



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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July 22, 2016

Bison World Fall Issue Advertising Commitments Due Aug. 10

Advertise your upcoming sale or other event or your bison or industry goods & services in ***Bison World***, the best way by far to communicate with the bison industry. The deadline to reserve space for the fall issue, which comes out in October, is Aug. 10. For rate information, marketing strategy ideas or to reserve your advertising space, contact Marilyn Bay Wentz at marilyn.wentz@tds.net or 303-292-2833, ext. 301.

Bison Association offers free bison training

(From The Farm Forum)

Westminster, CO — Have you heard the recent news about the bison becoming the first-ever National Mammal of the United States? Or maybe you've heard about the recent "kidnapping" of a bison calf in Yellowstone National Park?

Bison is in the news nearly every day, but most people are not aware that bison meat is also the fastest growing sector of the US meat industry. While still a fragment of the US protein sector, the emerging bison industry has developed a dedicated marketplace for this fine product over the past ten years and is now in need of more farmers and ranchers raising these incredibly hardy and resourceful animals to keep pace with growing demand.

Wholesale bison meat prices are approaching \$4.50/lb. (hot hanging weight), according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service, about twice what a fed steer will currently bring.

The strong, stable prices are prompting more ranchers to explore the bison advantage. And to contact Extension offices, agricultural lenders, and other professionals to inquire about production and marketing opportunities.

Now, the National Bison Association (NBA) is scheduling a series of Bison Advantage Workshops, specifically targeting Agricultural Extension Agents, Vo Ag Teachers, and prospective bison producers. The workshops will kick off on June 11, and continue throughout the summer and fall. All workshops are being offered free of charge.

The remaining scheduled workshops are:

- August 5 - Quality Inn & Suites, Jamestown, ND - 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- September 7 - Ruhter Bison, Urbana, IL - 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- September 16 - Cook's Bison Ranch, Wolcottville, IN - 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The workshops are being funded through the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, which focuses its outreach in the north central United States. The NBA is in the second year of administering the grant program.

Read more. http://www.farmforum.net/news/livestock/bison-association-offers-free-bison-training/article_8a9d7e8c-a61b-5569-b5b7-06f584db981a.html

Idaho State Vet Acts to Eliminate Bison Branding Requirement

Idaho State Veterinarian Dr. Bill Barton, has initiated the process to bring Idaho's state regulations into conformance with the USDA policy change last year that eliminates the requirement that bison imported from Canada be branded with the CAN brand.

The USDA, in conjunction with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, last year replaced the branding requirement with a new rule that allows producers to identify animals with an approved RFID (Radio Frequency) tag compliant with the U.S. National Animal Identification System, and a secondary ear tag bearing the official identification number. A handful of states—including Idaho and North Dakota—have state regulations or laws still requiring branding of bison brought in from Canada.

Responding to a petition from an Idaho bison producer, Dr. Barton this month developed a proposed regulation that eliminates the branding requirement. The rule was issued as a "temporary proposed rule," which allowed it to become effective July 1st, 2016. However, Idaho state law requires that this type of regulation be formally approved by the legislature before becoming permanent. Dr. Barton told the National Bison Association that it will be important for bison producers to be on hand to provide testimony when the legislature takes up this issue next winter.

Strong Demand Prompts Call for More Bison Ranchers

(From the Ag Journal)

The resurgent bison industry has gone through a boom and bust but has stabilized to the point where demand would support more producers, says an industry leader.

"The 30,000-foot view of the bison business is, well, let me just say, we have a huge welcome mat out right now," said Dave Carter, who is executive director of the Denver-based National Bison Association. "We have a shortage of trim and pet food ingredients. The marketers we've surveyed said they could sell 20 percent more product if they could get it."

Interest in heritage products and natural growing methods are boosting demand for bison meat, along with heightened concern about nutritional attributes and the desire for more distinctive flavors, Carter said. “I don’t see it as a passing fad,” he added.

Carter became involved in the industry after “falling in love” with the regal animals at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, he said. He now runs his own bison herd jointly with two other bison ranchers, David Wentz and Ray Thieman, on rugged pastureland south of Strasburg they lease from the Plains Conservation Center of Denver. Their ranch was the site of a recent bison workshop co-hosted by the bison association and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. The afternoon event also included an appearance by Jeff Moyer, the executive director of the Rodale Institute.

Moyer, who is from Kutztown, Pennsylvania, is a longtime friend of Carter’s and was passing through the state on his way to Montana. Both men have served on the National Organic Standards board, including stints as its chairman.

It was Ted Turner’s famous obsession with bison ranching that drove the initial boom in the bison industry, driving prices so high in the 1990s that raising the animals was like a get-rich-quick scheme, Carter recalled. The bottom eventually fell out of the market, however.

“In 1999, the National Western stock show champion bison brought \$101,000,” Carter recalled. “Two years later, the price for the top animal was \$5,800.”

In the years since, the association and the industry have made a concerted push to create more market-driven demand, with Ted’s Montana Grill restaurants springing up around the country and bison growers sampling out the meat at farmers markets.

“Gradually the price started going back up,” Carter said.

Carter and his partners rotate 470 head of bison, including 210 cow-calf pairs, through 16 pastures in a grazing system that Wentz oversees on a daily basis.

Wentz explained that the herd spends roughly 6 or 7 days at a time in each pasture, which stimulates plant growth without overgrazing it. The goal is for them to remove around 50 percent of the available forage as they rotate through each paddock twice during the growing season.

As the animals graze, they leave hoof-prints that capture rainwater and their feet work grass seed into the ground, all of which is intended to improve range health, Wentz said. (The Savory Institute for Holistic Land Management in Boulder is working with the ranch and has designated it as a Savory hub.)

Their particular grazing program isn’t technically considered “mob” grazing, which would involve stocking paddocks at super-high intensity levels, due to practical management considerations.

“If we had a drought, we’d have to find a place to take the excess animals or bring in feed, and we don’t want to do that,” Wentz said.

Both Carter and Wentz said it’s a myth that fencing and facilities need to be the equivalent of “Fort Knox” to keep bison in. Their cross-fencing is done using electric wire. While the heifers generally don’t calve until they are 3 years old, as cows they have exceptional longevity and will remain productive for two decades or more.

For these reasons, Carter hopes ranchers will give bison another look. Fully 34 percent of the bison currently being processed in the U.S. are coming from Canada, he said.

“If we didn’t have that Canadian supply, we could not supply everyone that wants the meat right now,” he said.

Full Story: <http://www.agjournalonline.com/news/20160717/strong-demand-prompts-call-for-more-bison-ranchers>

First Up-Close Look at Elk and Bison Is a Moment to Remember

(From The Norfolk Daily News)

NIOBRARA — I have recorded many firsts since I moved to Nebraska last September. Over the past 10½ months, I got to go to a Nebraska Cornhuskers football game, visit the Mall of America and meet nine presidential candidates.

I recently added another first to that list: my first time seeing bison and elk up close at the Kreycik Elk & Buffalo Ranch near here.

It was pretty exciting.

In addition to learning about the history of the ranch, I got to take the tour of the ranch with more than 60 other guests in a pair of tractor-pulled covered wagons. We got to not only see the elk and bison that the ranch is known for, but we also had the chance to feed the bison ears of corn.

The Kreycik family (pronounced KRAY-check) got into the business of raising elk and buffalo in the early 1980s, when the late Kenard Kreycik decided that raising his own elk was better than going to the mountains and hunting them.

“My dad went (elk) hunting to the mountains and he went three different times, but he only got one,” Stacy (Kreycik) Miller said. “He loved the animals so much that he said ‘Just forget this — I’m going to start raising my own.’ ... We started going around and he purchased two bulls and a heifer.”

Also spurring the elder Kreycik’s interest in raising elk was the value of the antler velvet on the bulls, in part because the velvet is considered by some to have medicinal properties. It was worth \$100 per pound at one point and still brings about \$13 per pound.

“He loved the animals and he started growing the herd,” Miller said. “People would come because they heard that he raised the elk and they wanted to see them — and he loved taking people out and showing them.”

The Kreyciks later added bison to the ranch and now have around 900 of the animals in their feedlot. This is in addition to a regular cow herd of 35 bison. Most of the Kreyciks’ bison are Plains bison.

Read more. http://norfolkdailynews.com/news/first-up-close-look-at-elk-and-bison-is-a/article_deebda2e-4f4a-11e6-a184-b7002c8feb5f.html

University of Saskatchewan researchers produce world's first wood bison using in vitro fertilization

(From The CBC)

Creating bison in a laboratory sounds like a premise for an unusual science fiction movie. But it's a fact, and the proof is gambolling about on a U of S campus field.

"The babies look great," said Gregg Adams, a reproductive specialist with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

"They're keeping up with mom, and I'm really happy about it."

It took a decade to get the idea from the drawing board to running around in a field, and Adams said its success has enormous implications for the species.

Under attack

It's been a rough 80 years for wood bison, with less than five per cent of the North American herd still alive in the wild. The animals suffered from disease, which they contracted from cattle eight decades ago, and loss of their habitat.

The dwindling population also meant a loss of genetic diversity.

Adams said one of the attractions of using in vitro fertilization is that it allowed researchers to "scrub" embryos of disease.

"We can now actually fly in to isolated herds, say for instance Wood Buffalo National Park, identify individuals, collect their eggs and sperm, and then bring them back to the laboratory so that we can wash them free of the disease," he said.

"If we could take those embryos and put it back into healthy surrogate moms, voila -- we have a way of regenerating, re-capturing this really important genetic diversity that we need."

Read more. <http://www.cbc.ca/beta/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatchewan-bison-laboratory-in-vitro-1.3689573>

Bison Range Transfer Gets Positive Reviews

(From the Lake County Leader)

More than a century after the federal government removed more than 18,000 acres of land on the Flathead Indian Reservation to establish the National Bison Range, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are working to return the wildlife refuge to tribal management.

Such an action would require federal action, and last month the tribes released a legislative proposal that would remove the range from the National Wildlife Refuge System and place it back into federal trust ownership for the tribes.

Nearly 150 people attended a Tuesday night meeting at the Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, where representatives from the tribes' natural resources and legal departments were on hand to discuss the proposal with community members and explain the draft legislation.

Tribal attorney Brian Upton explained that the bill's language specifically addresses two of the main concerns voiced by skeptics of the proposal: whether public access to the land will be maintained, and whether the land will continue to be managed for preserving the American bison. Both requirements are included in the proposed bill.

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, an organization that has in the past opposed tribal management at the refuge and in May filed a lawsuit to stop the latest proposal from moving forward, has also suggested that action on the bison range could lead to other wildlife refuges transferring out of federal ownership.

Upton said that even though he believes the situation at the bison range is a unique one, the tribes' legislation aims to put that concern to rest by including language specifically preventing the bison range from being used as a precedent in other cases.

"This history, these facts, the relationship between the tribes, this land and this population doesn't lend itself to any situation analogous to this," Upton said. "We don't know of a more direct way to deal with this issue."

Members of Montana's congressional delegation have yet to state whether they would sponsor the bill. Upton said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which currently manages the bison range, has given its support to the measure.

Read more. http://leaderadvertiser.com/news/bison-range-transfer-gets-positive-reviews/article_41098fa2-4e9d-11e6-ba4f-0f6a4c568786.html

49 Yellowstone Bison Still Locked Up; Awaiting Quarantine Decision

(From The Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

As state, federal and tribal officials haggle over the details, 49 bison sit in corrals at the northern edge of Yellowstone National Park, awaiting word on whether they'll be set free or sent to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

Early this year, Yellowstone National Park released a plan to send some of its 5,000 bison to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, where they would be quarantined to ensure they are brucellosis free. Then, they could either join the existing conservation herd at the reservation or be sent to other tribal reservations around the country.

A final decision was expected last spring, but it hasn't come yet.

"We are trying to work through the issues and public comments," said Jennifer Carpenter, acting chief of the Yellowstone Center for Resources. "Our desire is to get a decision soon."

Sources said the process has slowed because the Montana Department of Livestock is arguing that the transport of bison out of Yellowstone and through Montana without first certifying that the animals are completely brucellosis free is illegal.

"We see that as probably the key hurdle to getting the bison up to Fort Peck," said Dennis Jorgensen, a program officer for the World Wildlife Fund.

Read more. http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/yellowstone-bison-still-locked-up-awaiting-quarantine-decision/article_480527e0-d70a-5a3d-b113-484dd9847e8e.html

First Bison Bash set at Cross Ranch State Park near Hensler

(From Associated Press)

Cross Ranch State Park in central North Dakota is hosting a new event later this week focusing on the bison there, and planning to make it an annual happening.

The Bison Bash on Friday and Saturday is a collaboration of the state Parks and Recreation Department and The Nature Conservancy of North Dakota.

The weekend will include a bison orientation session, hikes in the Cross Ranch Nature Preserve, trivia, door prizes and a bison chip throwing contest.

The park and preserve are 12 miles southeast of Hensler.

Lake County's 'Bison-Tennial' Entry Incorporates Region's Themes

(From The Chicago Tribune)

Felix Maldonado wields a spray paint can like a fine artist's brush as he adds layers of color to a 5-foot-tall fiberglass bison in his Hammond studio.

Maldonado, 45, a graffiti artist with the tag name "Flex," was working recently on the bison for the South Shore Convention and Visitor's Authority. The agency was tapped to decorate Lake County's bison for the state of Indiana's 200th birthday celebration and Bison-ennial Public Art Project coordinated by the United Ways of Indiana.

The South Shore CVA will unveil Maldonado's finished product at 1 p.m. Thursday at the Indiana Welcome Center in Hammond.

Each of Indiana's 92 counties through their local United Way chapter was given a bison to decorate to celebrate the state's bicentennial. Speros Batistatos, president and CEO of the South Shore CVA, said the agency has been working with Maldonado to come up with the design that captures the region.

Read more. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-indiana-bison-st-0723-20160720-story.html>

Brucellosis Test Now Required for Big Horn County Cattle Entering South Dakota

(From MyBigHornBasin.com)

South Dakota is now requiring a negative brucellosis test on Big Horn County cattle and domestic bison prior to importation into the state. On July 12, the South Dakota Animal Industry Board approved a Board Order, effective immediately, which states:

-ALL test eligible Cattle and Bison from Big Horn County Wyoming must be tested within 30 days prior to being moved into South Dakota including:

-All Cattle and Bison of any age intended for breeding

-All intact male and female cattle and bison 12 months of age and older"

South Dakota has become the third state to impose this requirement on Big Horn County cattle and bison. North Dakota and Montana also require that Big Horn County cattle and bison are brucellosis tested prior to entry.

The new board order is due to South Dakota state animal health officials' concerns regarding potential exposure of cattle and domestic bison to brucellosis seropositive elk in Wyoming's Big Horn County - an area where Wyoming has documented brucellosis in elk since 2012. Should an animal become infected in this area of Wyoming, it might move untested across state boundaries and could complicate epidemiological investigations that attempt to identify the true source of exposure.

Full text:

<http://www.mybighornbasin.com/Brucellosis-Test-Now-Required-for-Big-Horn-County-/22813488>

More for Less in Pastures - Multispecies Pastures Show Productivity, Drought Tolerant Promise

(From The Crop Science Society of America)

Getting more for less is an attractive concept. But it isn't that easy when it comes to producing more food on less land with fewer resources.

R. Howard Skinner has been researching this idea of more for less in agriculture. Skinner is a physiological plant ecologist and member of the USDA-ARS-Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit. He's been looking into how to increase the amount of forage (grasses and plants that animals eat) pastures can grow. If a piece of land can produce more forage, it can feed more cows. More cows mean more beef and milk.

Previous studies suggest incorporating multiple types of plants in pastures is an effective way to increase the amount of forage. However, these studies varied in length. It hasn't been possible to say for sure what long-term effect using multiple types of plants has on forage production. To learn more, Skinner spent nine years tracking the progress of multispecies pastures.

Skinner and his team at Pennsylvania State University Hawbecker Farm planted eight experimental paddocks. They planted four paddocks with orchard grass and white clover. Another four paddocks had a combination of chicory, orchardgrass, tall fescue, white clover, and alfalfa. When the plants reached a certain height, cows grazed in the paddocks.

Researchers collected samples of the forage before and after the cows grazed. This helped them estimate the amount of forage produced and determine what types of plants were present in the paddocks. Additionally, researchers collected soil samples to check on the plant roots and determine how much carbon was being stored in the soil.

Skinner tracked changes in the amounts of each plant species over the course of the nine years. "We expected some of the species from the more complex mixture to disappear over time," he explains. What he didn't expect was the continued superior performance of the five-species mixture even after some of the species disappeared. "Initially I would have thought the loss of species from the more complex mixture was a negative, but this research suggests that by improving soil conditions, specifically soil organic matter, the initial inclusion of multiple species had a long-lasting positive effect even after species differences had disappeared."

The five-species mixture produced, on average over the nine years, 31% more forage than the two-species mixture. This could be because the five-species mixtures were also storing more carbon in the soil than the two-species mixtures.

Read more. <https://www.crops.org/news/media-inquiries/releases/2016/0720/800/>

FDA Issues Final Rule for FSMA Food Facility Registration

(From FDA Press release)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued the Amendments to Registration of Food Facilities final rule as part of the implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Food facilities that manufacture/process, pack or hold food for consumption in the United States are required to register with the FDA.

Retail food establishments are not required to register with the FDA as food facilities, and the final rule amends the definition of a retail food establishment in a way that expands the number of establishments that qualify. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition issued a press release saying that FDA's clarification of the term "retail food establishments" means that farmers and small food enterprises primarily selling value-added products directly to consumers are not subject to food facility registration requirements or regulations.

Read more. <http://www.fda.gov/food/newsevents/constituentupdates/ucm510037.htm>

Leopold Conservation Award in North Dakota

Sand County Foundation, in partnership with the North Dakota Grazing Lands Coalition, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, and the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, is proud to announce the launch of the Leopold Conservation Award Program in North Dakota. Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation.

The award will be presented for the first time to a North Dakota farmer, rancher, or other private landowner who exemplifies voluntary, responsible stewardship and management of natural resources. Recipients of the award receive \$10,000 and a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold.

Applications for the award must be postmarked by September 15, 2016.

Learn more. <http://leopoldconservationaward.org/>

Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation Agricultural Development and Young Farmer Grants

The Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation serves 22 counties in southern Ohio by providing educational assistance, agricultural, and economic development grants.

Agricultural Development and Young Farmer matching cost-share grants are available, up to \$25,000. Eligible applicants for the Young Farmer grants must be between 20 and 38 years old as of August 1, must have a current Farm Service Number, and must reside within the 22 counties the Foundation currently serves.

Funds can cover eligible goods and equipment or livestock purchases.

Applications will be accepted August 1-31, 2016.

Learn more. <http://www.soacdf.net/programs.html>

FDA Issues Guidance for Drugs Used in Food Animals

(From Sustainable Food News)

The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) on Wednesday released [draft revised guidance for industry](#) to address the human food safety of new animal drugs used in food-producing animals.

"The human food safety evaluation of new animal drugs used in food-producing animals helps ensure that food derived from treated animals is safe for human consumption," the FDA said.

The draft revised guidance provides an overview of the process for the human food safety evaluation of new animal drugs used in food-producing animals, including:

- determining an acceptable daily intake (ADI)
- calculating safe concentrations
- assignment of a tolerance
- calculation of a withdrawal period and a milk discard time
- evaluation of carcinogenic compounds

The FDA is seeking comments on the draft guidance 60 days from it being published in the Federal Register. Check out the pre-publication version at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2016-17188.pdf>