



National Bison Association

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NBA Farm Bill Position Paper – March 8, 2023 **2023 Farm Bill Priorities for the American Bison Business**

Background

American Bison producers' ability to access the resources available under the current farm bill has contributed to the growth, stability and profitability of the American bison business over the past five years. The bison industry is processing and marketing more bison than ever before, thanks to growth in consumer demand and increased bison processing capacity. As we have seen with the 2018 Farm Bill, more and more bison producers are utilizing farm bill programs, as bison becomes a more mainstream and accepted sector of American agriculture.

As the Senate Conference Committee works to develop the final farm bill language, several key provisions will support the continued growth of the bison business as a dynamic part of a diversified rural economy, a model of sustainable agriculture, and as an entry point for new producers.

Please review the following priorities that the National Bison Association has developed in cooperation with its partners in sustainable agriculture that will continue to support the growth of the bison business in the years ahead:

Title I Commodities

- Preserve language from the 2018 farm bill that directed the Farm Service Agency to update the market value of bison annually to determine Livestock Indemnity Program valuations.
- Oppose permanent authorization of ad-hoc disaster assistance, which has surpassed \$60 billion above farm bill spending since 2017 with beneficiaries generally being larger, wealthier agriculture producers.
- Reduce subsidies to high-income participants by creating an income limit as recommended by the Government Accountability Office in February 2023 as to increase other farm bill program funding.

Title II: Conservation

- Increase CSP and EQIP set-asides for new and beginning producers by 30%.
- For grassland CRP enrollments, incentivize the use of managed grazing for livestock through conservation programs.
- Provide EQIP upfront cost-share to practices with high ecological benefit and target livestock funding that rewards climate-smart management systems.
- Ensure that livestock producers receive 50% of EQIP funding, which was not adequately defined in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.
- Continue to include "bison" specifically as eligible livestock for all conservation programs.
- As an ally organization to the InterTribal Buffalo Council, NBA supports their recommendation to recognize traditional, ecological, knowledge-based (TEK) conservation in the 2023 farm bill.

Title III. Trade

- Reauthorization of the Trade Title Market Access Program (MAP) to allow FAS to work directly with the U.S. agricultural trade groups and assure that bison meat marketers have equal access to those funds.

Title IV: Nutrition

- Continue the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) commodity purchase program.
- Expand and improve procurement programs by expanding local procurement language to allow local production as a product specification for school foods.

Title V: Credit

- Direct FSA to increase access to financing for beginning, small, and socially disadvantaged producers with pre-approval for select federal lending programs.
- Assure that “bison” producers specifically are eligible for all lending programs.

Title VI: Rural Development

- The 2023 Farm Bill should reauthorize Rural Development Business Development Grant and direct USDA to simplify the application requirements to increase access to the program. Reauthorize the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program and provide at least \$6 million in mandatory annual funding, and raise the maximum loan amount available to from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Title VII: Research

- Reauthorize the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and increase funding to at least \$700 million as to support NIFA’s work particularly on climate change.
- Reauthorize the Animal Health and Disease Research Programs with funding at \$25 million/year.
 - Continue support for Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF) research conducted at the Animal Disease Research Unit, USDA Agriculture Research Service at Washington State University and University of Wyoming.
 - Continue support for the ARS/National Animal Disease Center in Ames, IA and particularly its work on Mycoplasma bovis research for bison currently underway.
- Reauthorize the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program with mandatory funding of at least \$100 million per year.
- Reauthorize the Farmer’s Market and Local Foods Promotion Program.

Title XII: Miscellaneous

- Continue to improve implementation of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and develop a long-term strategic plan for BFRDP.
- Rebuild local and regional meat processing capacity by supporting the independent meat processing sector, addressing workforce shortages, and enhancing opportunities for them.