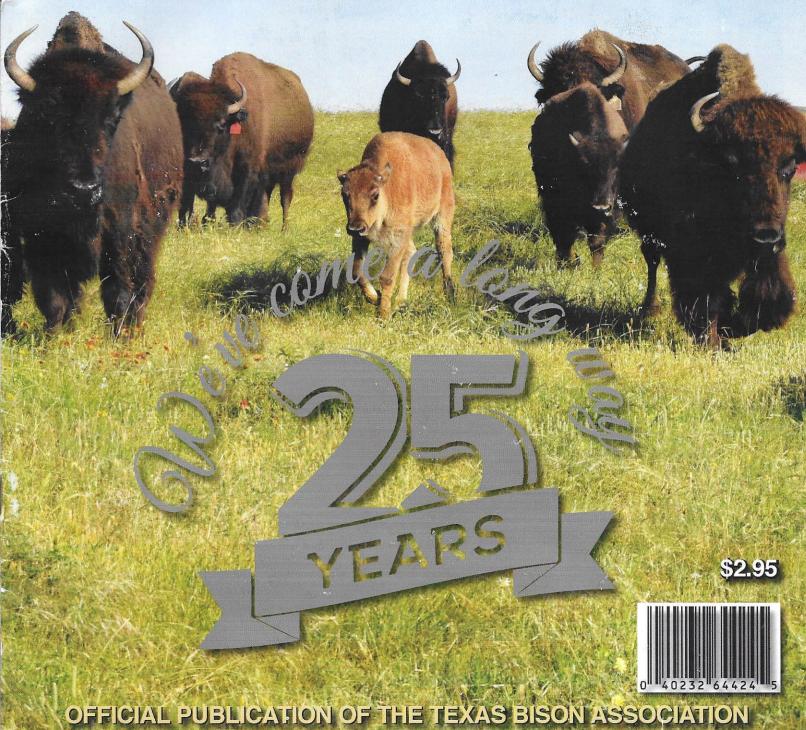
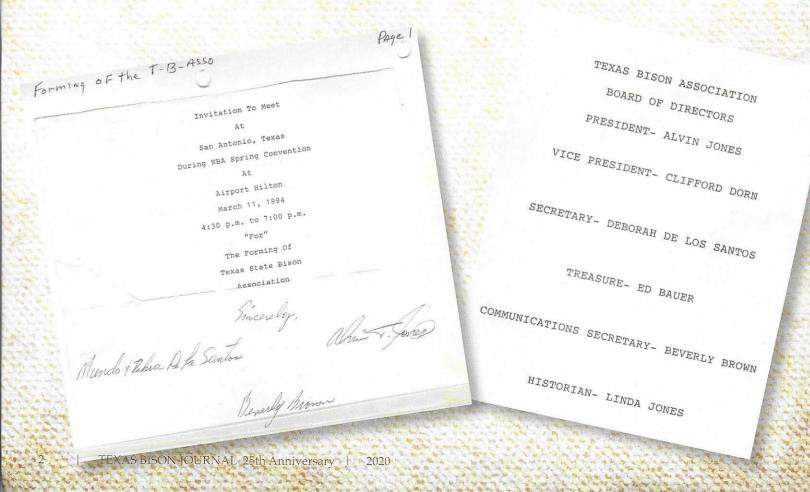
2020 JOURNAL



25 Years Ago...where it all started.



Board of Directors with their home-made sign.



From the President

How time flies. In 1994 a small group of ranchers in Texas conveyed in San Antonio to form the Texas Bison Association. The club's goal was to promote the health and welfare of bison in Texas to "Preserve the Legend" as stated on the TBA logo. The 2020 Texas Bison Association Journal is the 25th anniversary edition, reprinting articles from past issues and newsletters to give a glimpse of the past as we prepare for the future.

Articles in this issue are timeless, true today as when they were written years ago. An example is the American Bison article by Alvin Jones (TBA first president) is a descriptive primer for the American Buffalo (Bison)which a few years ago was named the national mammal. In this issue is an article by Bill Johnson on this very subject. There are articles with a historical prospective, Homesteaders 1st Cash Crop and Buffalo Runners. Also, a 2014/2017 article from the National Bison Association stating that Yes, Raising Bison can be Profitable.



Texas has its own challenges for bison that has to do with the climate and ecology, east to west, of the largest state in the lower 48. If you have spent some time in the Lone Star state you can identify with the late Fred Gipson who wrote that Texas was either too hot, too wet, too cold or too dry. Those changes from year to year make raising livestock, bison in particular, challenging when dealing with grazing pasture, available water and internal parasites. Each year is a learning experience and one notices that what worked in 2015, does not necessarily work in 2020 and so on. The experience and information exchange amongst the members are what makes the TBA annual dues a bargain. If you are not a member you can join us on the club website (texasbison.org) or the membership application found in the journal.

Because of the COVID-19 outbreak the Spring Conference in Amarillo has been canceled. The club's next scheduled meeting will be 17 October hosted by the Wild Horse Graham Ranch (Joe Graham) outside College Station. Details will be available on the club website later this summer.

This journal, the TBA's biannual meetings, and the knowledge of various members are all tools for use to increase a heathy bison population in Texas. We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to seeing you in College Station this October.

Adios

Benjy Cox is President of the Texas Bison Association

He and his wife Lisa, are the proprietors of Tai-Pan Station in Lytton Springs Texas



The Texas Bison Association

works to promote and preserve Texas bison through leadership, education and building public awareness for the bison ranching and meat industry. Founded in 1994, the Texas Bison Association provides assistance in raising and producing bison among our

health aspects of the North American Bison to consumers. The TBA welcomes anyone with an interest in the preservation, promotion and production of the North American Bison.

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JOURNAL

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D Buffalo Valley Ranch (est. 2007)

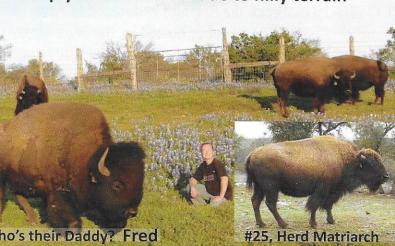
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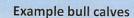
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Who's their Daddy? Fred

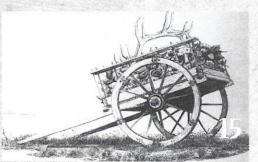
















COVER PHOTO — April photo of the Tai-Pan Station Bison herd in Lytton Springs, Texas.

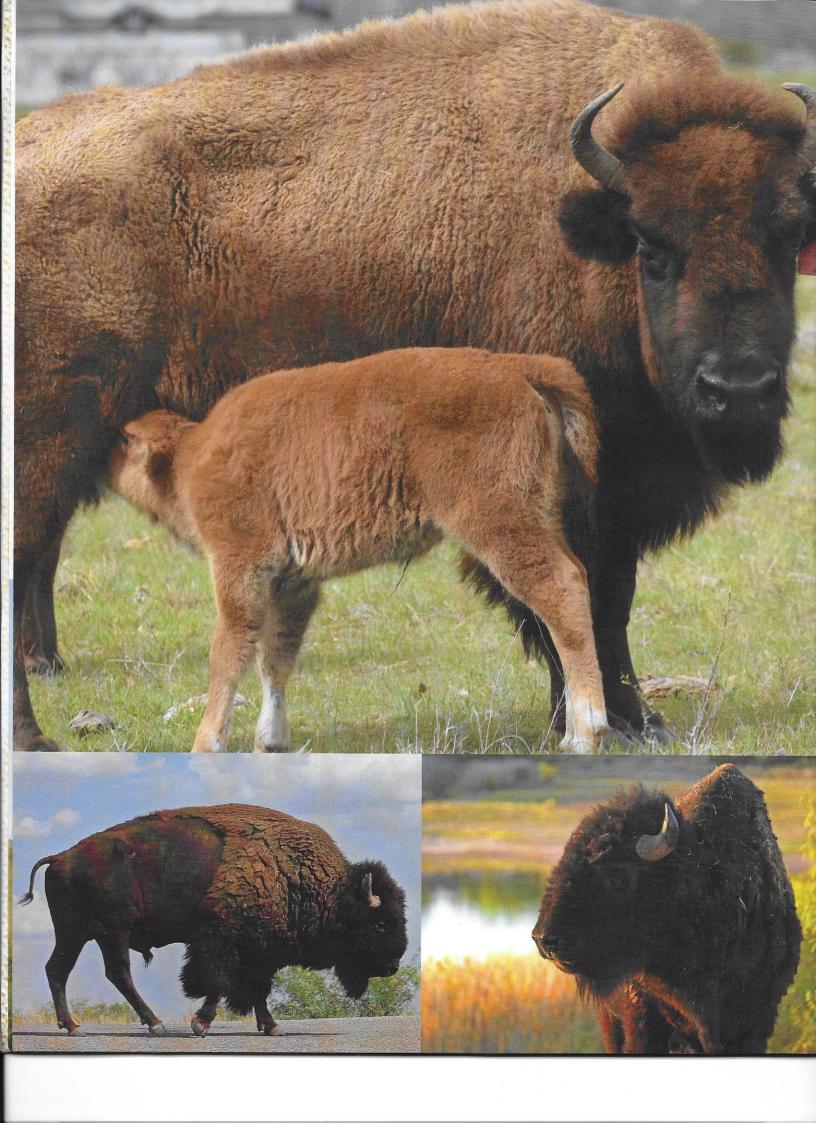
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The American Bison

This bison information is from the Texas Bison Association. Some of the information was adopted from an earlier material printed by the National Buffalo Association (now a part of the National Bison Association). Its intended use is for the informational and educational purpose of creating again a better common knowledge and relationship of the general public with and about the Great North American Bison.



The bison belongs to the same family, Bovidae, as the cattle of today. They have cloven hooves and are ruminants (cud-chewers) with hollow unbranched horns always present on the males and commonly on the females. Horns consist of a bony core, a permanent part of the skull, covered with a horny sheath. Bison are larger than beef cattle. The forehead is convex, rather than concave. The legs are larger. Their eyesight is very poor, even though their eyes are very large.

The bison's distinguishing feature is the huge shoulder hump that makes its hindquarters look preposterously tiny. The hump is pure muscle hitched to extra long shoulder spines which sever as gin-pole, giving leverage to lift the huge head. Their hair coat is shaggy. Bison have fourteen rip pairs, as compared to cattle's thirteen.

A mature bull stands six feet tall at the hump and weighs 1,800 to 2,000 pounds. Cows are about five feet tall and weigh 900 to 1,200 pounds. Bison come to sexual maturity at age three, instead of two as do cattle, but live twenty to forty years compared to that of ten to fifteen for cattle. Bison cows are known to have calved as late as 46 years of age.

Approximately 25,000 years ago, the genus bison (buffalo) passed from Asia over the Bering

Strait land bridge to North America. They adapted well to the environment of the North American Great Plains and flourished in huge numbers. Surely, there was never a shortage of food for the Indians who inhabited these great grasslands.

The Plains Indian lived very well during those days. The bison was not only his main diet, but also provided materials for shelter and clothing. The staples of his life were all derived from the bison. The bison was his life, his blood, his culture, and his future. Only the Great Spirit Himself was put above the bison.

Bison were hunted in various ways. One of the earliest methods was to encircle the animals with tribe members on foot. By getting the animals to mill within the ring they formed, the Indians were able to fire large volleys of arrows into the herd until they downed an adequate number. Other methods were stampeding hers over a cliff, and driving the animals into a large natural trap or into bods or blind canyons.

In the sixteenth century when horses were acquired by the Plains Indian, bison hunting became much easier. The most famous hunting technique, and also the most proficient, was the "horse surround". Several hundred riders would form semi-circles on two sides of a herd, then would move in until they created a circle around it entirely. As pressure was applied by the oncoming riders, the bison would begin to get confused, start milling, and eventually stampede into a frenzied milling mass. At this point the riders would move in and begin the slaughter with showers of arrows and plunging lances.

Virtually every portion of the bison was used by the Indians. To him, there were numerous ways to prepare bison meat for consumption. Some parcels were eaten raw, some were cooked, and other portions were dried as pemmican (a dried meat and fat concentrate). Hump roast was a delicacy even better than hummingbirds' tongues. The hides were made into footwear, clothing, and shelter. Sinew was used for sewing and binding. Bones were utilized as tools. There was practically no part of the Indian's life in which the bison did not pay a part.

In the late 1800's, the bison was almost extinct because of mass slaughter by the public, down to some 250 animals known to remain in North America. Thanks, however, to some early pioneer ranchers who caught and began to replenish the herds through closely-guarded breeding programs, the bison now once again is

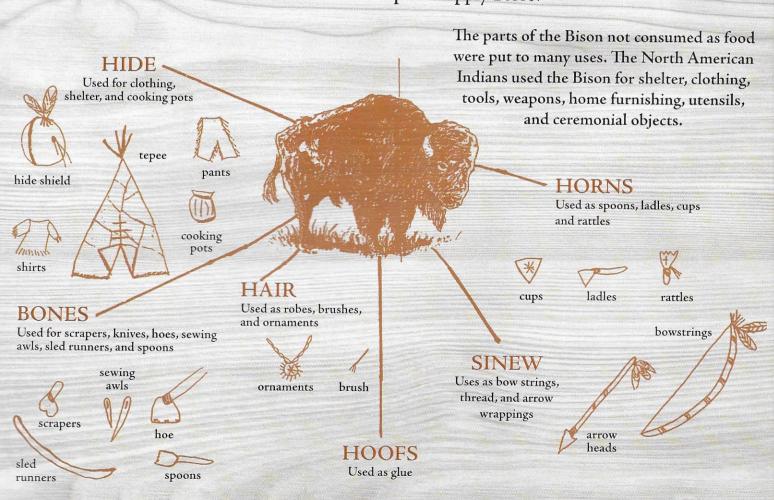
prolific and has reached a number which would exceed 200,000 head in North America alone. Let us re-introduce you to the North American bison, nature's number one environmentalist, America's most historic animal. He won the trust of early settlers and has lived up to the name given him by the great Sioux Nation, "Tatanka, the Spirit Animal".

Alvin T. Jones
President
Texas Bison Association

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The American Bison

The Indians' All-Purpose Supply Store!



Ranchers say bison provide healthier meat — and a spiritual experience.

It is late in the day and the sun is trying to set, but the heat has vet to break. The midsummer day is so scorched and dry the last thing anyone would normally think about is adding more heat to it. But 48-year-old Hugh Fitzsimmons III is stomping about the brush in jeans, denim shirt, and boots, scavenging wood and kindling for a pit in the ground near his modest ranch house outside Carizo Springs. Like his father and grandfather, Fitzsimmons ranches this arid and dusty land in South Texas not far from the Rio Grande, hoping the rain will come for the grass and that the mesquite and cactus won't suck away all the moisture from the earth. Texas farmers and ranchers are notoriously generous with their harvests; they're proud to show and share with strangers what they grew or raised with water, work, and luck. Fitzsimmons, who splits his time between his Dimmit County ranch and his home in San Antonio, is no exception. He has three New York strips cut from the carcass of one of his herd, and he intends to cook them for his guests this night.

Unlike the steaks that his father or grandfather might have served, Fitzsimmons says these will have less fat and cholesterol than traditional red meat – less even than some chicken. On top of that, he says, they taste sweeter than beef, and a smaller portion will satisfy a hungry soul. The evening will tell.

He ranches bison, or buffalo as most people call them, animals once so thick on the North American plains that no one ever thought they could be anything other than plentiful. Then a generation of greed, blood-lust, and

hatred at the end of the 19th century all but wiped them out.

Fitzsimmons is among a small number of ranchers in Texas, including some on the outskirts of



Sharla and Ronny (Dutchman) Wenzel

the Metroplex, who are trying to give the buffalo a second chance to roam. But unlike most of his fellow bison ranchers, Fitzsimmons tries to let his animals live and die as closely as possible to the way their ancestors did several hundred years ago, with minimal human contact no hormones, no grain to fatten them up, and no trip to the slaughterhouse. When it's time to "harvest" one of his herd, Fitzsimmons or a friend, Ted Herrera, a Coahuiltecan Indian who also blesses each animal with a traditional ceremony, does it with a rifle shot through the temple.

"I raise my animals in a spiritual fashion," said Fitzsimmons, who

also markets honey from the fragrant guajillo plants that bloom each spring on his land and has, in previous lives, taught American history and run a peach orchard. "My goal is to raise

[the bison] as close to nature as I can – just the way nature intended them to be hundreds of thousands of years ago when they were in Texas." The result, he said, is a product that is good for nature, man, and beast.

Bison ranchers tend to wax poetic about their animals.
Robert F. Hebeler Jr., who spends his weeks cracking open human chests as a thoracic surgeon, said the animals he runs outside Dallas "speak to him" the way a painting, or a piece of music, might speak to others.

"They're a parable for all things lost and endangered," he said of his decision to dabble in urban ranching. "It just seemed like the thing to do."

Cecil Miskin, a real

estate lawyer who tends to a fluctuation herd of a dozen or more "bufs" in Burleson just south of Fort Worth, said his animals are a tonic at the end of hectic days in the courtroom.

"I can come home after whatever kind of day I've had, and I can watch them and the world's a calmer place. You can't help but watch them," he mused one recent morning as his bison grazed in a pasture outside his front door, "They just kinda float."

If these sentiments sound too tenderhearted for people in the meat business, think again. The ranchers interviewed for this story — whether they had a few or a few hundred head — can be as matter-of-fact about their animals as traditional cattleraisers are about cows. Jess Oberly

of Euless, who runs a dozen adult bison on his land he and his family fenced near Lake Whitney, handfeeds a young bull – but he named him after the future awaiting him. "Hamburger," he calls him. Ronny Wenzel, who can pass an afternoon chatting about the future of the bison business or how his young bulls have a playful distinctive trot he calls the buffalo hop, sells sausage made from their meat at a roadside stand just down the road.

The bison's demise in North America roughly parallels the rise of the cow, one of the curious ebbs and flows of history in which tremendous energy was spent wiping out a healthy, readily abundant, majestic source of protein and replacing it with an uninspiring, fatty transplant.

Before the arrival of Europeans, a sea of brown bison floated over North America's grasslands, stretching from what is now Canada to Mexico. Estimates of the herd's size, according to the National Bison Association, range from 30 to 70 million animals. Nineteenth-century history is stained with accounts of the buffalo's near annihilation. Because thousands were killed for sport or for their hides alone, carcasses left to rot on the plains became sun-bleached mountains of bones sold as fertilizer, until the North American bison herd dwindled to a pitiful 1,500 survivors.

The first European to see a buffalo in Texas may well have been responsible for bringing the cow to the Lone Star State as well. According to several histories, Alvar Nuñez Cabesa de Baca - that's Mr. Head of the Cow in gringo encountered buffalo in the early 1500s and reported back to Spain the rumored existence of golden cities in the Southwest. His tales of glittered cities lured new explorers, who brought with them pigs, horses, and finally the ancestors of today's iconic longhorns. The cattle industry boomed with land grants and the

> founding of cattle empires like the King Ranch. A new invention, the windmill, provided water for ranchers and their cattle on parched land. Barbed wire let settlers cut up and fence off the vast grasslands on which the buffalo once depended. By the time the stock raisers? associations began to pop up around the country in the late 1800s, little remained of the buffalo but memory.

The survivors of the ruinous slaughter were eventually rescued

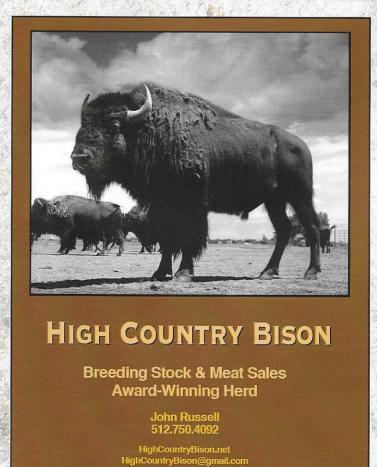
by the federal government, which established a national preserve in Montana, and by a handful of ranchers, like Charles Goodnight, the fabled Texas rancher, who took the stragglers in. When the Goodnight Ranch became a Panhandle tourist attraction, according to the Handbook of Texas, Goodnight became one of the first to sell buffalo steaks to the curious and provide the humpbacked icons of a fading life to zoos around the world. The bison had become a historical curiosity. The last indigenous bison in Texas, a stateowned herd in the Panhandle's Cap Rock Canyon, are descendants of those Goodnight rescued, according to the Texas Bison Association.

Over the course of the last century, the buffalo has made a modest comeback but in a very different world. The grasslands they once roamed are sliced and slivered by fences or covered with suburban asphalt and concrete. The 350,000 to 400,000 buffalo that exist today are spread across the country in ranches and preserves ranging from a few dozen acres to a few million.

The largest private owner is Ted Turner, the media mogul and philanthropist. His 32,000 animals roam on 2 million acres he owns in seven western states, and he's trying to create a market for their meat with a chain of restaurants – Ted's Montana Grills, featuring bison steaks and burgers.

Everything is supposed to be bigger in Texas, but the state bison ranchers have a long way to go before imperiling Turner's empire. A few ranchers, like Fitzsimmons in South Texas and Stanley K. Harper near Venus, have herds of several hundred. But most ranchers, according to the Texas Bison Association, keep only a few or a few dozen in a cow-calf operation like a startup cattle company.

And most everyone quoted in this story has been hit hard by a bottomed-out bison market. Animals



that might have sold for several thousand dollars in the late 1990s now go for several hundred. Why that hasn't translated into lower prices and better availability at grocery stores, which could boost production and sales, isn't clear.

People have been bellowing about the taste of bison for almost 500 years, according to one 100-year-old history of the buffalo's near extinction. After he stumbled upon his first buffalo, Cabeza de Vaca noted that "the flesh is finer and sweeter" than that of the cattle in his homeland. A little over 200 years later, an English surveying party that, according to one member, had lived "upon venison and bear till our stomachs loath'd them," issued a similar review: "We found it equal in goodness to the best beef."

It's not hard to find live bison in Cowtown. The Fort Worth Nature Center has a small herd – a bull, five cows, and the tawny yellow calves born this year and still nursing – on its buffalo range. The calves are sold periodically at auction. But if you want your buffalo steaks already butchered, you'll have to look a little harder – and be prepared for sticker shock. Bison meat can easily cost twice what beef does, or more.

If you want to dine in, Bonnell's Fine Texas Cuisine and Lonesome Dove Western Bistro both dependably have buffalo on the menu. If you want to try cooking, Bisoncentral.com lists several sellers in Texas. Or you can hunt down an individual rancher such as Fitzsimmons, who runs a mail order business over the web at ShapeRanch.com

Central Market in Fort Worth and Whole Foods in Arlington usually have buffalo meat for sale, although Central Market is iffy. The last several times I asked for fresh bison, a butcher there said all they had was frozen. Demand for fresh bison just isn't there. "We throw away more than we sell,"

he told me.

Lynn Kowalik, meat market manager at Central Market, said bison just isn't a big seller. "We can sell up to like 10 pounds on a weekend," he said. "Select customers come in that want it for its low fat content," but such health-conscious carnivores are a "very small group."

At Whole Foods, Martin Sauceda, the store's meat team leader, keeps a stock of fresh bison steaks and ground meat on hand as well as some frozen patties. The freshness apparently makes a difference in sales. During a typical week, Sauceda says his customers might buy 150 pounds.

Bison raisers like to brag about the healthful qualities of their product. With less than 3 grams of fat, 143 calories, and 82 milligrams of cholesterol per 1000-gram serving, the National Bison Association says its product is leaner, lighter, and healthier than beef, pork, or chicken. These figures are widely repeated by bison ranchers across the state, and the NBA says the info comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

There's a debate among bison ranchers about whether their animals retain their much-touted health benefits if they are raised like grainfed cattle. Some bison ranchers, in an attempt to please consumers' taste and boost profits, place their animals in feed lots and "finish" them off on grain during the final weeks or months before slaughter.

Fitzsimmons, president of the Texas Bison Association, is one of a very few ranchers who feed their animals only grass – and he noted that ranchers used to raise their cattle that way as well. "It wasn't until the forties that they started going to the feed lots," he said. If you put a bison on a feed lot, "you end up with a fat cow."

"Over the years everyone has been conditioned just by the very nature of the beast to view the bison as a plains animal that exists solely on grass because that's the way nature intended them to be. I guess the only thing to say is, people are being fooled when they're being put on the feedlot from 60 to 120 days.

"I certainly understand the reasoning behind it. Nature is fickle. And being able to have grass is a blessing. When you don't and that corn is just right there around the corner, and you can finish an animal on corn and have it ready to go to market, it's more of a sure thing for the producers."

The trick to raising the healthiest bison, he said, is to keep human contact to a minimum. "If you leave them alone and be patient, everything will be OK. You have to realize they're in charge; you're not. If you give them food, water, and each other, you're going to have success – if you're willing to back off," he said. "It's so simple really, the exact opposite of what 80 percent of the NBA is doing.

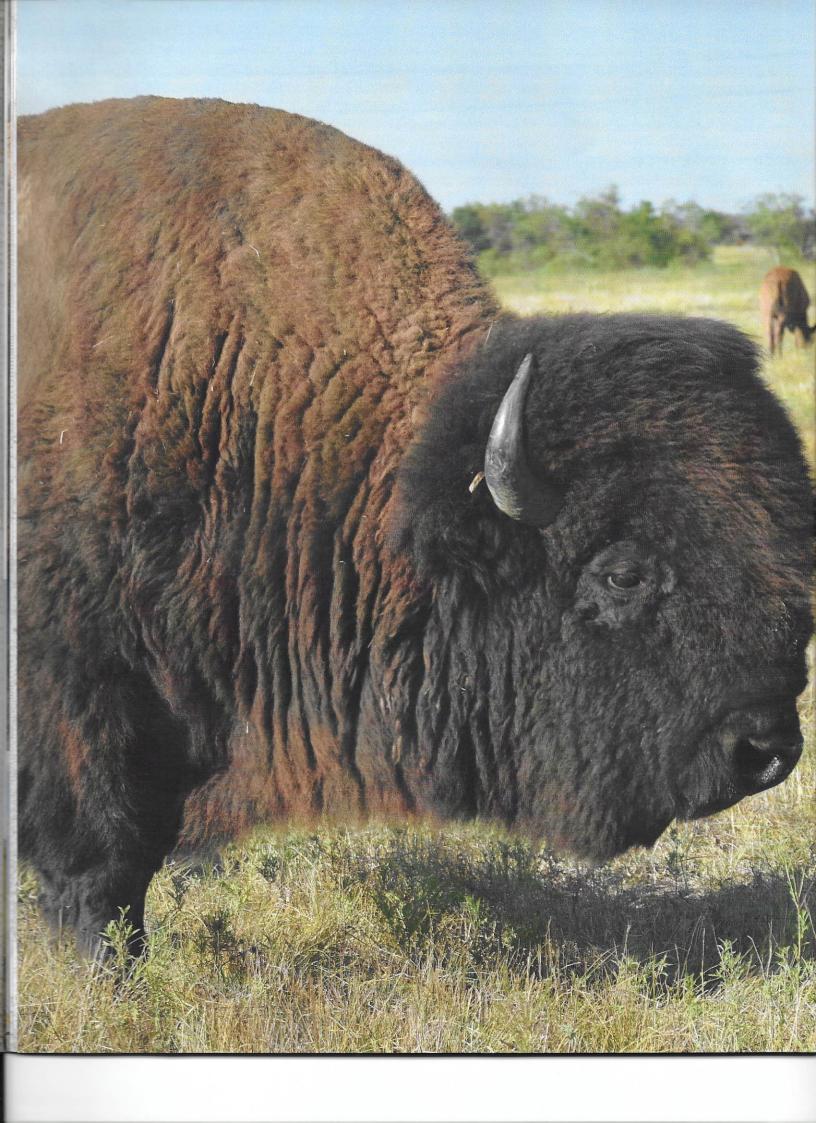
"We've been so arrogant to believe we could make them something better, fatten them up, put them on the menu at Chilis...It's just something that happens when...man comes along and sees something beautiful and says, 'I can make it better."

Central Market's Kowalik acknowledged that much of the bison meat he sells is both grain- and grass-fed, but disputed Fitzsimmons' contention that finishing a bison on grain makes it the equivalent of a "fat cow".

"During the last three months, they put them on the feed lot to beef them up a little bit," he said, "It's not going to wipe out the benefits of the product."

Whole Foods' meat man Sauceda said the bison he sells are "grass fed and they roam the range" until they are taken to a processing plant, where they are fed all natural grains for just a day or two before slaughter.

Cecil
Fort Worth Weekly — July 9-15, 2003
fwweekly.com



Don't Let Your Buffalo Roam

Bill Riebe - North Dakota Buffalo Association

Have you noticed how fast word travels when a herd of bison get out of a pasture and wander 10-15 miles away? And the story generally gets bigger as it travels, until as Baxter Black puts it "six deacons in seed corn caps are sipping coffee in the local café turning rumor into fact."

It does seem that bison draw more attention than a beef herd does. The reason obviously is that bison are still considered a novelty and also because the mystique of the animal and its place in the history of the West.

Whatever the reason, it does tend to put us under a spotlight when animals get away on us. This could create problems in two areas for bison producers – public relations and insurance. We need to be concerned about both, but I am going to concentrate on the insurance area for this article.

Being involved with an insurance company, I would like to share what I would consider an insurance company's view of the situation. Particularly liability insurance.

I believe we should be concerned with any liability claim we file for damage caused by bison. Keep in mind that insurance companies rely heavily on statistics to determine acceptable risks and to develop premium rates. The bison industry is very small both in terms of number of producers and number of animals. If we have a large number of liability claims that result in losses being paid out by insurance companies, we suddenly become significant, because one company's or several companies computers may kick out a loss report showing that bison are a bad liability risk. Since insurance companies do like to show a profit at the end of the year, they will either raise rates or simply not insure the risk where they are experiencing a high loss ration on that particular risk.

I have five recommendations that I would like to see producers follow. Most of them are merely good common sense.

- 1. Build good fences and handling facilities and keep them in good repair.
 - a. This is definitely a good starting point.
- 2. Be sure your bison have everything they need.
 - a. Plenty of grass, plenty of water, and an ample supply of minerals. Minerals being especially important at certain times of the year.

- 3. Get rid of any chronic problem animals.
 - a. An animal that refuses to stay in a fence is of no value to you.
 - b. Be cautious when buying bison. Be sure you are not buying someone else's problem.
- 4. Don't take out a liability policy to avoid upgrading those cattle fences.
 - a. You may be thinking, if your bison get out the insurance company will pay for the damage anyway. But we will all suffer from this attitude in the form of higher premiums, possibly deductibles (yes, even on liability) and some companies may even refuse to insure bison.
- 5. Maintain good public relations.
 - a. It can be very difficult for an adjuster to settle a claim with an irate neighbor. If our bison are out in his fields and you know that attempting to chase them out immediately will be counterproductive, be sure you explain this in detail to him.
 - b. If the damage is minimal and he will settle for a steak supper, it may pay to do so and avoid filing a claim. But if he is one of those difficult neighbors, you should have the insurance company settle as they will get a signed release of liability.
 - c. If you do file a claim, be honest with your agent and adjuster about what happened.

 Maybe you left a gate open, or maybe they swam across some water, or they were chasing some dogs and forgot to stop for the fence, etc. Whatever the reason, be sure to tell them what you plan to do to rectify the situation.
 - d. Remember, good public relations can net you many dividends when problems arise.

I hope I haven't discouraged anyone from using your liability policy if the need arises. That is not my intent. I am merely raising a caution flag on what may occur if we have too many losses among bison producers.



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The Homesteader's First Cash Crop

Written & Illustrated by NancyJane M. Huehl

The Red River ox cart was in use by many settlers during and shortly after the 1800s. The cart evolved in a region where wood was ample but iron continued to remain a rare commodity.

This disadvantage allured the craftsman to rediscover an age-old use of rawhide. Rawhide could be used to lash in place the wooden sections normally held together by iron. The ox cart, due to its wood and rawhide construction, would develop a squeal that could be heard for miles.

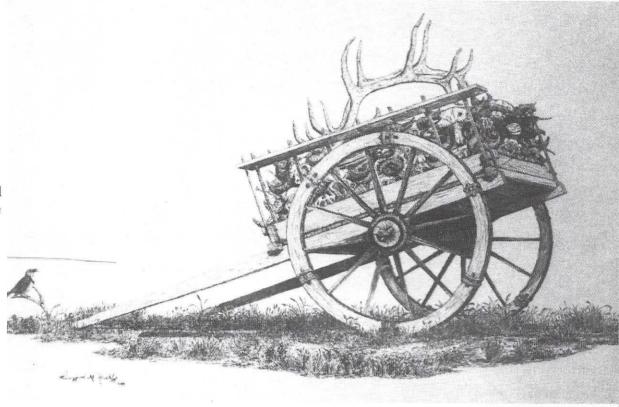
Many homesteaders owned an ox cart, which could be pulled by a single horse. Some homesteaders, traveling to

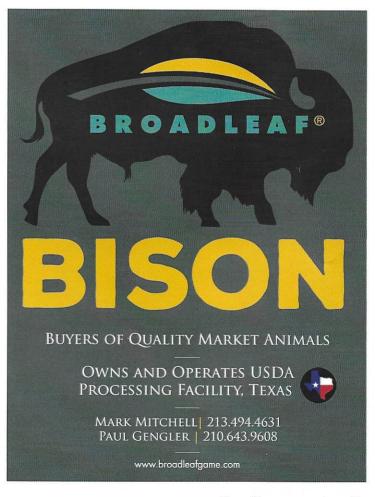
their claims, would pass vast expansive prairies whitened like snow with a variety of bones. A depiction of the wildlife that once lived on the plains, with the majority of the bones representing the bison herds.

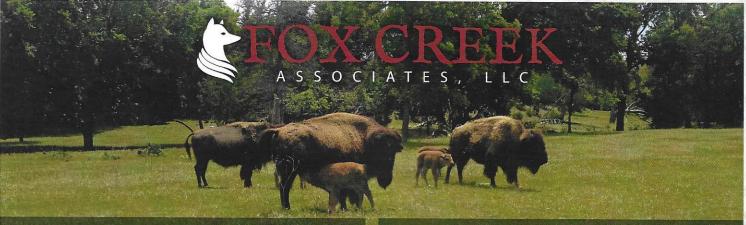
Prior to the late 1860s, the bones were viewed as worthless. It was not until the final construction of the railroads that eastern markets began to develop an interest in purchasing the bones. Bone-pickers came from various walks of life, but it is the homesteaders and their Red River ox carts I wish to point out here. The homesteader family would gather the bones on their claim and take this "first cash crop" to town serviced by a railroad. There they would find a ready market where mercantile owners would be willing to acquire the bones with cash or trade goods, such as seed. The bones were then piled into a rack near the railroad, in which many would run along the tracks for more than a half-mile. In a short time, they were placed into box cars and shipped back east and sorted for different uses.

By-products from bones, hooves, and horns:

- Bones Old bones were ground up and used to fertilize the tired-poor soils in the "now" eastern United States. Green or fresh bones were used to help in the refining of sugar.
 - Hooves shipped to glue factories
 - Horns made into knife handles, buttons, combs, etc.







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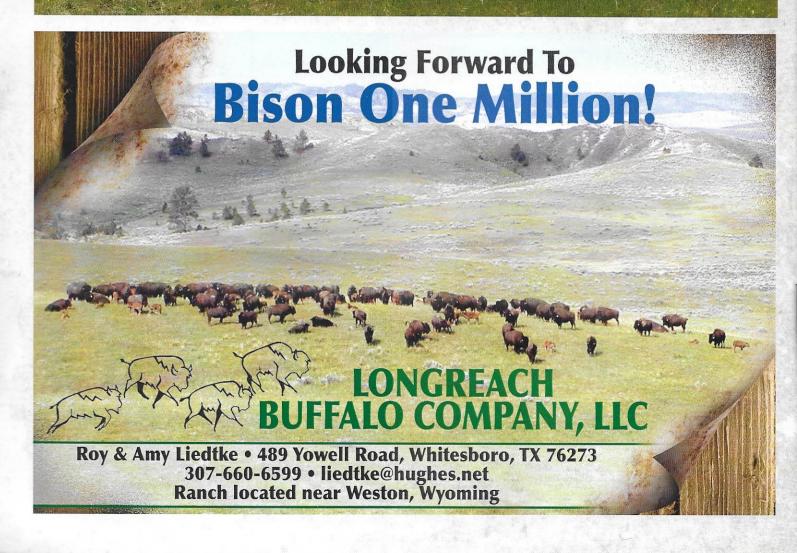
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America's National Mammal (Bison) Buffalo



The majestic Buffalo once numbered up 120 million head in America. Due to man, over the last century the numbers have fallen to less than 500 and once faced a stark extinction. However, due to brave conservationists and visionaries like Charles Goodnight, they are now bringing the buffalo back in National Parks and on many small family owned ranches. There are many private herds growing all over our country today. The Family at the Johnson Ranch in the Heart of Texas has a small but growing beautiful herd of 78 (bison) buffalo in Robinson.

With 350,000 buffalo currently in America and Canada what are the challenges? Our children and grandchildren often don't know the value of nature, the education or the understanding of the spirit of the wild. We all have made mistakes, but the real pioneers knew how to make the wrongs,

right and we still hope that we can do the same. Building good things for all is the American way and we pray that it will always be so.

Out Creator has a reason for what he did and why just think about it! There are those that are building Islands of Hope in many various ways both little and big in the world of boxes, life's computers, high technology, and people walk around stuck to their phones and their mind tuned to the rhythm of a fully controlled robot-like human. The reality of the natural world is buffalo had been passed by, run over, destroyed, and disrespected by many without concern for its repercussions. Thankfully, there are others, who want the beauty of this world to remain, who believe that a handshake is a total commitment, and that one should live within your means, not a buzzard sitting on a fence waiting to get you, but

riding for the brand as in the Code of the West with a moral compass.

Consider taking your family, friends, and children fishing, horseback riding, walking in the woods. Spend some time seeing nature or experiencing real life, watch a longhorn have a calf, take a deep look into a buffalo's eyes as he looks at you back with those great big fearless eyes, so deep that you can see his strong soul of fierce freedom but wanting peace with you, if you will yield.

American Christian core values can be rebuilt. I am completely at peace while sitting on the fence watching the beautifully created buffalo as they walked by. They would look at me as I looked at them, though no words spoken they and I were content. Neither of us fearing, but respecting each other, as we gazed at each other as they passed moving on to the next lush green pasture of Texas in the spring.

Those in the modern world who are imprisoned can soar free in the spring, mounting up and spreading their wings like that of an eagle soaring while the music of nature rings. On this particular morning the buffalo bull and longhorn bull were

bowed up threatening, mooing and walking along the opposite sides of the fence together in a challenge. Fortunately, they did not charge.

The modern world is good, but not everything modern is always good. There are things in the older natural world that we consider old school that remain the best. Take a break and get out to nature to better your life, your family and friends lives too.

A mountain lion got our little goat yesterday. While I was in the pen looking for the missing baby, the Billy goat rammed me. Boy did that hurt! It was not pretty, bit it did show me how poor my physical condition is. Now I will work on the improvement of my physical conditioning at the ranch for a re-charge.

My hope is that your peace will be enhanced by the spirit of the Buffalo. The modern world has a great deal of good, but when you feel and hear the roaring thunder of a buffalo herd on a stampede and feel the shock of the lightening of a storm remember all things happen for the good for those who love the Lord, including the roaming Buffalo.

Bill Johnson



Help Preserve the Legend! JOIN THE HERD

Whether you raise bison, or just love the magnificence of the animal. If your interest is to help promote bison conservation, stewardship and keep the herd building, and you just want to hang around people that are involved with bison, there is a membership for you in the Texas Bison Association. Whether you are young or not so young, we encourage you to join with us in the camaraderie, education and furtherance of our mission. It is a decision you will not regret.

New TBA Basic members receive a one-year subscription to Texas Bison Journal, TBA cap, our bi-weekly eNewsletter, *Bison Briefs* and a TBA key ring to proudly display that you are helping to preserve a true American icon — the American Bison

Sign up for a TBA Basic Membership for only \$50 per year.

Or, sign up as an Active Member for \$100 per year and receive advertising discounts in the Texas Bison Journal.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES, I want to join the Texas Bison Association

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Basic Membership per calendar year

(Package includes annual **Texas Bison Journal**, TBA cap and key ring, invitation to all TBA events and participation in email announcements effecting the bison industry).

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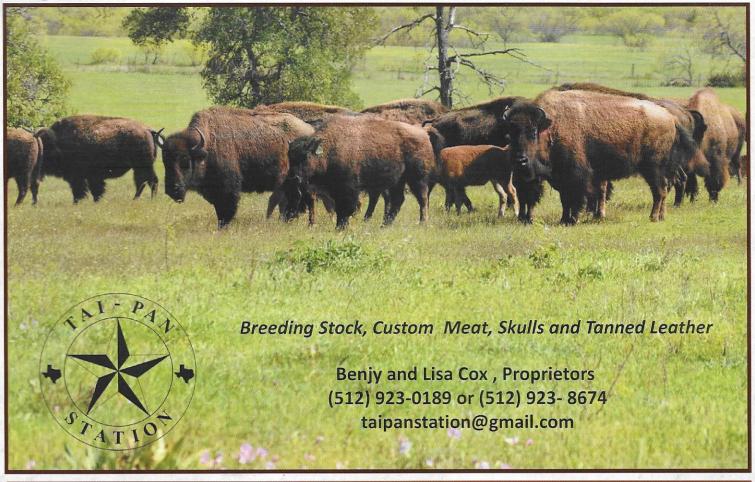
(Package includes all of the basic membership, plus voting rights in TBA elections along with a discount on TBJ advertising.)

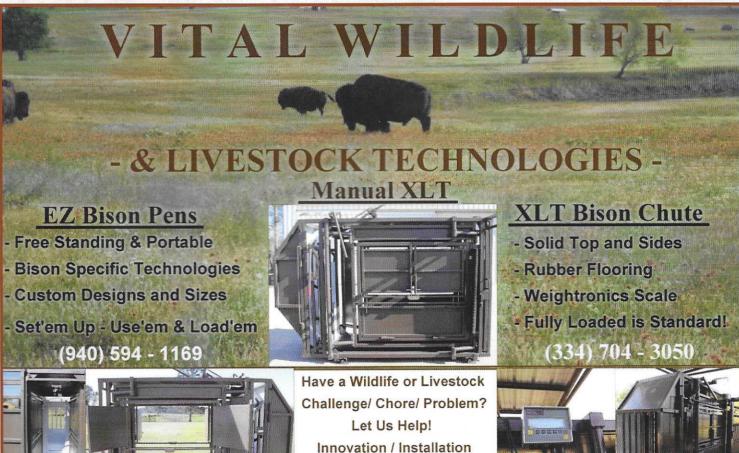
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Buffalo Runners - The Bravest of the Brave

Bravery was a highly valued virtue among the Native Americans of the Plains tribes. Status and recognition were generously bestowed on those who performed brave deeds against the enemy or endangered themselves in providing for their people.

Usually, such bravery was exhibited by counting coup on the enemy and surviving, whether in intertribal warfare or in fighting the invading whites. It was not necessary to wound or kill the enemy to score a coup, just touching him was sufficient. But wounding or killing him counts as coups too.

One of the most spectacular — and most dangerous methods of exhibiting bravery among the Plains Indians was to volunteer — or to be selected — as a "buffalo runner". These were the men who donned buffalo or wolf skins and sneaked up on the grazing herds of bison that provided so much of the necessities of life to the Plains people. It was extremely hazardous work and frequently the buffalo runners were trampled to death during the frenzied hunts.

The route stampeding buffalo would take was highly unpredictable and it was impossible to outrun them on foot if they bore down on the hunters stalking them. The animals had the unique ability to pivot speedily on their front feet and it was risky business to be in their path. The massive beasts were so ferocious and fast that the Indians serving as buffalo runners were accepted as being the bravest of the brave in tribal councils. If they survived!

George Catlin, the noted western artist painted buffalo

runners stalking a bison herd when he spent six years along the Missouri River in the 1830's drawing portraits of leading Indian chiefs and painting scenes depicting the lives and customs of the Plains tribes in modern times, another outstanding western artist, the late J.K. Ralston of Billings, MT, won acclaim with his imposing oil painting of a buffalo runner.

Prior to the coming of the horse to the Plains early in the 18th century, buffalo runners were used in two ways. If their bands were small and few buffalo were needed to sustain then, the buffalo runners would hide under either buffalo or wolf skins and crawl close enough to their prey to throw spears or shoot arrows at them. Wolf skins were the preferred disguise as the skin of a full-grown bison bull could weigh as much as 150 pounds, much too heavy for easy maneuverability. But buffalo hides were sometimes used to shield more than a single stalker.

If the village was large, however, mass killings of buffalo were required to supply it. Usually the big buffalo hunts took place just after the fall rutting season and involved using the buffalo runners as decoys to stampede the bison into carefully prepared traps. Buffalo were accustomed to wolves who posed no threat to them. So, buffalo runners hiding under wolf skins could get close enough to stampede them in the desired direction. Sometimes traps were set up in box canyons or dry ravines where hidden hunters awaited to slaughter the panicky animals.

In some cases, the buffalo runners got close enough to the herds to suddenly jump up, wildly

wave their robe disguises in the air while shouting to stampede their prey over nearby precipitous cliffs where the animals fell to their deaths. Those merely injured in the fall were finished off by hunters at the bottom. Usually the cows were the first to stampede, followed by their calves and trailed by the bulls. As the front runners came to the edge of these cliffs, the forward thrust of the frantic mass in the rear forced them over the precipices. Soon, like lemmings, the entire herd had plunged over.

Evidence of these "buffalo jumps" has been found throughout the entire Plains region, but have been most common in the Old West Trail States. One such site near Sundance, Wyoming, ischaracterized by a sinkhole below a high promontory that yielded the bones of up to 20,000 buffalo in layers more than 20 feet deep. Archaeologists believe that at least five Plains tribes used the site as a buffalo jump between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Other early-day methods employed by the Plains Indians to hunt buffalo involved setting the prairie afire to force the animals into ambushes, or driving them into deep snow where they foundered and were easy targets.

The buffalo provided the Plains Indians with practically every necessity of life. Besides the abundance of meat, the kills provided hides that were used for clothing and shelter, brain paste for tanning, tallow for candles, horns for utensils, intestines for pouches, hair for rope, tendons for bow strings, hooves for ceremonial rattles and dung for fuel. A mature bull, standing six feet tall at the

shoulder and weighing as much as one ton, yielded enough meat to see an extended Indian family through the harsh Plains winter.

It has been estimated that sixty million buffalo ranged the nearly one million square-mile Plains region bounded by the Rocky Mountains on the west, the Mississippi River Valley on the east, central Texas on the south and the Canadian border on the north at the beginning of the 18th century. At that time, the total Native American population of the entire Plains region was believed to be less than 500,000. The seasonal buffalo hunts so essential to the subsistence of the Plains tribes had little impact on the herd size until the Indians acquired the horse and guns. Then they could kill buffalo quicker

and more efficiently than before and exchange the excess hides for useful trade goods.

However, it wasn't until hide prices skyrocketed and white buffalo hunters took the field in great numbers that the slaughter reached epic proportions. More than six million buffalo were killed, 80 percent of them by white hunters, from 1872 through 1874 alone. The mass killings were encouraged by the white man's government that considered the extinction of the buffalo as the fastest and least costly way of forcing the Plains Indians off their coveted lands and onto reservations.

"The white hide hunters have done more in the last two years to settle the vexing Indian question than the entire regular army has done in the past 30 years, exclaimed General Phil Sheridan at the time. "They are destroying the Indians' commissary. For the sake of lasting peace, let them kill, skin and sell until the buffalo are exterminated."

By the end of the 18th century, fewer than 1,000 buffalo were estimated to have survived the wholesale slaughter. Not coincidentally, the old way of life for the Native Americans had disappeared too. By that time, the day of the uncommonly brave buffalo runners had also vanished. Only in the dramatically realistic paintings of such artists as Catlin and Ralston is the extraordinary early Plains Indian hunting practice immortalized for all time.





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¹A.M. Best Market Share Report (2018).

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YES, RAISING BISON CAN BEPROFITABLEI

Just compare the May 3, 2017 article (top) with the May 19, 2014 article below.

U.S. Bison Sales Hit \$350 Million in Retail, Restaurant Sales

(NBA News Release May 3, 2017)

The U.S. bison business has notched \$350 nillion in sales

The U.S. bison business has notched \$350 million in sales at the retail and restaurant level in 2016, with tight supplies of market-ready animals limiting additional growth in the business, according to information compiled by the National Bison Association this week.

The analysis released this week was based on the association's latest Economic Size of the U.S. Bison

Business model, along with its most recent survey of commercial bison marketers in the United States and Canada.

According to the association's model, the bison business grew from \$340 million in sales in 2016 to \$350 million in sales last year. That increase, though, was due almost entirely to additional prices for bison meat, rather than from increased production. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 61,300 bison were processed under federal and state inspection last year, which was only 1,000 more than were processed the previous year.



Meanwhile. 85 percent of the marketers responding to the association's latest survey in November reported that they were unable to fill all their customers' orders. with the majority of marketers saying they could sell at least 15 percent more product at the current prices if supply was available.

"The bison market is enjoying strong stability and profitability, with growth projected to continue as long as we can expand herds across the country,' said Dave Carter. executive director of

the National Bison Association. "Our primary focus today is reaching out to producers to build the herds of bison across the country."

"The growing popularity of bison meat is providing a strong, stable foundation for our business," Carter said. "Bison today is perhaps the strongest growth area in American agriculture, and a growth area that is bringing back our National Mammal to more of its historic rangelands and pastures."

The National Bison Association is actively reaching out to prospective producers, agricultural lenders, and others with a series of comprehensive resources to

encourage new entrants into the bison ranching and marketing business. Information on those resources is available at www.bisoncentral.com.

The National Bison Association has regularly surveyed major commercial marketers since 2011 to gauge issues that are impacting the bison business in the marketplace. The participants in the survey represent more than 85 percent of the bison meat sold in the United States.

The association's assessment of the economic size of the bison business is based on a model using U.S. Department of Agriculture data, along with information provided by the major marketers.

Bison Business Nears \$280 Million in Meat Sales in 2013

Sales Jump 12% Over Previous Year

Westminster, CO (May 19, 2014) – Sales of bison meat in restaurants and grocery stores jumped more than 12 percent last year, as the U.S. bison business neared \$280 million in total sales at the retail and foodservice level, according to information compiled last week by the National Bison Association.

The Economic Size of the Bison Business analysis is compiled each May by the National Bison Association, based on annual slaughter numbers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wholesale bison meat price report, and interviews with major bison marketers. Because of the significance of state-inspected processing, the association only compiles the report after the USDA releases its annual slaughter report of state and federally inspected processing numbers in late April.

According to the Bison Association's analysis, the sale of bison meat hit \$278.9 million in 2013, compared to \$248.3 million in 2012.

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, said, "much of the increase in overall sales was the result of growing market penetration, and not higher prices to consumers."

"The 57,200 bison processed in 2013 represented an 11 percent increase in the number of animals harvested over 2012," Carter said. "We are proud of this growth, but recognize that we will still be considered a niche product when compared to the major meat commodities."

According to the NBA analysis, 45 percent of every dollar spent on bison meat in retail outlets or restaurants went directly back to ranchers who are restoring bison to rangelands and pastures across the country.

Carter noted, "According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average farmer and rancher in the United States receives less than 16 cents from the consumer's food dollar. We are pleased that nearly half of every dollar spent on bison flows directly back to the farmers and ranchers who raise the animals."

Carter noted that the association is encouraging existing producers to expand their herds, and for new producers to join the business, to keep pace with growing consumer demand.

Information on purchasing bison meat, and raising bison as a business, is available on the National Bison Association website at www.bisoncentral.com. Shoppers wanting to know where to locate bison meat in their area can also download the free BisonFinder app for smartphones and tablets.

So. Dak Auctions Bison Sale Auction Results

	1985	2017
Heifer calf	\$600	\$1033
Bull	\$525	\$1519
Yearling heifer	\$700	\$1025
Older cow open	\$1100	\$1817
2 yr old bull	\$1150	\$1997
2 yr old heifer/bred	\$588	\$2700
Mature cow/bred	\$1350	\$2800
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The average from 1985 - 2017

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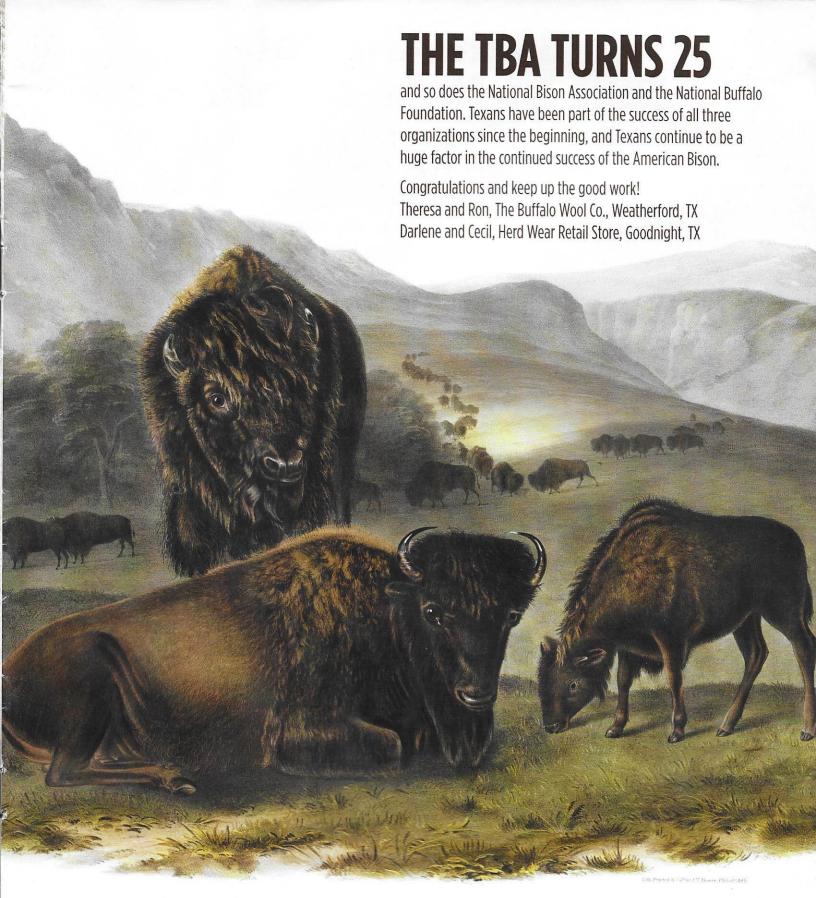
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