



## National Bison Association

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# Water Buffalo in “Bison Clothing” is a Risk You Don’t Need

North American bison producers and marketers have worked diligently during the past two decades to build a strong relationship with their customers based upon the great taste and nutritional benefits of the meat, along with sustainable practices utilized in raising the animals. During the past few years, water buffalo products have entered the U.S. marketplace and been marketed simply as “buffalo.”

One example is the one-lb. package of ground “Wild Ground Buffalo – Free Range” being marketed in an East Coast retail chain. The packaging and labeling are deliberately designed to lead consumers to believe that the product is American bison, when it is, in fact, water buffalo.

The water buffalo is being brought into the United States as whole muscle meat and reprocessed in a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved facility, but is not being processed under USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) voluntary inspection.



USDA regulations require any water buffalo processed under its inspections services to be properly and fully labeled. Because water buffalo is classified as a nonamenable species under federal law, it is not required to undergo inspection if that meat is produced in an FDA approved facility.

However federal regulations also prohibit the labeling of food in a manner that “*is a false or misleading representation with respect to another food.*”<sup>\*</sup>

This mislabeled product is spreading beyond the retail marketplace. Water Buffalo meat is also being distributed to food service outlets as well. It’s important that the customers in your dining, or retail establishments get what they are ordering. Water buffalo processed without USDA and state-equivalent inspection carries potential risk for customers, and for food service establishments.

That National Bison Association has filed a formal complaint to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to enforce this regulatory requirement for honest labeling. We will continue to work aggressively with federal regulators, and to fully inform the American public of mislabeled products in the marketplace until there is full enforcement of rules to prevent consumers by being buffaloed when seeking bison meat for their families.

Don’t lose customers over mislabeled product. Be sure that you are serving your guests 100% North American bison.

<sup>\*</sup> CFR 21 §101.18(a)