



NEWS & VIEWS

MAY 2021

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We Need You and It Won't Cost a Cent

WBPA membership has been stagnant for several years and we want that to change. We are offering free membership to all of you who are receiving this newsletter for the remainder of 2021. In researching news articles and other membership rosters for potential members, so many familiar names surfaced. Many new names appeared as well. We want all of you to try the WPBA again or for the first time.

There will be four newsletters each year (May, July, October and January). Occasional group emails may be sent when important news happens. We will host at least one educational seminar each year and will have additional educational sessions at our annual meetings.

What do you have to lose? A membership application is enclosed. Just fill it out, email, text or mail to:

Wisconsin Bison Producers Association
Tanya Holcomb
210325 Heartland Hills Road
Stratford, WI 54484
715-897-1340
tanya.holcomb@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

June 27-29	NBA Summer Conference, Cheyenne, WY
July 15	Deadline for articles for WBPA Newsletter
July 20-22	Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, Huntsinger Farms Eau Claire Co. WI
August 5-15	Wisconsin State Fair, West Allis, WI
October 18	Deadline for articles for WBPA Newsletter
October 15-17	WBPA Fall Conference, Hudson, WI
January 20-22, 2022	30 th GrassWorks Grazing Conference, Wisconsin Dells, WI

President's Message



I am honored to be serving as the association President for this term. I previously served as a Director under Phil Hausler. I would like to update you on a few items that the board is working on. Please know that we welcome feedback from you. The board contact information is located in the newsletter so please reach out to one of us if you have feedback to provide.

One of the items that the board is working on is discussions with the Minnesota Bison Association on a joint venture. You might recall that this was a topic of discussion during the 2020 Annual Meeting. Phil had asked Jeremy Alleman to begin the discussions with the Minnesota board. There were many reasons for pursuing this option to include our association looking at a new logo, upgrading the website and increasing membership participation. There was a thought that a combined collaboration might achieve this.

During late 2020, we fielded some questions from the Minnesota board. In 2021, the board voted to move forward with the exploration of this joint venture and also voted to send any board member that had time to the Minnesota conference held in April 2021. Mike and Connie Maass and my wife, Tanya, attended the conference. I did attend on Sunday to meet with the Minnesota board. We were inspired by the meeting and the education that was provided. Additionally, the joint venture was introduced to the Minnesota membership. The Minnesota Bison Association has formed a work group to explore this joint venture with our board.

Today, the board is working through questions that the Minnesota group has asked and the board is the current working group on the Wisconsin side. If you have feedback regarding this joint venture, we would like to hear. Please know that a joint venture can include anything from collaborating on meetings and education to a full merger. A full merger would require a membership vote. We will continue to keep you informed of the progress.

I am happy to announce that the board is planning a Fall Education Conference for October 15-17 in the Hudson, Wisconsin area. This will include a ranch tour and several excellent speakers. The board believes that this conference will be able to accommodate what would have been offered at a summer picnic, as well as, provide education that is needed by each of us. Please mark your calendars for this weekend. We will update you in the next newsletter, if not before, on the details of the conference. We hope you all can make it.

Thank you all for your commitment to raising bison and for taking an active role in our association.

Rob Holcomb
WBPA President

Spring – Challenges and Opportunities

By Mike Maass

Every year at this time we are faced with new challenges. This year's biggest challenge is getting parts in a timely matter which is still being blamed on COVID. Other than that, everyone here is staying healthy and field work is moving along well. Cows are calving, fields are being fertilized, worked and planted, and first crop hay is getting close to being cut. Looking forward to warmer days ahead of us for another successful year. This summer we will be staying plenty busy as we will be updating and expanding our grain holding facilities. After wheat comes off our custom tile list is about a mile long to install. Hope everyone has a safe, healthy, and happy summer!



The Pasture Is Yellow

By Rebecca Ries

During a recent drive, Pat and I noticed the extraordinary display of blooming dandelions this year. The little yellow-headed beauties are probably the most unpopular plant in a suburban lawn but as grass feeders for our bison herd, we don't mind seeing them in our pastures. When the fields are in full bloom, chances are the grass in the pasture is high enough and is ready for grazing.



First, a little history of the dandelion might be interesting. Dandelions are documented way back to the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, and have been used in traditional Chinese medicine for over a thousand years. Dandelions probably arrived in North America on the Mayflower – not as stowaways, but brought on purpose for their medicinal benefits. Before the 20th century, many gardeners intentionally grew dandelions for culinary and medicinal uses. Maybe you've been lucky and have enjoyed a wilted dandelion green salad or a glass of dandelion wine.

The nutrition that makes dandelions good for humans is also good for grazing animals like bison. They are a great source of calcium as well as iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc and Vitamins A, B, C, E and K. The plant is high in digestible dry matter from late April to early June. It has decent crude protein, about 76% as high as alfalfa, and more than smooth brome grass. We've noticed our animals like the plant but may or may not eat the flower.

Laura Paine, a well-known grazing specialist in Wisconsin, has written that dandelions and other broadleaf "weeds" actually fill a niche role in a pasture system. She says "research suggests that most broadleaf pasture species tend to accumulate

essential minerals required by livestock. Absolute amounts taken up will vary with the plant species and the soil it is grown on, but, in general they are higher than grasses and legumes. So, overall, dandelions aren't so bad. They make palatable and high-quality forage."

Dandelions have another benefit for your pastures. Their wide-spreading roots can loosen up hard-packed soils and will help prevent erosion. The deep taproot pulls nutrients like calcium from the deeper strata of the soil and makes it available to other plants.

I'm not suggesting that we all start growing dandelions on purpose but let's not fret about this persistent plant. Its benefits outweigh its nuisance factor...and the yellow fields are so pretty.

From Lakeview Buffalo Farm

By Al Weyker



The sun is shining and hay is growing, babies are being born near lakeview buffalo farm. We got our twelfth grandchild and her name is Maeve. Our son Robby and wife Lauren know have two girls. He has eight cows at his place and one calf at this time. Hope everyone was able to get there covid vaccine shots.

The thing I want to talk about is hay. When we first started raising buffalo we stored our hay outside. This caused a lot spoilage. Then we put our hay the in the barn and shed, which worked good but room was a problem. Then this year was our first year with baleage. This is hay put up at moisture levels in upper 20% to low 30% and in plastic wrap. We used the in-line wrap and the individual wrap bales for feeding. We had our hay made into big squares. You can have round bales or big squares wrapped and creates very little spoilage. Buffalo did well on that feed. The bales that are in-line do take up a lot of field space. The individual wrapped bale can be stacked three high using much less ground space. In our case the cost of wrapping was very close to the same price for in-line as individual bales. Hope this will make hay making and storing better for you this year. The cost for baling and

wrapping was \$15.00 per bale. If the price of hay is \$60.00 a ton and your loss is 25% that will cover the cost of the wrapping the hay. That will make your hay last that much longer.

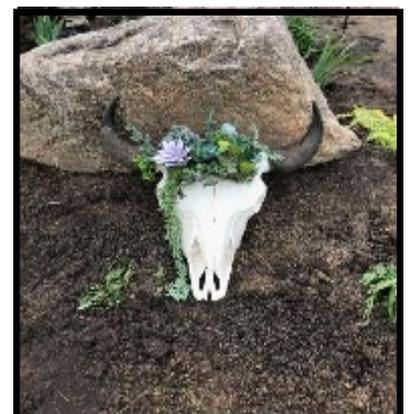
Bison Books for Kids

By Rebecca Ries

Our immediate family is so huge...38 and counting. We feel very blessed but buying Christmas and birthday gifts became overwhelming. Nowadays, the families get bison meat for their freezers in October, a delivery of amaryllis bulbs for their homes in January, and at Christmas, stockings full of good stuff for each person. I start collecting the good stuff right after Christmas for the next year.

This past Christmas I decided to add a kids bison book for all the littles in the family and was so happily surprised to find so many. I've listed a few, in case you want to start your Christmas shopping early this year.

- Bison for Kids** by Todd Wilkinson
- My Bison** by Gaya Wisiewski
- Bison Coloring Book** by Rusu Baby
- Buddy Bison's Yellowstone Adventure** by Llona E Holland
- Boomer and Friends** by Joshua Viola
- The Buffalo Are Back** by Jean Craighead George
- Ranger Rick: I Wish I Was a Bison** by Jennifer Bove
- Facts About the Bison** by Lisa Stratton
- Gotta Go Buffalo** by Haily Meyers & Kevin Meyers
- Bison Coloring Book for Kids** by Golden Wave Publishing



Skull Art
Your Skull or Mine
Call Sue Friend
920-222-9474

The Conservation Stewardship Program

By Patrick Ries

The 2018 Farm Bill. I heard about it. Didn't think there was anything in it that would apply to our grass-fed bison operation. Boy, was I wrong! One of the financial assistance programs in the 2018 Farm Bill is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). This program is almost written for grass-fed operations.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. They can help you identify natural resource problems in your operation and **provide technical and financial assistance** to solve those problems or attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. For example, NRCS can look at ways to address the amount of soil lost; mitigate the impact of excess water; reduce the contribution of agricultural operations to airborne soil particles and greenhouse gas emissions; improve the cover, food, and water available for domestic and wildlife species; or promote energy efficiencies for on-farm activities. If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals.



CSP provides two possible types of payments through five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices; and supplemental payments for adopting a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Applicants may include individuals, legal entities, joint operations, or Indian tribes that meet the stewardship threshold for at least two priority resource concerns when they apply. They must also agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the contract. Producers must have effective control of the land for the term of the proposed contract.

Eligible lands include private and tribal agricultural lands, cropland, grassland, pastureland, rangeland, and nonindustrial private forest land. CSP is available to all producers, regardless of operation size or type of crops produced, in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Island areas.

New CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative Provides financial assistance to conserve grasslands through a single opportunity to enroll in a 5-year contract. Eligible lands are limited to cropland for which base acres have been maintained under FSA's ARC/PLC and were planted to grass or pasture, including idle or fallow, during a specific period. Enrolled acreage must be managed consistently with a grassland conservation plan.

Apply at your local USDA Service Center, which you can find at farmers.gov/service-locator. Applications are accepted at any time.

A business card for Shirley and Doug Repinski. The card has a teal background with a zebra print pattern on the left side. The text on the card includes: "European Deer Mounts", "hugs not boiled", "flyingbirdfish@sbeglobal.net", "Shirley and Doug Repinski", "1527 Georgia Ave", "Sheboygan WI 532081", and phone numbers "920-452-7972" and "920-207-8041".

what's cooking

What's Cookin' in Connie's Kitchen

By Connie Maass

BBQ Bison

4 lbs. Bison Chuck Roast, Frozen
1 Large Onion, Chopped
½ Cup Chopped Celery
2 Tablespoons Vinegar
2 Tablespoons Brown Sugar

1 Cup Catsup
3 Tablespoons Worcestershire Sauce
3 Teaspoons Chili Powder
1 ½ Cups Water
4 Tablespoons Lemon Juice

Mix together the vinegar, brown sugar, catsup, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, water and lemon juice. Then add onion and celery. Place Bison roast on the bottom of a Crockpot. Pour the mixture over the top of the roast. Set the Crockpot on low temperature for 8-9 hours.

If you have a recipe you want to share, please send it to Connie at maassfarms@centurytel.net.



For Sale Several cull cows. Call/text Patrick Ries at 920-948-0993 or email patrickries20@gmail.com

Wanted Vendors for the WBPA Fall Conference. Call/text Rob Holcomb at 352-973-5299 or email rholcomb4313@me.com

Wanted - Bison meat for the WBPA Fall Conference. Requests for proposals will be sent to interested parties when the chef establishes the menu. To be considered call/text Mandy Hein at 715-550-9010 or email mandyhein@gmail.com

WBPA Members can place up to 3 ads per newsletter. You can also advertise your business for only \$25 a year (business card); \$75 a year (quarter page); or \$125 a year (half page). That's four newsletters for a bargain basement value. Call/text ad to Rebecca at 920-923-2028 or email bluestembison@gmail.com. Members are also encouraged to send articles for the newsletter.





Rebecca Ries
W2749 Golf Course Road
Mt. Calvary, WI 53057
Bluestembison2gmail.com

Wisconsin Bison Producers Association
**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND
NEW MEMBER APPLICATION**

Check One: _____ **Active Member (\$0.00)** _____ **Associate Member (\$0.00)**
**Note: All renewals begin January 1* (Own Bison) (Will be owning bison)

Date: _____

MEMBER NAME(s):

BUSINESS NAME:

ADDRESS: _____
P.O. or Street City County State Zip

HOME PHONE: _____ **WORK:** _____

E-MAIL: _____ **WEBSITE:** _____

Please remit application and payment to:
WBPA c/o Tanya Holcomb
210325 Heartland Hills Road, Stratford, WI 54484
E-mail: Tanya.holcomb@gmail.com