



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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June 21, 2019

Summer Conference Registration Extended to Monday

Good news! Both the host hotel, the Bismarck Radisson, and the NBA have extended their deadlines to Monday, June 24th to accommodate any members who would still like to register for the Summer Conference. The hotel will take reservations on discounted rooms through Monday. The NBA will keep its online registration open through Monday as well, or call during business hours - 303-292-2833 - to register by phone. And please send any questions to jim@bisoncentral.com.

There are just 3 days left to register for the 2019 NBA Summer Conference! Three days of fun, networking and education are in store for our July get together. See the agenda below and learn why you won't want to miss this amazing bison opportunity. Registration is just \$160/person and you can register quickly at <https://bisoncentral.com/nba-summer-conference/> and get all the details including host hotel reservation instructions and links. We hope you can join us Go Forth in the North!

See the updated **conference agenda** and see why you won't want to miss out on this extraordinary bison learning experience!

Low Ticket Alert!

We have just 20 tickets left for the Sunday evening Missouri river cruise on Bismark's Lewis and Clark and Clark Riverboat! Tickets are just \$50/each and includes a two hour cruise with a bbq dinner and a cash bar. The cruise departs at 7:30 pm from 1700 N. River Road, Bismarck, ND 58503 and returns at 9 – <https://www.lewisandclarkriverboat.com/>. A shuttle will be available to those coming from the hotel without transportation, which will depart at 7 and returns at approximately 9:30 pm. This is a great way to kick off the summer conference and catch up with friends old and new on the mighty Missouri river!

NBA Attends FSIS Small/ Processing Plant Stakeholder's Meeting

NBA Assistant Director, Jim Matheson, and members of the National Bison Association attended the Denver stop of the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition-organized

stakeholder's meeting with the leadership of USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) to discuss issues facing small and very small processing plants.

The bison business was well represented with 9 members in attendance, who inquired about labeling issues, bison's non-amenable designation, monthly bison meat reports and more.

Said Matheson "It was great to see such a strong turnout among bison producer's at the Denver stop of this listening tour, I believe this was the sixth one across the country. We had a "Bison Issues" bullet point on the agenda and the leadership took our comments and issues intently with promises to follow up. It was also nice to hear about our relative lack of issues with FSIS, when hearing from larger commodity growers who had a lot to discuss at the meeting and underscored how we're certainly not the only breed with processing challenges these days".

The stakeholder's meeting will next meet in Kentucky in approximately two months at a location to be determined. Stay tuned to <http://sustainableagriculture.net/> to learn more.

Carter, Gehring Meet with Lawmakers in Washington, D.C.

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter and President Dick Gehring were in Washington, D.C. to brief key Senate and House Staff members on the challenge that the U.S. bison sector is facing from imported water buffalo meat and pet food ingredients.

U.S. Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) have been working with the NBA to explore legislative alternatives that could provide the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with stronger authority to enforce truthful labeling of products containing water buffalo meat. Carter and Gehring met with the staff of Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Pat Roberts (R-KS), the staff of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, and with U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA).

Wholesale Prices Mostly Steady in latest USDA Report

Prices paid for dressed young bull and heifer carcasses were mostly steady in May, although the prices for older animals was lower, according to the latest monthly wholesale bison price report issued by USDA's Livestock and Grain Market News Service.

Young dressed bulls brought an average of \$449.32/cwt. in May, which was \$0.43/cwt. lower than in April, and \$40.56/cwt. lower than in May 2018. Dressed heifers averaged \$432.90/cwt. in May, which was \$4.11/cwt. higher than in April, but \$35.75/cwt. lower than in May 2018. Older cow and bull carcasses were lower for the month, and for the year.

Year-to-date, 23,742 bison have been processed under USDA inspection, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. That is 1,327 more than during the same period last year, and is the highest YTD slaughter level since 2010. Young bulls account for 61 percent of the young animals processed through May. That compares to the ten-year average of 51 percent.

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

The NBA Five-Year Price Tracking Report is available in the members' section at www.bisoncentral.com, or see the report here. <https://bisoncentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/May5.19.pdf>

A Note from NBA President Dick Gehring

Over the past month, I've had the opportunity to attend a couple of state/regional bison association meetings.

On May 17th and 18th I attended the Texas Spring Conference. They had multiple sessions that were of interest to the attendees. Dr. Cook's talk on MCF and Tim Fraser's talk on SPBTX parasitism program had everyone listening and asking for more. Good food, good speakers, good time. Thanks to Benji Cox and all the folks in Texas for a great conference.

Then on June 7th and 8th, the Western Bison association along with the Montana Bison Association had their Summer Rendezvous. It was held in beautiful Kamas, Utah at Joe and Kathleen Sorenson's Buffalo Pass Ranch. Joe gave tours of their fantastic house during a wagon ride around the properties.

There was much to do from fishing to trail rides and excursions up and down the mountains. Wade and Kristen Klingler went out of their way to host a great event and wherever there was a need or request, these two came through. A good time was had by all. Glad I could finally make it out west.

Attending these events is always an educational and enjoyable experience. And, it's always refreshing to see how much passion producers have for this animal, and for the bison business.

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Bison Find Home On This Range

(From The Post Bulletin)

On a ranch approximately 3 miles north of Luverne, the buffalo — bison — roam. At Prairie Heights, owner John Bowron has a new addition to the herd that may possibly be the elusive great white bison.

Bowron stumbled onto the new cow at an auction in South Dakota. He isn't 100 percent sure she is a white bison so for now, she is being referred to as a "blonde" until she undergoes DNA testing this fall.

"She was the last animal sold and I thought, 'I had to come home with something,'" Bowron reflected.

Bowron said he was told that the previous producer in South Dakota had established a herd in 2000 with stock from two different sources, all of which the producer referred to as "brunette." After a few breeding cycles, a new color joined the herd.

“Lo and behold as he (the previous owner) got his herd put together from these two sources there were some blonde calves born,” Bowron said. “I don’t know what percentage of his herd was blonde but it was way too many for what you might say be rare. It would seem it was a couple of recessive colors coming together for him.”

Bowron is certain she is not albino and that perhaps she has cattle DNA mixed into her bloodline, creating the difference in fur color from the other 400 or more bison on his ranch.

Read more. https://www.postbulletin.com/agrinews/news/minnesota/bison-find-home-on-this-range/article_a354c0c8-885b-11e9-8bbd-13f63a6caf54.html

Lone Bison Died Where He Lived, A Sunnyside Blvd. Pasture

(From The Daily Herald)

Wobble the bison, iconic as the image on a Buffalo nickel, was a welcome sight for drivers on Sunnyside Boulevard.

Lori Wicker would see the lone bison, off in a pasture, while on her way to see her daughter in Marysville. “Every time we’d go that way and see Wobble in the field or at the gate, it was going to be a good day,” she said.

Wicker, who lives in the Lynnwood area, recently contacted The Herald. She’d read about Wobble in this column two years ago. She hadn’t seen him in awhile, and wrote: “Wondering if something happened to him?!”

There’s sad news for those who liked seeing the mighty beast. Wobble, who began life as a wobbly 26-pound calf, died May 29 on Ruth and Paul Brandal’s 70-acre property.

He lived 27 years, about the life span of a horse, on the farm where the Brandals once had a bison herd. Wobble was the last one on the farm they’ve called Bisondalen, between Ebey Slough and Sunnyside Boulevard.

Ruth Brandal, a 64-year-old nurse, said Wobble had been “doing just fine” until his last day or so, when he refused his daily treat of grain. With the springtime grass, “we thought maybe he was getting enough in the field,” she said. “He laid down and died. The gentle soul was found laying in the lush grass on the farm where he was born prematurely 27 years earlier.”

Read more. <https://www.heraldnet.com/news/lone-bison-died-where-he-lived-a-sunnyside-blvd-pasture/>

Oakland Zoo Helping Return American Bison To Tribal Lands In Montana

(From KTVU-Fox)

OAKLAND, Calif. - The Oakland Zoo is doing their part to strengthen American bison herds that roam Blackfoot tribal lands in Montana and national parks in the Rocky Mountains and Canada.

On Tuesday, two male American bison from a different herd in northern Colorado joined eight female bison that have been living at the zoo after a transfer last year from Blackfeet Nation tribal lands and Glacier National Park in Montana and Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada.

The Blackfeet Nation had been without bison, a sacred and spiritual symbol of their heritage, since 1873 due to hunting.

But three years ago, under a partnership with the Blackfeet Tribe, the zoo helped bring 89 bison from a national park in Canada to their land, and the herd grew enormously.

“It is an honor to be a part of the (initiative) in bringing American Bison back to the Blackfeet Nation people” said Amy Gotliffe, the zoo’s director of conservation. “These returning bison and those in the future will play a critical role in re-populating the open range.”

To lessen inbreeding and genetically diversify the future off-spring of those bison, the zoo last spring brought 14 female bison from the tribal land to the zoo’s California Trail exhibit, a 56-acre exhibit that features animals that are native to - but no longer present in - California, including the iconic bison.

Read more. <http://www.ktvu.com/news/oakland-zoo-helping-return-american-bison-to-tribal-lands-in-montana>

Private digs: Montana State Students Unearth Bison Kill Site Near Judith Gap

(From The Billings Gazette)

In an area known for producing wind for turbines and a cattle ranching culture that influenced a young Charlie Russell’s art in the 1800s, some old bones and stones have caused a local stir ... thanks to a badger.

The badger had dug a hole along a spring on David Bradley’s Ubet Ranch, north of Judith Gap. Jim Bergstrom, who was leasing the ranch to farm and ranch 17 years ago, was strolling along the spring when he spotted the hole and something unusual.

“About one foot down there was a pretty good-sized leg bone,” Bergstrom said. “I started digging and sifting — it must’ve been the fall of 2002 — and I found a lot of bone and arrowheads.”

Prior to finding the badger hole, Bergstrom said he had found “quite a substantial amount” of tools like scrapers and knives nearby.

“So I figured something had happened back in that area.”

Bergstrom had stumbled upon an ancient bison kill site that may date back 2,000 years. The area close to the Little Belt Mountains was so popular as a hunting site that the bones of the animals eventually stacked up 3 feet deep at the bottom of the hill.

“I always thought you had to run them off a cliff,” he said, but the surrounding terrain, although steep, was no cliff-like drop-off. So it’s possible natives had built an entrapment, or corral along the spring to capture and kill the big animals.

Read more. https://billingsgazette.com/outdoors/private-digs-montana-state-students-uneearth-bison-kill-site-near/article_527070de-d6e6-59c7-9296-e7d6d5568c8d.html

Rare Colorado Bison Herd Faces 'Growing' Problem, Nears Capacity Near Fort Collins

(From the Fort Collins Coloradoan)

While driving out to Soapstone Prairie Natural Area north of Fort Collins, CSU's Jennifer Barfield laughed as she described the quickly growing "problem" her bison team is having. It was a giddy — not nervous — laugh.

The problem is the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd is growing much faster than anticipated.

[What 3½ years ago started as 10 genetically pure descendants from the Yellowstone National Park bison herd](#) has grown to 76, including a dozen calves this season.

And the number of calves is expected to double each of the next few years. That means in less than five years since the program began, it will reach its carrying capacity of 100 bison at the city-managed Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and adjoining Larimer County-managed Red Mountain Open Space.

"It's hard to imagine with 10 animals on the ground when we started how quickly we have gotten to the point now that we almost have too many animals," said Barfield, a Colorado State University reproductive physiologist in charge of the team. "It's a good problem to have." The problem has allowed the program — consisting of CSU, the city of Fort Collins and Larimer County — to accomplish its mission of having enough genetically pure and disease-free bison to give or trade away to tribes and conservation organizations.

Full story here. <https://www.coloradoan.com/story/news/2019/06/20/colorado-bison-herd-growing-problem-nearing-capacity-fort-collins-buffalo/1513544001/>

Many Young Adults Value Sustainably Produced Foods, Leading To Healthier Food Choices

(From University of Minnesota School of Public Health Press Release)

Sustainable diets have many benefits in having a minimal impact on the environment, contributing to food security and promoting healthy life for present and future generations. Research focusing on selected components of sustainable diets, such as eating food that is organically grown/produced, minimally processed, locally grown, and not genetically modified, has found that individuals who are more aware of where and how food is produced tend to select more nutrient-dense food choices.

School of Public Health researchers examined the continuity of supporting sustainable diet practices over the course of development from adolescence to adulthood and how it is related to food choices. Their findings were recently published in the journal Public Health Nutrition.

Researchers used data from Project EAT, a population-based study of eating- and weight-related outcomes that has followed Minnesota young people from adolescence to adulthood. Project EAT participants completed mailed/online surveys about their support for sustainable diet practices, eating behaviors, and usual food and beverage intake in 2003-2004 (late adolescence/early adulthood, age 15-23 years) and 2015-2016 (young adulthood, age 28-34 years). The four sustainable diet practices assessed were organically grown/produced, not processed, locally grown and not genetically modified.

The study found:

- 11 percent of participants reported supporting 2+ practices in late adolescence/early adulthood (2003-2004) and 34 percent reported supporting 2+ practices in young adulthood (2015-2016);
- 18 percent of participants reported supporting 2+ practices in both late adolescence/early adulthood and young adulthood; and
- Supporting 2+ practices was associated with preparation of meals with vegetables at least a few times/week, less frequent purchase of family meals from fast food restaurants and higher diet quality in 2015-2016.

Read more. <https://www.sph.umn.edu/news/many-young-adults-value-sustainably-produced-foods-leading-to-healthier-food-choices/>

FFA Students To Raise Then Process Meat In New Facility

(From Meatingplace.com)

Hands-on agricultural learning took another step forward with the recent launch of a Future Farmers of America (FFA) program in Missoula, Mont., that features both a farm to raise animals along with a facility to process the meat.

The more than 330 students who participate in the agricultural science program will now be able to raise cows, pigs and lamb in addition to running their own meat processing facility, a program that took eight years to achieve, according to [a report from the local ABC affiliate.](#)

The teachers who help the students manage the FFA program note that having both facilities allows the participants to experience the complete cycle from the conception of the animals to the slaughter and processing of animals into various meat products, the report added.

Missoula residents also will benefit, as programs already are in place to sell hamburger from the plant to the Missoula County Public Schools. The program reportedly also is expected to eventually provide hamburger for the entire school district within the next few years.

USDA announces feral swine control pilot program

(From Texas Farm Bureau)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced \$75 million in funding is available for the eradication and control of feral swine through a new pilot program.

The program, Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program, is a joint effort between USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The 2018 Farm Bill included this new pilot program to help address the threat that feral swine pose to agriculture, ecosystems and human and animal health.

NRCS will direct up to \$33.75 million of the allocated FSCP funds toward partnership efforts to work with landowners in identified pilot projects in targeted areas. Applications are being accepted through Aug. 19 for partners to carry out activities as part of these pilot projects in select areas of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas. APHIS has determined that these states have among the highest feral swine population densities and associated damages in the country.

"NRCS state conservationists and APHIS state directors, in coordination with state technical committees, have identified pilot projects that can be carried out within these target states," NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr said. "Our agencies stand ready to work with partners at the state and local level to respond to the threat of feral swine."

Ten counties in Texas have been identified to participate in the program. They include: Potter, Hartley and Oldham counties along the Canadian River; Eastland, Erath and Comanche along the Leon River; and Hardeman, Wilbarger, Wichita and Clay counties along the Red River. Pilot projects will consist broadly of three coordinated components: 1) feral swine removal by APHIS; 2) restoration efforts supported by NRCS; and 3) assistance to farmers and ranchers for feral swine control provided through partnership agreements with non-federal partners. Projects can be one to three years in duration.

"The projects selected for funding will allow APHIS and NRCS to collectively reduce the damage and disease caused by one of the most destructive and formidable invasive species in the United States," APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea said. "Overall, this pilot program builds upon and expands work already underway by APHIS' National Feral Swine Damage Management Program to both manage feral swine and eliminate populations in partnership with local government, the private sector, industry and academia."

NRCS is accepting proposals from non-federal partners to provide landowner assistance for on-farm trapping and related services as part of the pilot projects described above. NRCS will provide funding for these services through partnership agreements. The funding limit for a single award is \$1.5 million. Awardees will be required to provide at least 25 percent of the partnership agreement budget as a match to NRCS funding.

Additional information on the complete funding announcement and about specific pilot projects, including target areas and the roles for which partner assistance is being requested, can be found on the [FSCP webpage](#).

Source. <http://texasfarmbureau.org/usda-announces-feral-swine-control-pilot-program/>

Grass-Fed Beef Trade Group Hits Back At Maker Of Impossible Burger

(From Sustainable Food News)

The [American Grassfed Association](#) (AGA), a trade group providing certification to producers of grass-fed beef and dairy cattle as well as pastured pork producers, said Thursday that a recently released report from the maker of the Impossible Burger, which calls grass-fed beef unsustainable “at scale,” is “misleading and misguided.”

Redwood City, Calif.-based Impossible Foods Inc., which now sells its Impossible Burger in fast food and casual restaurant chains such as Burger King, White Castle, Qdoba and Red Robin, released its [2019 Impact Report](#) on Wednesday.

The Impossible Burger is made with water, wheat protein, potato protein, coconut oil and heme, an iron-containing molecule in blood that carries oxygen in both animals and plants that gives the product its meaty flavor. Heme is also found in ground beef.

To make heme, the company genetically modifies yeast and adds a gene from the protein leghemoglobin – the plant version of hemoglobin – which it extracts from a genetically modified soy plant. The yeast is grown using fermentation, then the heme is isolated from the yeast. The AGA said Impossible Foods’ use of GMO ingredients means the company has to keep consumer awareness at a minimum: “In the end, Impossible Foods’ 2019 Impact Report does what it was intended to do: To deflect negative attention from its GMO soy-based products in order to write a new narrative that sells more impossible-to-defend Impossible “burgers”—an endeavor that does nothing but benefit the bottom line of an industrial food corporation.”

In a bid to convince consumers that its products are better for the environment than conventional, feedlot beef, the Impossible Foods report makes this claim: “If everyone who ate an Impossible Burger in 2018 chose it explicitly over a burger made from cows, we would have collectively spared greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 250 million driving miles in a typical US car, a land area nearly the size of San Francisco and enough water to hydrate 3 million people for a year.”

Researchers See Link Between Red Meat, Lower MS Risk

(From Meatingplace.com)

Australian researchers found there may be a connection between the consumption of unprocessed red meat as part of a regular diet and a lower risk of having a condition that usually leads to multiple sclerosis (MS).

Scientists at the School of Public Health at Curtin University in Perth, Australia, studied subjects who showed signs of central nervous system demyelination (FCD), which other research says leads to full-blown MS 83% of the time after 10 years of the diagnosis. The Curtin team discovered that subjects who ate more unprocessed red meat than the group that ate much less were between 37% and 52% less likely to be at risk for MS, depending on the amount of red meat in their regular diets. The study found no association between the risk for FCD and red meat consumption for those who ate very little red meat like beef, lamb, pork or veal.

The study results appear in the [Journal of Nutrition](#) and concluded that a Mediterranean diet that includes unprocessed red meat could be beneficial for those at high risk of developing MS, the report added.

US Wants EU Ag Talks, But Are They Worth The Trouble?

(From AgriPulse)

The Trump administration is adamant that agriculture and all of the divisive policies and regulations that go along with it should be included in trade talks with the Europeans, but success could mean a long and arduous battle at a time when a trade war with China is being fought and other potentially lucrative trade pacts are being negotiated.

The political call to get the EU to come to the table on agriculture has only increased since negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) fell apart, but some in the industry are beginning to question if it's worth the trouble.

Getting the EU to negotiate its tariff and non-tariff barriers would be a win, but the Trump administration should focus its resources on efforts that are more likely to succeed and result in major windfalls for U.S. farmers and ranchers, said Maria Zieba, director of international affairs at the National Pork Producers Council.

“Are we going to go through that exercise again?” she said “All that effort again? I think that we’re just tired in the ag industry. I’m not rushing to that [EU] agreement. I’m rushing to finish [the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement] and get back to some kind of normal trade relationship with China or Japan or some of these other markets that have potential.”

Just getting the Europeans to negotiate ag policy will require extraordinary efforts, said Jaime Castaneda, senior vice president for trade policy of the U.S. Dairy Export Council.

Mexico Approves USMCA; Trump, Trudeau Meet In D.C

(From Meetingplace)

Mexico's Senate voted overwhelmingly to ratify the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), becoming the first country to approve the new pact meant to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The treaty passed by a vote of 114-4 on Wednesday amid strong support for the agreement in Mexico, which sends about 80% of its exports to the United States, the Washington Post reported.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D.-Calif., has yet to schedule a ratification vote for the agreement. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [met with President Trump](#) at the White House on Thursday to discuss progress on congressional passage of the pact, among other issues.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer on Wednesday said he believed Democrats' concerns about enforcement of labor and environmental provisions in the treaty could be addressed quickly, [Reuters reported](#), noting Trump is eager to claim a trade victory before the 2020 presidential election campaign gets under way.

The North American Meat Institute, National Pork Producers Council and numerous other food and agricultural organizations have urged swift passage of USMCA.

