



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 29, 2016

Join the NBA for 3 Years and Save!

Is your membership renewal on the horizon? If so, consider the Three-Year membership option at a \$55 savings.

The NBA has initiated a new three-year membership price of \$695. That compares to a cost of \$750 for three one-year memberships.

Joining the National Bison Association for three years makes a lot of sense because it saves the hassle of an annual renewal, and makes sure that all of your benefits will continue uninterrupted over the three-year period," said Jim Matheson, NBA assistant director. "Now, the three-year membership comes with a tangible cost savings as well."

The three-year membership option is included on every membership renewal.

Bison Advantage Seminars Set for ND, IL, IN

Three upcoming Bison Advantage Workshops will provide Agricultural Extension Agents, Vo Ag Teachers, and prospective bison producers with a taste of the emerging opportunities in bison production and marketing.

The free workshops are part of a continuing series of education and outreach efforts by the National Bison Association and state/regional bison associations with financial assistance from the USDA North Central SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education).

Next Friday, the North Dakota Buffalo will host a workshop at the National Buffalo Museum in Jamestown, ND. The session, scheduled to start at 1 p.m., will be facilitated by NBA Assistant Director Jim Matheson. Participants must register by Monday by contacting the NBA at jim@matheson@bisoncentral.com.

On September 7, NBA Executive Director Dave Carter will facilitate a workshop at the I-Hotel in Urbana, IL. That workshop, set to kick off at 10 a.m., is being hosted by the Illinois-Indiana

Bison Association, and will feature a walk-through of handling facilities at the farm of David Ruhter.

The final workshop, set for 9 a.m. on September 16th, will take place at 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 US. The NBA is in the second year of administering the grant program.

Participants must register no later than one week prior to the workshop date to participate. To register, simply email jim@bisoncentral.com with your name and hometown, or with any questions.

Local Flavor: Bison On the Grill

(From the Carroll County Times)

I'm tired of chicken. Cooking for my family I've grilled, marinated, shish-kabob'ed (maybe not a word), baked and/or broiled chicken. Chicken is my family's go-to dinner solution as one daughter doesn't like fish, the other won't eat meat that looks like the animal it came from, and the husband won't eat anything green. As the family chef I was beginning to get a bit grumpy until I drove by the Gunpowder Bison Company.

Bison — the new meat on the block — has health experts cheering (it's a bit leaner than beef and generally grass fed and finished) and creative cooks flocking to this most ancient of protein sources.

American Indians feasted on the Bison and prized the meat for its flavor and high protein content. And now nutritionists praise Bison as a low-fat source of protein high in vitamins and minerals. The high levels of iron make Bison an appealing alternative to beef for pre-menopausal women. With two local companies providing much of the Bison in our region there's no reason not to support this trend. The Lineboro company Twin Springs Bison Farm promises the same quality as Gunpowder Bison — no antibiotics, no hormones, grass-fed and raised pure Bison.

As a former Midwesterner, Gunpowder Bison's recipe for Bison Burgers with Cabernet Caramelized Onions and Wisconsin Cheddar Cheese sounded particularly appealing. And in an effort to get the husband to eat green I created a recipe using Grilled Bison Steaks as a basis for a very manly main dish salad.

See full recipe at <http://www.carrollcountytimes.com/columnists/ph-cc-benson-072716-20160720-column.html>

How to Make the Perfect Bison Burger

(From Men's Fitness)

Take a hint from our Native American ancestors: You can't beat a big, hot hunk of buffalo meat. "Bison has as much protein as beef," says Eleat Sports Nutrition's Angie Asche, R.D. "But a 3 oz bison burger has 152 calories—a beef burger has 230. Bison also has just 7g of fat compared to beef's 15g, so it's a leaner, healthier option."

Bison's also readily available in stores nowadays, not to mention tasty and damn easy to cook. "To keep it juicy, don't cook it past medium," says Chris Raucci, head chef for Ted's [as in Turner] Montana Grill. Raucci advises grilling bison to bring out its slightly sweet flavor. "Then I use a little Ted's Seasoning"—aka salt and pepper—"and, for our No. 11 burger, cheese, grilled mushrooms, and horseradish."

By the way, this May, the bison (millions of which roamed the West before the 1870s, when the U.S. Army massacred them to starve out the Indians) was named our first-ever national mammal.

But, yes, it's OK to eat them—numbers of protected and farmed bison have come back strong. Read more. <http://www.mensfitness.com/nutrition/what-to-eat/how-make-perfect-bison-burger>

Bison included in the 50 Best Burgers in America

(Adapted from PowWow.com)

A list of the top burger in every state released this week by PowWow.com included two succulent bison burgers. Included in the listing were:

- **Kentucky: Proof On Main** – Go for the Bison Burger, piled high with shredded lettuce and apricot-laced jezebel sauce. Just try it. 702 W. Main St. (at N. Seventh St.), Louisville; 502-217-6360 or proofonmain.com
- **Virginia: Melt Gourmet Cheeseburgers** -- What's the only thing better than munching on a buffalo burger with roasted garlic, caramelized onions, Wisconsin sharp cheddar and horseradish sauce? Washing it down with a double dark chocolate milkshake. 525 Market St. (at Plaza St. SE), Leesburg; 703-443-2105 or [meltgourmetcheeseburgers](http://meltgourmetcheeseburgers.com)

A Modern Bison Primer

(From Civil Eats)

Not long ago, it was bison that dominated North America, reaching into the tens of millions, whereas beef cattle were relative newcomers, introduced by European settlers and miniscule in number.

Today, those numbers have been flipped: there are 90 million cattle in the U.S. and roughly 185,000 bison (another 150,000 are being grazed in Canada). Having barely survived the U.S. government slaughter of the 1800s, modern bison is therefore a niche delicacy.

Even so, bison meat is beginning to show up in more places—in freezers at Costco, on menus at bowling alleys, and in the pockets of amateur athletes in the form of energy bars. Growing consumer preference for lean, grass-fed meats that are humanely raised and offer a taste of

place is driving today's steadily increasing demand. (The recent designation by Congress of bison as the national mammal may spark further interest.)

But consumer perceptions about how bison are raised doesn't always line up with the reality. A common assumption is that all bison are raised on grass and live their entire lives under "purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain."

Going With Grain

In fact, about three-quarters of America's bison are finished on grain, many in feedlots, according to Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association. These animals are raised on grass for the first 18 to 20 months of their lives, but many are then transferred to outdoor corrals similar to cattle feedlots, where they're fed grain (with added roughage) for the remaining 3 to 6 months of their lives.

Bison production methods aren't tracked, but Carter estimates that the other quarter of America's bison are grass-finished. They're either sold as cuts or whole animals that are marketed as 100 percent grass-fed, or they're older animals used for burger meat that is not necessarily marketed as grass-fed.

Bison producers often put their animals on grain to provide more of the fatty taste that Americans have come to prefer after years of eating grain-fed beef. And feeding a grain ration to bison gives producers some control over the consistency of their product, as bison meat can be quite variable due to the wild genetics of the species.

Not all producers who feed grain to their bison do so in feedlots, though. Instead, they grain their animals in the field, which allows them to label their bison "pasture-raised." As is the case with beef, consumers may not know that a "pasture-raised" label doesn't necessarily mean the animal was 100 percent grass-fed.

A number of bison producers in the U.S. are certified 100 percent grass-fed by the American Grassfed Association. Global Animal Partnership, which certifies meat sold at Whole Foods based on a 5-step animal welfare rating system, also recently released a set of pilot bison standards.

Despite the prevalence of grain-fed bison in the nation's grocery stores, it is grass-finished bison—100 percent grass-fed—that is now the fastest growing segment of the industry, according to Carter. Grass-only producers are raising bison for direct sales to consumers, for use in energy bars, and for restaurants.

Given that only about 15,000 of America's 185,000 bison are raised on federally owned public ranges (with another 10,000 on Native American tribal lands), it is private ranchers and bison meat purveyors who are doing the most to reacquaint this noble animal with the American grasslands it once dominated.

Read more. <http://civileats.com/2016/07/26/a-grassfed-bison-primer/>

Tour Showcases State's Diverse Agriculture

(From AgriView)

Officials representing Wisconsin state agencies made more than 100 stops July 11 and 12 throughout northwestern Wisconsin. “Cabinet on the Road” visits allowed agency representatives — 35 of them — to hear from businesses, educational institutions and citizens about important issues and the communities.

Among the stops on the tour was NorthStar Bison in Rice Lake, WI. Here is the report from that tour:

NorthStar Bison goes native

NorthStar Bison was established in Rice Lake by Lee and Mary Graese in the early 1990s. The couple has melded their passions for nutritious food and sustainable farming with their entrepreneurial skills. Their company processes and sells grass-fed bison, beef, lamb and elk meat products, as well as pastured-pork and poultry products.

The Graeses are involved in the family business with their children – oldest daughter Renee and husband Andre Abraham, son Sean Graese and wife Sami, daughter Marielle and husband Brett Hewitt, and daughter Lexi and husband Kees Stolarczyk. Andre Abraham manages the company’s meat packing plant in Rice Lake. Sean Graese is manager of customer relations and distribution; Marielle Hewitt manages the 700-head bison herd.

Lee Graese was raised on a dairy farm in Prairie Farm, Wisconsin, but didn’t care for the commodity market structure. He moved away from the farm after high school. He developed an interest in power lifting and eventually established two fitness centers. It was at one of the fitness centers where he and Mary, a dietitian, first met. They later married and, with their interest in health foods, they began to sell Shaklee products in the late 1980s. They left the Shaklee business when that company’s objectives changed, Sean Graese said.

In 1994 Lee Graese purchased a bison bull and a bison heifer calf from the Blue Mounds State Park near Luverne, Minnesota. He said he had an interest in bison since he was a boy and also liked bison meat for its nutritional and human-health benefits. Bison contains high levels of omega 3 fatty acids and conjugated linolenic acid.

Within just a couple of years, the Graeses increased their herd and began selling meat directly to customers. They built a mail-order business and were early to use the Internet and their website to increase sales.

As the market for their bison grew, the Graeses decided to become vertically integrated. They bought Mincoff Meats in 2005 – a meat-processing plant in Conrath, Wisconsin. They later renamed the plant Conrath Quality Meats. The Graeses also package and distribute products from their store in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. NorthStar Bison has about 20 employees. “We’re looking into building a new state-of-the-art processing facility, with a site yet to be determined,” Sean Graese said.

Today NorthStar Bison products are sold throughout the United States, with the largest markets in California, New York, Florida and Texas. The company’s four main markets are direct sales to consumers, and sales to meat-provision companies, groceries and restaurants. NorthStar Bison currently commands more than 50 percent of the grass-fed bison market in the United States, according to Sean Graese. He added that bison’s high levels of omega 3 fatty acids and conjugated linolenic acid have attracted companies like General Mills, which acquired EPIC Provisions in January. The EPIC Provisions product line includes 100 percent grass-fed animal-

based protein snacks. NorthStar Bison also produces about 1.2 million bison burger patties per year for Tony Little, a certified personal trainer and television fitness show mogul. The Graese family currently raises bison on about 1,700 acres of native grasses, and finishes them on pasture including clover and trefoil. Bison are raised to a market weight of 1,000 pounds to 1,100 pounds, which they reach in about 28 to 30 months.

“If the grass isn’t native, it’s not sustainable,” Sean Graese said.

NorthStar Bison also contracts with other farmers in Wisconsin to raise pasture-fed hogs and chickens, as well as grass-fed beef, lamb and elk. The company field harvests its animals, meaning they are killed in the field instead of at a slaughter plant. Using this method, an animal isn’t under stress and meat quality isn’t adversely affected like it might be at slaughter plant, Sean Graese said.

During his visit to NorthStar Bison, Jeff Lyon, deputy secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, talked with Sean Graese about how the state of Wisconsin eliminated the overtime charge of \$55 per hour for slaughter inspections of exotic animals like bison. Elimination of that inspection fee, which took effect April 1, has helped reduce NorthStar Bison’s production costs, which has improved profitability, Graese said. Visit www.northstarbison.com for more information.

Grilled Bison Ribs with A Bit of Chew

(From The Coeur d’Alene Press)

Exhausted from a stressful day of work, I slowly carry myself toward my open-air Jeep, loosen my tie, unbutton my collar and heave my tired body into the driver’s seat. Before starting the engine, I inhale deeply through my nose to gain energy for the journey home. Surprised at the beautiful aroma entering my brain, I quickly take a deeper breath and verbally acknowledge, “Barbecue chicken!” The delicious scent enters my body and I realize I’ve yet to eat anything today as my stomach growls at my head.

On my drive home, I’m surprised by the many smells floating through each neighborhood. The scent of steak, salmon, hot dogs and garlic meld in my mind to form a delightful menu of dinner possibilities. Now I’m confused, twice as hungry and ready to cook. It is a beautiful summer evening so cooking inside after working all day in an office is not an option. Once at home I decide to light the grill and search the freezer for possibilities.

My eyes discover a package of bison back-ribs and the wheels in my noggin begin to turn. I’m too hungry to wait for the time required to create fall-off-the-bone ribs but, ribs with a bit of a chew sound delicious. I defrost the meat, salt and pepper the ribs, then build a sauce.

Bison is an amazing alternative for dieters who crave the rich taste of beef but must be cautious of fat, cholesterol and calories. Quick ribs and fall-off-the-bone ribs both start the same but end differently. After grilling the quick ribs, the chef can make them fork-tender by wrapping the ribs in foil and placing them in a warm oven (275 degrees) for an additional 2-3 hours. I prefer my ribs with some chew, but most don’t (but, I must admit the fall-off-the-bone ribs are amazing). Most dieters feel more satisfied when chewing on the meat they consume so try this recipe both ways to see which satisfies most.

Read more. http://cdapress.com/columns/william_rutherford/article_3af6f09b-ba73-543c-a816-becd6c454aba.html

Park Officials To Visitors: Don't Get Too Close, Give Bison Their Space

(From KSL.com)

No matter how many times you see pictures of bison, there's nothing like taking your own. Candace Marston and her husband hail from Connecticut and are visiting state capitols in the West. But when she heard about bison in Utah, their trip to Boise took a detour to Antelope Island State Park.

"They're dangerous, but they're really cute," Marston said. "I want pictures."

Park workers understand people love the bison and want to take pictures of them. But as always, especially now, they're warning visitors to not get too close.

"Just with the kind of extra stress with the fire, I think it's even more critical to give them their space," said Wendy Wilson, assistant manager at Antelope Island State Park.

Over 15,000 acres burned last week, covering half the island and taking a lot of the vegetation bison and other animals rely on.

"It is devastating what burned out here," Wilson said.

<https://www.ksl.com/?sid=40848874&nid=148>

Antelope Island already healing itself as flames fire die down

(From KUTV.com)

Following the Antelope Island wildfire, which has charred over 14,000 acres so far, park officials are looking to make things green again.

Jeremy Shaw, park manager, said they plan on re-seeding the charred acreage, but it's an expensive task so they are looking at multiple options. Shaw believes the island environment will be back to normal sooner than people think.

"Come round up time in October you're going to see a green island," Shaw said.

Another concern is the wildlife on the island. Shaw said there were no animal deaths from the fire and now that the fire is about 80 percent contained, visitors have seen bison and antelope moving back to the burned areas.

See the video at <http://kutv.com/news/local/antelope-island-already-healing-itself-as-flames-fire-die-down>

Scientists Produce World's First Wood Bison Using In Vitro Fertilization

(From The Canada Journal)

Four bison calves frolicking around a University of Saskatchewan research farm could hold the key to rejuvenating the world's threatened wood bison population.

Three calves are the first bison ever born using in vitro fertilization. Researchers produced them in a laboratory, then transferred the embryos into surrogate mothers more than nine months ago. The bison cows gave birth to the calves earlier this month.

The fourth calf was produced from a frozen embryo that was taken from a bison cow in 2012 and transferred to a surrogate mother in 2015-another reproductive first for the bison species. "The babies look great," said Dr. Gregg Adams, a professor and reproductive specialist at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM). "They're keeping up with mom, and I'm really happy about it."

Adams has conducted reproductive research of wood bison for nearly a decade. Indigenous to Canada, the wood bison are threatened both by disease and loss of habitat.

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

Jamestown Features Bison, Buffalo Museum

(From The Aberdeen News)

Selfies with bison are risky and unadvised, with one exception — and it's a big one.

Dakota Thunder is the world's largest buffalo. His home is atop a hill in Jamestown, N.D., and he sits perfectly still, making him the perfect selfie companion.

Dakota Thunder is part of Frontier Village in Jamestown, a park featuring a city street that looks as though it hasn't changed in 150 years. The National Buffalo Museum is located on the campus, as is a herd of real bison, including White Cloud, a rare white bison.

Do not try and take selfies with the real bison.

Jamestown also features several great places to eat, a beautiful campus at the University of Jamestown, and a few parks along the James River if picnics are more your thing.

Visit discoverjamestownnd.com for more information.

Source: http://www.aberdeennews.com/outdoors/jamestown-features-bison-buffalo-museum/article_ead6f431-da9e-5127-b2c0-a92f3b4ff8d3.html

Midewin Welcomes Two Baby Bison

(From The Chicago Tribune)

Two bison calves were born this week at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington, bringing the total heard up to 38.

Midewin introduced 23 bison cows from South Dakota and four bulls from Colorado in October.

"Before the cows got here, we knew that some were pregnant," said Midewin Rangeland Management Specialist Kelly Gutknecht.

Gutknecht said that although the new calves appear healthy and remain with their mothers, these two were born, "just about two months later than the rest of the calves were born," she said.

The two are smaller and have less body fat than the others recently born, she said.

The bison roam on 1,200 acres, which is divided into four fenced-off parcels.

"Since their arrival, they've been on 350 acres," she said.

Midewin sought the bison for use as a "restoration tool" for the prairie, Shea said. The bison diet includes more grasses, whereas the cattle that had grazed there preferred more forbs, which are flowering plants. Because grasses grow faster, the bison will allow the forbs a better chance to establish on the prairie.

Also, the grazing style between the animals are different. Cattle graze the prairie down, then move to a new area. Bison graze and move at the same time.

Read more. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/news/ct-sta-baby-bison-born-st-0728-20160727-story.html>

Wildlife Official Made Same Mistake with a Bison Calf as Misguided Tourists in Yellowstone, Report Says

(From The Weather Channel)

It seems the well-meaning tourists blasted two months ago for their attempt to rescue a baby bison in Yellowstone National Park are not the only misguided rescuers-to-be.

A new federal investigation indicates that a government wildlife expert made the same mistake.

In May, two international visitors to Yellowstone arrived at a ranger station with the bison calf in the trunk of their SUV, saying they thought the little guy was cold. After attempts to reunite the calf with its herd failed, officials said they were forced to euthanize the baby bison. The incident led to global ridicule for the visitors on social media and incredulities by the public.

The encounter with the calf prompted Morgan Warthin of the National Park Service to urge visitors to respect wildlife and park regulations.

"Approaching wild animals can drastically affect their well-being and, in this case, their survival," she said in a statement.

Ranger Attempts a Misguided Rescue

As it turns out, even wildlife officials can make the same error out of the same desire to help abandoned or ill animals.

According to an Interior Department report released this week, an unnamed Park Service supervisory natural resource specialist removed a sickly buffalo calf from Badlands National Park in South Dakota and brought it to his house, where the calf reportedly died.

The investigation conducted by the Office of Inspector General concluded that the calf's removal was authorized by the park's acting superintendent but violated NPS policy, as well as state and federal law.

"The local police chief chose not to cite the supervisory natural resource specialist for the misdemeanor violation and the U.S. Attorney's Office declined prosecution," the report states.

Read more. <https://weather.com/science/environment/news/wildlife-official-baby-bison-calf-yellowstone>

Roberts Among U.S. Senators Addressing Organic Livestock Ahead of Rule

(From KAKE.com)

U.S. Senator Pat Roberts, R-Kan., Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, led a bipartisan group of 13 Senators in sending a second letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), requesting additional information regarding expressed concerns with the Agency's proposed rule on revised organic livestock and poultry production standards.

"The proposed rule raises significant concerns regarding the impact on current organic poultry and egg producers as well as access and price for organic consumers," the Senators said. "Further, proposed changes to outdoor access standards could have a detrimental impact to both animal health and food safety."

Other Senators include Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., Thad Cochran, R-Miss.; Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.; John McCain, R-Ariz.; Richard Burr, R-N.C.; Bob Casey, D-Penn.; Jerry Moran, R-Kan.; John Boozman, R-Ark.; John Hoeven, R-N.D.; Gary Peters, D-Mich.; David Perdue, R-Ga.; and Thom Tillis, R-N.C.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/jd4z4pw>

USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

(From USDA Press Release)

Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan option with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas, sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>