



BISON LINK

August 2005

The Official Newsletter of the Canadian Bison Association

In this Issue:

President's Message....1

Executive Director's Message.....2

Federal Government Announcement.....3

Canadian Bison move across the U.S border..4

Adjusting Grading Parameters.....4

Developing a Trace Back System.....5

On Farm Food Safety Update.....6

Benefits of membership.....7

SALE: Promotional Material8

The Bison Link is published for the:

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Mark Silzer

After months of disappointment, there have been several positive developments for the bison industry. In addition to the abundant hay crops, good pastures and good grain crops in most areas, there have been many bison industry developments which have transpired because of the proactive approach taken by the CBA Board of Directors, your Regional Associations and the Canadian Bison Association Executive.

The U.S border restrictions have been modified to allow live bison less than thirty months of age move to designated feedlots and to slaughter plants. Allowing bone-in cuts from animals less than thirty months of age into the U.S. and providing flexibility to approved facilities to slaughter bison under thirty and over thirty months of age has increased the options available to producers. These developments are excellent for the marketplace. Live bison have already moved to the U.S. for slaughter.

The recommendation to have plains bison listed as a threatened species has been addressed. Working with industry and government officials, it was agreed not to list plains bison as a threatened species. By working together, the bison industry will continue to grow while at the same time assisting Environment Canada achieve conservation goals.

In the fall of 2004, with the request for assistance for the Canadian bison industry to deal with the consequences of BSE, the CBA requested \$250,000 a year for three years from

the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to expand the domestic market for bison products in Canada. In June of 2005, the Government of Canada announced that \$550,000 would be made available to the bison industry over two years with all funds to be spent by March 31, 2007 on domestic and international marketing initiatives. To access this funding, the CBA is in the process of preparing the required plans

With feedback from producers, marketers and the research completed by the Lacombe Research Centre, changes have been recommended to the government to adjust the parameters to the present grading system. Once approved, many of the heifer carcasses now grading "C" although tender and tasty will grade "A" resulting in more money for producers.

Progress has been achieved because of membership support. For those readers who are not members please become a member and support your regional association and the CBA. Complete a membership form and receive the benefits for the remainder of 2005 with your 2006 membership. Attend the National Convention in Regina on November 20th and 21st and the bison show and sale on November 22nd and 23rd.

Together we can make a difference. With growing industry support as demonstrated through membership, we will have a greater impact on the national agricultural policy agenda for the benefit of the industry.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

After 27 months of uncertainty, live bison are moving into the U.S marketplace. Shipments are expected to move into the U.S at a more rapid pace as producers and marketers become familiar with the processes that facilitate animal movement.

In addition to the progress outlined by President Mark, there has been progress in following up on the threatened species decision, the On Farm Food Safety Program, animal identification, and Smoke Signals.

In consultation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Environment Canada officials, there is consensus that the revival of the bison registry will assist in better understanding the genetic pool of plains bison in Canada. This will not only be beneficial for bison producers, but it could also provide information that could be beneficial for achieving plains bison conservation goals. There is also a group of bison producers who have suggested private "conservation" herds to assist conservationists in achieving conservation goals. These herds would be managed according to a protocol that has yet to be established. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Although there is more work to complete on the Canadian Quality Bison On Farm Food Safety program, the first step of the technical review by CFIA and provincial rep-

resentatives is complete. Review recommendations are being incorporated into the Reference Manual, the Producer Workbook and the Generic Model documentation.

Work continues on developing the bison industry tracking and tracing strategy. In addition to moving forward with electronic tags, the CBA is working with members of the Canadian Livestock Identification Agency to develop strategies which will identify and register premises and record animal movement so that the livestock sector has a complete tracking and tracing system.

The publication of Smoke Signals continues to be on track. The summer 2005 edition, on the recommendation of the CBA Marketing Committee, included a special publication that focuses on bison and bison products. A number of extra copies of the insert were printed to be used for those marketing bison products. Response to the special publication has been very positive and we would appreciate feedback on how we can make it better. They are available at \$1.00 each plus GST and shipping.

The 2005 convention planning is in progress. We look forward to a bigger and better convention this year so please make plans to attend.

Terry Kremeniuk MBA, PAg, CAC

ANNUAL CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 20th –22nd, 2005

REGINA, SK

Host Hotel: Travelodge

4177 Albert St S, Regina, SK

1-800-578-7878

more information will be available in the next issue of Smoke Signals

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES FUNDS FOR OTHER RUMINANT MARKET DEVELOPMENT

The Canadian Bison Association has been very active in lobbying the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to promote domestic marketing of bison and bison products. Because of these efforts and the support of other ruminant associations, on June 29th 2005, Andy Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada announced additional funding is being made available to the other ruminant sectors to address market development domestically and internationally. The funds allocated to this initiative total \$2 million and will be shared between the bison, sheep, goat, cervid and veal sectors, over a two-year period ending March 31, 2007.

The funds will be made available to regain old markets and establish new

“Up to \$550,000 will be made available to the bison industry over the next two years.”

ones domestically and internationally. The funds will be accessed by the Canadian Bison Association based on the marketing strategies developed. Up to \$550,000 will be made available to the bison industry over the next two years.

The marketing strategies will be focused to ensure an increased sustainable demand for bison products domestically and internationally. Strategies being proposed include introducing and promoting bison products with a major restaurant, awareness sessions with chefs in major cities in Eastern and Western Canada, point of sale materials for marketers, and initiatives with wholesalers and distributors.

More information will be shared as it becomes available.

CALL FOR: MYRT LENTON MEMORIAL NOMINATIONS

The Myrt Lenton Memorial Award was established to recognize members of the Canadian Bison Association who have “unselfishly given their time, tireless efforts, support and commitment to the Canadian Bison Industry and the Canadian Bison Association.” The annual award consists of a bronzed sculpture of a bison cow with her new born calf. Each recipient is presented the award and is able to keep the sculpture for a year. A significant engraved gift is also given to the recipient.

Any CBA member can nominate a fellow deserving member, by submitting a letter of reference to the Canadian Bison Association national office before November 1, 2005. At that time, the nominations will be forwarded to the committee. The winner will be announced at the Awards Banquet on November 21st, 2005.

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CANADIAN BISON MOVING TO THE UNITED STATES

Cattle/bison under 30 months are allowed into the United States for immediate slaughter or for feeding and subsequent slaughter providing trailers are sealed and appropriate documentation is provided. Live bison for breeding purposes are prohibited.

Bison meat (bone- in and boneless) from animals under 30 months of age can be exported into the U.S.

Live Bison Going to Feedlots

- ⇒ Live animals going to feedlots must be permanently and humanely identified with an approved Canadian animal identification tag, a distinct and legible "CAN" mark that has been applied with a freeze brand or hot iron, and is easily visible. The mark is to be applied to each animal's right hip, high on the tail-head and is not less than two (2) inches in height.
- ⇒ The animals are subject to a ruminant feed ban equivalent to the requirements established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- ⇒ Based upon a manual examination of the animals and/or information provided, heifers in the shipment cannot be pregnant.
- ⇒ Sealed vehicles must move directly from the exporting premises to port of entry and from the port of entry to the designated feedlot.
- ⇒ For the official requirements and forms please go to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/forms> and www.inspection.gc.ca

Live Bison Going to Slaughter

- ⇒ Live animals going to slaughter are subject to a ruminant feed ban equivalent to the requirements established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- ⇒ Based upon a manual examination of the animals and/or

information provided, the heifers in the shipment cannot be pregnant.

- ⇒ The animals must be tagged with Canadian animal identification tags.
- ⇒ The animals are less than 30 months of age based upon:
 - (a) verifiable birth records, or
 - (b) an examination of each animal's dentition.
- ⇒ Sealed vehicles must move directly from the exporting premises to port of entry and from the port of entry to the designated slaughter establishment or feedlot.

Exporting Bison Meat to the U.S.

- ⇒ All meat products (bone-in/boneless) derived from bovines under 30 months and meeting the established slaughterhouse segregation requirements can be exported to the U.S.
- ⇒ The animals are subject to a ruminant feed ban equivalent to the requirements established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- ⇒ At slaughter, air-injected stunning cannot be used and the specified risk material (small intestine and lingual tonsils) must be removed.

Slaughter Facilities

- ⇒ Establishments processing under thirty months (UTM) beef/bison may now process over thirty month (OTM) bison. Only UTM bison can be moved to the U.S.

Note: Please ensure that heifers shipped are not pregnant. Pregnant heifers will incur additional costs and can jeopardize market access.

By: Terry Kremeniuk, Executive Director CBA

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADJUST GRADING PARAMETERS FORWARDED TO GOVERNMENT FOR APPROVAL

Research completed by the Lacombe Research Centre in Alberta to determine the degree of ossification and grade fat thickness on muscle quality and palatability attributes of bison meat has been completed. Based on this research and stakeholder feedback, the Canadian Bison Association (CBA) is recommending changes to the present bison grading parameters.

The major change in the grading parameters will be the elimination of the "C" grade as research demonstrated that at ossification levels of less than 80% there are no significant differences in tenderness of fresh heifer cuts with slightly more tenderness in frozen cuts. The research also demonstrated that tenderness for both fresh and frozen cuts improved as fat thickness increased. Bulls with the same levels of ossification also demonstrated similar results.

The bison industry recommendations have been forwarded to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to move through the federal regulatory process. The CBA has also requested the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to expedite the process.

DEVELOPING A TRACE BACK SYSTEM FOR THE BISON INDUSTRY

Introduction

Increased awareness of food safety issues among consumers, along with a more educated and informed public is driving the need for more information about the food consumed and its origin. Recent animal health and food-borne illness scares in many parts of the world are creating the demand for source verification of food products. In Canada, recent developments with BSE and Avian Influenza have served to provide increased urgency and support for the need for national tracing and trace back systems.

The bison industry recognizes the importance of providing leadership in tracking and tracing to help prevent and control the spread of diseases, maintain consumer confidence in the food system and to have access to markets of major trading partners.

Bison Tracking and Tracing Developments

As a first step, the Canadian Bison Association obtained funding to develop a National Animal Identification and Trace Back System Strategic Plan that meets the requirements of stakeholders in the industry. As part of the plan, it was recommended that the bison industry move to electronic (RFID) tags to serve as the identification infrastructure for the trace back system. More recent developments require the development of premise identification and animal movement as part of a tracking and tracing system.

RFID Tag Availability

The CBA has moved to RFID tags as part of the technological backbone to its tracking and tracing program. RFID tags were made available January 15, 2005. Bison Industry RFID tags are white. **In the fall of 2005, only RFID tags will be available to bison producers.**

All animals that have been tagged with CFIA approved dangle tags will continue to be acceptable. All animals tagged after January 1, 2004 must be tagged with tags specifically allocated to bison.

Tagging Requirements

The present policy is to ensure that bison are tagged at the time they leave their herd of origin. There are also provisions

to transport untagged animals to tagging sites. Tags are retired at slaughter. As of June 29, 2005, producers are required to report all tags from dead stock disposed on the farm to the national Canadian Cattle Identification (CCIA) database to ensure the tag number is retired. Producers are now required to ensure all animals are tagged if they are going to community pastures, fairs and veterinary clinics. Auction barn owners will now be responsible for ensuring that all lost tags on animals moving through their facilities are replaced.

Age Verification

With International trading partners proposing Age Verification information as a prerequisite for export, the CCIA website now allows producers to record the date of birth of animals. This process provides an internationally recognized age verification process. This will reduce the need for dentition to age animals. For producers who do not have Internet access, please call the CBA office to submit information.

Record of Movement

The CBA has updated its Record of Movement of Bison form to meet present as well as future requirements. Maintaining movement records will complement future initiatives such as full animal movement and premise identification.

Next Steps

Now the bison industry must address the practical concerns of implementing RFID tags, premise identification, and animal movement. Processes and procedures must be developed to meet the evolving national tracing and tracking requirements. This will be achieved by working with producers, feedlots, auction markets, marketers and packing plants through a number of pilot projects in the fall and winter of 2005 – 2006. In addition there will be developments in areas of premise identification, conveyance and further developments in animal movement. Information will continue to be communicated to producers as it is made available.

If you have any questions about bison identification, please call Tara Dlugan at 1-306-522-4766 or Terry Kremeniuk at 1-306-522-4762.

HOW MANY BISON ARE THERE?

This question of how many bison there are in Canada has been asked frequently. The Canadian Bison Association estimated that at the end of 2004, there were an estimated 230 000 bison in Canada. More precise numbers will be helpful in developing policies for the industry as well as marketing and business development strategies.

On May 16, 2006, bison producers will be able to contribute to establishing the Canadian bison inventory by completing the Census of Agriculture.

ON FARM FOOD SAFETY– AN UPDATE

Canada's food supply is safe. Although there is limited research, a 2004 survey undertaken by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provides some insights on consumer attitudes towards food safety. The report concludes:

- Food safety is not immediately top-of-mind for consumers as they have high levels of confidence in the safety of food produced in Canada.
- Consumers typically get their information about food safety from the media, so this source appears to play a major role in consumer confidence in food safety. However, about 1 in 10 consumers have used the Internet for information on food safety in the past 12 months (11%) with some respondents specifying an Internet site and others mentioning general Internet searches.
- Less than half of consumers claim to be familiar with food safety practices on farms (46%). However, more Canadians say they know "a lot" about farm-based food safety practices (13%) than claim to know "a lot" about food processing safety practices (8%). This may be related to the somewhat unlikely claim by slightly less than one half of Canadians that they have been on a farm in the last two years.
- Almost one quarter of consumers want more information on both agricultural production issues and food processing issues (both 23%). Agricultural production issues include mentions of various topics like general food safety on farms (7%), GMOs (5%), animal diseases (4%) and safety of meat/fish products (3%), outbreaks (2%), agricultural inputs like pesticides (2%) and antibiotics/hormones (1%) and organic production (2%).
- The majority of Canadian consumers have not heard of the various food safety information forums, such as the Food Safety Network (28), Fight BAC/Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education (22%), On-farm Food Safety Systems (21%) and the Food Safety Information Society (19%). Only 15% of Canadians are familiar with the HACCP system.

Canadians have a positive image of the contribution of farmers to food safety and of the safety of the Canadian food supply. Producers recognize that from the consumer and customer perspectives, this positive image can be altered dramatically by a single food safety incident of local, Canadian or external origin. Furthermore, initiatives that impact on consumer's knowledge and understanding of on-

farm food safety should re-enforce these images.

As of May 2005, twenty-six commodity-specific or multiple commodity producer led and industry owned on-farm food safety programs have been or are in the process of development and implementation. They cover approximately 99 per cent of primary production and could potentially involve every Canadian farm operation in the implementation of one or more programs.

All the programs incorporate the principles set out by an international body (the Codex Alimentarius Commission) and the approach adopted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for the development of HACCP-based food safety programs. For each commodity, a generic model has been thoroughly researched by a technical team composed of producers, HACCP experts and other stakeholders. The results of this hazard analysis have been translated into an auditable set of good production practices (GPP's), critical control points (CPP's), where applicable, and record keeping requirements that provide the producers with an effective and technically sound program for implementation within their operations.

The Canadian Quality Bison Program Status

The Canadian Bison Association on-farm food safety program went through technical review during the week of June 20, 2005. This review ensures that the bison program meets international HACCP standards. In the technical review process, CFIA officials, and representatives from the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta reviewed program detail. Dr. Marshall Paterson, Ray Salmon, and Terry Kremenik represented the Canadian Bison Association.

The technical review team made a number of recommendations to enhance the program. Suggestions included adding more detail when describing potential hazards to food safety in areas including feed processing, chemical storage and the subsequent controls. There were also suggestions to update references to *Health of Animals Regulations*, and a recommendation to strengthen the cross-referencing between the Producer Manual, the Reference Manual and the Generic HACCP model. The recommendations will result in an updated producer workbook reference manual and generic model that build on what has already been shared with producers.

CANADIAN NATIONAL BISON SALE: NOVEMBER 22, 2005
REGINA'S EXHIBITION GROUNDS
In Conjunction with the Canadian Western Agribition

WHY BE A MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN BISON ASSOCIATION?

Through membership in the Canadian Bison Association (CBA) and their regional associations, bison producers provide financial support to assist the associations protect and promote the interests of the bison industry. This support enables the national and regional associations to provide benefits that include:

- ◆ Smoke Signals, an industry magazine and Bison Link an association newsletter each published three times per year, a national electronic news letter and regional news letters to keep members current on industry issues.
- ◆ Seminars and a national convention to educate members and to enhance their management practices both in production and marketing.

The Canadian Bison Association and regional associations represent their members in many ways. These include:

- ◆ Lobby on industry's behalf to ensure the interests of the bison industry are considered in federal and provincial policy development.
- ◆ Lobby on the industry's behalf to remove trade restrictions both domestically and internationally.
- ◆ Represents the interests of the bison industry to assist in opening the U.S. border to live bison and bison products.
- ◆ Lobby on behalf of the industry to obtain financial assistance as required. i.e. Transition Industry Support Program
- ◆ Represent the industry in dealing with animal health issues i.e. worked with CFIA to move to TB/Brucellosis slaughter surveillance thus reducing the stress on bison, facilities, and handlers while reducing operating costs.
- ◆ Represent the industry in dealing with conservation and environmental issues
- ◆ Work with the National Bison Association in the U.S to ensure free trade in bison and bison products as well as share industry knowledge.
- ◆ Develop national marketing strategies and promotional material
- ◆ Increase consumer awareness by participating in food shows.
- ◆ Administer the bison identification and trace back program.
- ◆ Administer the On Farm Food Safety Program
- ◆ Developed a Code Of Practice for producing bison.
- ◆ Developed a grading program for bison.
- ◆ Funds research in production, finishing and marketing of bison.
- ◆ Compile and assist in collection of industry information.

Where appropriate, regional associations work with their provincial governments to ensure provincial programs and support include the bison industry.

The activities of the Canadian Bison Association and Regional Associations are supported financially by membership. Non-members have access to all these benefits, and are encouraged to join to support the Canadian and Regional Bison Association's initiatives and activities.

BECOME A MEMBER FOR 2006 AND ENJOY THE BENEFITS FOR THE REMAINING YEAR OF 2005. (membership forms enclosed)

NEXT ISSUE OF SMOKE SIGNALS (OCTOBER 2005) IS OUR MEMBERSHIP ISSUE WHICH INCLUDES OUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

**FOR ADVERTISING IN SMOKE SIGNALS,
CALL: S.G. BENNETT MARKETING SERVICES AT 204-895-2222.
DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 1, 2005.**

Promotional Material Order Form

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

COMPANY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP: _____



Item	Description	Language	Member Price	Non Member Price	Quantity	Total
Posters **	Features "Slow Down, Savour Life, Live it Well" 16 "x 24"	English	\$1.00	\$2.00		
Posters **	Features "Slow Down Savour Life, Live it Well" 8 1/2 x 11	English	\$0.50	\$1.00		
Ad Mats **	One time fee for PDF files on CD. 5 Ad versions in color and black & white. Customize with your ranch for use in local media.	English	\$89.00	\$178.00		
Folders **	8 1/2 x 11. One pocket with business card slot		\$0.50	\$1.00		
Brochures **	"Slow Down" 2 Versions: Consumer & HRI	English German French	\$0.50	\$1.00		
Food Service Manual – 2 nd Edition	Hard cover 1" binder	English French	\$35.00	\$35.00		
Nutritional Profile Sheet	Highlights bison's nutritional value and fit in Canadian diet	English French German	\$0.50	\$0.75		
Meat Cut Chart		English French German	\$0.50	\$1.00		
Cut Sheets (Hip & Chuck)	Highlights uses for these underutilized cuts	English French	\$0.75	\$0.75		
Summer 2005 Meat Edition	16 page booklet on bison meat	English	\$1.00	\$2.00		
Cookbook	Bison...Natures Best is back	French English	\$2.00	\$3.00		
Brochure	Cooking Guide and Grading Standards	English	FREE Just pay S & H	\$0.20		
Tent Card	"Buffalo Served Here"	English	FREE Just pay S & H	\$0.20		

** Canadian Bison Branded Material

TOTAL

Payment Method: Invoice _____ Cheque _____

Credit Card: _____ exp _____ / _____
Non-members: Payment will have to be received before material can be shipped out

Card Holder Name: _____

Signature: _____

SHIPPING

GST 7%