



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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September 2, 2016

NBA Questions USDA New Directive on Bison Imports

The National Bison Association today requested that the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service clarify its justification for a new Import Alert announcing that, effective September 26th, anyone importing bison into the United States must obtain approval from the agency at least seven days before the animals are shipped.

“This new alert came as a complete surprise to the National Bison Association, and to our commercial producers engaged in the importation of bison.” NBA Executive Director wrote in a letter to the APHIS Director of Animal Permitting and Negotiations Services.

In the letter, Carter noted, “The import Alert notes that the new prior-approval process is being implemented ‘due to a lack of adequate inspection facilities to safely inspect such animals at the port.’ The Import Certification Regulations adopted by USDA APHIS in 2007 alleviate the requirement for any off-loading of bison at the port, as long as the animals are transported in sealed trailers, and that the appropriate veterinary officials are present when the seal is broken. Accordingly, the lack of facilities for inspection at the port should not present a problem.

“Although our members have encountered some delays in the past because of inspection personnel, we have not been aware of any difficulties at the border within the past two years,” Carter wrote.

Less Than Two Weeks Left to Nominate Regional Directors

National Bison Association members have two weeks to nominate themselves or someone else as a candidate to serve on the board as a director from Regions I, III, V or VII. Ballots will be distributed September 15th, with voting to be conducted through the end of September. The directors elected in that balloting will serve from January 2017 through January 2019.

To qualify, candidates shall have been active or lifetime members of the Corporation for at least two years, and must have registered for and attended at least one general membership meeting or other NBA sponsored event during the two immediately preceding years.

Directors will be elected from the following regions:

Region I is comprised of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. Alan Douglass, the current director, is eligible and has filed for re-election.

Region III is comprised of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. Dave Hunter, the current director, is eligible for re-election.

Region V is comprised of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Tom Barthel, the current director, is eligible and has filed for re-election.

Region VII is comprised of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. Brian Grubb, the current director, is eligible and has filed for re-election. Kevin McRitchie of Michigan has also been nominated as a candidate.

IBC Planning Committee Finalizing Agenda, Promoting Raffle Items

The International Bison Conference Committee met yesterday to continue finalizing the plans for the four-day event planned in Big Sky, MT next July 4-8.

Educational sessions during the 2017 event will focus on “Bison in a Changing Climate,” “Marketing All Things Bison,” and “Building a Successful Bison Business.” Dr. Jim Hurrell, director of the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research, is among the speakers scheduled to delve into the topic of bison production in a changing climate. Lauri Demeritt, director of the Hartman Group consumer research firm, will be one of the keynotes for the session on marketing all things bison.

The IBC will kick off with a celebration of Americana on Tuesday, July 4th. On Friday, July 7th, attendees will travel to the Flying D Ranch for workshops and a tour. Sessions on the 5th and 6th will be at the Huntley Lodge in Big Sky. On July 8th, people may take an optional tour of Yellowstone National Park, including the park’s bison management facilities.

Evening entertainment will include Willie and the Wild West, and Cowboy Poet/Musician Leo Downing.

Three raffle items are being offered as fundraisers for the IBC. Those items include:

- One of only 15 Shiloh Sharps reproduction 1874 Sporter 3 rifles, tickets - \$20 U.S./\$25/Canadian;
- A Yearling Bull directly descended from the Yellowstone National Park herd, tickets \$25/ U.S./\$30 Canadian; and
- A 4-night getaway for four people to Ted Turner’s historic Sierra Grande Lodge and Spa in Truth or Consequences, NM – tickets - \$20 U.S./\$25 Canadian.

In addition, an on-line auction is being set up for a four-night getaway for two people at Flathead Lake Lodge in Big Fork MT, and for one of the Shiloh Sharps rifles.

A variety of sponsorship packages are also available for the 2017 IBC.

Montana and National Bison Associations Weigh in on Proposed Bison Ordinance

The Montana Bison Association and the National Bison Association today sent a joint letter to the Carter County, MT Conservation District requesting that commercial bison producers be exempted from a proposed ballot measure that would restrict or prohibit bison production in that district.

The Conservation district has drafted a proposed ordinance for the November ballot to “protect the soil and water resources within the boundaries of the conservation district from unreasonable depletion and degradation of natural resources from the grazing of wild, free-roaming and domesticated bison.”

The proposed ordinance would prohibit any bison grazing without a permit from the Carter County Conservation District. And it would prohibit grazing if the district deemed that the “grazing will result in sediment damage to lands, drainages, waterways, reservoirs, and other water storage facilities.”

In the letter to the Conservation District, the Montana and National Bison Associations wrote, “We share your commitment to the stewardship of our fragile soil and water resources in Montana, and support your efforts to protect those resources within Carter County.

“However, the wording of this ordinance is prejudicial against those commercial producers. Accordingly, we request that you remove any reference from domestic (commercial) bison from this proposed ordinance.

The letter continued, “We recognize that any livestock—including bison—can have a detrimental impact on the land and water if improperly managed. But there is no scientific research to show that properly managed bison have any more significant detrimental impact on the natural resources than cattle, sheep or other types of domestic livestock. In fact, as an indigenous species, properly managed bison can have a positive impact on the landscape when compared to introduced livestock species.”

Ruhter Promoted Bison Advantage Workshop on CBS Affiliate

David Ruhter of the Illinois-Indiana Bison Association dropped by the local CBS affiliate (WCIA News) in Champaign, IL, to promote the Bison Advantage workshop scheduled next Wednesday at the I Hotel and at Ruhter Bison Farm in Urbana, IL. Ruhter noted that the bison business is welcoming new producers, and encouraged participation in the upcoming workshop.

“The biggest problem in the bison business is that we don’t have enough supply to meet the demand. It’s projected that, for the next five years, the supply will be very short, so we are looking for new producers,” Ruhter said during the interview.

We see the interview with Ruhter, click here:

<http://www.illinoishomepage.net/the-morning-show/bison-advantage-workshop-ruhter-bison>

Price Reduction Announced for Conservation Herd Registry

During the NBA Board of Directors meeting held August 18, 2016, the North American Bison Registry recommended a price reduction for participation in the Conservation Herd Registry [CHR]. The recommendation was approved unanimously in the interest of economics for the membership.

The price change includes a reduction to \$110 for entry to the CHR and \$50 for the annual report fee.

Learn more about the NABR and the CHR at <http://bisoncentral.com/about-nba/bison-registry> and please note, the new NBA website that is currently under construction will include an online application and payment for these services and will be available soon.

The CHR was innovated by the NABR, and approved by the NBA, to help tell the story of bison ranching as a species restoration vehicle, which is identified indisputably as integral to the most successful post-bottleneck wildlife recovery in the history of the planet.

Additionally, The NABR submitted its official position on 'Pure' and 'Pure bison' for the conversations that seem to focus on bison purity in the media, that it may be available to the NBA for use as a disclaimer and educational post-script.

The positions and opinions reflected in this article are not necessarily shared by the North American Bison Registry (NABR).

Whereas the NABR charges itself with discovering and recording bison heritage, the inclusion of all remnant Bison genetics is our mission to ensure that the future of bison conservation is secure. Until it is proven that absolute purity is significant, and can be indisputably identified, the NABR includes all Bison for their genetic contribution, but excludes recent introgression, i.e. hybrids, by process of genetic testing and ethical management.

Communications Working Group Delivers Recommendations to Board

Following a series of meetings, and a survey of the NBA membership, the National Bison Association Communications Working Group wrapped up its work this week and delivered its recommendations to the Board of Directors.

The report adopted by the Working Group notes, "A survey of NBA members and comments from members of this committee suggest that most members generally favor "more" and "better" content and presentation in all forms of association media — even the platforms they follow most consistently and those they like best."

The working group also noted that, while the Bison World and Weekly Update are valuable tools for communicating with members, the emerging social media platforms are a growing opportunity to communicate with external audiences.

The two recommendations offered by the working group are:

That the NBA hire an experienced advertising, sales and marketing professional to increase the revenue for *Bison World*, and thus allow for an expanded publication, and;

That a new committee be developed of active social media users to advise the association on opportunities to maximize those platforms.

The committee was chaired by former NBA Vice President Donnis Baggett of Texas. Other members of the working group were Gail Griffin of Minnesota, Karen Conley of South Dakota, Mark Tilsen of South Dakota, Sherry DiSimone of Georgia, and David Ruhter of Illinois.

Resolution being Prepared to Designate November 5th as National Bison Day

U.S. Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) are preparing to introduce a resolution in the Senate designating November 5th as National Bison Day, 2016.

Even though legislation was enacted earlier this year to establish bison as the national mammal of the United States, Senate action is still required each year to designate the official National Bison Day.

Bison producers and associations are encouraged to organize activities on national Bison Day to provide additional outreach to the American public about the Animal. Businesses and organizations organizing events should pass along that information to the NBA so that we can help promote the activities.

Sen. Hoeven is also working to organize a bison outreach event on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. for November 16th.

October 31 deadline nears to nominate honorees to Buffalo Hall of Fame

(From the National Buffalo Foundation)

The National Buffalo Foundation accepts nominees for the Buffalo Hall of Fame. Administered by the Foundation, the Hall of Fame formally and publicly recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the buffalo industry. The list includes historically famous bison benefactors such as William Hornaday and Theodore Roosevelt as well as contemporary honorees such as Kenneth "Doc" Throlson, Georgia Peterson and Ted Turner.

The National Buffalo Foundation considers nominations based on their industry support and guidance. Those who know of someone who "fits that bill, who has played an outstanding role in keeping the Buffalo industry and its allied businesses among the best in the nation," can acknowledge his or her lifetime achievements by nominating them for induction to the National Buffalo Foundation's Hall of Fame: "the only buffalo industry recognition of these outstanding individuals."

The deadline to nominate someone is October 31. The National Buffalo Foundation Board of Directors will evaluate each nomination.

The full roster of Buffalo Hall of Fame honorees is on display at the National Buffalo Museum in Jamestown, North Dakota. The Hall of Fame was founded in 1980. Comprehensive biographies for each Buffalo Hall of Fame inductee are newly available at the Buffalo Hall of Fame page of the National Buffalo Foundation website.

Click on the Buffalo Hall of Fame at www.nationalbuffalofoundation.org where you can find a downloadable nomination form to submit new candidates for consideration.

Foundation guidelines stipulate only that nominees should have made bison industry contributions that have had a lasting impact or benefit, with supporting information that includes such things as “bison-related associations or offices held and committees served, honors, awards, citations of merit or other positive information about the nominee.”

Source. <http://bisoncentral.com/news/october-31-deadline-nears-nominate-honorees-buffalo-hall-fame>

NOTICE: USDA Updates Vaccine Labeling and Packaging Requirements

(From USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Bulletin)

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is amending its regulations for veterinary biologics labeling and packaging to make the requirements more consistent with current science and veterinary practice. These changes are necessary to update and clarify labeling requirements and to ensure the required labeling is accurate with regard to the expected performance of the product.

The rule will become effective 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, but there will be a 4-year phase-in of the packaging and labeling requirements in this rule, with additional extensions of up to 2 years allowed under certain conditions.

In addition to the changes described in this new rule, when manufacturers implement these changes, they will also need to implement a simpler, uniform format label format for veterinary biologics. The simpler format will allow biologics companies to more clearly communicate performance information to the end user. APHIS published that final rule in July 2015, but delayed its implementation until now so that the companies only need to change label formats once.

Full text:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/bulletins/15fbc58>

Threats Force Closure of USDA Offices

(From Agri-Pulse)

The Agriculture Department shut down offices in five states because of anonymous threats, including at Beltsville, Md., home of USDA's flagship research facility.

A spokesman didn't describe the nature of the threats but said that the department was working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and local law enforcement.

In addition to Beltsville, the closed offices were located in Fort Collins, Colo.; Hamden, Conn.; Raleigh, N.C. and Kearneysville and Leetown, W. Va.

"Personnel at these locations have been made aware of the threats and will not report to these offices until further notice," USDA spokesman Matt Herrick said in a statement. The closures affected USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Agricultural Research Service, Food Safety Inspection Service, Forest Service, National Agricultural Library, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Office of the Inspector General, and USDA Departmental Management.

How Will America's Aging Farmers Transfer Land to The Next-Generation?

(From Sustainable Food News)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released a [new report](#) that examines U.S. farmland ownership and tenure, how land is acquired and transferred, the characteristics of land rental agreements, and landlord involvement in rented farmland operations.

Ten percent (93 million acres) of all land in farms is expected to be transferred during 2015-2019, most of which (6 percent) will change hands through gifts, trusts, or wills. Of all land expected to be transferred, only about a quarter (21 million acres) will be sold between nonrelatives, the study found.

In addition, another 14 percent (or 13 million acres) is anticipated to be sold from one relative to another. While the amount of farmland expected to be sold is relatively small, some of the land transferred through trusts, wills, and gifts may then be sold by the new owners, bolstering the supply of land available for purchase.

The agency's Economic Research Service (ERS) said farmland ownership, tenure, and transfer have important implications for land accessibility, particularly for young and beginning farmers. "The advanced age of many farmers raises questions about how land will be transferred to the next generation of agricultural landowners," the ERS said.

Despite the significance of these issues, a number of information gaps remain. For example, to what degree are non-operator landlords involved in the farm sector, what barriers exist to accessing land in the rental market, and do operators and non-operators plan to transfer their land (when not through sales) through different channels, such as wills, trusts, or as gifts? Findings from the report include:

- Approximately 39 percent of the 911 million acres of farmland in the contiguous 48 States is rented
- Smaller family farm operators are more likely to be full owners of land they operate.
- The majority of rented acres are owned by non-operator landlords.
- Retired farmers make up 38 percent of non-operator landlords.
- Most tenants rent land from multiple landlords.
- Most landlords have long-term relationships with their tenants, suggesting that access to new land
- through renting may be limited.

- Non-operator landlords are more likely than operator landowners to acquire land through inheritance.

Can The Sale of Wildlife Friendly Beef Help Ranchers and Conservationists Get Along?

(From Montana Public Radio)

Wild Sky Beef is part of American Prairie Reserve's mission to provide habitat for wildlife. The for-profit arm of APR is paying its neighboring ranchers if they agree to be wildlife friendly.

Some ranchers in central and northeastern Montana resent APR, and its wealthy backers, for buying or leasing their neighbor's land and turning loose free-roaming bison.

Fifth generation rancher David Crasco used to be one of those ranchers.

Laura Huggins, the CEO of Wild Sky Beef, remembers her first meeting with Crasco, "He came up to me and said, 'Hi, you're my enemy.' And I said, 'Are you sure about that? I don't think I'm your enemy.'"

"At first it was. I used to call them the enemy," Crasco says laughing.

APR has launched a controversial, ambitious project is to create 3.5 million acres of public and private land that its supporters often call an "American Serengeti." If successful, it would be larger than Yellowstone National Park.

Carasco's ranch is south of Malta on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

Carasco says he changed his mind after talking with Huggins and another participating rancher on Fort Belknap.

About two years ago, he agreed to let Wild Sky place 5 cameras on his ranch to document mountain lions, bears, and other predators on his land. He receives a check for each photo of a predator.

Carasco welcomes the income.

"It helps my bottom line at the end of the year. I don't put up my own hay. I buy it all. The money I receive from that business helps buy that hay," he says.

Bovine TB Identified in Alcona County Herd

(Michigan Dept. of Agriculture Press Release)

LANSING - Bovine tuberculosis was recently confirmed in an Alcona County herd when one of the animals was tested to be transported off the farm. The large beef herd is the 66th cattle herd in Michigan found with bovine TB since 1998.

In the Modified Accredited Zone, which encompasses Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency and Oscoda counties, testing before movement and annual surveillance testing is required of cattle

producers. These testing precautions are designed to catch the disease in the very earliest stages and prevent the disease from spreading to other farms. Bovine TB is endemic in the free-ranging white-tailed deer population in the MAZ and any shared contact between deer and cattle can be a potential source of infection.

"Finding bovine TB in a herd is always hard on the impacted farm and at this time we have not determined how this herd became infected," said Dr. Rick Smith, Assistant State Veterinarian. Due to the location of the infected herd, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is establishing a special surveillance area which will involve a small number of herds in the northern portion of Iosco County. Producers who need to test will be notified by MDARD.

An informational meeting for cattle producers in Alcona and Iosco counties is scheduled for:
Monday, September 12, 2016 at 7 p.m.
Curtis Township Hall
4932 F-30, Glennie, Michigan 48737