



## **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 7, 2016**

### **Regional Election Results Announced**

With the ballots counted from the four regional elections conducted in September, Mimi Hillenbrand of South Dakota will join the National Bison Association Board of Directors as the newly-elected Region III director. Incumbent Directors Alan Douglass of Oregon (Region I), Tom Barthel of Minnesota (Region V), and Brian Grubb of New York (Region VII) were re-elected to two-year terms on the board of directors.

The four directors' two-year board terms will begin in January 2017.

Roy Liedtke, NBA President, said, "I want to thank all of the members who stepped forward as candidates and offered their services to the NBA. That demonstrates a great commitment to the association, and to building the buffalo business. I particularly want to welcome Mimi to the board, along with our returning directors Alan, Tom and Brian."

The NBA bylaws specify that balloting for one-half of the regional directors be conducted each September. The association's officers, along with the at-large director, are elected during the January annual meeting, with the officers elected for one year terms and the director at large elected for a two-year term. Incumbent officers, President Liedtke, Vice President Dick Gehring, and Secretary-Treasurer Karen Conley, are all eligible for re-election in 2017. Director at Large Jason Moore's term will continue until 2018.

### **Gold Trophy Show and Sale Consignments Open**

Consignments are now open for the 2017 Gold Trophy Show and Sale, with entry forms posted this week on the NBA website at: <http://bisoncentral.com/about-nba/gold-trophy>

Consignment categories for the 2017 show and sale, scheduled at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, January 17 – 21, 2017, are:

2016 Bull and Heifer Calves Heifers;  
2015 Bull and Heifer Yearlings  
2014 Bred Two-Year;

2014 Two-Year Old Bulls;  
Pen of 5 Ranch Ready Yearling Heifers;  
Pen of 3 Bull Calves; and  
Market Class (carcass) bulls and heifers

In a letter to prospective consignors this week, “NBA Executive Director Dave Carter wrote, “Savvy producers know that quality seed stock is the foundation for future profitability. The National Bison Association’s Gold Trophy Show and Sale, January 17-21, 2017, will serve as the premier showcase and marketplace for the best bison genetics in the business.

“For bison breeders, the Gold Trophy Show and Sale is the opportunity to compete with other industry leaders for recognition that will translate into higher value for your stock. For buyers, Gold Trophy offers a selection of the best breeding stock in the world.”

The NBA is putting additional resources into the promotion of the annual show and sale this year. Promotion will include direct mailings to prospective buyers, advertising in regional publications, and a 30-second video clip that will be run on the National Western Stadium Arena monitor throughout the Stock Show.

## **State/Regional, NBA Leaders Convening in KC**

Leaders of several state/regional bison association, along with NBA directors and staff, are headed to Kansas City today for the fourth NBA State/Regional Leadership Meeting.

These meetings are held periodically to develop ideas and procedures to better coordinate efforts by state/regionals and the national association to represent buffalo producers around the country.

This year’s session will include a workshop designed to help state/regional associations to effectively utilize social media opportunities. The workshop will be conducted by Carrie Kocik, the NBA’s social media consultant.

Leaders at the session will also spend time developing an action plan listing priorities for The NBA, and for the state/regional association.

“This is an important gathering,” said Jud Seaman, chair of the NBA State/Regional Committee.

“The National Association, and the State/Regional Associations operate independently, but we know that it is important to work together to maximize our limited resources on behalf of all of our members.”

## **Cook to Represent NBA at USDA Meeting on Small Meat Processing Plants**

Former NBA President Peter Cook of Indiana will represent the association today at a meeting of USDA officials regarding small and very small meat processing plants.

The meeting was organized by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, and is scheduled at Gunthrop farms in northeast Indiana. The meeting topics include: inspections, labeling, humane slaughter regulations, varietal meat, and USDA help desk procedures.

Scheduled to attend from the USDA are: Al Almanza, Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety and Acting FSIS Administrator and/or Carmen Rottenberg, FSIS Deputy Administrator;

- Dan Engeljohn, FSIS Assistant Administrator, Office of Policy and Program Development
- Bill Smith, FSIS Assistant Administrator, Office of Field Operations
- Patty Bennet, FSIS Humane Handling Enforcement Coordinator
- Jeff Canavan, FSIS Labeling Program Staff

## **IBC 2017 is on-Line**

People can register now for three great raffle prizes being offered as a part of the upcoming 2017 International Bison conference, scheduled July 4-8, in Big Sky, MT. The prizes, along with other conference information, are available here: <http://bisoncentral.com/international-bison-conference-2017>

One raffle prize is a 2nd generation bull directly descended from the Yellowstone National Park herd. Ted Turner has generously donated two Yellowstone bulls to support the IBC.

A second item is a reproduction 1874 Sporter No. 3 Rifle, one of only 15 that have been crafted by the Shiloh Sharps Gun Co. specifically for the IBC. The 45/70 caliber black powder cartridge rifle has a 30" full heavy octagon barrel, with semi-fancy wood, a traditional steel butt-plate, pewter trip, full Buckhorn and Blade front, and is engraved with a full buffalo on the hammer side.

The third item is a 4-night stay for four people at Ted Turner's historic Sierra Grande Lodge and Spa in Truth or Consequences, NM ([www.sierragrandelodge.com](http://www.sierragrandelodge.com)), along with credit toward The Restaurant at Sierra Grande, The Spa at Sierra Grande, and an adventure tour on one of Ted Turner's ranches. The Sierra Grande is known for its unparalleled combination of luxurious accommodations, rustic charm, amazing food and relaxing spa and mineral baths.

People can also purchase one of the limited edition 1872 Sporter No. 3 rifles on the IBC 2017 website.

## **USDA FSIS Issues Guidance to preserve Grass-Fed standard**

*(From the National Bison Association and Agri-Pulse)*

Less than one year after one USDA agency threw the grassfed meat marketplace into chaos by withdrawing its regulations governing the raising protocols of animals used to source meat labeled as grassfed, another USDA agency is now providing some more certainty to the marketplace by basically re-instating those same requirements.

Late last week USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service has issued [guidance](#) to make sure that the labels carrying "Grass Fed" or "100% Grass Fed" claims may only be applied to meat labels derived from animals that were only fed grass after being weaned from their mother's milk. Groups representing producers of grass-fed livestock welcomed the new guidance as a measure that will provide consumers with confidence that the grass-fed label will mean what it says.

"Consumer confidence is very important as producers of specialty products work to build their markets," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. "The new guidance will help protect the integrity of the grass-fed label."

In 2007, the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) implemented a grass-fed labeling regulation specifying that the label could only be used on meat derived from animals fed a diet of 100 percent grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g., legumes, Brassica), browse, or cereal grain crops in the vegetative (pre-grain) state. However, the agency withdrew that regulation ten months ago, stating that it did not have the authority to regulate label claims. According to the AMS announcement at that time, only the FSIS had authority to regulate any label claims other than organic.

Ferd Hoefler, policy director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, said this week, "We are pleased that FSIS has clarified through this guidance that any label claim using the term 'grassfed' must meet a 100 percent grassfed standard. Taking this action was necessary to preserve the label's strong reputation, and we applaud FSIS' swift response to producer and consumer concerns following AMS' withdrawal of the standard earlier this year."

While generally pleased with the guidance, Hoefner said it needs to be improved. He said it allows FSIS to approve lesser label claims, such as "75% Grass Fed" or "80% Grass Fed," which he said were misleading to consumers and harmful to farmers and ranchers who have built their reputations on the 100 percent Grass Fed standard.

"USDA needs the legal authority to not only enforce strong, pro-farmer, pro-consumer standards, but also to reject misleading claims," he said. "We will continue to support FSIS in upholding a strong 100 percent Grass Fed label claim standard, while also advocating for an improved process that does not leave the door open for misleading, lesser claims."

Under the FSIS guidance, companies wishing to label their products as "Grass Fed" need to provide a detailed written description explaining controls for ensuring that the raising claim is

valid from birth to harvest, as well as a signed and dated document describing the diet of the animals to support that the claims are not false or misleading.

## **Yellowstone Determines Highway Patrol Official Didn't Violate Park Rules in Bison Photo**

*(From The Casper Star Tribune)*

Yellowstone National Park officials determined Tuesday that a top Wyoming Highway Patrol leader did not violate park rules when he took a photo near a bison at the park.

Park officials began investigating Major Keith Groeneweg last week after he posted the photo of him posing behind a bison, possibly violating a park rule that people stay at least 25 yards from all wildlife.

Groeneweg, the third-highest official at the highway patrol, posted the photo on Facebook with the caption: "Yellowstone signs everywhere: 'Stay 100 yards from animals. They can be dangerous.' Keith's translation: 'Time to sneak up and hug a buffalo!'" #YNP #ILoveWyoming."

The photo, which Groeneweg made his profile picture, was taken during his recent vacation and shows him behind the bison with his arms outstretched as if to hug the animal.

Groeneweg told park rangers and his boss at the highway patrol that he was respecting the rule and was more than 25 yards away. The photo made him appear closer than he actually was, and there was a ravine between him and the animal, he said.

Read more. [http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/yellowstone-determines-highway-patrol-official-didn-t-violate-park-rules/article\\_d2d6a908-c46d-5a34-af1d-75d74850cb43.html](http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/yellowstone-determines-highway-patrol-official-didn-t-violate-park-rules/article_d2d6a908-c46d-5a34-af1d-75d74850cb43.html)

## **Tuberculosis Risk: Animal TB Threat Greater Than Previously Believed, Report Says**

*(From The International Business Times)*

Experts said animal tuberculosis is a greater threat to humans than previously believed. A report published Friday in the journal the Lancet Infectious Diseases called for action in battling zoonotic tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis is one of the world's deadliest diseases, claiming at least 1.5 million lives worldwide in 2014. Animal tuberculosis is spread through contaminated food primarily raw or unpasteurized milk. It is more difficult to treat.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in many cases, doctors may not be able to differentiate between animal tuberculosis caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* and human tuberculosis caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Animal tuberculosis is also resistant to the antibiotic pyrazinamide used to treat tuberculosis.

Institutions like the World Health Organizations have long been saying that the threat of animal tuberculosis has been ignored. Apart from contaminated food, people in contact with infected animals like veterinarians, butchers, dairy farmers can also be infected.

Francisco Olea-Popelka from the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease said animal tuberculosis was "far more common than previously recognized."

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/z83oaza>

## **Nebraska state agencies brace for possible budget crunch**

*(From The Associated Press)*

LINCOLN (AP) - Nebraska state agencies are bracing for a possible budget crunch that could mean less maintenance at state parks, fewer law enforcement officers and a slower response to livestock disease outbreaks.

The potential consequences are outlined in a series of budget requests submitted to lawmakers and Gov. Pete Ricketts, who have said they may have to cut spending as state revenues dwindle.

Ricketts announced in July that he had ordered state agencies to analyze how they would handle an 8 percent budget cut so that he and lawmakers would know where to trim if needed. Traditionally, agencies are asked to identify cuts totaling 5 percent.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/jj77nlr>

## **'Bison-ennial' Celebration Roams On**

*(From Inside Indiana Business)*

With just over two months remaining until the state's 200th birthday, unique tributes continue to pop up throughout the state. One is the Bison-ennial Art Project, which involves life-size fiberglass bison statues to be displayed in every county. The creatures once roamed parts of southern Indiana, where parts of the so-called Buffalo Trace helped create a course for settlers moving to Indiana and beyond.

The project, which is led by the Indiana Association of United Ways, is one of hundreds of official Indiana Bicentennial Legacy projects approved by the Indiana Bicentennial Commission.

Bicentennial Projects Coordinator Heather Davis says "my favorite thing about this project is the legacy it is leaving in communities across the state. These bison have been painted by local youth, budding amateur artists and even professionals donating their time. They have been used by our hardworking local United Ways to support Early Reading programs for our children and to help bring new excitement to local fundraisers for admirable causes. I think we should all be proud of the story they tell about the great people that make up this state, and what we have to look forward to in the years that come."

You can connect to more about the Bison-ennial Art Project, including a map, by clicking here.

Read more. <http://www.insideindianabusiness.com/story/33323449/bison-tenial-celebration-roams-on>

## **Group Calls for More Curbs on Use of Antibiotics in Livestock**

*(From Nasdaq.com)*

U.S. food regulators need to take further steps to curb antibiotics use in livestock to maintain the drugs' ability to defend human health, according to an advocacy group.

By early next year, animal drugmakers have agreed to abide by U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines to stop using antibiotics used in human medicine to help livestock and poultry gain weight faster. Some antibiotics had been used for that purpose on farms for decades, alongside treating and preventing disease.

But researchers for the Pew Charitable Trusts said Tuesday in a review of livestock antibiotics that the new guidelines don't go far enough. The Philadelphia-based group said regulators need to clamp down on how long some antibiotics can be used, and more closely scrutinize some uses that may not directly relate to keeping animals healthy. Pew is a nonpartisan, nonprofit group that researches consumer, environmental and health issues, including a focus on the impacts of large-scale food production.

An FDA spokeswoman said the agency considers the duration of antibiotics use "an important next step" to evaluate, including the idea that some drugs may be used for unspecified periods. "The agency does not believe such use is judicious and has been actively engaging veterinary organizations, animal producer organizations and other stakeholders to address this concern," she said.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/il55p6a>

## **RFA to offer zero-interest loans for farmers in flood disaster counties**

The Minnesota Rural Finance Authority (RFA) has lowered its interest rate on the Disaster Loan program to zero percent to help farmers cover the costs to replace and repair items lost or damaged due to flooding and not covered by insurance.

As with other RFA loans, the Disaster Loan program will be available for farmers through their existing agricultural lenders for financing for these repairs. The loans can be used to help clean up, repair, or replace farm structures and to replace seed, other crop inputs, feed, and livestock. The loan may also be used to repair and restore farm real estate that was damaged by flooding. The RFA participation is limited to 45 percent of the principal amount up to a maximum of \$200,000.

The loans will be offered in the following 23 counties that have been declared a disaster by the Governor due to flooding conditions that started September 21, 2016 in Anoka, Blue Earth, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Freeborn, Goodhue, Hennepin, Houston, Le Sueur, Mower, Nicollet, Olmstead, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Washington, and Winona counties.

"Minnesotans have a proud tradition of coming together to support one another after a disaster," said Lt. Governor Tina Smith. "Providing zero interest loans to our ag producers will help them recover from severe weather and flooding. I encourage all eligible Minnesota farmers to apply for assistance."

The RFA partners with local lenders to provide affordable credit to eligible farmers. Loan participations are purchased by the RFA under several programs that assist beginning farmers purchase agricultural land; finance improvements to the farm such as grain handling facilities, machine storage, and manure systems; help farmers reorganize their farm debt to improve cash flow; and, finance new livestock production facilities. Over \$227 million has been invested in over 2,900 participations by the RFA in these programs.

Interested borrowers should contact their lender or call RFA at 651-201-6004. More information is also available on the RFA website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/agfinance>.

## **First Nations call on Alberta to classify Plains bison as wildlife**

*(From the Calgary Herald)*

Dozens of First Nations and tribes who have signed a historic Buffalo Treaty are calling on Alberta to classify bison as wildlife.

The treaty, initially [signed in 2014](#) by eight First Nations from Alberta and tribes in the United States, aims to bring buffalo back to the landscape both physically and as a symbol of First Nations culture.

It has since added First Nations from Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The 20-plus signatories [passed several resolutions](#) this week during a two-year anniversary ceremony in Banff — including one that asks the province of Alberta to reassess the status of bison.

"The plains buffalo receives no special status, no special protection here in the province of Alberta," said Leroy Little Bear, an elder with the Blood reserve or Kainai First Nation in southern Alberta. "They are considered domestic."

"One of the efforts on the part of the signatories is to try to urge the province of Alberta to change the status of plains bison to wild."

Others attending the bison conference in Banff earlier this week called it a 'disgrace' for Alberta. An official with the province, however, said they are already in the process of revising Alberta's bison status report.

"Right now, all wild bison — except those in Hay-Zama and those in Ronald Lake — don't have standing under the Wildlife Act," said Sue Cotterill, director of species at risk, non-game and wildlife disease policy with Alberta Environment and Parks. "We are seeking to rectify that." The herd at Hay-Zama, about 120 kilometres west of High Level, is protected as an endangered species, while the herd at Ronald Lake, southeast of Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Alberta, is protected as a subject animal.

Cotterill said the revision of the status report is looking at all free-ranging plains and wood bison, but not domestic bison that are raised as livestock under Alberta Agriculture and Forestry regulations.

Once they revise their wild bison status report, she said scientists will move through a provincial detailed status assessment process — which mirrors a federal process by using the International Union for Conservation of Nature criteria.

Full Story: <http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/first-nations-call-on-alberta-to-classify-plains-bison-as-wildlife>

## **Ranchers cheer, enviros boo changes to ESA petition process**

(From Agri-Pulse)

Recent regulatory changes to the Endangered Species Act provide needed reforms that will help curb “rampant abuse” of the listing petition process, according to ranchers.

Not so, says one of the environmental groups that has submitted petitions and filed lawsuits that have forced the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) – and, to a far lesser extent, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) – to make listing decisions on hundreds of species.

The changes are “nothing more than a gift to industries and right-wing states that are hostile to endangered species,” said [Brett Hartl](#), endangered species policy director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “These rules make it harder to get imperiled species the (ESA) protections they desperately need, and they do nothing to address the backlog of hundreds of imperiled species that are still waiting to get the protections they deserve.”

[In a rule published Sept. 27](#), FWS and NMFS are requiring petitioners to notify affected states 30 days before they plan to file a petition. The services also said they would no longer consider petitions that address multiple species. Instead, each petition will have a one-species limit. That was music to the ears of the [National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and Public Lands Council](#), which said they had been pushing for similar changes for years.

“Limiting petitions to one species at a time will provide some desperately needed focus, and notification to the states affected in a timely manner – even if only 30 days – is progress toward increasing local input into the process,” said Ethan Lane, NCBA federal lands and PLC executive director. “Serious groups from across the spectrum that are engaged in true conservation will applaud these changes.”

Hartl, however, said the rule is designed “to intimidate ordinary citizens by making it more cumbersome for them to seek protection of our imperiled plants and animals.”

The services said in the rule, “We value the input and expertise of our state partners and wish to provide them the opportunity to be aware that species in their states are the subject of petitions and to provide pertinent information on those species.”

They also said that “multispecies petitions have often generalized or referenced information across species, which significantly complicates the evaluation process, because it is unclear which references apply to which species.”

The new requirements are a far cry from those originally proposed in 2015, one of which would have forced petitioners to send their petition to affected states, gather the state input, and then include any information received in the final petition. The proposal also would have required that each petition include “all relevant information” on the species in question, “a requirement that would be virtually impossible to meet, and could cost a petitioner thousands of dollars to comply with,” dozens of environmental groups said in [a comment letter](#) to the agencies.

FWS and NMFS issued another proposal earlier this year that eased off on the state requirement and proposed that instead of requiring that each petition contain “all relevant data,” it instead should include a “detailed narrative justification for the recommended administrative action that contains an analysis of the information presented.” FWS and NMFS also recommended that petitions provide a “complete, balanced representation of the relevant facts, including information that may contradict claims in the petition.”