



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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August 19, 2016

Register early for September Bison Advantage Workshop

(From The Purdue Extension)

Producers wanting to help satisfy consumers' growing appetite for bison can learn more about the opportunities and challenges of raising bison by attending a Purdue Extension program.

The Bison Advantage Workshop, co-sponsored by the National Bison Association, will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 16 at Cook's Bison Ranch, 5645 E. County Road 600 S, Wolcottville.

"We love being able to be a part of raising an animal that has deep roots in our American history," said workshop host Pete Cook. "Bison meat is an excellent product with a high consumer demand. The history of bison, along with the advantages of raising this animal, make it an attractive option for producers. It's an exciting time to be involved in the bison business."

Sales of low-fat, high protein bison meat in restaurants and retail stores now amount to more than \$340 million per year, according to the National Bison Association. Prices paid to producers have reached record highs in each of the past six years.

Compared with cattle, bison are relatively easy to raise - hardy and resistant to disease - needing no artificial shelter.

Those attending will be introduced to management and marketing of bison and receive a free toolkit of bison production educational materials. There also will be a tour of the host ranch, lunch and a networking hour.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required by Sept. 9. Register by email at jim@bisoncentral.com or call the National Bison Association at 303-292-2833.

For more information, contact Steve Engleking at 260-499-6334 or email englekin@purdue.edu or visit <http://www.bisoncentral.com/events> for more details.

Registration Still Open for IL Bison Advantage Workshop

Registration is still available for the Bison Advantage workshop, scheduled September 7th in Urbana, IL. The workshop is designed to provide agricultural extension agents, Vo Ag Teachers, and prospective bison producers with a taste of the emerging opportunities in bison production and marketing.

NBA Executive Director Dave Carter will facilitate the 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. (see story above)

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.

Communications Working Group Surveys Membership

The National Bison Association is conducting a survey of its members to determine the effectiveness of our communications and find ways to serve our members better. The survey was developed by the association's Communications Working Group, which was organized earlier this year to develop some recommendations prior to the NBA Board Strategic Planning session next spring.

Follow this link to participate in this anonymous survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NQZZCVG>

Please complete the survey by this Tuesday, August 23rd.

Bison Wholesale Market Prices Reach New Record...Again

The bullish market for wholesale bison carcass prices continues unabated, according to the latest monthly report released by the USDA's Livestock and Grain Market Reporting Service this week.

According to the latest report, young bull carcasses in July average \$456.73/Cwt., with is \$10.34/Cwt. higher than in the previous month and \$32.52/Cwt. higher than the previous July. Heifer carcasses averaged \$443.64/Cwt., which was \$12.36/Cwt higher than the previous month and \$33.57/Cwt. higher than in July 2015. Older cows and bulls were also sharply higher.

Year-to-date slaughter under USDA inspection is 32,678 head of bison, compared to 31,591 during the same period in 2015. Through July, bulls accounted for 51 percent of the young

animals process, while heifers accounted for 49 percent. This compares with a ratio of 62 percent bulls and 38% heifers of the young stock processed between 2009 – 2015.

The USDA Price report is available at: https://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/nw_ls526.txt

The NBA Five-Year Tracking Report is available in the members' section at <http://bisoncentral.com/sites/default/files/Meat7.16.pdf>

State/Regional Leadership Workshop Set for October 7-9

State and Regional bison association leaders are encouraged to plan now to participate in the leadership workshop, scheduled at the Marriott Residence Inn, Kansas City, October 7-9, 2017.

The session is intended to provide information about utilizing social media, and to help associations coordinate activities to reach out to new and prospective producers.

The leadership gathering will kick off Friday evening, October 7th with a social hour and kick-off session. On Saturday, the sessions will focus on expanding social media presence, and on continuing to develop stronger communication and cooperation among the NBA and state/regional associations. The group will enjoy a dinner Saturday evening, and will reconvene Sunday morning to develop an action plan before the meeting adjourns at 11 a.m.

The host hotel for the State/Regional Workshop is the Marriott Residence Inn, Kansas City Airport. Rooms are \$99/night. Deadline to reserve is September 23. You can reserve your discounted room by calling 800-331-3131 and mentioning the NBA.

USDA Awards Contracts for 2 Million Pounds of Bison

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service issued a new solicitation for an additional two million pounds of ground bison to be delivered to Nampa, ID, and to Kansas City, MO. Bids are due by 1 p.m. Central Time, on August 16, 2016. Additional information, including the bid reports, is available on the Commodity Procurement website www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food

Questions regarding this procurement should be directed to Chyra Lewis, Contract Specialist at Chyra.Lewis@ams.usda.gov, (202) 260-8256.

Bison Help Butterflies Survive

(From Agri-View)

MADISON, Wis. — Following a massive increase in Karner blue butterflies in 2015, Wisconsin conservation biologists hope population surveys again find high numbers of the federally endangered species as the diminutive blue butterflies emerge from Wisconsin's savannas, barrens, prairies and sandy roadsides.

"We are happy with most of the numbers we are seeing so far in our surveys although the weather has been a serious issue," said Chelsea Gunther, the Department of Natural

Resources conservation biologist coordinating surveys and Wisconsin's Karner blue recovery program.

"The Sandhill site is looking promising again and I'm hopeful it is another good year there and at other central Wisconsin sites," she said.

Record numbers of Karner blue butterflies were surveyed last year at Sandhill Wildlife Area, a 9,150-acre wildlife area in central Wisconsin named for a series of gently rolling sandy ridges crisscrossing the property. The 58,000 total Karner blue butterflies counted at the site in 2015 was a 14-fold increase from the previous tally of 3,800 at that site in 2013. They constituted nearly 80 percent of the statewide total of 74,000 in 2015.

The main goal of the recovery program, initiated in 2007, is to establish 11 independent Karner populations of 3,000 to 6,000 butterflies on different state-owned properties that include wildlife areas, fishery areas, state natural areas, state parks and state forests. There are also a handful of cooperating private landowners involved in the recovery program. Population levels must exceed the site-specific goals for four consecutive years to be considered recovered.

Extensive efforts by DNR staff and property managers at Sandhill, as well as habitat benefits resulting from having a herd of buffalo at the site, are restoring the kind of open habitat Karner blue butterflies need. Wild lupine, the native plant that is the only one the butterflies eat during their larval stage, is found in the prairies and oak savannas at the site.

DNR research highlighted in "[Bison and butterflies](#)" in the April 2015 Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine has revealed a link between habitat disturbances caused by American bison and improved habitat for the butterfly.

"They found that the bison are having a real impact by keeping woody shrubs out of the area and causing minor soil disturbance," Gunther said.

The bison roll around on the ground and rub horns against the shrubs and trees, setting back growth and disturbing the soil.

"It's making really great conditions for the Karner blues and I'm hopeful that these conditions continue to support Karner populations," she said.

Full story: http://www.agriview.com/feature/farmlife/bison-help-butterflies-survive/article_708247a7-ff71-5833-aae1-8a1637cfd8d.html

Montana Tribes Seek Wild Bison Transfer to Reservation

(From The Casper Star Tribune)

BILLINGS, Mont. — A proposal to transfer wild bison from Yellowstone National Park to a Montana American Indian reservation ran into resistance on Monday from state livestock officials who said the animals pose a potential disease threat.

Leaders of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux tribes are pressing state officials to support the transfer of 49 bison to the tribes' northeastern Montana reservation. The request is backed by

Yellowstone park administrators looking for alternatives to the current practice of shipping park bison to slaughter when they cross into Montana.

More than \$500,000 has been spent on the Fort Peck reservation to build new fences and other facilities to keep the bison contained, said tribal Chairman Floyd Azure. The animals have been tested five times to guard against transmissions of brucellosis, said Fort Peck Fish and Game Department Director Robert Magnan.

“With the steps we’ve taken and the amount of money we’ve spent on this, we should be allowed to take bison,” Azure said. “We have numerous tribes and other organizations that want these bison and they are there to assist us.”

But Montana veterinarian Marty Zaluski told livestock board members that state law prohibits moving the bison until they are certified as disease-free. Zaluski said they would need to remain in quarantine inside or near Yellowstone for up to two-and-a-half years to be certain they’re not infected.

“The one sticking point that seems to be non-negotiable is the legal one,” Zaluski said. “No one has identified a legal way for us to do it.”

Many Yellowstone bison carry brucellosis, a disease feared by the livestock industry because it can cause cattle to abort their young. No transmissions from bison to cattle have been documented.

The 49 bison were captured last winter under an agreement between Montana and federal officials that restricts the animals’ seasonal migration into Montana.

Read more. http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/montana-tribes-seek-wild-bison-transfer-to-reservation/article_ee73bcbb-1804-5ad7-a34f-3905360b5042.html

American Bison Society Conference Planned in Banff in Late September

Conservationists, ranchers, tribal leaders and others interested in bison restoration will gather in Banff National Park September 26-29 for the American Bison Society conference, entitled, “The Social and Cultural Dimensions of Bison Ecological Restoration”.

For the first time in its history the ABS will meet in Canada, at The Banff Centre in Banff National Park. Bison enthusiasts, managers, producers, advocates, philanthropists, and artists are invited to share experiences and strategies to guide future progress toward the ecological restoration of wood and plains bison.

ABS Meeting Schedule:

September 26th, 2016 - Early evening opening reception
September 27th and 28th, 2016 - Meeting and Workshops
September 29th and 30th, 2016 - Optional Field Trips

Learn more and register at <http://www.ambisonsociety.org/>

Wilmington Prairie Hits Record Attendance After Bison Arrive

(From The Chicago Tribune)

WILMINGTON, Ill. -- There has been a large increase in the number of visitors to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in northern Illinois since the U.S. Forest Service introduced a herd of bison there last year.

ADVERTISING

New attendance figures show there were nearly 2,800 visitors to the prairie in July, the Daily Journal (<http://bit.ly/2biGh9m>) reported. That's more than four times higher than the 675 visitors the prairie had in July 2015, three months before the bison arrived.

"It has been great to see the sincere interest the bison have generated here locally from people of all different ages and walks of life," said Kurt Steele, Midewin's acting supervisor.

Eleven bison were brought to Midewin last October to attract visitors. The bison are also part of a 20-year experiment to restore the prairie to presettlement conditions because they eat grasses and walk their hooves on the land. Two more bison calves were born in late July.

"While the bison seem to be the draw, we encourage people to come out and walk around the prairie and get a better understanding about the work we are doing to try to restore the agency's first national tallgrass prairie so that generations to come will be able to see what the Illinois landscape could have looked like prior to European settlement," Steele said.

Read more. <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20160817/news/308179913/>

Study Examines Genetics of Bison in Theodore Roosevelt Park

(From the Bismarck Tribune)

Research underway at Theodore Roosevelt National Park aims to help scientists better understand bison in order to conserve the species.

Researchers recently collected tissue samples from 100 bison in the north and south units of the park that will be compared with bones and fossils collected in the state, said Bill Whitworth, chief of resource management for the park.

The goal of the project is to better understand the genetic diversity of the American bison, officially named the national mammal earlier this year.

"Genetic diversity allows animals to adapt to change," Whitworth said. "The more diverse they are, the more likely they are to adapt to changing circumstances."

Theodore Roosevelt National Park reintroduced 17 bison to the South Unit in 1956 from the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge. Twenty bison were transferred to the North Unit in 1962.

Today the herds average between 250 and 500 at the South Unit and between 150 and 300 at the North Unit.

The North Unit's population is approaching the upper limit, so a bison roundup is planned for this fall to remove 90 to 100 animals, Whitworth said. The size of the herd is managed conservatively to make sure bison and other wildlife in the park have enough forage, even in dry years.

"Whether we get a lot of rain or no rain, we can support the bison that we have," Whitworth said.

Read more. http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/study-examines-genetics-of-bison-in-theodore-roosevelt-park/article_77c594e6-5349-532d-b286-1bd8bbe0a2d2.html

Ag Credit Conditions Worsen, Kansas City Fed Says

(From Agri-Pulse)

A [new report](#) from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City paints a dim picture of agriculture credit conditions in the nation's heartland.

The survey of ag lenders throughout the seven-state 10th District covered by the bank shows credit conditions continued to deteriorate in the second quarter of 2016 as farm income "remained subdued." The district includes western Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Colorado and northern New Mexico.

Nearly 75 percent of bankers responding to the survey reported farm income was down from a year ago. Bankers also indicated they expect farm income to remain weak in the third quarter. "Persistent declines in farm income in the district have continued to affect agricultural credit conditions," according to the report's authors, Nathan Kauffman, the bank's assistant vice president and Omaha Branch executive, and Matt Clark, assistant economist. "Slimmer profit margins also have pulled down the rate of loan repayments. Almost half of all respondents reported that loan repayments rates in the second quarter were lower than a year ago. In addition, the severity of repayment rate problems has increased slightly over the past year." The survey also found:

-- Bankers reported an increase in the share of loan applications that were denied in the second quarter. The higher rate of loan denials suggests the number of farm borrowers who are less creditworthy has increased over the past year.

-- Values of cropland and rangeland are dropping. Values of non-irrigated and irrigated cropland declined 3 percent and 5 percent, respectively, from a year ago. Rangeland values also fell 3 percent, continuing the downward trend of recent quarters. Many bankers indicated they expect further declines in farmland values in the months ahead.

-- While a significant number of bankers in each district state expect farm income in the third quarter to be less than a year earlier, they also expect the rate of decline to be sharpest in the Mountain States and Oklahoma, which are relatively more dependent on income from wheat, cattle and energy production than other parts of the district.

-- Main Street businesses are suffering. Almost 85 percent of bankers noted that the weakening farm economy has reduced Main Street business activity. That's up from about 60 percent last year and just under 40 percent in 2014. The worst effects were being felt in the Mountain States and Oklahoma, regions with a stronger relative dependence on the livestock and energy sectors.

Looking to the future, the authors says crop prices at the end of the quarter “appeared poised to remain low along with growing expectations of a strong fall harvest,” and they warn that “borrowers without sufficient liquidity, substantial net worth or large borrowing bases may find it increasingly more difficult to attain financing if their creditworthiness continues to decline.”

Despite these concerns, the authors note that farm loans in the second quarter that were significantly past due or non-accruing remained slightly below recent averages amid a general, gradual downturn in the farm economy.

SD Officials Ask Landowners, Hunters to Report Dead Deer

(From The Rapid City Journal)

Wildlife officials in South Dakota are asking landowners and hunters to report to the state any sightings of sick or a cluster of dead deer.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department says it has documented the first deer mortality of the year caused by epizootic hemorrhagic disease, also known as EHD. The disease, which is spread by a biting midge, is common in white-tailed deer.

Officials say reports from landowners and hunters help wildlife managers monitor deer populations. EHD-caused losses have previously forced officials to reduce the number of deer hunting licenses in some units.

Read more. http://rapidcityjournal.com/sports/outdoorbriefs/article_5d22924d-2d4f-558e-8724-6bd2df62aff3.html

Bovine TB Found in Indiana Wild, White-tailed Deer

(From The Hoosier Ag Today)

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) has been diagnosed in a white-tailed deer in Franklin County, Ind. This marks the first time the disease (more formally known as *Mycobacterium bovis*) has been found in a wild animal in Indiana. This finding means significant changes in disease monitoring requirements for cattle owners and deer hunters in the area.

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) has been working with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to test wildlife on a Franklin County cattle farm where TB was diagnosed in April. The 2-year-old doe that tested positive for TB was culled as part of the surveillance effort on the cattle farm.

Under federal requirements, finding TB in a free-ranging wild animal means testing of all cattle must expand from 3 miles to 10 miles and surveillance in hunter-harvested deer will intensify. For cattle owners in Franklin County and portions of some adjoining counties, BOAH staff will be reaching out to determine if cattle in the 10-mile circle are test-eligible and, if so, schedule herd testing. BOAH's premises registration program has approximately 400 farms registered in the 10-mile testing zone.

For deer hunters in the region, that means whitetails harvested in a specific zone must be sampled for laboratory testing. DNR will be providing more information to hunters in the coming weeks.

"This is an enormous undertaking that cannot be completed overnight," said Indiana State Veterinarian Bret D. Marsh, DVM. "Farmers and hunters in this area have been extremely cooperative and supportive of our efforts over the years. We need their help now more than ever as we widen our surveillance efforts. If this disease is out there-either on farms or in the wild-we need to find it. Our status as a TB-free state is critical to our growing and thriving cattle and dairy industries in this state."

Read more. <https://www.hoosieragtoday.com/bovine-tb-found-in-indiana-wild-white-tailed-deer/>

Local Foods Marketplace Invites Artisan Food Entrepreneurs to Apply

Feast! Local Foods Marketplace, held in December in Rochester, Minnesota, hosts more than 100 vendors from Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota who show, sample, and sell their artisan food products to wholesale buyers and consumers.

The jury-selected exhibitors also have a half-day of networking and sharing about best practices for growing their small food businesses. Businesses selected to attend and exhibit are operating at a distributor-ready scale and utilizing locally grown ingredients in their supply chains. Feast! Local Foods Marketplace is co-hosted by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and Renewing the Countryside.

Read more. <http://www.local-feast.org/>

Farmbytes Offer Video Introductions to Small-Farm Topics

University of Minnesota Extension Small Farms Team has introduced Farmbytes, a series of short, online, self-guided video introductions to a variety of topics related to your small farm. The goal of the Farmbytes series is to provide useful, practical, relevant information in the form of easily digestible lessons with more resources for those who want to drill down further.

Farmbytes have been posted on fencing systems, soil sampling, marketing local food, making a poultry feeder, watering system designs for rotational grazing, and more.

Read more. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/small-farms/farmbytes/>

Nutrition Education for Native American Communities

First Nations Development Institute plans to award up to 30 grants totaling \$10,000 each to Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations programs that expand access to nutrition education programs in Native communities and measure the effectiveness of education interventions.

This grant opportunity will support FDPIR programs that are looking to provide or expand nutrition workshops, cooking classes/food demonstrations, healthy recipe development, development and dissemination of educational materials, and more.

Proposals are due August 23, 2016.

Read more. <http://www.firstnations.org/grantmaking/2016FDPIR>

EQIP Available in Wisconsin

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin is accepting applications for Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding. EQIP is the primary program available to farmers for farm and woodland conservation work, offering payments for more than 110 basic conservation practices.

Special sign-up opportunities are also open for On-Farm Energy, Organic, and Seasonal High Tunnel conservation practices, as well as a number of landscape-based initiatives. All offer technical and financial assistance through EQIP.

Apply by September 2, 2016, for funding in 2017.

Read more.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/wi/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1221208>

Us Meat Consumption Rising at Record Rate

(From MarketWatch.com)

Meat: It's what's for dinner.

Last year, per capita meat consumption in the U.S. increased at the fastest rate in four decades, climbing 5% compared with a year prior, according to data from research and advisory firm Rabobank. The average American now eats roughly 193 pounds of beef, pork and/or chicken a year (or more than 3.7 pounds a week), up from roughly 184 pounds in 2012.

Among the reasons: A stronger dollar and large increases in the supply of chicken and pork, says William Sawyer, the director of food and agricultural research at Rabobank.

What's more, Rabobank projects that by 2018 meat consumption will be at record levels of more than 200 pounds a year per capita. That's due, in part, to a rapidly expanding pork and poultry supply — the firm expects this supply uptick to lead to lower meat prices — as well as high demand for meat.

Meat has even become an easy and popular snack option, says Sawyer: "Hot categories right now are meat sticks and jerky."

USDA Warns All 50 Governors Over New GMO Food Law

(From *Sustainable Food News*)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has sent a [letter to the governors of all 50 states](#) to stress that the new GMO food labeling law signed by President Obama last month prohibits states from requiring claims to disclose whether a food is genetically engineered.

"I would recommend that [name of state] fully review the scope and effect of this new federal law in advance of taking any action or considering any new state initiatives related to the regulation of labels for foods that are genetically engineered or that contain genetically engineered ingredients," wrote Edward Avalos, USDA under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs.

Obama signed the new law, called the [National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard](#), on July 29, immediately nullifying Vermont's first-in-the-nation GMO-labeling law, which went into effect July 1. The new federal law also invalidates GMO labeling laws on the books in Maine, Connecticut and Alaska, as well as any future state effort to enact labeling requirements for foods made with GMOs.

The new federal law gives the USDA two years to create a mandatory, nationwide GMO food-labeling system that lets manufacturers disclose genetically engineered ingredients using digital codes and 800-numbers rather than on-pack language.

Several major U.S. food manufacturers had already re-labeled food products to comply with Vermont's law, including multinational food giants ConAgra Foods, Inc., General Mills, Mars Incorporated, and Kellogg Company, the world's largest cereal producer. [Campbell Soup Company](#) became the first major food manufacturer to label food products made with GE ingredients in January.

USDA has also established a working group to develop a timeline for rulemaking, according to the [Food Marketing Institute](#), the trade group for the U.S. food retail industry. FMI recently hosted a meeting featuring Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's senior advisor, Doug McKalip, who said the agency plans to hold listening sessions and expects to publish an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) in the fall to request feedback from the public and industry. In an effort to promote transparency in the process, McKalip said the USDA has set up a [website](#), where it will publish responses to questions it receives via a new phone line and email address, GMOLabeling@ams.usda.gov.

The Weekly Update is a service designed to provide National Bison Association members with news and information affecting bison production and marketing. Many items in the Weekly Update are reprinted from outside sources. The content of those articles does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the National Bison Association, and are reproduced here only as a means to keep our membership informed as much as possible on all information and opinions relating to bison that is circulating publicly.