises registration for adult cattle and bison moving interstate.

The lawsuit seeks declaratory judgment and an injunction against Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and USDA Administrator for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Kevin Shae, who together issued the RFID mandate in April of this year. The lawsuit alleges that USDA's mandate that livestock producers use RFID ear tags, along with the requirement that they obtain a premises identification number (PIN), and the elimination of all other animal identification options currently available to U.S. cattle producers, violate current traceability regulations. The existing regulations, adopted in 2013, allow livestock producers to use the types of effective animal identification techniques and devices that have been widely used by the industry for over 100 years, including brands, tattoos, permanent metal ear tags, group/lot identification, and backtags on animals destined for harvest. The lawsuit further alleges that the USDA violated the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) by relying exclusively upon a hand-picked group of individuals who have been advocating for the use of RFID, including industry officials and ear tag manufacturers who stand to earn windfall profits from the mandate. The USDA created this advocacy committee simply by winnowing out those U.S. cattle producers who oppose RFID. The defendants' actions in that regard violate federal law, which requires balanced representation on advisory committees. According to Harriet Hageman: "This case is important well beyond the livestock industry. Under our Constitution, Congress is the legislative branch responsible for making the law.

Full text:

<https://www.tsln.com/news/ranch-group-files-lawsuit-to-stop-usdas-rfid-ear-tag-mandate/>

## **Genome-Edited Bull Passes on Hornless Trait to Calves Study Sheds Light on Future of Genome Editing in Livestock**

*(From UC Davis News)*

For the past two years, researchers at the University of California, Davis, have been studying six offspring of a dairy bull, genome-edited to prevent it from growing horns. This technology

has been proposed as an alternative to dehorning, a common management practice performed to protect other cattle and human handlers from injuries.

UC Davis scientists have just published their findings in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*. They report that none of the bull's offspring developed horns, as expected, and blood work and physical exams of the calves found they were all healthy. The researchers also sequenced the genomes of the calves and their parents and analyzed these genomic sequences, looking for any unexpected changes.

All data were shared with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Analysis by FDA scientists revealed a fragment of bacterial DNA, used to deliver the hornless trait to the bull, had integrated alongside one of the two hornless genetic variants, or alleles, that were generated by genome editing in the bull. UC Davis researchers further validated this finding.

"Our study found that two calves inherited the naturally occurring hornless allele and four calves additionally inherited a fragment of bacterial DNA, known as a plasmid," said corresponding author Alison Van Eenennaam, with the UC Davis Department of Animal Science.

Full text:

<https://www.ucdavis.edu/news/genome-edited-bull-passes-hornless-trait-calves>

## **USMCA Passage Could Come Before Thanksgiving**

*(From Feedstuffs)*

President Donald Trump voiced optimism on passage of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada agreement (USMCA), and some now believe that it could happen ahead of Congress's Thanksgiving recess.

During a signing ceremony for the U.S.-Japan trade deal with many agricultural leaders on hand, Trump stated that the Administration reached a "tremendous agreement" with Mexico and Canada to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement with the new USMCA. Regarding USMCA, Trump said "hopefully that'll get done in the not-too-distant future." He added, "Everybody wants it: Manufacturers want it, farmers want it, even unions want it. People want it."

Vice President Mike Pence visited a Tyson plant in Tennessee on Monday, where he also touted the trade deal. Pence said under USMCA, Canada would increase access to imports of American chicken by 10,000 metric tons within the first six years and then increase it 1% for the next 10 years. In addition, it'll allow the U.S. to export up to 1,000 mt of turkey products every year for 10 years -- and potentially a lot more than that.

"According to one estimate, poultry meat exports to Canada would increase by more than \$180 million, or nearly 50%, within the six years after USMCA becomes law," Pence said. "We need Congress to approve the USMCA and approve it this year, because we want to keep the momentum in this economy," Pence added.

Full story here. <https://www.feedstuffs.com/news/usmca-passage-could-come-thanksgiving>

## **Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge**

*(From American Farm Bureau)*

The American Farm Bureau Federation, in partnership with Farm Credit, has opened online applications for the 2020 Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge. In its sixth year, the Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge is a national business competition for U.S. food and agriculture startups. Entrepreneurs will compete for \$145,000 in startup funds.

Launched in 2015 as the first national competition focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs, the competition continues to provide an opportunity for U.S. startups to showcase business innovations in food and agriculture. Startup funds for The Challenge have been provided by sponsors Farm Credit, John Deere, Bayer Crop Science, Farm Bureau Bank and Country Financial.

Ten semi-finalist teams will be announced on Nov. 22 and awarded \$10,000 each. All 10 semi-finalist teams will travel to AFBF's Annual Convention, in Austin, Texas, in January 2020, with all expenses paid, to compete in a live competition to be the Farm Bureau Entrepreneur of the Year. The 10 teams will compete in Austin to advance to the final round where four teams will receive an additional \$5,000 and compete live on stage in front of Farm Bureau members, investors and industry representatives. The final four teams will compete to win:

- Farm Bureau Entrepreneur of the Year award and \$15,000 (chosen by judges), for a total of \$30,000
- People's Choice award and \$10,000 (chosen by public vote), for a total of \$25,000

Entrepreneurs and startups with businesses in the following categories are encouraged to apply:

- Farm, ranch, greenhouse, aquaponics
- Input product or crop variety
- Method or tool for growing, monitoring or harvesting crops or livestock
- Production support services
- Retail, agritourism or farm-to-table business
- Food/beverage/textile product or ingredient
- Method of production, preparation, or packaging of food/beverage/textile products or ingredients
- Value-added processing including yogurts, cheese and processed meats, wineries, breweries, cideries and distilleries

Food & ag startups have until midnight EDT on Oct. 14, 2019 to apply.

Read more. <https://www.fb.org/events/afbf-annual-convention/ag-innovation-challenge>