



National Bison Association

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Bison Issues Overview, September 2019

An Overview of Today's Bison Business

The bison business has enjoyed an unparalleled period of growth, stability and profitability during the past decade.

When the USDA began tracking wholesale bison meat prices in June 2004, the price for a slaughter bull carcass was reported at \$1.60/lb., or about \$1,040 for a 650/lb. carcass. In July 2019, that same USDA report listed the average value of a bull carcass at \$4.44/lb., or \$2,886 for a 650-lb. carcass; an increase in value of nearly 300%.

The bison business today is facing headwinds not experienced in the past 10 years. A number of factors are inhibiting our current growth.

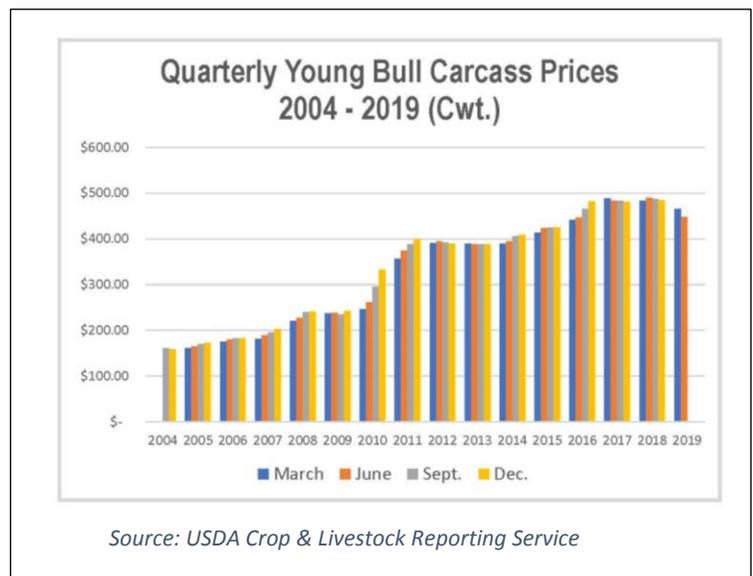
Our business, for example, has been impacted by circumstances relating to the emergence of deceptively labeled water buffalo meat and ingredients in both the pet food and human food marketplace. The precipitous decline in all ruminant hide values has compounded the impact on the drop value from bison carcasses.

The inability to gain prompt approval from USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service for small label changes places our marketers at a competitive disadvantage to the mainstream meat commodities. We have petitioned FSIS to make our approval process the same as is used for amenable species products.

Our ability to tap the demand for U.S. bison meat in foreign markets is hamstrung by a series of hurdles, including the 20% tariff of all bison meat (which is non-hormone treated under federal regulations) to the European Union, and the outright prohibition on bison meat exports to Mexico, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. We appreciate the work being conducted by USDA Foreign Agricultural Service and the U.S. Trade Representative's Office to address those issues.

The steady growth of bison meat in the U.S. retail and foodservice sectors has been driven by the perseverance of the National Bison Association, and by individual ranchers and marketers. Our message of great-tasting, sustainably raised, healthy meat is resonating with a growing segment of the American—and international—public.

USDA has played a strong supporting role in this success story. Resources provided over the past decade have strengthened the bison industry's financial viability in many ways:



- RMA's grant resources have enabled the NBA to develop a new mobile app that will enable ranches to monitor and manage the health of their herds.
- AMS's Farmers Market Promotion Program has provided the resources for the NBA to launch its new BuysomeBison consumer app, which is connecting small-direct marketers with new customers. And the FMPP resources have underwritten other initiatives ranging from farmers' market workshops to on-line "how to cook with bison" videos.
- FSA worked with the NBA to develop a model that now provides bison producers with realistic market-based compensation for claims filed under the Livestock Indemnity Program.
- NIFA, ARS and APHIS have all assisted the bison industry develop new resources and programs to maintain the health of our bison herds.
- The monthly price report compiled by the Livestock and Grain Market Reporting Service and the statistics captured by the National Agricultural Statistics Service supply important data that helps us monitor market prices, processing, and herd development.
- The Foreign Agriculture Service, and the USTR, are working to open new markets for bison meat exports, and to address the prejudicial tariffs that are hindering the realization of marketing potential in the European Union.
- The ability for bison ranchers to access EQIP funding through NRCS is helping those producers better manage their land and increase profitability.