



BCBA President's Report 2023

Prepared by Conrad Schiebel

Nov. 5, 2023

2023 MEETINGS

BCBA Board Meetings by ZOOM

1. May 3
2. Sept 25
3. Nov. 7 AGM

BCBA Board Members: Conrad Schiebel(President), Steven Boyd (VP), Sandra Marascio (Secretary), Isobel Vere(Treasurer), Bernie Vere (Past President), Chris Kayat, Francois Grimbeek, Cyndy Donally, Sharif Fahmy (CBA Rep.), Danica Vere (CBA Rep).
Kim Grimwade resigned mid-term following the death of her partner Vic Beisel.

This year proved to be another challenging one for BC Bison Producers with the ongoing drought impacting forage and hay production. The resulting astronomical hay prices reported as high as \$350/ton have necessitated producers to consider downsizing their herds. The 2023 forest fire season has been reported to be the most expensive and most destructive on record. 25,000 square kms of land was burned and \$770 million was spent fighting the fires. Luckily, there were no reported loses to bison ranches however we all felt the impacts from smoke, heat, anxiety and empathy towards those who lost so much.

Synopsis of activities this year

- **Game Farm Regulations** - we continue to advocate for changes to Game designation of bison
 - Potential action: Legislative action called “Order in Council” may be the next step. Government staff claim that they have run out of options.
 - Bumps in the road this year towards having bison removed from Game Farm Regs include:

- Formerly domestic bison herds in Nicola Valley and Burns Ridge (Hudson Hope) have been on the loose for over a year have become a significant problem this year. Issue has not been remedied despite the herds now becoming Crown property and a Forestry (lands management) issue. There is high potential for conflicts between bison and cattle ranches in the area. Competition for feed on grazing reserve lands is a concern with the ongoing drought and fires.
- Non-licensed bison ranches have also been a problem with not following Bison Code of Practice and BC Game Farm Regulations
- BC Livestock Protection Program – the Association became aware that bison were not included in the program to provide compensation for wolf predation. The BC Cattleman's Association administer this government program and we are working with them to be included. Bear and cougar predation are not included in this program.
- Emergency Hay Supply Support Program – In response to the feed shortage the BC Cattleman's Association was given the mandate by government to search out feed sources for all livestock producers in BC, including bison.
- Best Management Practices – EFP - ongoing government support under the Climate Change Strategy to improve agricultural resilience through shared funding grants.
- BC Agriculture and Food – Farmed Animal Welfare Framework – this proposed legislation involved engaging livestock stakeholders and the BCSPCA to build a framework to ensure best practices are being followed and that access and enforcement are well supported.
- Answer inquiries from potential new ranchers
 - It is encouraging that new people are reaching out regularly for direction
- BCBA sponsorship support (\$2,225) for CBA Conference/AGM and Show and Sale

Continuing challenges for the BC Bison Industry

- Insufficient Abattoir and meat processing space
- Game Farm Regulation designation change
- Adapting to extreme weather related events

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
Provincial Bison Slaughter	328	189	211	193	188	200	343	195	179 to Nov. 1	2,026
Dressed Weight (Kg) {Pounds}							91,125	50,462	52,123	

Data supplied by BC Ministry of Agriculture - Food Safety Inspection Branch – Provincially inspected

- Bulls and cows/heifers were not differentiated

2023 Ranch Census – Data from BC Agriculture

Region	Number of Farms
Northern	27
Chilcotin	11
Thompson OK	6
Vancouver Island	2
Lower Mainland	2
Kootenays	3
TOTAL	51

- 51 licensed bison farms with 15,803 bison reported
- 2022 census showed 50 farms with 10,055 bison reported
- Net gain of animals in the province is 5,748 over a one year period