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Weekly Update



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NBA Weekly Update for May 22, 2020

The Weekly Update is a service designed to provide National Bison Association members with news and information affecting bison production and marketing. Many items in the Weekly Update are reprinted from outside sources. The content of those articles does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the National Bison Association. The articles are reproduced here only as a means to keep our membership informed as much as possible of all information and opinions relating to bison that is circulating publicly.

Registration Now Open for NBA Virtual Learning Seminar – Free to NBA Members

- Registration is FREE to NBA Members
- Registration Required for Live Streamed Presentations
- *After registering, you will receive a confirmation email from Zoom with information about joining the webinar*
- 100 Seats Available Per Day for Live Streaming, First Come First Serve
- Presentations will be Recorded for Later Viewing on bisoncentral.com

Day One - The Bison Marketplace & Covid 19

- When: Jun 22, 2020 01:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)
- Agenda:
 - 1 pm - "What the future holds for the natural/organic meat market" - Carlotta Mast, New Hope Media - Natural Foods Market Specialist
 - 2 pm - "Pivoting Operations with COVID-19" - Bruce Anderson - Western Buffalo Co., Bob Dineen - Rocky Mountain Natural Meats, Rex Moore -Rock River Ranches
 - 3 pm - "Direct Marketing During a Pandemic" - Jennifer Karnes - Red Frazier Bison, Carie Starr - Cherokee Valley Bison, Candis Westre - Bitterroot Bison Co.
- Please register in advance for this webinar:

- https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bCMpBuuHTqWRWeunhTax0g

Day Two - Bison Management and Production Tips

- When: Jun 24, 2020 10:00 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)
- Agenda:
- 10 am - "Regenerative Ranching" - Ray Archuleta - Certified Professional Soil Scientist, The Soil Academy
- 11 am - "Introducing the NBA Conservation Management Plan" - Ken Klemm, Beaver Creek Buffalo/The Buffalo Guys
- Noon - "Selecting Breeders and Feeders" - A panel discussion on animal selection. Speakers TBD
- Please register in advance for this webinar:
- https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FNjnFWjzRgSS4Uog-sXRiw

Day Three - An Introduction to Bison Management

- When: Jun 26, 2020 01:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)
- Agenda:
- 1 pm - "The Bison Advantage" - Bison 101 - Dave Carter and Jim Matheson, NBA
- 2 pm - "Bison Start-Up Stories and Tips" - John and Jen Graves, pending bison ranchers, and TBD
- 3 pm - NBA General Membership Meeting
- Please register in advance for this webinar:
- https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-n6pWSgLRoqX9WY6l6Oy9A

Please send any questions to jim@bisoncentral.com.

Bison Excluded from CFAP Eligibility

Despite the strong efforts of the National Bison Association, state/regional associations, several U.S. Senators and the North Dakota Commissioner of Agriculture, bison were not included as eligible livestock in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Package announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on May 19th.

"We were extremely disappointed not to be included in the assistance package," said National Bison Association Executive Director Dave Carter. "However, we will continue to push for inclusion as USDA considers adding additional commodities for coverage."

The USDA package offers assistance to producers of dairy, cattle, lambs and yearlings, wool, and hogs and pigs, based upon market information that documents at least a five percent drop in value from January through April. According to officials at USDA, bison were not included primarily because the agency lacked sufficient market information to document a similar drop in value.

Carter noted, "USDA has a wealth of in-house information at its fingertips to determine the overall price impact for producers of cattle, pigs, dairy and sheep. Unfortunately, USDA has scant information on bison, except for the monthly wholesale price report, which doesn't include any information on live animal values."

In the announcement of the CFAP program, USDA reported that it will be issuing a Notice of Funding Availability for \$637 million to cover commodities not included in the original package (See related story below). Carter stressed that the NBA would be submitting a formal proposal, with market information, through that NOFA process.

The 40-page rule issued on May 19 notes that a longstanding Executive Order commits the USDA to consult and coordinate with Tribes on a government-to-government basis on policies that have Tribal implications, including regulations, legislative comments proposed legislation, and other policy statements or actions that have substantial direct effects on one or more Indian Tribes..."

The language continues, USDA has assessed the impact of this rule on Indian Tribes and determined that this rule does not, to our knowledge, have Tribal implications that required Tribal consultation under Executive Order 13175."

Earlier today, Carter met with the board of directors of the InterTribal Buffalo Council to discuss this issue. The ITBC leaders said they were not consulted, and will contacting USDA to determine why the agency did not reach out. The ITBC board also agreed to work with the NBA to document.

Notice Published for Additional Funds Available for CFAP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture USDA today issued a Notice of Funding Availability for the \$637 still available in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program package for commodities that were not included in the coverage package issued earlier this week.

This notice in today's Federal Register notes, "For the purpose of potentially supplementing the commodities listed in the CFAP regulation, this document requests information on agricultural commodities not already included in CFAP, which may be negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and for which sufficient information is not currently available to USDA to include them in CFAP.

"If sufficient information is received and a decision is made to add commodities to the program, USDA will issue another NOFA listing the additional commodities, the respective payment rates, application dates, and any other unique information that producers will need to know for those commodities and the availability of CFAP payments."

The NOFA adds, "Generally, in order to be eligible for a CFAP payment, a producer must have suffered a 5-percent-or-greater price loss over a specified time resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak or face additional significant marketing costs for inventories—whether caused by lower prices given significant declines in certain types of demand, surplus production, or by disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities. In addition, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many farmers markets, restaurants, and schools have temporarily or permanently closed, thus causing significantly decreased demand for commodities grown by producers that are ordinarily supplied to these places."

The deadline for submitting comments is June 22nd.

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter said, "We will be working to compile as much market information as possible to accompany a re-submission of our former request. And, we will be reaching out to our members to file comments documenting their personal experience with market losses exceeding five percent."

Moran to Introduce Small Packer Overtime Relief Bill

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) is preparing to introduce legislation that would provide relief to small and very small meat processing plants who are operating overtime and during holidays to keep retail stores and other customers stocked with meat.

The Small Packer Overtime Fee Relief COVID-19 Act, expected to be introduced when the Senate returns from the Memorial Day recess, would discount the overtime and holiday inspection rates by at least 30 percent for small plants, which have fewer than 500 employees, and, and by at least 75 percent for very small meat processing plants with fewer than 10 employees.

The legislation also appropriates \$58 million to cover the cost of discounting those fees. Dave Carter, NBA executive director, noted, "Bison processors are already required to absorb the cost of USDA inspection, which is currently set at \$64.84/hr. That burden is compounded when they are then required to pay the overtime rate of \$79.88/hr. or the holiday rate of \$94.88/hr."

Bison processors have already been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges created by COVID-19—including the Executive Order requiring continued operations to

keep the food system intact--is increasing the need for operations beyond normal hours, and during holidays.

Wholesale Bison Prices Slip in April

The disruption created by COVID-19 impacted wholesale bison carcass prices last month with prices on all categories falling, according to the latest monthly wholesale bison meat report issued by USDA's Livestock and Grain Market News Service.

Dressed young bull carcasses averaged \$396.56/cwt. in April, which was \$11.53/cwt. lower than in March, and \$53.19/cwt. lower than April 2019. Dressed heifer carcasses averaged \$378.99/cwt in April, which was \$24.91 lower than in March and \$49.80/cwt. lower than in the previous April. Carcasses for older bulls and cows were also lower.

According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, 22,832 have been processed year-to-date under federal inspection. That is an increase of 15 percent over 2019, and represents the highest year-to-date processing since USDA began recording that information in 2000.

Editor's Note: The following news stories were distributed by organizations not affiliated with the National Bison Association. They may not reflect the opinions or the positions held by the NBA on matters such as genetic integrity, animal management, and other issues.



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Mexico opens up for U.S. bison imports as herd reintroduced

(From TriState Livestock)

The National Bison Association said Monday that Mexico has formally opened its doors to import U.S.-produced bison meat.

At the request of the National Bison Association, the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service formally petitioned Mexico in 2018 to open its market to U.S. bison meat. That request led to extensive discussions between agricultural officials in the two countries over the protocols and procedures that would be required from exporters. Last week, Mexico formally agreed to the protocols recommended by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

USDA FAS formally notified the National Bison Association Friday that Mexico had agreed to the latest procedures proposed by FSIS.

"This is a very positive development for the bison business," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. "The Mexican marketplace offers a growth

opportunity for our business. Additionally, many consumers in Mexico tend to favor cuts of meat that are not in high demand by U.S. customers, so this can help our marketers balance carcass utilization.”

In an unrelated development, the bison’s presence in northern Mexico in ancient times was recognized in March when a herd of 19 American bison specimens were introduced into El Carmen Nature Reserve in Coahuila to establish the second conservation herd of this species in Mexico.

Read [more](#).

Bison Injures Woman at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

(From KVRR)

MEDORA, N.D. – The National Park Service says a bison injured a woman visiting the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park near Medora, North Dakota.

Officials say the 55-year-old woman from Watford City was hiking around a bend on the Buckhorn Trail on Monday afternoon when she encountered a bull bison on the trail.

The bull charged, striking the woman in the face and knocking her down.

The woman called 911 while on the ground, and a U.S. park ranger responded and found the bull still standing near the woman.

The bison did not respond to hazing measures, so the ranger shot the animal.

The woman was flown to Minot and treated for broken vertebrae and facial fractures.

Source. <https://www.kvrr.com/2020/05/20/bison-injures-woman-at-theodore-roosevelt-national-park/>

Department of Livestock Proposes Designated Surveillance Area Boundary Adjustment in Madison County [MT]

(From Tri-State Livestock News)

Helena, Mont. - The Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) is proposing a change to the boundary of the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) for brucellosis. The proposed administrative rule change is in response to the discovery of two brucellosis exposed elk in the Ruby Mountains, outside of the current DSA boundary. The boundary adjustment will ensure that cattle and domestic bison at risk of exposure to infected wildlife are included in disease surveillance efforts. A public comment period is open until 5:00 p.m. on June 18, 2020.

Wild elk and Yellowstone National Park bison are the last known reservoirs of brucellosis in the U.S. Periodic. Transmission from infected wildlife to livestock occurs with infected wild elk determined to have been the source over the last 10 years. The potential for transmission to livestock is why Montana has an established DSA with surveillance and traceability requirements for cattle and domestic bison.

Cattle and domestic bison that utilize ground within the DSA have brucellosis testing, identification, and vaccination requirements. These requirements include brucellosis testing prior to change of ownership or movement out of the DSA. Disease surveillance requirements maintain the marketability of Montana cattle by assuring the brucellosis-free status of Montana livestock.

"This is the fifth boundary adjustment in the 10 years that the DSA has existed," says Marty Zaluski, State Veterinarian. "Each year, Livestock partners with Fish Wildlife and Parks to conduct live elk captures for brucellosis surveillance. Information from these captures help us determine where and if an expansion to the DSA

is necessary in response to the presence of brucellosis positive wildlife on the landscape."

Read [more](#).

CFAP aid to cover 80% of price losses that occurred from mid-January until mid-April across many commodities

(From Feedstuffs)

Just two months after passage by Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture detailed Tuesday how it would distribute the \$16 billion Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) to farmers who have suffered price losses due to the pandemic.

Payments will go directly to farmers who have suffered a 5% or greater price loss and who are facing significant marketing costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible commodities include cattle, hogs, dairy, specialty crops and row crops. Payments will be limited to \$250,000 per person.

In a call with media Tuesday afternoon, USDA undersecretary for farm production and conservation Bill Northey said during this time of crisis, the Administration recognized the challenges the agriculture sector is facing and worked to develop the CFAP from the ground up.

"We recognize we're in unique times, and the impact is broad," Northey said, adding that the resources available will help deliver as much help as possible with those funds.

Read [more](#).

Keep livestock farms safe

(From Beef Magazine)

Meat protein producers - livestock and poultry farmers, along with egg and dairy producers - pay attention to pathogen control and infection mitigation within their operations every day. Whether following the mandates of a production contract, or best practices followed by an independent producer, ensuring the biosecurity of production facilities has a direct effect on productivity, animal health and ultimately profitability.

The COVID-19 crisis has focused a great deal of attention on the food supply chain and what happens before products reach the grocers' shelves. Consumers should be confident that there are effective measures in place to keep livestock products safe to eat. However, with the linking of COVID-19 and the food supply chain, it's important to help separate the conversations between what is being done to keep food safe, and what is being done, or can be done, to better protect workers throughout the supply chain.

Craig Steen, CEO of JBI Distributors and Services, a biosecurity firm in Red Oak, Iowa, explains these differences and interrelationships.

Q: What is the COVID-19 risk to livestock in production barns, feedlots and in transport?

To our knowledge, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in livestock. The risk of this virus appears to be to humans. In addition, if best practices are applied in sanitization and disinfection of barns, trucks and other facilities, even if the COVID-19 virus were present, it would likely be mitigated along with the other pathogens that do pose a risk to livestock.

Read [more](#).

Senators Seek Meat Worker Protections from USDA

(From SoutheastAgNet.com)

A group of 29 Senators, led by Democrat Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, penned a letter to Perdue outlining recommendations for ways the Department of Agriculture should improve worker safety.

The Senators wrote, "While we recognize the importance of keeping these plants running, it is wrong and shortsighted to use the Defense Production Act to mandate plants to stay open without effectively addressing worker safety issues."

The group says that while the Trump administration has applauded the reopening of several plants, USDA officials in congressional briefings could not confirm that the plants were operating in accordance with CDC and OSHA guidance. The Senators urged USDA to ensure that meatpacking plants take sufficient actions to protect worker safety before opening, including reconfiguring the plants to allow for social distancing, providing appropriate personal protective equipment, instituting ongoing testing, ensuring that infected employees are not coming to work, and making other necessary changes to keep workers safe.

[Source.](#)

Atlas of cattle genes sheds light on key traits

(From Feedstuffs)

Scientists in the U.K. and U.S. have created a detailed library of genes in cattle in a development that aids the understanding of key inherited traits linked to animal health and productivity, according to The Roslin Institute in the U.K.

The results include insight into a range of genes and their influence on tissues and cell types, underscoring the genetic basis of 45 key traits, including fertility, milk production and growth, Roslin said. A better understanding of the genetics underlying complex traits will support scientific research and enable selective breeding in the livestock production industry.

The researchers built the genome atlas using samples from almost 100 tissue and cell types, from which they detailed the sequence of more than 700 sections of genetic code, Roslin said.

The atlas may be used to add novel insight to genetic analyses of individuals or populations, pinpointing relevant tissues and cell types for traits of interest. The findings will also enable researchers to better anticipate cattle's likely response to changing environments and to domestication, the institute added.

Read [more.](#)

82% Of Organic Shoppers 'Open To Experimenting' With New Products, Brands

(From Sustainable Food News)

With less time spent in the grocery store, and less selection on store shelves, 93 percent of "likely organic" shoppers said they prioritize organic when purchasing produce, while 46 percent said choosing organic dairy was important, and 39 percent expressed a preference for organic meat.

That's according to new survey results from the Organic Trade Association (OTA), which conducted an online poll of 3,188 "likely organic" shoppers from April 28 to May 6.

The Washington, D.C.-based trade group released some of the poll results Monday and will release more of the survey results next month when it publishes its 2020 Organic Industry Survey, which examines U.S. organic retail sales in 2019.

OTA said the survey showed that more than 90 percent of “likely organic” shoppers “indicated that, in their current food shopping, organic is more important than ever.”

Meanwhile, 82 percent of organic shoppers said they are “open to experimenting” with new products or brands, said OTA.

“The poll asked organic shoppers to give one word that described their priority for food shopping at this time. In addition to organic, they also cited health and safety, anxiety and availability. They talked about food delivery, but also mentioned their favorite stores. They reported wearing masks and being hopeful,” OTA said. “In short, they painted a pretty good picture of what it’s like to shop for groceries in this moment.”

When asked how they anticipate their organic shopping habits to evolve over the coming three to six months, 56 percent of shoppers indicated that the changes they have experienced – including “home cooking and simplified ways of eating” – will become lasting habits, OTA said.

As EU Talks Stall, UK Outlines Tariffs For Post-Brexit World

(From Associated Press)

LONDON (AP) — The British government published Tuesday the outlines of a new post-Brexit tariff regime that could potentially lead to a fall in the price of thousands of products, including Christmas trees, cocoa and fridges.

The Department for International Trade said the new regime will see tariffs eliminated on 62 billion pounds (\$76 billion) of imports. Called the U.K. Global Tariff, it will apply to all countries that the U.K. does not have a trade agreement with.

“Our new Global Tariff will benefit U.K. consumers and households by cutting red tape and reducing the cost of thousands of everyday products,” said International Trade Secretary Liz Truss.

However, tariffs on industries such as agriculture, automotive and fishing are remaining as an attempt to protect them against competition.

The U.K. Global Tariff will replace the European Union’s external tariff on Jan. 1, when the country is formally due to exit a transition period aimed at smoothing its departure from the bloc earlier this year. During this period, which British Prime Minister Boris Johnson insists will not be extended, the U.K. remains part of the EU’s tariff-free single market and customs union.

Under the new tariff plan, the U.K. will see 60% of trade come in tariff-free, compared with 47% currently.

Full story [here](#).

Local Farms See Sales Skyrocket Via Facebook

(From AgriPulse)

Interest in finding local foods from nearby farm families continues to be strong during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April, we wrote about “[How to find local foods and local farms during the COVID-19 crisis](#)” and included links to sites in almost every state. Most are managed by state departments of agriculture, but one that has witnessed exponential growth is the “Shop Kansas Farms” Facebook page. It was started three weeks ago by Kansas writer and photographer Rick McNary, who is also a Vice President of Strategic Partnerships at Outreach, Inc.

“[Shop Kansas Farms](#)” aims to connect people who want to buy from Kansas farmers with

those who are selling. When the page was first launched, it gained over 800 members in the first 18 hours. Three weeks later, the group has over 123,000 members.

McNary says he had “no idea” the following would grow so large and adds that he couldn’t have done it without support from five volunteers who moderate the posts, handle administrative duties and provide resources, including help from the Kansas Farm Bureau and resources from the Kansas Dept. of Agriculture.

In his own post to farmers and ranchers, he noted that “our role is to prosper and protect you,” and to make sure that people follow the guidelines of the group and Facebook rules. That’s required some “policing,” McNary said and deleting a few people who were critical of farmers and the prices charged, or made political comments.

“If you attack farmers, you’re gone,” McNary added. “We have tried to create a place of respect.”

“Some of the best things I’m hearing is that farmers who thought they would not make any money this year are now making a profit,” he said. “That’s very encouraging.” McNary says he’s also excited about the regional food system being built as people are connecting with each other online and sometimes in person. In addition to Kansas, buyers and sellers in Colorado, Ohio and other states are working with McNary’s team to replicate this online model.



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- 6/22, 24, 26/2020 - NBA Virtual Bison Learning Seminar - Online
- 1/20 - 1/23/2021 - National Bison Winter Conference - Denver, CO
- 1/23/2021 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - Denver, CO

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