



Weekly Update from the National Bison Association

A news and update service **exclusively** for members of the National Bison Association.
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December 2, 2016

NBA at Western, Kansas Association Gatherings the Weekend

The National Bison Association will be on hand this weekend as two state/regional associations hold meetings and live bison auctions in Kansas and Utah.

Executive Director Dave Carter will be in Salina, KS on Saturday as the Kansas Buffalo Association conducts its 27th annual fall sale. The KBA sale will start at 11 a.m., CDT, at Farmers & Ranchers Livestock, with more than 400 bison consigned. The consignment includes 157 bull calves, 138 heifer calves, 27 yearling heifers, and 30 cows.

Meanwhile NBA Assistant Director Jim Matheson is headed to Ogden, UT the Western Bison Association's annual winter conference and Show and Sale. The WBA has more than 60 head of bison scheduled to arrive at the Golden Spike Arena in Ogden for the association's show and sale. The live animal auction begins at 12 noon, on Saturday at the Golden Spike Auction Arena.

Canadians Release Draft Updated Humane Handling Practices

The Canadian Farm Animal Care Council has released its draft update of the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Bison for public comments. The Canadian government maintains codes of practices for all major livestock species. The bison code was established in 2001, but has not been updated since then.

A working group convened by the Farm Animal Care Council two years ago, has been working to update that code. That working group contained several members of the Canadian Bison Association.

The draft update on the code is open for public comments until January 19th, 2017. The draft code is available at <http://www.nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/bison>

Dave Carter, NBA executive director, noted that the National Bison Association has convened a small working group to recommend a best practices guide for U.S. producers.

"Our working group wants to make sure that we have practices that are consistent on both sides of the border. The draft standards released by the Canadian Council provide us with a baseline for developing protocols that will address consumer concerns, and will recognize the realities of bison ranching and processing."

Bison Advantage touted in Broadcasters' Messages

Radio broadcasts across the county side over the past few weeks have been salted with a generous dose of bison advantage news, thanks to the national Bison Association's presence at Trade Talk at the National Association of Farm Broadcasting convention in Kansas City in November.

Here is a sampling of some of the coverage generated for bison from the NAFB convention:

<http://sdagchat.podbean.com/e/bison-industry-a-bright-spot-in-the-agriculture-economy/>

<http://animal.agwired.com/2016/11/30/bison-demand-continues-to-grow/>

<http://www.aginfo.net/index.cfm/event/report/id/Colorado-Ag-Today-35802>

Reservation Ranchers Struggle to Keep Buffalo Alive Amid N.D. Pipeline Protests

(From the Washington Times)

The anti-pipeline protesters descending by the hundreds on rural North Dakota in support of the Standing Rock Sioux aren't necessarily standing with Beverly Fischer. Or her dead buffalo.

An enrolled tribal member, Mrs. Fischer and her husband, Ernie, are convinced that at least 13 of their bison have been butchered, barbecued and eaten by some of the hundreds of activists trespassing through the livestock pastures of Cannonball Ranch since the protests erupted in August.

In one day, the Fischers had three buffalo drop dead after hundreds of protesters on Highway 1806 panicked the herd in a clash with Morton County law enforcement.

"They're honking their car horns. Then the police are there, and the protesters are yelling and screaming and chanting, and the buffalo are across the ditch in the pasture, and they're just running because they don't know what to do," said Mrs. Fischer.

"They're just running in big circles throughout the pastures," she said. "By the end of the day, three were gone."

The Fischers' plight echoes those of local ranchers, farmers and others whose struggle to maintain their livelihoods has gone largely unnoticed as protesters upend the rural communities along North Dakota's southern border.

The Fischers, who live on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in Selfridge, North Dakota, also illustrate the growing unease within the tribe over the activists who have increasingly shrugged off the chairman's call for peaceful and prayerful opposition to the project.

"There are a lot of local people being vocal now that don't want these protesters around," Mrs. Fischer said.

The North Dakota Stockmen's Association has offered rewards for information on the rash of livestock depredations during the past two months, including butchered and burned cows and bison, horses and cows shot and killed, and at least 30 missing cattle.

The perpetrators have not been caught, and a number of activists have decried the livestock deaths.

With as many as 2,500 people living in different camps with different philosophies, however, the locals are convinced that some of the more belligerent protesters are responsible.

Read more. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/nov/14/dakota-access-pipeline-reservation-ranchers-strugg/>

Brucellosis Found in Beaverhead County, MT Herd

(From the Fairfield Sun Times)

Two bulls on a Beaverhead County ranch within Montana's brucellosis Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) have cultured positive for brucellosis.

The brucellosis-infected bulls were identified during a voluntary whole herd test. The animals were euthanized and infection was subsequently confirmed through tissue cultures at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. The ranch has been placed under quarantine and an epidemiological investigation is underway. All other animals on the ranch tested negative for the disease.

State Veterinarian Dr. Marty Zaluski, Montana Department of Livestock, said the discovery of the two animals provides evidence that the DSA program is working due to significant efforts of veterinarians and the producers who utilize the area.

"It can be frustrating when a brucellosis affected herd is discovered but our robust brucellosis program continues to find them early which protects our state as well as our trading partners," Dr. Zaluski said.

In all three Greater Yellowstone Area states, elk were determined to be the likely source of the infections in recent brucellosis incidents in livestock. Results from genetic fingerprinting (genotyping) of the cultured bacteria should be available in a few weeks.

Full text:

http://www.fairfieldsuntimes.com/business/article_1abd29dc-b674-11e6-8022-677a491adb07.html

Yellowstone Park Looks At Large Bison Cull to Trim Herds

(From Boise State Public Radio)

Yellowstone National Park biologists say more than 900 wild bison would need to be killed or removed this winter to begin reducing the size of herds that spill into neighboring Montana.

The park has an estimated 5,500 bison, the highest number since at least 2000. Park officials meet Thursday with state, tribal and U.S. Agriculture Department representatives to discuss options for managing the animals.

Biologists say 900 would need to be removed just to stabilize population growth. Many Yellowstone bison carry brucellosis, a disease that can cause livestock to abort their young. Neighboring communities also have raised concerns about property damage and public safety from migrating bison.

Recent efforts to gradually reduce bison numbers have been largely unsuccessful and drawn criticism from wildlife advocates who want them to roam freely.

Comment Sought on Temporary Allowance of Wyoming Elk Feed grounds

(From The Billings Gazette)

The Greys River and Big Piney ranger districts in Wyoming are seeking comments on issuing permits for two elk feedgrounds on forest lands.

The feedgrounds have been criticized by some conservation groups for allowing the spread of wildlife diseases such as chronic wasting disease.

The proposed two special use permits, one each for the use of Forest Park feedground and Dell Creek feedground, would be issued to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission for the purpose of continuing their elk management activities and associated facilities for one year. The permits would expire on Dec. 31, 2017.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/z57hjra>

Bovine Anaplasmosis in Drought

(From Drovers CattleNetwork.com)

The recent drought that has plagued the Southeast US has certainly resulted in an increase in the movement of cattle across the region. Along with this movement of animals comes an increase in the possibility of diseases that we may not typically see in certain areas.

Veterinarians in some parts of the U.S. are reporting more cases of anaplasmosis in recent years, perhaps as a result of increased cattle movement due to drought and other natural disasters.

Anaplasmosis is a disease characterized by progressive anemia and caused by the rickettsial organism Anaplasma marginale. The disease is present in many parts of the Southeastern US, and causes significant economic losses to the beef and dairy industries.

Spread of Anaplasmosis

A. marginale is transmitted from carrier to susceptible cattle via arthropod vectors (predominantly biting flies and ticks) or through contaminated needles, dehorning and castration equipment, tattoo instruments, etc. Ticks serve as biological vectors and are therefore more likely to spread the disease from one herd to another. Horse flies are the other major arthropod vector; however, they are mechanical vectors so transmission requires close proximity of infected and susceptible animals. Stable flies can also transmit the disease, but probably not as effectively as horse flies. Transmission through contaminated needles and equipment is sometimes a more efficient route of transmission within a herd than the arthropod vectors. According to one report, a needle used on an infected animal leads to a 60% chance of the next animal being infected if the same needle is used.

Full text:

<http://www.cattlenetwork.com/advice-and-tips/cowcalf/bovine-anaplasmosis-drought>

USDA Seeking Nominations for Meat Inspection Advisory Panel

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is soliciting nominations for membership for the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI). The full Committee consists of 20 members, and each person selected is expected to serve a 2-year term. The current Committee consists of 17 members, with 4 members retiring. USDA is soliciting nominations for seven available positions.

Nominations, including a cover letter to the Secretary, the nominee's typed resume or curriculum vitae, and a completed USDA Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form AD-755, must be received within December 23, 2016. Self-nominations are welcome.

To receive consideration for service on the NACMPI, a nominee must submit a resume and the USDA Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form AD-755. The resume or curriculum vitae must be limited to five one-sided pages and should include nominee's educational background and expertise. For submissions received that are more than five one-sided pages in length, only the first five pages will be reviewed. The USDA Advisory Committee Membership Background Information form AD-755 is available online at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/forms>. The AD-755 will only be considered if it is complete.

Nomination packages should be accompanied by a resume and AD-755 form and can be sent by mail to: Natasha Williams, Designated Federal Officer; Office of Outreach, Employee Education and Training, Food Safety and Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Mail Stop 3778, Patriots Plaza III, Room 9-265A, Washington, DC 20250, Attention: National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection.

USDA Extends Comment Period for Antibiotic Use in Food producing Animals

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA or we) is extending the comment period for a notice that appeared in the Federal Register of September 14, 2016. In that notice, FDA requested comments regarding the establishment of appropriately targeted durations of use of antimicrobial drugs of importance to human medicine (i.e., medically important antimicrobial drugs) when they are administered in the feed or water of food-producing animals for therapeutic purposes. The Agency is taking this action in response to requests for an extension to allow interested persons additional time to submit comments.

DATES: FDA is extending the comment period on the request for comments published September 14, 2016 (81 FR 63187). Submit either electronic or written comments by March 13, 2017.

Full text:

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-29/html/2016-28660.htm>

http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/AnimalFeedSafetySystemAFSS/ucm529868.htm?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Farm Income Slide Expected to Continue

(From Agri-Pulse)

USDA says that an already grim financial picture in the farm sector has actually gotten worse and will continue to do so.

In its [November update](#) of its farm sector income forecast, USDA's Economic Research Service predicts a drop in farm income for the third consecutive year. Net cash farm income is forecast at \$90.1 billion, down 14.6 percent from 2015, and down from \$94.1 billion seen in August. Net farm income, meanwhile, is seen at \$66.9 billion, a 17.2 percent drop from last year. The decreases come after the sector set record highs for farm income in 2012 and 2013.

The animal ag sector is perhaps playing the biggest role in the decrease. Crop receipt forecasts are essentially unchanged, but animal and animal products receipts are forecast to drop \$23.4 billion, about 12.3 percent, in 2016.

Some slight relief looks to be headed to producers as production expenses are predicted to fall while government payments increase. Those payments are seen rising by \$2.1 billion, or just over 19 percent in 2016, pushed by a whopping 159.6 percent jump in payments under the Price Loss Coverage program and a 35.7 percent increase in the Agricultural Risk Coverage program.

For the second straight year, production expenses are expected to decrease. ERS forecasts a 2.6 percent drop in 2016 after those same expenses fell 8.1 percent in 2015. The 2016 decline is expected to total about \$9.2 billion. Expenses peaked in 2014 at \$390 billion. Net rent expenses are also expected to drop in 2016 by almost \$20 billion, or 1.6 percent.

While farm income is expected to continue its decline, total median farm household income - which also takes into account off-farm income - is expected to rise slightly, by less than 1 percent.

The forecast is the last for 2016. Final data for the year is expected to arrive at some point in 2017, which will give economists a more definitive farm income picture for 2016. ERS will unveil 2017 farm income estimates early next year.

CRP bids Open for 500,000 Acres of Working Grasslands

Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services Deputy Under Secretary Alexis Taylor today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will accept more than 504,000 acres that were offered by producers during the recent ranking period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands enrollment. Through the voluntary CRP Grasslands program, grasslands threatened by development or conversion to row crops are maintained as livestock grazing areas, while providing important conservation benefits.

USDA will accept more than 2,100 offers totaling more than 504,000 acres across 34 states. Over 70 percent of the acres are from beginning farmers, veterans and underserved producers. About two-thirds of the acres are in counties with the highest threat for conversion. Additionally, nearly 60 percent of the acres are in wildlife priority areas and nearly three-fourths of the acres will have a wildlife-focused conservation plan as part of the operation.

"This 15-year commitment on more than half a million acres demonstrates that voluntary, incentive-based conservation methods benefit producers and help to preserve our natural resources," said Taylor. "Combining conservation and wildlife benefits, while still supporting livestock production, is a clear example of how agriculture and conservation can go hand-in-hand."

USDA is also reminding producers that it is still accepting additional offers for CRP Grasslands. The current ranking period that closes on Dec. 16, also includes a new CRP Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations to encourage broader participation. Small livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing dairy cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm. USDA's goal is to enroll up to additional 200,000 acres. The new practice for small-scale livestock grazing operations encourages greater diversity geographically and in all types of livestock operation. Small livestock operations are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency office to learn more about this program before Dec. 16, to be considered as part of the current ranking period.

Participants in CRP Grasslands establish or maintain long-term, resource-conserving grasses and other plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. CRP Grasslands participants can use the land for livestock production (e.g. grazing or producing hay), while following their conservation and grazing plans in order to maintain the cover. A goal of CRP Grasslands is to minimize conversion of grasslands either to row crops or to non-agricultural uses. Participants can receive annual payments of up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land and up to 50 percent to fund cover or practices like cross-fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife.

USDA will select offers for enrollment based on six ranking factors: (1) current and future use, (2) new farmer/rancher or underserved producer involvement, (3) maximum grassland preservation, (4) vegetative cover, (5) environmental factors and (6) pollinator habitat. Offers for the second ranking period also will be considered from producers who submitted offers for the first ranking period but were not accepted, as well as from new offers submitted through Dec. 16.

Small livestock operations or other farming and ranching operations interested in participating in CRP Grasslands should contact their local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

USDA Wants Changes in Nutrition Fact Panel for Meat, Poultry Products

(From Agri-Pulse.com)

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service is proposing to amend the nutrition labeling regulations for meat and poultry products to parallel the FDA's final nutrition regs, which were published in May.

FSIS says the proposal, if finalized, will improve presentation of nutrition information, helping consumers maintain healthy dietary practices.

"This new rule will provide more transparency on nutrition labels so that American consumers can make informed decisions about the foods they eat and feed their families," Alfred Almanza, USDA's deputy under secretary for Food Safety, said in a [release](#). "The new nutrition facts panel will complement the many other proactive, prevention-based food policies that we've put in place in recent years."

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Specifically, FSIS is proposing to:

- Update the list of nutrients that are required or permitted to be declared;
- Provide updated Daily Reference Values (DRVs) and Reference Daily Intake (RDI) values that are based on current dietary recommendations from consensus reports;
- Amend the labeling requirements for foods represented or purported to be specifically for children under 4 years of age and for pregnant and lactating women, and establish nutrient reference values specifically for these population subgroups;
- Revise the format and appearance of the Nutrition Facts label;
- Amend the definition of a single-serving container;
- Require dual-column labeling for certain containers;
- Update and modify several reference amounts customarily consumed (RACCs); and
- Consolidate the nutrition labeling regulations for meat and poultry products into a new Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part.

[Click here](#) to see the full proposal. The public will have 60 days to comment on the proposal once it's published in the Federal Register. Directions for submitting comments online or by mail can be found in the [USDA release](#).

Brian Kennedy, a spokesman for the Grocery Manufacturers Association, said GMA is looking forward to working with FSIS and other stakeholders as the proposed updates work make their way through the rule-making process. During that process, he said, it is "critical that any changes are based on the most current and reliable science. Equally as important is ensuring that any changes ultimately serve to inform, and not confuse, consumers."

For 20 years, he said, the Nutrition Facts panel has been "an invaluable tool to help consumers build more healthful diets for themselves and their families, and the time is right for an update." "Diets, eating patterns and consumer preferences have changed dramatically since the Nutrition Facts were first introduced" Kennedy said. "Just as food and beverage manufacturers have responded by creating more than 20,000 healthier product choices since 2002, and by providing tools like Facts Up Front front-of-pack labels, the USDA FSIS is responding with a thoughtful review of the Nutrition Facts panel."