



National Bison Association

8690 Wolff Court, Suite 200 Westminster, CO 80031-3646
www.BisonCentral.com Phone: 303-292-2833 Fax: 303-845-9081

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 23, 2016

National Bison Day Declared

The fourth time is the charm for the American bison – our national mammal – as the U.S. Senate for the fourth time in four years agreed to a resolution designating National Bison Day as the first Saturday in November, which falls this year on November 5th.

National Bison Day has become an annual celebration of the ecological, cultural, historical and economic contribution of the U.S. national mammal, the American bison. Similar resolutions were passed in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Native American tribes, bison producers, conservationists, zoos, sportsmen and women, educators and other public and private partners commemorate the National Bison Day by hosting events celebrating bison in their communities in dozens of states and participating on social media.

Earlier this year, President Obama signed the National Bison Legacy Act on May 9, 2016, making the North American bison the official National Mammal of the United States. The signing of that legislation was a milestone for an animal that once faced extinction. The bison has played central role in America's history, helped to shape the ecology of the Great Plains, contributes to the U.S. economy, and holds cultural and spiritual significance for Native Americans. Today, bison live in all 50 states and serves as a symbol of unity, resilience and healthy lifestyles and communities.

The National Bison Day resolution was led by Sen. Michael Enzi (R-WY) and co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of senators. The effort is supported by the American Bison Coalition, a group of more than 60 organizations and businesses led by the Inter-Tribal Buffalo Council, National Bison Association, and Wildlife Conservation Society.

Said John Calvelli, WCS Executive Vice President of Public Affairs: "There can be no denying that 2016 is a great year for the American Bison, which became the U.S. National Mammal in May and now the U.S. Senate has once again officially declared National Bison Day which will be November 5th this year. At WCS, we are proud to help lead the American Bison Coalition whose members celebrate this magnificent species which once faced extinction but contributes so much to our country."

Keith Aune, WCS Senior Conservationist and Bison Program Director, said: "This year's National Bison Day will be extra meaningful as we now recognize bison as our national

mammal. Bison have been part of the American landscape for many thousands of years and have shaped the ecological function of the Great Plains.”

Jim Stone, Executive Director of the Inter-Tribal Buffalo Council, said: “Once again, Indian Country is looking forward to celebrate National Bison Day as a testament to the iconic nature of the bison. Now as a national symbol, the standing of the bison in the eyes of the country is ever increasing and is fulfilling the dreams of tribal communities.”

Dave Carter, Executive Director of the National Bison Association, said: “National Bison Day rightfully honors this magnificent animal, our national mammal, and helps focus attention on the work being done by private ranchers, conservationists and tribal leaders to bring bison back to pastures and rangelands across the country.”

Matheson Headed to Banff for American Bison Society Conference

NBA Assistant Director Jim Matheson will attend the American Bison Society conference next week in Banff, Canada.

The Wildlife Conservation Society hosts the conference every three years and gathers over 200 bison conservationists, wildlife biologists, herd managers and enthusiasts to discuss bison restoration. This year's theme is "the Cultural and Social dimension of Bison ecological restoration" . Learn more at <http://www.ambisonsociety.org/American-Bison-Society-Meeting.aspx>

Said Matheson, "It's important that the NBA is represented at this conference as to offer the private producer's significant role in bison restoration. I look forward to both learning and educating next week."

Also attending is NBA Conservation Committee chairman, Donald Beard, and Canadian Bison Association executive director, Terry Kremeniuk, who is among the conference presenters.

Members Urged to Vote in Regional Elections

National Bison Association members in Regions I, III, V and VII have until next Friday to cast their ballots for their candidates to represent them on the National Bison Association board of directors from the next two years. The directors elected in that balloting will serve from January 2017 through January 2019,

Ballots were emailed last week to members in the following regions.

Region I is comprised of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. Alan Douglass, the current director, is the candidate for reelection.

Region III is comprised of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. John Cammack of Stoneville, SD and Mimi Hillenbrand of Rapid City are the two candidates for that seat.

Region V is comprised of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Tom Barthel, the current director, is the candidate for reelection.

Region VII is comprised of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. Brian Grubb of New York and Kevin McRitchie of Michigan are candidates for that seat.

Ballots have also been mailed to members in the four regions who have not registered email addresses with the association. Anyone in Regions I, III, V and VII who has not received a ballot should contact the NBA at jim@bisoncentral.com.

Carter Meets Discusses Trade, Commodity Purchase Issues with USDA Officials

National Bison Association Executive Director Dave Carter met this week with key USDA officials on issues relating to international trade and commodity procurement.

On trade issues, Carter connected with Laura Anderson, director of animal products for the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Dawn Williams Deputy Director, and three other FAS officials to discuss the progress of efforts to open the Korean and Japanese markets to bison meat. FAS last year initiated a formal petition process to open the Korean market, and is anticipating filing a petition on the Japanese market within the next year.

Carter also met with Terry Lutz, Marketing specialist for the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, to express concern over the potential disruption that the USDA's large bison purchase proposals are creating in the commercial marketplace.

Bison Represented at Natural Expo East

The buzz surrounding bison continues to grow, as at least three National Bison Association member companies staked out ground at the nation's second largest natural foods exposition this week.

Exhibiting a variety of bison products at Natural Products Expo this week were Epic Provisions, Golden Valley, and Tanka Bars. The companies sampled a variety of bison jerky products, protein bars, tallow and other products.

The Natural Products Expo holds two natural foods trade shows annually, one in Baltimore and one in Anaheim which attracts over 2,000 exhibitors and tens of thousands of attendees, and is considered the premier natural and organic trade show for prospective buyers.

The Meaning Behind the Sacred White American Bison

(From Modern Farmer)

When a white American bison is born it's a rare event indeed. Some scientists estimate it at a one in 10 million occurrence. For the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Sioux, the birth of a white bison isn't just a random occurrence.

At the heart of the reverence of the white American bison—or American buffalo; the terms bison and buffalo have become interchangeable in reference to the animal—is the story of White Buffalo Calf Woman. There seems to be no definitive version of the story, but each one describes a beautiful maiden dressed all in white who brought seven sacred rituals to the Sioux people 19 generations ago—the equivalent of 1,330 years. Among them: the canunpa wakan (the Sacred Pipe), which still exists and is in the possession of Chief Arvol Looking Horse of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe; the Sun Dance, an important ceremonial event; the inipi (sweat lodge); and the hanblecia (the vision quest).

In one version of the story, it was a summer in which there were no bison. The Lakota—which like other Plains tribes heavily depended on the animals for food and other necessities—were starving. A beautiful woman in white came to the tribe and, over the course of four days, taught them many things, including the notion that all things in the world are connected. As she was leaving, she transformed into a white bison calf and brought a massive herd of bison to the people, saving them from starving. In many versions, the woman promises to return in the future in the form of a white bison calf.

For many Lakota, the teachings of the White Buffalo Calf Woman are an exemplar of how to live, especially the notion of universal connectivity. Looking Horse, a current spiritual leader of the Sioux, has described the prophecy of the White Buffalo Calf Woman's return as a time of sweeping change in which people must unite or face global disaster. He is currently taking part in the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline, a multi-billion dollar project that would pass through land sacred to the Lakota to connect the Bakken oil sands in North Dakota to another pipeline in Illinois that leads to oil refineries on the Gulf Coast.

Read more. <http://modernfarmer.com/2016/09/white-bison/>

Tribes ask legislators to give bison more room to roam

(From the Post Register)

Northwest tribal representatives urged a small group of Montana legislators on Wednesday to allow bison more room to roam outside of Yellowstone National Park.

Instead the Environmental Quality Council voted by a narrow margin to draft a letter to Yellowstone National Park officials saying they support allowing tribal hunting inside the park.

“I think it’s a damn good thing,” said Sen. John Brenden, R-Scobey. “Do I think we’ll get anything out of it? No.”

The decision prompted a Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes legal representative to urge the council to note in the letter that the tribe has not asked to hunt in the park. Sen. Mike Phillips, D-Bozeman, also wanted it noted in the letter that the council was divided on the issue.

Winter plan

The discussion arose during the first day of the EQC’s two-days of hearings on a variety of subjects, including plans for how Montana would manage Yellowstone bison that migrate out of the park this winter.

Last year the Park Service delayed its trapping of bison to allow more hunter opportunity to kill the big animals, which is more politically and socially acceptable. The Park Service traps the bison in part to test for the spread of the disease brucellosis but also to ship animals to slaughter to reduce the size of the herd which otherwise has few natural predators.

The Yellowstone bison population has grown to more than 5,000 animals. Montana would like the park to drop that number to 3,000, a desire outlined in a court-mediated agreement between the Department of the Interior and the state.

The delayed trapping and the coordination of hunts to try and give the bison time to move out of the park before they're shot created a situation that proved "untenable" in the Beatty Gulch area where the huntable bison congregated, according to Sam Shepherd, Fish, Wildlife and Parks Region 3 supervisor.

So this year Yellowstone officials have agreed to start trapping bison immediately when the animals migrate out of the park in the Gardiner Basin. Some bison will not be rounded up to still allow for hunter opportunity, Shepherd added.

"We recognize that hunting is not the entire solution," said Marty Zaluski, the state veterinarian. "We want to make sure we are proactive and not creating a crisis situation with larger numbers of bison coming out of the park."

Read more. <http://www.postregister.com/articles/outdoors/2016/09/21/tribes-ask-legislators-give-bison-more-room-roam>

Sunshine, bison bring visitors to Autumn on Prairie

(From The Ogle County News)

Close to 1,000 visitors came to the Nachusa Grasslands' Autumn on the Prairie Sept. 17 with most of them hoping to get a closer look at the preserve's bison herd.

Some of them did and some did not, but such is the case when it comes to seeing an undomesticated herd that has 1,500 acres to choose from.

"This is a wild herd, we may not be able to see them on demand," Grasslands' volunteer Mike Carr told a wagon full of visitors as they used binoculars to search bison in the distance.

And there they were...walking very slowly with the just the tops of their large brown bodies framed against a hill of flowing prairie grass.

"Yes, the grass is very tall, but there, there they are," said a tour participant.

Carr confirmed the sighting. "Seeing them at distance like this is one of the best things for me," he said. "It's a balance here. We don't want them to become domesticated."

The tour wagon Sarah Zuniga, an Oregon resident and student at Eureka College, was riding in watched as bison neared their group.

"Our tour had a group of bison run past us to catch up with the rest of the herd. It was exhilarating seeing them run, and I think all of us were amazed at their power," she said.

Read more. <http://www.oglecountynews.com/2016/09/18/sunshine-bison-bring-visitors-to-autumn-on-prairie/azi44lt/>

Second European Bison Found Decapitated in Spain

(From The Guardian)

Spanish authorities are investigating the death of a second European bison, which was found decapitated just days after staff discovered the headless body of the herd's dominant male. The death of the bison was similar to that of Sauron, the 660kg (1,455lb) male whose decapitated body was found nearly a week earlier at the reserve.

A spokesman for the central government's representative in the eastern Valencia region where the private Valdeserrillas reserve is located said the animal had been decapitated after death. "Either it died of a natural death, or it was poisoned before being decapitated by an axe," he said.

Neither of the dead animals had any bullet wounds, and reserve spokesman Rodolfo Navarro told AFP earlier this week he thought that Sauron might have been poisoned and decapitated by hunters who wanted its head as "a trophy".

At the time, another three animals belonging to the same herd were missing, and staff feared they could have been sick or frightened and hiding.

The second bison to have been discovered dead was one of those three. The two other animals have been found safe and sound.

Police have opened an investigation into the deaths.

The owners of the reserve plan to introduce female bison to the site later this year to allow the herd to reproduce.

Read more. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/22/second-european-bison-decapitated-spain>

New Minnesota Zoo leader checks out Minneopa bison

(From The Mankato Free Press)

The new president and CEO of the Minnesota Zoo thinks the new Minneopa bison, a cooperative venture between the Department of Natural Resources and the zoo, is a perfect opportunity to meet the missions of education and conservation.

"Animals have that magic — they draw the people and then we can educate the people," said John Frawley, who visited the Minneopa herd Wednesday. "And they help get people out to the parks."

Eleven cows were delivered to the 330-acre range at Minneopa last fall. Eight came from Blue Mounds State Park in southwestern Minnesota and three from the Minnesota Zoo.

The bison herd now totals 14 after three calves — a bull and two heifers — were born in the spring.

The zoo has long been tracking the genetics of the bison at Blue Mounds and the zoo and now at Minneopa. The Minnesota bison, which number 122, have pure genetics, while many remaining American bison have cattle genes in them. The zoo also works with the Yellowstone National Park bison.

Frawley aims to expand the public's vision of what the zoo does throughout the state. "A lot of people think of the zoo as a destination, but we're very conservation based. Our mission is to save animals, not just to show them."

He said the bison on the Minneopa prairie also ties in nicely with the zoo's increased focus on pollinators and the need for prairie restoration.

Frawley has ties to the area. He was born in St. Peter and played football at Minnesota State University. He was a zookeeper at the Minnesota Zoo for five years before moving to San Francisco where he eventually became the president of a watershed conservation nonprofit. Twenty-five years later, he has returned to Minnesota to lead the zoo.

Read more.

http://www.mankatofreepress.com/news/new-minnesota-zoo-leader-checks-out-minneopa-bison/article_60f72462-8036-11e6-9a58-a3276eee2f6c.html

Certified Organic Food Gaining Ground

(From Baking Business.com)

More than 12,000 certified organic farms in the United States generated \$6.2 billion in sales in 2015, an increase of 13% from \$5.5 billion reported in 2014, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported in its 2015 Certified Organic Survey.

Ten states accounted for 78% of all certified organic food sales. California led with \$2.4 billion, which accounted for 40% of the total value of all certified organic sales in the United States, the NASS said.

The value of sales from organic milk and eggs led all food categories with \$1.9 billion followed by vegetables with \$1.4 billion; fruits, tree nuts and berries with \$1.2 billion; meat and poultry at \$743 million and field crops at \$660 million.

The top five commodities in certified organic sales were:

- Milk, \$1.2 billion, up 8.4% from \$1.1 billion in 2014.
- Eggs, \$732 million, up 74.5% from \$420 million in 2014.
- Broiler chickens, \$420 million, up 13.1% from \$371 million in 2014.
- Apples, \$302 million, up 20% from \$251 million in 2014.
- Lettuce, \$262 million, down less than 1% from \$264 million in 2014.

“In the 2015 Certified Organic Survey, producers reported that they expect to expand U.S. organic production in the coming years, making the data even more important for policy and programs,” said Hubert Hamer, administrator with NASS. “These results will assist with the development of appropriate risk management programs designed to help organic producers.

“The report also shows that organic producers are marketing their products through similar avenues in 2015 as in 2014, largely within their region, and that the value of sales increased during that time for many products.”

Read more.

http://www.bakingbusiness.com/articles/news_home/Trends/2016/09/Certified_organic_food_gaining.aspx?ID={5D80508E-BF84-4B6D-880B-E7E9C5409B90}&cck=1

‘They took his head as a trophy’: Bison named Sauron killed on Spanish reserve

(From The Sacramento Bee)

Suspected poachers struck a Spanish reserve last week, reportedly poisoning a herd of European bison and claiming the largest male’s head as a trophy, according to the Guardian.

Police began investigating the attack on the Valdeserrillas reserve Friday, when manager Carlos Álamo discovered the body of Sauron, the largest male in the herd, with his head hacked off and nowhere to be found.

Three additional bison were missing from the herd, and reserve spokesman Rodolfo Navarro said staff were searching for them on foot.

Álamo had found several members of the bison herd in distress during a check of the fenced-in reserve last week, but only realized why the several-hundred-pounds animals had run away from him when he found Sauron’s carcass in another part of the 900-acre site.

Reserve officials said they suspected that the herd had been poisoned, as several of the bison showed signs of diarrhea, the Guardian reported, and Sauron, who often ate first and most as the herd’s largest member, likely was struck particularly hard by whatever poison the attackers had used.

Nature protection officials said they had taken samples from Sauron’s headless body to determine how he might have been poisoned, the Guardian reported.

Sauron, who weighted more than 1,700 pounds, was named for the omnipresent villain in the Lord of the Rings series “because he was the biggest and the most powerful,” Navarro told the Guardian. “He was sort of the symbol of the reserve.”

Navarro speculated that the attackers “took his head as a trophy.”

“It must have been a gang because one person couldn’t commit this kind of brutality on their own,” he added to the Guardian. “The police are investigating and it will be difficult, but we hope they get them.”

Read more here: <http://www.sacbee.com/news/nation-world/world/article102891447.html#storylink=cpy>

China to Resume Imports of U.S. Beef, Premier Says

(From The Wall Street Journal)

NEW YORK-China's premier promised to resume Chinese imports of U.S. beef soon, calling it a sign of Beijing's sincerity to improve commercial ties with the U.S.

Speaking to U.S. business groups in New York on Tuesday night, Premier Li Keqiang said China would soon allow imports of U.S. beef.

"We also recognize that the United States has very good beef, so why should we deny Chinese customers this choice?" Mr. Li said, in one of several less scripted moments during his remarks. Though the premier didn't give a specific timetable, trade groups have previously said imports may resume before the end of the year. China has had a ban in place on most U.S. beef imports since 2003, partly due to concerns over the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or "mad cow" disease, after a cow with the disease was found in Washington state .

Full text:

<http://kticradio.com/agricultural/china-to-resume-imports-of-u-s-beef-premier-says/>

New Allowances for Including a "Non-GMO" Statement on Certified Organic Meat and Poultry Products

(From The National Organic Program USDA Blog)

Organic meat and poultry producers can now use a streamlined process to get approval for labels verifying that their products do not include genetically engineered (GE) ingredients. These products may also now use a "Non-GMO" label claim. Because of this, we're updating a previous blog from our "Organic 101" series.

In 2014, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) streamlined procedures for including a "non-genetically engineered" statement on the label of organic meat and poultry products. This continues to be consistent with organic regulations, which have always prohibited the use of GE in all organic products. Today, FSIS is adding further process improvements and labeling flexibilities, in light of recently passed legislation. Many organic stakeholders have expressed an interest in using "Non-GMO" label claims to clearly communicate to consumers that organic products do not contain genetically engineered ingredients, and that organic animals were not fed genetically engineered feed.

So why the change? In a newly-passed law, the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Act, Congress stated that organic certification is sufficient to make claims about the absence of bioengineered ingredients, such as "non-GMO." Also, the Food and Drug Administration recently clarified its policy to accept claims that products do not contain genetically modified ingredients, including "non-GMO" statements. This lets USDA grant additional labeling flexibility to organic producers and processors. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which runs the

National Organic Program and establishes organic standards, worked closely with FSIS on their updated guidance. FSIS and AMS have long shared responsibility for verifying accurate labeling of certified organic meat and poultry products.

Full text: <http://tinyurl.com/zn297oo>

Texas Young Farmer Grant

(From The Texas Dept. of Ag)

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers the Young Farmer Grant program, which provides financial assistance in the form of dollar-for-dollar matching grant funds to young agricultural producers that are engaged or will be engaged in creating or expanding an agricultural business in Texas.

Grant applications will be accepted from any individual person 18 to 46 years of age as of the application deadline, who is engaged or will be engaged in creating or expanding agriculture in Texas. Grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 and may not be used toward capital purchases.

Applications must be received by October 12, 2016.

Learn more.

<https://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasAgriculturalFinanceAuthority/YoungFarmerGrant.aspx>