

Bison Issues Overview, September, 2013

2013 Farm Bill Priorities For the American Bison Business

Background

The National Bison Association urges the House of Representatives to appoint its conference committee so that a farm bill can be adopted before the current legislation expires on September 30th. And, we encourage conferees to address the issues below as priorities for U.S. bison producers.

Title I: Commodities

- Continue to include bison as eligible livestock in the Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance program.
- Support the House language that indemnifies producers at 75% of the animal's market value (Senate is 65%).
- Support House language Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish that authorizes \$20/M year in funding.

Title II: Conservation

- Continue to include bison as eligible livestock for all conservation programs.
- Support House language regarding continuation of EQIP program.

Title IV: Nutrition

- Continue Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations as written in both versions.

Title V. Credit

- Assure that bison producers are eligible for all livestock programs.

Title VI: Rural Development

- Value-Added Producer Grant – NBA supports increase in funding to \$50 million as contained in the House bill.
- B&I Direct and Guaranteed Loans –We support House language authorizing the use of funds for working capital.
- Reauthorize Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program and continue funding at \$40 million.
- Also, we support the change in the 2008 Farm Bill that allows B&I loans/guarantees to be used in urban areas if the benefits would accrue to rural producers. We support extending that allowance to the VAPG and Rural Business Development Grant programs. The reason for this is that rural producers need to be able to build businesses in the areas where their customers are located (urban areas).

Title VII: Research

- Continuing Animal Health and Disease Research Programs with funding at \$25 million/year as contained in the Senate bill.
 - Continue Support for the MCF research conducted at the Animal Disease Research Unit, USDA Agriculture Research Service, at Washington State University, Pullman, WA and University of Wyoming, in Laramie, WY.
 - Continue the funding for ARS/National Animal Disease Center in Ames, IA.
- Full funding for the Veterinary Services Grant Program to encourage more large animal vets.
- Support House language with \$20M in Mandatory CCC funding for Organic agriculture research and education.
- We support both versions that reauthorize Supplemental and Alternative Crops at \$1M per year, but urge that the definition be expanded to include livestock.
- Continue full funding of \$5 million/year for Sustainable Agriculture Technology Development and Transfer Program.
- Support \$30 million/year funding for Farmers market Promotion Program.
- Support Senate language authorizing Study on Local Food Production and Program Evaluation.

Title XI: Crop Insurance

- Include bison under any definition of livestock.
- Continue the Risk Management Training and Education grant program.