



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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December 23, 2016

Happy Holidays from the NBA

As 2016 comes to a close, all of us in the bison business can count abundant blessings for this year.

During this past year, Bison officially became the National Mammal of the United States. National news media—along with the growing social media sector—helped to promote the great taste of bison meat, and the growing opportunities in bison production. And, the strong demand for quality bison meat among the American public kept prices at profitable levels for everyone along the value chain from farm to fork.

Dave, Jim, Barb and all the folks at the National Bison Association wish all the best for you and your family during this Holiday season. We hope you are settling in with family and friends to enjoy the spirit of the Season. We'll be doing the same. In fact, the National Bison Association office will be "officially" closed next week so that our staff can spend time with their families before the rush of Winter Conference, Gold Trophy Show and Sale, and all the other activities ahead in 2017.

Happy Holidays, everyone!

USDA Releases Final Report on Bison Health and Management Practices

The U.S. Department of Agriculture this week released the final report on the most comprehensive study ever conducted on the health and management practices on United States bison farms and ranches.

The 200-page report, entitled *Bison 2014 – Health and Management Practices on U.S. Ranched-Bison Operations*, is the result of a three-year comprehensive epidemiological study of the American bison herd spearheaded by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The epidemiological study was initiated after the National Bison Association submitted a formal request to USDA in 2013.

“Bison 2014 represents the most significant analysis of the modern bison business ever conducted,” said NBA Executive Director Dave Carter. “The information in this report will provide herd managers, bison association leaders, and public policy makers with some significant information regarding the key areas for focusing public and private resources.”

The final report notes, “The Bison 2014 study was conducted in all States and provides information on health and management practices on U.S. ranched-bison operations to study participants, stakeholders, and the bison industry as a whole. Most estimates in this report refer to the reference period of July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2014.”

The two-year study covered a broad range of issues, including current management practices, bison reproduction, herd health management practices, and disease testing, and population estimates.

A complete version of the Bison 2014 study is available at:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/bison/downloads/bison14/Bison2014_DR.pdf

Buffalo Hall of Fame Member Georgia Peterson Dies at age 91

The modern bison business lost another of its pioneers last week, with the death of Georgia Peterson of Nebraska at the age of 91.

Peterson and her husband, Lawrence, were active bison producers throughout their marriage. , She was active in the buffalo industry serving on the Board of Directors of the National Buffalo Association, and was recognized as the 2000 inductee into the National Buffalo Hall of Fame for her contributions to the preservation and marketing of the animal.

In 200, she served as the Trail Marshall for Bison Trek 2000, a wagon train conducted in conjunction with the International Bison Conference that year. She was known for her collection of buffalo-related items, particularly the buffalo jewelry that she wore when she went out.

She was born on July 3, 1925 to William and Irene (Clark) Atkinson, in her grandparents home near Springview, Nebraska, on July 3, 1925. Georgia attended rural schools in the area, including two years at Keya Paha County High School. The family moved to Rock County where Georgia graduated from Rock County High School in 1942.

After high school Georgia taught in the Tucker and Ewing schools in rural Rock County, and spent some time working in the Cornhusker Ordinance Plant in Grand Island where bombs were made.

On December 19, 1944, Georgia married Lawrence Allen Peterson, and the couple lived in Greenville, SC, until the end of WWII. After the war, the couple made their lifetime home on the Peterson ranch south of Newport. Four children were born to their marriage, son Earl Allen, and three daughters, Sheila Raye, Pamela Sue, and Lori Alene.

Georgia moved to Bassett in 2003, attended the Valley Grove church, and spent time enjoying the Senior Center. She went to be with her Lord on December 14, 2016, surrounded by family in her home.

Georgia was predeceased by her parents and brothers, her husband Lawrence, son Allen, and

two grandchildren. She will be missed by her daughters, Sheila Peterson of Bassett, Pam Peterson of Bassett, Lori and son-in-law Trent Geistlinger of Beatrice, sister Ann and brother-in-law DuWayne Thompson of Lincoln, sisters-in-law Nina Atkinson of Bassett and Della Atkinson of Yuba City, California, six grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren, and ten nieces and nephews.

Memorials in Georgia's behalf may be offered to the Rock County Ambulance Association.

Bison Workshop Set for January 6-7

(From Char Koosta News)

GREAT FALLS — Montana Bison Association Winter Conference and Workshop Slated for January 6 and 7 for Holiday Inn. You don't have to own bison to attend, matter of fact everyone is welcome to register. Montana Bison Association (MBA) feels that this would be a great time for bison producers, cattle producers, red meat consumers and the simply curious to find out more about bison and about the people in Montana who raise them.

Aaron Paulson current president of the MBA states, "With record high bison prices it a great time to spread the word. Our friends in the beef business may be looking for some diversity as the current beef market is struggling and bison meat marketers are begging for product. We expect the demand for bison meat to continue to grow. So, invite your neighbors to come and talk bison at the MBA Winter Conference. We'd love to have you come." Paulson manages a bison ranch by Alder, MT.

The MBA also hope to build better relationships with the beef and sheep industries. All livestock producers have many common issues with regulations and maintaining a friendly regulatory environment. It is important that all red meat producers work together for the sustainability of the red meat industry.

Julia Arnold, secretary of MBA, states "I would love for more people to come to the workshops and conference. I fear there is a misconception out there of what we are all about, and it would be great to have people come and really learn about our industry and the similarities between us and beef production. We just have bigger animals with a different behavior but in the end, we are all about providing nutritious protein for people to enjoy." Julia, her husband, Tobin, along with his parents raise bison near Conrad, Montana.

Montana Bison Association's main mission is to promote bison products, namely breeding stock, meat and by-products. They also advocate for fair and equitable regulations in the control of disease and the movement of domestic bison and bison products. In addition, they promote public education on bison both as livestock and as a native animal of North America.

Friday, January 6, the National Bison Association will present a workshop on "The Bison Advantage." They will cover such factors as little need for shelters, feed efficiency, long

production life, independent calving, low fat high protein meat with a high demand in the market place. The afternoon will have a panel discussion where questions on grazing, beneficial impacts on land, benefits to communities can be discussed. The cost for Friday's work shop is \$30.

Friday evening kicks off with a meet and greet and presentation on Best Management Practices for Raising Bison Commercially. Saturday will continue this topic, business meeting and more. Registration for Friday night and Saturday with all meals included. Pre-registration by December 28 is \$95 and at the door registration will be \$120.

For more information and register go to bit.ly/2017MBA or contact Julia Arnold 406-627-2436 or jarnorldmt@gmail.com to reserve your place. To learn more about the Montana Bison Association you can check out their website www.montanabison.org or like them on Facebook.

Source: http://www.charkoosta.com/2016/2016_12_22/Bison_workshop.html

Bison Boom: These Stoic Animals Require Less Handling Than Cattle.

(From Successful Farming)

It's no longer a rarity to find the animals that once roamed America's Wild West -- bison -- grazing on farms, stocked in grocery stores, and featured on restaurant menus.

The U.S. Census of Agriculture now includes bison (American buffalo) in its reports because of the industry's growing popularity. South Dakota tops the list of states with over 33,000 bison.

More ranchers and farmers are becoming interested in raising these stoic animals, says Jonathan Harding of Golden Bison Company, whose trade name is High Plains Bison, in Denver, Colorado.

Unlike cattle, bison rarely need to be handled. "There's less intervention, and that appeals to some farmers," says Harding. "You've got a herd, you put them in the pasture, and they pretty much take care of themselves, which is what they did for a millennium."

The USDA forbids the use of growth hormones or growth-promoting antibiotics in bison, so the animals are typically only handled once a year for required vaccinations, for checkups, and to wean calves.

The biggest problem in bison today is the lack of consistency in meat, says Harding. Bison are usually ready for market at 24 to 28 months old. Smaller farms raising bison don't always send their animals to market at the ideal time, leaving room for a diverse range of meat quality.

Full Story: <http://www.agriculture.com/livestock/bison-boom>

Where the Bison Roam: Bitterroot Bison Sees Growing Demand

(From the Missoulian)

It's not a bad idea to keep your head on a swivel when walking anywhere near a herd of bison.

There's a growing number of visitors to Yellowstone National Park who will attest to that.

Closer to Missoula, the owner of Bitterroot Bison has plenty of experience when it comes to the critters that reach upwards of 2,000 pounds of lightning-fast fury.

"They can be a little unpredictable," said Troy Westre as he finished posing for a photo with the 2,000-pound former bottle baby bull he calls Dozer.

Westre said there are only three in his herd that he would walk up to and pet like Dozer. And one of those might still give him a run for his money if he's not on his toes.

Anyone who has spent some time around the brawny and powerful beasts knows that you can never been too careful.

That's probably what's kept many in the cattle industry from converting their herds over to the animal native to this part of the world.

It's also why Westre doesn't worry at all about the current plunge in cattle prices.

When Westre bought his first five bison back in 2000, prices weren't anything to brag about. Around 2006, the price for bison meat started moving upward and it hasn't stopped since then.

"I can remember selling a bull for \$1.20 a pound," he said. "Now it's \$2.75 on the hoof. Over the last three years, the prices have really been banging upwards."

Westre credits media-mogul Ted Turner for creating the demand for bison burger.

"He probably has about 60 percent of the bison market now," Westre said. "The National Bison Association has been doing a good job in marketing as well."

Bison remains a niche market and Westre predicts it will be for a long time to come. "They butcher about 173,000 cows a day," he said. "We killed 60,000 bison last year. I think the prices will keep going up because the demand is so high for them right now."

That demand is being driven by people looking for a healthy alternative to red meat.

Full Story: http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/where-the-bison-roam-bitterroot-bison-sees-growing-demand/article_655e4218-285f-518c-a415-71491fa6b513.html

Major Donation Helps Effort to Preserve Rare Albino Bison in Jamestown

(From InForum)

JAMESTOWN, N.D.—The effort to preserve and display a rare albino bison at the National Buffalo Museum in Jamestown has received a boost thanks to a sizeable donation.

Dave and JoAnn Vining, owners of Vining Oil in Jamestown, donated \$30,000 toward the \$50,000 goal of preserving White Cloud, an albino bison that died Nov. 14 at the Shirek Buffalo

Ranch near Michigan, N.D. White Cloud was 19 years old and spent most of her life with the herd at the National Buffalo Museum.

"We just thought the white buffalo is very rare and it's a historical treasure that we want to help preserve," said JoAnn Vining. "White Cloud has been very important for Jamestown and she has brought a lot of business and tourism to our area."

Ilana Xinos, executive director of the National Buffalo Museum, said the National Buffalo Museum's Board of Directors decided to have White Cloud mounted and displayed at the museum. The display will offer visitors a more historical, cultural and scientific significance of albino bison, she said.

"The Vinings' gift for White Cloud's mount and display case allows the museum to start the project," Xinos said. "This project would not be possible without the Vinings' generosity." White Cloud will be displayed in a humidity-controlled enclosure that will be placed in the Select Inn room where the tipi is located, she said. The display will also tell the history of white bison, along with White Cloud's story and her importance to Native American culture, to the museum and community.

From a scientific point of view, true white bison are exceedingly rare, said James Derr, a professor at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine who has performed genetic testing on the museum's herd, in a press release.

"A permanent display of this exceptional animal provides an outstanding opportunity for scientific and cultural education and for increasing awareness and understanding of animal biodiversity," Derr said.

Geoff Woodcox, assistant curator of collections at the State Historical Society of North Dakota in Bismarck, consulted on the mounting and display of White Cloud, Xinos said.

"Geoff recommended the type of enclosure to best preserve the mount based on our museum's current environment," she said.

White Cloud's passing and her preservation project came at a time when the museum was already committed to other projects to improve and grow, Xinos said.

Work is underway on a lobby redesign with an adjacent 25-seat theater in an existing 12-by-26-foot semi-enclosed space.

The museum averages 21,000 to 25,000 visitors per year, Xinos said, and the theater will be able to screen a 16-minute documentary of bison as an optional entry piece to enhance the experience, she said.

The museum has raised \$64,000 of the \$100,000 film and theater project goal, Xinos said. Sponsorships of \$250 or more will be listed on a donor wall located in the completed theater, and sponsorships of \$1,000 or more will be listed on the wall and in the film credits, she said. Full Story: <http://www.inforum.com/news/4183235-major-donation-helps-effort-preserve-rare-albino-bison-jamestown>

Conservation Stewardship Program Funding Available Now

(From Center for Rural Affairs)

CFRA wanted to be sure you knew about an open funding opportunity for conservation. The signup process for the updated Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is now open and applications are being accepted. This is a major farmer and rancher funding opportunity that rewards farmers for protecting and enhancing natural resources on their working lands. The program is designed to encourage and reward resource-conserving practices such as planting cover crops, rotational grazing, or ecologically-based pest management. CSP also doesn't forget smaller producers: for folks who qualify for the program, the minimum contract payment is \$1,500, no matter the acreage.

Your initial application is due February 3, 2017. To enroll in the 2017 program, apply to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) by Feb. 3. For this application, you don't have to know all the details about the conservation practices that will be the best fit for you and your operation. Those details are worked out with NRCS later on in the process.

The form for [the initial application is here](#), and you can [find your local NRCS office here](#). You can also call me with questions at (515) 329-0172 or email me at annaj@cfra.org. To view **what's new this year, and learn why CSP matters**, find more on our [blog](#). We will also publish information on re-enrollment for farmers and ranchers who want to renew their CSP contracts. Watch our website for more information!

TB testing to continue into January in Canada

(From Alberta Farm Express)

As of Dec. 7, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has confirmed six cases of bovine TB. This number includes the cow that was confirmed to have the disease when it was slaughtered in the U.S. All confirmed cases are still from one infected herd located on 18 premises.

Approximately 50 premises are under quarantine - mostly in Alberta, with no more than five in Saskatchewan. More than 26,000 animals are under quarantine, including those on the infected premises. Testing on quarantined farms is expected to be completed by early January. The last round of reactor animals that were humanely slaughtered showed no lesions or other clinical signs of the disease.

Full text:

<http://www.albertafarmexpress.ca/2016/12/20/tb-testing-to-continue-into-january/>

Threshold Podcast: Exploring the Past, Present, And Future of Bison And Humans

(From Montana Public Radio)

People and bison first met 75,000 years ago, and ever since, we've been hunting them, painting them, and walking with them into new lands. Before Europeans arrived in America there were more than 50 million bison here. By 1901, there were just 23 wild bison left. Now, we have some decisions to make. Can we ever have wild free-roaming bison in North America again? Should we? What does the history of bison have to teach us about ourselves?

This February, [Threshold podcast](#) will take a deep-dive into the complicated issues surrounding the re-wilding of American bison. You'll hear intimate, personal stories from people of all viewpoints struggling to come to terms with big moments of environmental change.

Full Story: <http://mtp.org/post/threshold-podcast-exploring-past-present-and-future-bison-and-humans>