

Montana Bison News

A newsletter from the Montana Bison Association

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FALL 2020 Edition

Edited and Produced by All Things Bison

MBA Tentatively Plans 2021 Winter Conference

Please join us for the Winter Conference 2021 to be held in Great Falls, MT on January 8-9, 2021 at the Holiday Inn on 10th Avenue South. Please reach out to the hotel at (406) 727-7200 and reference the Montana Bison Association for room reservations. Room rates will be \$109/night. Tentatively we have the following presentations scheduled for the weekend. Conference registration is available [here](#), and will be available on at www.montanabison.org soon.



Friday evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. We have scheduled presentations by the Department of Livestock and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. The Interpretive Center exhibits have been modified due to COVID-19 in what we will be able to visit, but the Museum Director assures the MBA that the facility will do all that they can to share highlights of the Lewis & Clark travels with us. We have also tentatively scheduled a presentation with the Department of Livestock for an update from the agency.

Saturday morning, we plan on starting about 9am with a presentation by Bruce Maxwell from the CMR Wildlife Refuge. This will be an interesting, complex, and possibly opinion generating presentation. This presentation will be followed by the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks in regards to their opinions and policies surrounding a wild herd of bison in the State of Montana. Before lunch we will have an update from the National Bison Association. The NBA will share an update of the state of the bison market, their modified Winter Conference plans, and a general update of the National Organization doings.

After lunch we will have a presentation from the Miles City Community College (MCCC) president, Ron Slinger. MCCC is in the beginning phases of starting a meat cutters training program with additional classes in business and management. Mr. Slinger will share all the details of the program with us. Additionally, we will have a presentation on a feasibility study for a new meat processing plant in the Whitehall, MT area. As the Board this summer decided it was imperative to encourage and support efforts to expand local meat processing plants/operations within Montana. As a result, these two gentlemen will share their knowledge, present and future insights into the local and state development of these operations.

We will finish the day with an hour focused on Bison Animal Health, our annual Board meeting, and dinner with our traditional fun auction. We encourage you to sign up early so the Board can best plan for this event. If the Conference must be cancelled due to the Local and/or State agencies tightening present restrictions,

your money will be refunded and/or applied to the alternative event.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us!

[Learn More Here](#)

President's Corner - Julia Arnold

Greetings! As we all probably are in need of a bit of good news, I want to share how excited I am for the upcoming Winter Conference. We have numerous great presenters planned and we hope (COVID dependent) to spend Friday evening at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center for a fun, informative evening. Saturday will be hosted at the Holiday Inn for a day filled with bison related presentations. The two days will be filled with great information, good friends, food, and fun. Please make sure to see the article on the Conference and sign up on-line or by mail in-registration form as soon as possible.

In early October bison producers were notified that they now qualified for the Corona Virus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP-2) for specialty producers. Included in the newsletter is an article how to access the USDA website and general instructions on how best to complete this application. Please remember it is due by December 11, 2020. Likewise, we are anxiously awaiting news from the USDA on the Section 32 purchase of \$17 million of bison meat. In listening to Dave Carter, director of the NBA, he shared he thought decisions would be made in the near future regarding this purchase. Many thanks to the National Bison Association, the 12 Senators (including John Tester- MT) that collectively wrote a letter to the USDA in support of the purchase of this meat.

We want to welcome Wylie Gustafson, Zoo MT, and David Illig & Lisa McCullough to our association. In addition, I am excited that we also have several more ranches and producers reach out with interest in joining our Association next year. In a year of uncertainty, it is exciting people are still encouraged and interested in raising bison in our great state. Many thanks to the MBA producers who willingly shared their ranch and knowledge this past summer. Additionally, we have also included an article highlighting the Flathead Lake Lodge, founding member Doug Averill, his son Chase, and their many great contributions to the Montana community.

Producers if you have not already done so please take the time to complete the survey from the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS). The purpose of this study is to set a benchmark on present animal health,

Chris D. Bechtold
Ranch General Manager



Choteau, Montana

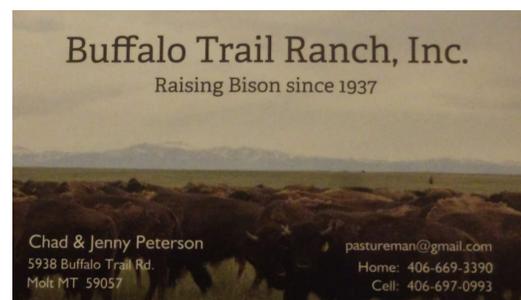
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nutrition, and research. This will update the study conducted in 2014 and better provide an accurate picture to the USDA of the needs of the producer. The link to this survey is <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/bison-needsassessment>.

The newsletter also contains proposed by-laws change and more detailed information on the Winter Conference. For reference the present by-laws are posted on the website for comparison. As the Winter Conference date gets closer I will update you as to any changes to the conference itself via email and the website. Alternative ideas have been discussed by the Board and we are watching the 'rules' established in Cascade County to make the most educated decision possible. Likewise, we are still planning for the Summer Conference to be held in conjunction with the Western Bison Association in the Polson/Kalispell area.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need more specifics regarding the Winter Conference and any concerns you need addressed about attendance. As North Central MT is already looking like winter and we never know what to expect with COVID, it seems like a perfect opportunity to wish you all the best for a happy and very healthy holiday season.

Julia Arnold



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BUFFALO RANCH



Proposed Changes to the Montana Bison Association Bylaws

The Board of Directors proposes to the membership, the following changes to the By-Laws of the Organization. These changes are being suggested to either clarify, update or improve conditions for the workings of the Association.

A summary of the proposed revisions are as follows:

1. Article 1, Section 1.2 Offices. The position of Treasurer is being shown separately.
2. Article's 2.1& 3.1, All references to the term "buffalo" have been replaced with the term "bison". This is being done to update the By-Laws.
3. Section 3.1 New Associate and Industry Memberships have been proposed.

4. Section's 3.2, 3.3 & 3.5 the position of Treasurer is being shown separately.
5. Section 4.2 Revised to clarify that payment of membership dues are due by January 1st of each year.
6. Section 4.3 Revised to clarify default provisions for membership dues not paid.
7. Section 5.1 New language is being proposed (last two paragraphs) in the event the annual meeting should have to be delayed in handling replacement director positions.
8. Section 6.2, Revised to clarify that only one person from each family, ranch or organization may be considered for office.
9. Section 7.1, Revised and updated language to clarify director positions that are to be replaced annually.
10. Section 11.2, Revised to show the fiscal year to run from January 1 thru December 31 of each year.
11. Section 11.3, Revised and updated to reflect latest language for completing financial audits of the organization.

See the complete MBA bylaws with revisions highlighted [here](#).

MBA Board of Directors 2020

President: Julia Arnold - Outlaw Livestock - Conrad, MT - 406-899-1611 - tjwilsall@yahoo.com

Vice President: Matt Skoglund - North Bridger Bison - Wilsall, MT - 406-223-1950 - matt@northbridgerbison.com

Treasurer: Craig Denney - DDC Ranch - Park City, MT - 406-633-2743 - montanabuffalousa@hotmail.com

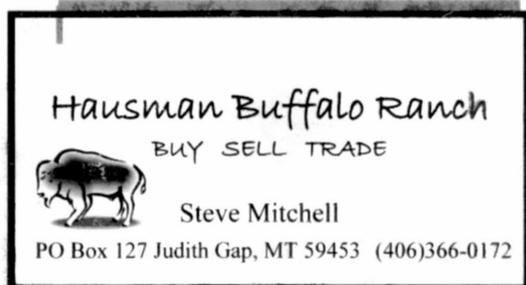
Secretary: Candis Westre - Bitterroot Bison Co.- Missoula, MT - 406.531.5352 - candywestre@yahoo.com

Director: Jennifer Olsson- Montana Bison Fashion & Furs - Bozeman, MT - 406-539-8252 - jo@mtbison.com

Director: Jonathon Sepp - Roam Free Ranch - Hot Springs, MT - 571-243-8057 - info@goroamfree.com

Flathead Lake Lodge hosts families with critically-ill children for week of adventure

From The Bigfork Eagle



Gehring Ranch

Bill Gehring
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Last November, Veronica "Vo" Hubble's world changed in an instant. Her daughter Jordana, then just six years old, was struck by a car after getting off her school bus in Olney. She was reportedly thrown 60 feet from the point of impact, and has been on a long road to recovery for a traumatic brain injury sustained in the incident. For the past seven months, Jordana has undergone intensive rehabilitation at the Nexus Children's Hospital in Houston.

In late August, Jordana and her mother finally made the return trip to Montana. But before they settled in at home, the family spent a week at Bigfork's Flathead Lake Lodge. The guest ranch



Damien Austin

Reserve Operations Manager

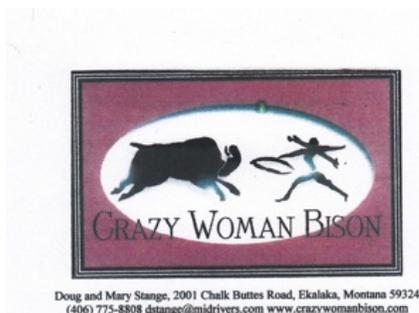
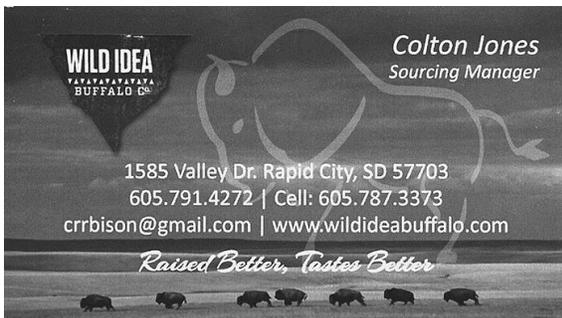
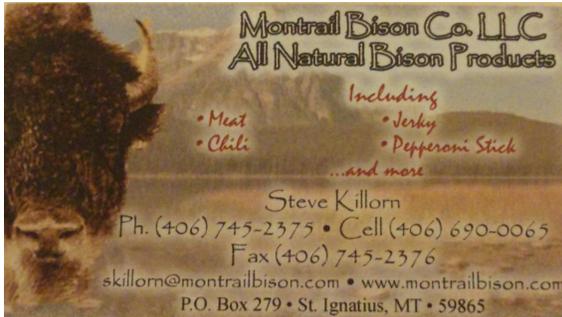
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hosted more than a dozen children with life-threatening medical conditions and their families for A Week of Hope -- held in honor of the lodge's 75th anniversary.

"You don't make it 75 years without a lot of other people helping you, so we didn't just want to throw a party and make it about us," said general manager Chase Averill. "We wanted to do something to help someone else out."

The Lodge worked with the nonprofit, Hope Kids and the Montana Children's Hospital in Kalispell to select 20 families for the weeklong excursion, three of which were from Montana. Over the course of their stay, the Week of Hope families spent time horseback riding, sailing, mountain biking, shooting sports, among other activities. And while staff and volunteers catered to the group's needs, they also wanted them to have an experience just like any other guest would.

"The whole motto of the ranch is we treat everyone the same -- and we treat you well," Averill noted.

Read [more](#).

Learn more about the history and see photos of Flathead Lake Lodge in this Big Sky Journal [article](#).



Celebrate National Bison Day This Saturday, Nov. 7th

From The National Bison Association

WESTMINSTER, CO (November 4, 2020) – This Saturday offers everyone an opportunity to rally around a symbol of national unity, as National Bison Day celebrates the cultural, historical and economic significance of our National Mammal, according to Dave Carter, executive Director of the National Bison Association.

The U.S. Senate this year once again designated the first Saturday in November as National Bison Day and encouraged citizens everywhere to engage in bison-centered activities throughout the weekend.

“Bison represent the greatest market-based conservation success story in the history of North America,” Carter explained. “Little more than a century ago, herds that once numbered tens of millions were reduced to an estimated 700 bison left alive. Dedicated efforts by ranchers, conservationists and tribal leaders have successfully restored nearly half a million bison to the rangelands and prairies of the United States and Canada. National Bison Day helps us celebrate that success, and to continue to grow the herds on private, public and tribal lands.”

He noted that many public herds and private ranches are hosting special tours and activities this weekend to help inform the public of the vital role that bison are playing in restoring healthy grassland ecosystems. People can utilize the free [BuySome Bison](#) app to find nearby ranches that may be offering activities this weekend.

Carter noted that celebrating Bison Day can be as simple as enjoying a deliciously healthy bison burger.

“Demand for bison meat in the marketplace is providing the economic incentives for ranchers to build their herds,” Carter said. “That’s why we’ve launched Partner in Bison Restoration,[®] a new program to educate the public on how eating bison helps restore bison.”

He added that National Bison Day comes at a particularly appropriate time.

“We’ve been through a bruising political season. The Democrats may have the donkey, and the Republicans may have the elephant, but we all have the bison. This magnificent animal belongs to every American as our National Mammal.”

National Bison Assn. Moves Winter Events to Rapid City

Bison Show and Sale, Membership Meeting Set for Feb. 18-20

From The National Bison Association

With the National Western Stock Show in Denver postponed for a year, the National Bison Association has teamed up with the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association (DTBA) to plan its annual live bison show and sale, along with its winter membership meeting for February 19-20, 2021 in Rapid City, SD.



“The Gold Trophy Show and Sale, and our Winter Conference, are vital business activities for our association,” said Jim Matheson, assistant director of the National Bison Association. “Working with the leadership of the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association, we’ve been able to plan an event that will provide a safe way for members to gather and to conduct our show and sale, while also providing an opportunity for people to participate virtually as well.”

The annual Gold Trophy Show and Sale conducted by the bison association is recognized as the leading showcase for quality bison breeding stock in the U.S. Similarly, the DTBA’s performance tested “Girlz Gone Wild” yearling heifer

competition provides ranchers with the opportunity to purchase young animals with proven quality. The two events will be combined into one auction on February 20th.

Judging for the two events will take place the day before.

The national association and its regional counterpart have also collaborated to organize a joint conference with individual association membership meetings. That event is scheduled at the Ramkota Inn in Rapid City for February 19-20. Matheson noted, "We are planning the meeting in a manner that will allow everyone to participate safely in person, or to log on and participate on-line." He said that details for the Show and Sale, and the Winter Conference are being posted on the bison association website, www.bisoncentral.com, as they are finalized.

Learn [more](#).

CFAP Registration Deadline Approaching

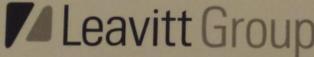
From National Bison Association

Bison producers, who were declared eligible for assistance under the second round of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP-2), can file their claims for payments any time between now and **December 11th**. All payments will be based on the producer's sales of live bison in 2019. Breeding stock and value-added products are not eligible for coverage.

Payments are based on a sliding scale. For example, a producer filing a claim on 2019 sales totaling \$120,000, would receive a payment equaling 10.6% of the first \$49,999 (\$5,300), 9.9% of the next \$50,000 (\$4,950), and 9.7% on the final \$20,001 (\$1,940).

In this example, the rancher would receive \$12,190 in total assistance. Details on filing an application are available through local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. More information on the program is available on the USDA www.farmers.gov website by clicking on the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 information button.

[Learn more](#)



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The Little Industry That Could

By Ken Klemm for the NBA Blog

I think I can, I think I can. I think I can, I think I can. I know I can, I know I can! So goes the signature lines from the classic children's storybook, The Little Engine

That Could.

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MIKE JACOBSON
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We in the bison industry are a LOT like that Little Engine. We are ridiculously small compared to our ginormous peers. For instance, each business day in the U.S. about 125,000 cattle are processed under USDA inspection, whereas the bison industry processes only about 220 head per day. That's .00176% as much as the beef business!

Our little industry, unlike the beef industry, has no mandatory check-off program that brings in tens of millions of dollars for marketing, yet has somehow managed to get our product into virtually every major grocery chain and thousands of small chains and independent stores in every State in the Union, including the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Yet, in the face of an economy-crushing pandemic that has decimated the restaurant industry, where the lions share of our high-end steak cuts were marketed, we have somehow managed to still process and market about the same number of animals on a monthly basis. Sure, prices are much lower than pre-pandemic, but we are making it happen. Somehow, this Little Engine just keeps chugging along and making progress, whereas other industries of much, much larger size have pulled off to the side-tracks and are in need of major repairs.

Somehow our coalition of wildly disparate types of people, in starkly different climates and communities, have been able to make the Bison Industry into "The Little Industry That Could".

Just like any motorhead would wonder what that Little Engine in the storybook had for a motor, so one might rightly wonder about what makes our bison industry the "Little Industry That Could"?

When you pop the hood on our industry, you'll notice that, just like the bison we raise, we're chockfull of determined, creative, tenacious, brave, fair-minded, cooperative, yet fiercely independent and just all-around generous people. We want this industry to work and we are not afraid to go out, put the sweat into it, and make it happen.

So, when the hill gets a little steep, and the load is big, don't underestimate "The Little Industry That Could". There are too many smart, hard-working folks under her

- Raised respectfully on pasture, hay & grains
- Fed without hormones, or meat by-products
- Raised free-ranging

Chris & Stacy Sullivan
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Tobin, Julia and Teagen Arnold

hood to think that only the big, flashy, shiny industries are the only ones that will succeed.



Source

2020 Custer State Park Bison Auction Results
From The National Bison Association

Prices Compiled by The National Bison Association - Please Send Questions to Info@bisoncentral.com

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1								
2	November 7, 2020 - Custer State Park - South Dakota							
3	Class	Animals Sold	High \$	Low \$	Average \$	2019 Average \$	Avg. Weight	Price/lb.
4	Two Year Old Bred Heifers	10	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$2,100	\$1,650	920	\$2.28
5	Two Year Old Open Heifers	10	\$1,575	\$1,150	\$1,218	\$1,550	840	\$1.45
6	Three & Four Year Old Open Cows	24	\$1,050	\$925	\$930	\$2,050	930	\$1.00
7	Mature Cows, Bred	10	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$2,200	1037	\$1.54
8	Mature Open Cows	41	\$925	\$900	\$906	\$1,360	1001	\$0.91
9	Heavy Yearling Heifers	10	\$1,300	\$1,000	\$1,195	\$1,700	714	\$1.67
10	Medium Yearling Heifers	9	\$975	\$975	\$975	\$1,400	636	\$1.53
11	Light Yearling Heifers	15	\$725	\$725	\$725	\$1,157	566	\$1.28
12	Heavy Heifer Calves	15	\$675	\$675	\$675	\$900	378	\$1.79
13	Light Heifer Calves	51	\$625	\$625	\$625	\$812	338	\$1.85
14	Heavy Bull Calves	59	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,125	389	\$2.57
15	Light Bull Calves	79	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$1,110	339	\$2.80
16	Heavy Yearling Bulls	45	\$1,625	\$1,450	\$1,501	\$1,750	732	\$2.05
17	Light Yearling Bulls	28	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,450	617	\$2.28
18	Two Year Old Grade Bulls	8	\$2,050	\$1,950	\$1,963	\$1,928	1093	\$1.80
19	Two Year Old Breeding Bulls	6	\$2,800	\$2,300	\$2,550	\$2,945	1119	\$2.28
20	Total	420						

Two men cited for harassing bison in Yellowstone
From The Bozeman Daily Chronicle

An Arizona man and a Utah man each pleaded not guilty Monday to charges that accuse them of riding motorcycles off-road in Yellowstone National Park and harassing bison.

Dallin McAllister, 25, of Utah, and Tyler McAllister, 36, of Arizona, are each charged with operating a motor vehicle in prohibited areas and feeding, touching, teasing, frightening or intentional disturbing wildlife. Both appeared in federal court in Yellowstone before Judge Kelly Rankin.

On Friday around 5:30 p.m., people rode motorcycles off-rod near the Fountain Flats Drive, said Ashton Hooker, spokesperson for the park.

In a Facebook group titled ["Yellowstone National Park: Invasion of The Idiots!"](#) a user posted a video showing two motorcyclists riding off road within feet of several bison, including some calves. A woman on the video could be heard yelling at the motorcyclists "get out of the field."

The video shows the motorcyclists ride away from the bison as a herd chases them back onto the road.

Read more

Twelve Senators Urge USDA to Approve Bison Meat Purchase

From the National Bison Association

(WESTMINSTER, CO, Oct. 2, 2020) -- Twelve U.S. Senators, led by John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) sent a letter yesterday to USDA Under Secretary Greg Ibach urging approval of the National Bison Association's request for a \$17 million purchase of bison meat under the Section 32 surplus removal program.

"More than ever, the bison industry needs support. An unanticipated over-supply of harvest-ready animals, drought across the heart of bison production territory, and the COVID-19 public health emergency have created an uncertain economic outlook," the Senators wrote. "As you know, existing authority under Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935 (Public Law 74-320) allows the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make purchases of farm products to be used for distribution through the federal food and nutrition programs."

Granting the National Bison Association's \$17 million purchase request would provide much needed stability and market relief for bison producers struggling in the current environment." The Senators added.

As Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulation, Ibach oversees the Agricultural Marketing Service, which is considering the Section 32 request.

In addition to Hoeven and Bennet, Senators signing the letter were John Boozman (R-AR), John Barrasso (R-WY), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Michael Rounds (R-SD), Tina Smith (D-MN), John Thune (R-SD), Cory Gardner (R-CO), John Tester (D-MT).

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, said today, "We deeply appreciate the support from these 12 Senators, and particularly the leadership from Senators Hoeven and Bennet, to support the bison producers across the United States. Their input to USDA is a very positive development for our request."

Source

Bison Calendar of Events

Please note, several bison events have been postponed/canceled due to the COVID-19 situation. Please contact the host to ensure the event is still planned.

- 11/07/2020 - 55th Annual Custer State Park Fall Classic Bison Auction - SD
- 11/09/2020 - TNC Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Online Only Auction - OK
- 11/15/2020 - Oklahoma Bison Association Sale, Payne County Stockyards - OK
- 11/16/2020 - Brownotter Buffalo Ranch Annual Production Sale - SD
- 11/16/2020 - Antelope Island State Park Bison Auction - UT
- 11/17/2020 - Bison on the Bear Annual Production Auction - ID
- 11/17/2020 - Diamond Land & Livestock Online Bison Auction Closing Day - WY
- 11/20/2020 - Wild Winds Buffalo Preserve, Auction Closing Day - IN
- 11/21/2020 - Coyote Trail Buffalo Annual Production Auction - SD
- 11/28/2020 - Minnesota Bison Association's Legends of the Fall Show/Sale - MN

- 11/29/2020 - Rocking P Ranch Production Auction - SD
- 11/30/2020 - 3 Suns Bison Ranch – Dispersal Bison Auction Closing Day - FL
- 12/05/2020 - Kansas Buffalo Association Annual Production Sale - KS
- 12/08/2020 - Northern Range Buffalo Simulcast Consignment Auction - SD
- 12/10/2020 - Missouri Bison Association Fall Sale - MO
- 12/19/2020 - North Dakota Buffalo Assn. Meeting/Simulcast Auction - ND
- 1/02/2021 - Prairie Legends Bison Auction - NE
- 1/08/2021 - Montana Bison Assn. Winter Conference - Great Falls, MT
- 1/09/2021 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Auction - SD
- 2/19/2021 - NBA - DTBA Joint Winter Conference - Rapid City, SD/Online
- 2/20/2021 - NBA GTSS & DTBA Girlz Going Wild Auction - Rapid City, SD/Online
- 3/20/2021 - Missouri Bison Association Fall Sale - MO
- 6/27/2021 - National Bison Assn. Summer Conference - Cheyenne, WY

[See more bison events here.](#)

Montana Bison Association
montanabison.org

