



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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November 22, 2019

Partner In Bison Restoration Labeling Program Launched

Two bison meat marketers and one national pet food brand has signed up as the first participants in the NBA's new Partner in Bison Restoration labeling program, launched this month.

"Partner in Bison Restoration is a new campaign to assist bison meat marketers and food companies using bison ingredients to tell the story of how eating bison is helping to restore herds to their historical rangelands, which—in turn—is helping to restore ecological health," said Dave Carter, NBA executive director.

The new logo designed for use on product packaging, and in marketing materials, contains the URL www.bison1million.com. Consumers clicking on that URL will be directed to a special site within www.bisoncentral.com that contains news articles and information about the nutritional and ecological benefits of bison.

Broadleaf Specialty & Game Meats, and Rocky Mountain Natural Meats have both signed up as a Partner in Bison Restoration.

Merrick Pet Food has also enlisted in the program as a part to launch its Beef, Bison and Sweet Potato dog food formula. As a part of enlisting in the program, Merrick invited Carter to post a blog on its company website. That blog can be found here.
<https://www.merrickpetcare.com/blog/where-the-bison-roam/>

Carter noted, "We invite anyone marketing products containing bison meat or other bison ingredients to enlist as a Partner in Bison Restoration. And, all revenues earned through this licensing program will be used to support the NBA Growth Fund."

Prices Down in Latest USDA Wholesale Report

Prices were down for all carcass categories, according to the latest monthly report of Wholesale bison prices released last week by USDA's Gain and Livestock Market Reporting Service.

Prices for dress young bulls averaged \$425.21/cwt., according to the report, which was Δ .32/cwt lower than the previous month, and \$54.48/cwt. lower than in October 2018. Dressed heifers averaged \$390.44/cwt, which was \$28.28/cwt. lower than in September and \$71.58/cwt. lower than the previous October. Prices for cull bulls and cows were lower as well.

According to USDA's national Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 46,916 head of bison have been processed year-to-date under federal inspection. That's an increase of six percent over the same period in 2018, and only 530 head below the largest year-to-date level, which was recorded in 2008.

Carcass weights for dressed young bulls averaged 676 lbs. in October which was slightly lighter than in September but 58 lbs. heavier than last October. Dressed heifers averaged 630 lbs. which was 63 lbs. heavier than the previous month and 102 lbs. heavier than the previous October.

Young bulls comprise 68 percent of the young animals processed year-to-date. That compares with the nine-year historical average of 61 percent.

The full USDA monthly price report is available here.
https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw_ls526.txt

The NBA Five-Year Tracing Average Report is available in the members' section of www.bisoncentral.com

Time for Some Deep Breathing Exercises

(Blog post by Dave Carter)

Angst...it's not just for teenagers anymore.

There's a fair bit of that floating around the bison business these days. Carcass prices—which tested the stratosphere for eight years—have dropped back to earthly levels in the past six months. Early auction reports haven't been terrible, but they haven't been anything to tell the grandkids about, either.

Mislabeled water buffalo continues to disrupt our marketplace. The hide market has disappeared—for bison and beef—as consumers choose tennis shoes over leather footwear. Processors are running at full capacity, creating a challenge for producers trying to schedule animals for harvest.

There is more than just a bit of grumbling that—even as carcass prices have dropped—the price of bison in the retail meat case seems frozen.

On top of everything else, the public seems to be stampeding to buy laboratory-concocted burgers marketed as “healthy, plant-based meat.”

It's time to take a deep breath. Or two.

It's Thanksgiving time after all, so let's get in the spirit.

First of all, today's prices are still something we only dreamed of a decade ago, and something our friends in commodity agriculture continue to envy. Last month's USDA-reported carcass price on young bulls of \$4.25/lb. was 79% higher than the price reported a decade earlier and nearly two and one-half times more than cattle ranchers are receiving for their finished steers. That's some consolation, but probably not a lot if your business model has been based on prices above \$4.60/lb.

So, let's look at our prospects for continued growth.

Red full blog here. <https://bisoncentral.com/time-for-some-deep-breathing-exercises/>

Bison Business Pioneer Wayne Calloway Dies at Age 80

Funeral services were held today Wayne Calloway, longtime buffalo rancher and historian, who passed away at his home in Pittsville, MD, last Saturday at the age of 80.

Born in Pittsville, he was the son of the late Harry and Elizabeth Calloway.

Wayne is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Mary Beth Calloway: 2 children, Chris Calloway and his wife Jan, of Laurel, DE and Laura Horner and her husband Scott, of Eden, MD: 4 grandchildren, Ethan and Aaron (Le'Anna Block) Calloway and Maddison and Benjamin Horner: 2 great grandsons, Bryson Cross and Keegan Calloway and their mother Kaila Kortum: 1 brother, Eddie (Glenda) Calloway: 2 sisters, Judy Calloway and Cathy (Bryan) Vance: 1 sister-in-law Terri Calloway. As well as several nieces, nephews and cousins. In addition to his parents, Wayne was also preceded in death by 2 brothers, Bobby Calloway and Donnie Calloway.

After retiring from Delmarva Power after 35 years, Wayne fulfilled his dream of raising bison for 17 years. He was a docent at the Salisbury Zoo for 21 years. He was also a member of the National Bison Association and the Eastern Bison Association. Wayne was a member of Ayres United Methodist Church. He always enjoyed writing stories and had a love of photography.

Contributions may be made in his memory to Ayres United Methodist Church c/o Barbara Wootten 34424 Workman Road Pittsville, MD 21850, or to Coastal Hospice.

To send condolences to the family please visit www.hollowayfh.com.

Canadian Producers Gathering for Annual CBA Convention.

Roughly 200 Canadian ranchers and processors—joined by some fellow producers from south of the 49th Parallel—will be gathering at the Ramada Plaza by Wyndam in Regina tomorrow through Tuesday for the Canadian Bison Association's 36th annual convention and Show and Sale.

The conference agenda includes sessions on addressing herd health, utilizing genomics in bison management, and exporting live bison. NBA Executive Director is scheduled to provide a presentation on "Consumer Market Trends Below the 49th."

Meanwhile, more than 50 head of live bison are scheduled to arrive at the Agribition grounds in Regina for the CBA's annual Live Bison Show and Sale. The sale will be held next Tuesday at Agribition.

Happy Thanksgiving from the NBA

The Officers, board and staff of the National Bison Association wish everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving holiday.

Weekly Update will not be published next week so the Dave, Jim, Barb and Karen can enjoy the holiday week.

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What America Lost When It Lost the Bison

(From The Atlantic)

Chris Geremia was surprised. After considerable effort, and substantial risk to life and limb, he and his colleagues finally had the results from their decade-long experiment, and those results were both clear and unexpected: Bison do not surf.

Specifically, bison (or buffalo) don't follow the waves of new shoots that burst from the ground every spring. This phenomenon, known as surfing the green wave, allows animals to eat plants at their most nutritious, when they're full of nitrogen and proteins and low in indigestible matter. Such freshness is fleeting, and so grazers undertake large migrations to track the new greenery as it crests across the landscape. Over the past decade, scientists have shown that mule deer, barnacle geese, elk, elephants, Mongolian gazelles, and a dozen other species all do this. Geremia wanted to see whether bison, which once formed the largest grazing herds in North America, follow the same pattern.

Beginning in 2005, he and his colleagues started putting GPS collars on bison in Yellowstone National Park, home to the largest remaining herd in North America, and the only one that truly migrates. Their sociable nature makes for an impressive spectacle, but also creates a problem: When you tranquilize one of them, the others tend to surround their fallen herd-mate. "It took a few years to learn the confidence to walk into this group of a hundred animals, each weighing between 1,000 and 2,000 pounds, and put a collar on the one that's sleeping," says Geremia, who works at the National Park Service. "Most of the time, the others just move away."

Once it had collared enough bison, the team used satellite images to see whether the animals' movements matched the appearance of new greenery. "They really didn't," Geremia says. "They start to surf, but then they stop," allowing several weeks' worth of fresh vegetation to pass them by.

Confused, the team followed the bison in person, and collected dung samples to see whether the animals were suffering from a nutritional deficit because of their lax migrations. The poop, however, revealed that the bison were still consuming as much protein as if they had continued to surf the wave. "It threw us for a complete loop," Geremia says. "How can they fall behind but still have an incredibly high-quality diet?"

Read more. <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/11/how-bison-create-spring/602176/>

Colorado Ranchers Have Beef With Lab-Grown And Plant-Based “Meat” — And They Want Well-Done Labeling

(From The Colorado Sun)

Boyd Meyer runs about 4,000-head of American bison on the Colorado-Wyoming border, fully aware of the speed, power and cussed nature of the 1-ton beasts.

“They can out-maneuver a horse and I’ve seen them jump a 5-foot fence flat-footed,” Meyer said. “They are not like cattle, if they don’t want to do something, they flat won’t do it and there is not much you can do about it.”

Meyer, who runs Cold Creek Buffalo Company on 27,000 acres, is also part of a vanguard of Colorado bison ranchers, slowly chewing out a niche in the American meat market. For the past two decades, they have pushed bison as a low-fat, low-cholesterol delicacy to the American palate through high-end restaurants and local grocery store chains.

“We really are getting a foothold in the American meat market,” Meyer said. “This is a remarkable animal and people are starting to develop a real taste for it.”

The bison industry’s optimism is muted by new forces in the American meat market, however. Imported water buffalo is muddying the domestic market for bison ranchers. And pure science is moving the traditional ranching industry to demand let’s-set-the-record-straight rules and laws governing the very identity of meat.

This existential meat crisis is being pressed by the stampede of plant-based meat into fast-food joints and the eventual arrival of man-made chicken breasts in grocery stores and restaurants. Cattle producers especially worry that if they don’t do something to clear the fog over meat, families will one day be savoring an All-American burger from a cow raised in Ecuador or a lab in Boulder or Berkeley, California.

Read more. <https://coloradosun.com/2019/11/20/impossible-burger-colorado-ranchers-cattle-bison/>

Young, Haaland, And Cole Introduce Legislation To Restore Buffalo On Tribal Lands
(From Alaska Native News)

Washington, D.C. – Monday, Congressman Don Young (R-AK), Vice Chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus, along with Caucus Co-Chairs Congresswoman Deb Haaland (D-NM) and Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK) introduced the Indian Buffalo Management Act of 2019. The American buffalo, a North American species of bison, once roamed freely across the United States, and served an important role for Native communities throughout North America.

Historically, bison were a reliable source of food, shelter, clothing, and economic mobility for Indigenous peoples across the American West. The decimation of the American buffalo that began in the mid-19th century significantly impacted the Native communities that depended on these majestic creatures. The Indian Buffalo Management Act establishes a program within the

Department of the Interior to assist tribes and tribal organizations with the protection, conservation, and fostering of buffalo herds. This legislation is supported by the 68 tribes in 18 states that are the members of the InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Congress of American Indians, the American Bison Society, the National Bison Association, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the World Wildlife Fund.

“For hundreds of years, the American buffalo was central to the culture, spiritual well-being, and livelihoods of our nation’s Indigenous peoples,” said Congressman Don Young. “The tragic decimation of these iconic animals remains one of the darkest chapters in America’s history, and we must be doing all that we can to reverse the damage done not only to the American buffalo but to the way of life of Native peoples across our country. I am proud to be joined by Congresswoman Deb Haaland and Congressman Tom Cole, in addition to Alaska Native and American Indian organizations and countless tribes, as we introduce this critical legislation to protect a resource vital to Native cultural, spiritual, and subsistence traditions.

“I would like to thank the InterTribal Buffalo Council, in particular, for their advocacy and hard work on the development of this legislation. This bill is an important step to restoring once-vibrant buffalo herds, and I will keep working with friends on both sides of the aisle to see this legislation across the finish line,” he said.

Read more here. <https://alaska-native-news.com/young-haaland-and-cole-introduce-legislation-to-restore-buffalo-on-tribal-lands/45879/>

Study: Yellowstone Bison Mow, Fertilize Their Own Grass

(From The New York Times)

MISSOULA, Mont. — A study of grazing in Yellowstone National Park found that bison essentially mow and fertilize their own food. This allows them to graze in one area for two to three months during the spring and summer while other hoofed mammals must keep migrating to higher elevations to follow new plant growth.

Hundreds of bison grazing in an area stimulates the growth of nutritious grasses, in part because their waste acts as a fertilizer, according to research published this week in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

“They add fertilizer through urinating and defecating, they drop nutrients back on the landscape, which are then available to plants,” Yellowstone scientist Chris Geremia said Wednesday.

“It’s almost like the bison become this giant fleet of lawnmowers moving back and forth across the landscape,” he said.

When more bison grazed an area more intensely, the area greened up earlier and faster and the grass stayed greener and had a higher nutritional quality for a much longer time, Geremia said.

Many other migratory animals in Yellowstone — pronghorn, bighorn sheep, mule deer and elk — do not form these large groups while they migrate and graze, Geremia said.

“Bison don’t just move to find food, kind of the classic way that we think of animal migration,” Geremia said, “but they create good food by how they move and how they graze.”

From 2012 to 2017, researchers fenced off plots of grass along bison migration corridors and compared them to the grazed areas.

Read more. <https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2019/11/21/us/ap-us-yellowstone-bison-grazing.html>

Rancher Recovers Bison Loose In Bitterroot

(From NBC Montana)

STEVENSVILLE, Mont. — It was the call no rancher wants to get -- some of Troy Westre’s bison were loose, and at least one had been hit by a truck.

Westre is the partial owner and ranch manager at Bitterroot Bison. Thirty-eight bison left through an open gate at Bitterroot Bison’s Stevensville location.

“That’s my biggest nightmare about raising bison is if they get out,” Westre said.

Westre has been raising bison for decades, and he believes someone else opened the gate.

“I’ve been doing this for 20 years, and so has my ranch hand here with me,” Westre said. “We don’t leave gates open. I know that gate was closed.”

Bison can weigh more than 2,000 pounds, and Westre said they can be dangerous on the loose.

“They go out on the road, they can kill people, they cause damage, they’re getting killed themselves,” Westre said.

In this case, a pickup truck was totaled after colliding with bison and killing three.

Bison can be worth up to \$4,000 each. But the loss wasn’t just financial, Westre said a lot of work goes into raising bison.

“It’s constant,” Westre said. “It’s not really a job, I live this.”

With the help of friends and neighbors, Westre located all of his bison, and they were returned to the ranch.

“I had a lot of help from my friends and my neighbors in Stevensville, which I’m so thankful for,” Westre said. “We located them all and systematically went after every group.”

Read more. <https://nbcmontana.com/news/local/rancher-recovers-bison-loose-in-bitterroot>

The Return of a Relative: Tribal Communities in the Northern Great Plains Rally Around Bison Restoration *(From EcoWatch)*

On Oct. 11 people around the world celebrated the release of four plains bison onto a snow-covered butte in Badlands National Park, South Dakota.

Their large, chocolate brown bodies were in beautiful contrast against the park's snow-covered sagebrush, hills, and canyons. This was the first time that the species had set hoof in this area since 1877. For wildlife fans and the U.S. national mammal it was a homecoming long overdue. For tribal community members who were there to witness this important moment, the significance was immense for much deeper reasons.

"As a tribe, we and the buffalo are one and the same," said Monica Terkildsen, a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Tribal Community Liaison for World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Northern Great Plains Program. "The buffalo represent our own healthy return. The buffalo once provided our home, our life ways, our food, and created a diverse, flourishing ecosystem. Today, as our herds are growing, we are beginning to re-center as a people. So, bison have a deep, profound meaning to us. They mean economics, they mean health, they mean our spiritual well-being. They are our elders that guide us. They are our relatives."

Prior to European settlement plains bison numbered between 30 million and 60 million and were the widest-ranging large mammal in North America. Bison played an incalculable role in the lives and traditions of Native Americans and many species that live in the plains. By 1889, only 512 plains bison remained after westward expansion and a concerted effort by the US government to eliminate the bison and subdue the tribes that relied so heavily upon them.

Read more. <https://www.ecowatch.com/bison-restoration-2641403058.html?rebellitem=2#rebellitem2>

Judge Denies Halt To Bison Hunt Near Yellowstone *(From The Associated Press)*

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A District of Columbia federal judge has denied a Montana landowner's plea to halt the hunting of bison just outside Yellowstone National Park.

The Billings Gazette reports that in an order filed Nov. 11, Chief Judge Beryl Howell also ruled that Montana is the proper jurisdiction for a lawsuit filed by Gardiner-area resident Bonnie Lynn and Neighbors Against Bison Slaughter who argue that bison hunting so close to residences is life threatening.

In rejecting Lynn's arguments, Howell said tribal hunters were the ones who would be "substantially injured" if the hunt was halted.

Montana began a hunting season for bison that leave the park in 2005.

The majority of the bison harvest is by tribal members with treaty rights, and four Montana tribes opposed Lynn's lawsuit.

Read more.

<https://news.google.com/articles/CBMiM2h0dHBzOi8vYXBuZXdzLmNvbS9jM2M2ZGM2ZmZkNGI0M2MxOTBINjY3YWVhYjYyNNIBAA?hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US%3Aen>

Hartman Group: Regenerative Organics Catching On With ‘Progressive’ Consumers

(From Sustainable Food News)

For some time, under the related rubrics of purchasing organics and living more sustainably, the topics of responsible farming and land management and their linkages to regenerative agriculture have been gaining traction with progressive consumers.

Specifically, products sourced with ingredients that restore, rather than deplete, soil health are on the rise as a distinction of interest among the most engaged consumers.

One example: Grass-fed, once a progressive term, has become a mainstream buzzword to attract consumers seeking to avoid feedlot dairy and beef for personal wellness, animal welfare and sustainability concerns. In general, regenerative agriculture is a growing movement in which farming practices are used to restore soil degraded by planting and harvesting crops.

Related to grass-fed beef, one way to regenerate the topsoil is to graze cattle or bison on land used for growing crops, allowing their manure and left-behind forage to act as natural fertilizers, and plant crops (such as drought-tolerant sorghum) that use less water than conventional crops. Major media outlets have been covering the rise in cultural interest in regenerative agriculture, including NBC News, which recently [posited](#) “Can regenerative agriculture reverse climate change? Big Food is banking on it” and noted “Companies like General Mills, Danone, Kellogg, and Nestlé, among other Big Food corporations, say they’re investing in environmentally friendly practices such as rebuilding biodiversity and eliminating deforestation.”

Consumers are certainly interested in such efforts. Our [Organic & Natural 2018](#) report finds that the most active “Core” organic consumers (who make up 24 percent of the current 85 percent of consumers who buy organics) are increasingly seeing ideal agriculture as becoming less about an absence of chemicals and more about the cultivation of healthy soils and ecosystems. For these consumers, organic no longer represents the highest ideal for how their food is produced. For them, everything that most mainstream consumers are trying to avoid when buying organics (chemicals/pesticides/GMOs, etc.) are shortsighted, band-aid solutions for an agricultural system that simply is no longer working properly, the effects of which manifest in the quality of our food. As such, food that attempts to address these issues goes beyond organic.

Consequently, alternative farming movements like biodynamic farming, regenerative organics, transitional farming, vertical farming and hydroponics are all receiving attention, especially from progressive consumers.

Our recent [Sustainability 2019: Beyond Business as Usual](#) report echoes these insights and finds that sustainability’s association with responsible farming and land management, animal welfare and climate has risen since our last study in 2017.

When it comes to living and consuming more sustainably, consumers are keen to better align their sustainable actions with their sustainable aspirations—particularly in areas related to

impacts from their consumption of material goods and the conservation of natural resources. Overall, climate and responsible land management—whether through farming or conservation—are of growing significance in consumer definitions of sustainability.

(Editor's Note: Laurie Demeritt, CEO of the Hartman Group, will be the keynote speaker at the NBA 2020 Winter Conference)

Cattle Effect On Greenhouse Gas Lower Than Believed: Industry Report

(From meatingplace.com)

The amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by U.S.-raised cattle is lower than has been stated in several global reports, [according to new research](#) cited by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA).

The industry organization says recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) data from 2017 found that beef cattle contribute just 2% of the total GHG emissions in the United States. Direct GHG emissions from all agricultural production, crops and livestock collectively represented 8.4% of all U.S. emissions, noted a new white paper from Sara Place, senior director of sustainable beef production research at NCBA.

The research also indicates that recent U.S. cattle production benefitted from scientific advancements in beef cattle genetics, nutrition, husbandry practices and biotechnologies. As a result of these factors, U.S. GHG levels currently come in 10 to 50 times lower than other parts of the world, the report says. The U.S. cattle industry today also produces the same amount of beef generated in the mid-1970s using one-third fewer head of cattle, NCBA reported.

The organization also notes that earlier global GHG estimates ascribed all livestock emissions to beef when coming up with an estimate of 14.5% of global GHG emissions. The new white paper reports that global beef cattle production actually generates just 6% of the world's GHG annual emissions.