

# BISON CODE OF PRACTICE: FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

Dr. Jeffrey Spooner

CBA Convention  
November 20, 2023  
Regina, Saskatchewan



# Bison Code of Practice: CBA members (2014-2017)

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- Mark Silzer [Code Development Committee Chair]
- Frank McAllister
- Sharif Fahmy
- Todd Dowd
- Terry Kremeniuk



## Bison Code of Practice: Belated thanks



- Belated thanks to all CBA members for your invaluable input/feedback on 2016 draft Bison Code.

# Bison Code of Practice: Relationship-building

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NFACC Codes,

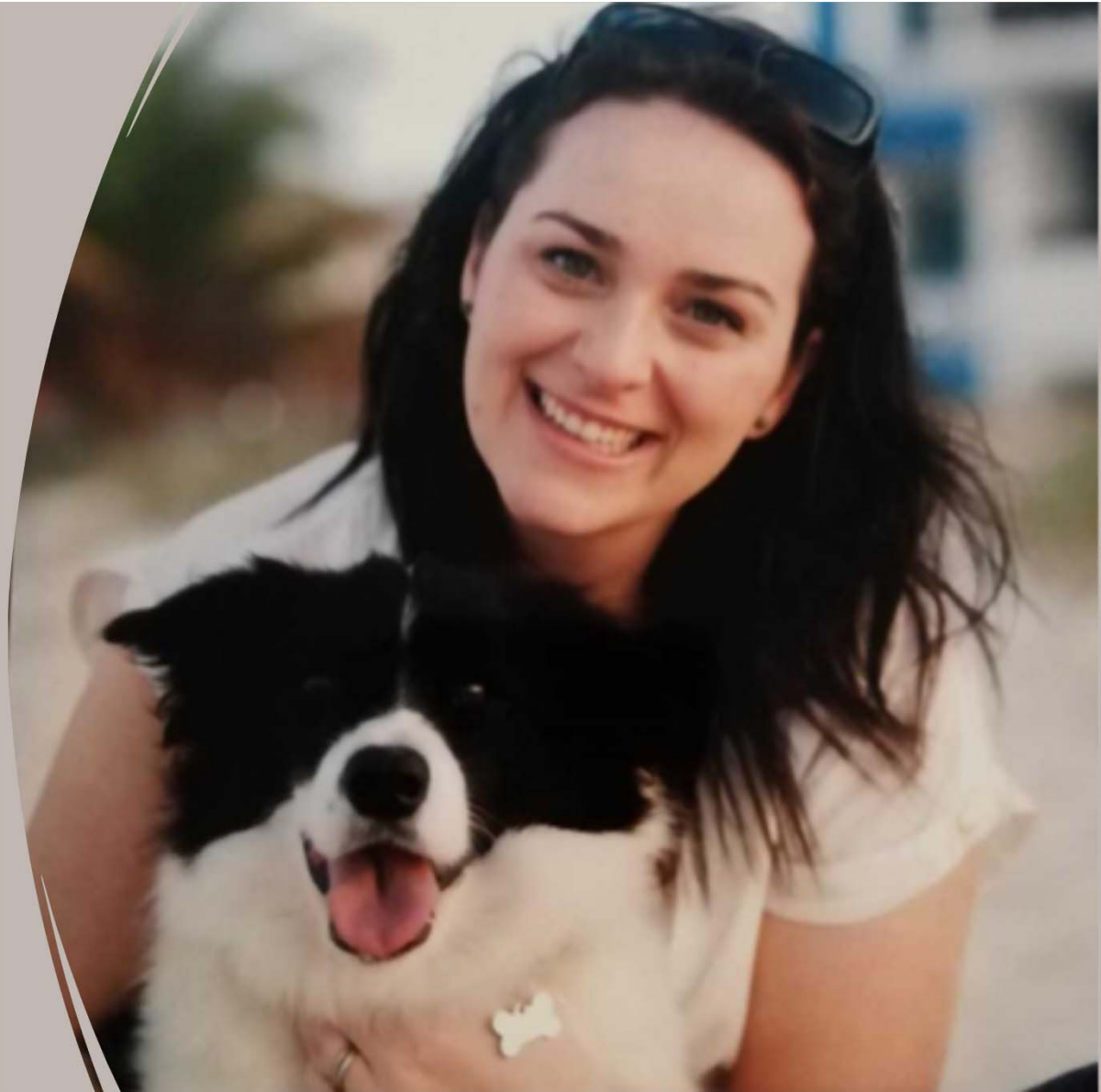
- Closely connect individual CDC members - usually for life
- Indirectly connect Canadian food animal producers across all sectors



Bison Code of  
Practice:  
Remembering

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*Dr Fiona Connell*  
*Rioja Lang*



# Bison Code of Practice: 5-Year Review Introduction

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- Same enthusiasm, commitment, and work ethic of original CDC members who agreed to undertake 5-Year Review

# BISON CODE: FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

Carl Flis,  
Executive Director, Canadian Bison Association

Dr. Jeffrey Spooner,  
Coaxis.ca

June 29, 2023  
Ottawa



## About the Code



- The updated Bison Code was released in 2017
- The first update to the Code since 2001
- Developed by an 11-person Code committee
- Aided by a three-person Scientific committee

## Code Development Committee

Role	Representative	Organization
Producer	Mark Silzer (Chair)	Canadian Bison Association
	Frank McAllister	Canadian Bison Association
	Sharif Fahmy MBA, SCMP	Canadian Bison Association
	Todd Dowd	Canadian Bison Association
Veterinarian	Roy Lewis DVM	Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Welfare Organization	Kaley Pugh MSc	Canadian Federation of Humane Societies
Animal Welfare Regulatory Enforcement Body	Terry Whiting DVM	Manitoba Agriculture
Federal Government	Sarah Johannson MSc	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Researcher/Academic	John Church PhD, PAg	Thompson Rivers University
Technical Expertise	Jayson Galbraith PhD, PAg	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
	Terry Kremeniuk BSc, Pag, MBA	Canadian Bison Association
Industry Liaison (Ex-Officio)	Terry Kremeniuk BSc, Pag, MBA	Canadian Bison Association

## Scientific Committee

Representative	Organization
John Church PhD, PAg	Thompson Rivers University
Rob McCorkell DVM, PAg	University of Calgary
Jayson Galbraith PhD, PAg	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

# Bison Code of Practice: Montana Presentation (2017)

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BIG SKIES, BRIGHT HORIZONS  
**INTERNATIONAL  
BISON CONFERENCE**  
**JULY 2017**

## 5-Year Review CTP



- Prospective CTP members approached in February 2023
- Review panel established March 2023

# Bison Code of Practice: Code CTP (2023)

Representative	Organization	Role
Mark Silzer	Canadian Bison Association	Saskatchewan producer
Les Kroeger	Canadian Bison Association	Saskatchewan producer
Sharif Fahmy	Canadian Bison Association	BC producer
Todd Dowd	Canadian Bison Association	Ontario producer
Dean Andres	Andres Trucking	Transporter
Roy Lewis	Canadian Veterinary Medical Association	Veterinarian
Kaley Pugh	British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	Animal Welfare Organization
Sarah Johannson	National Policy and Program Leader/Humane Transport and Livestock Traceability Programs	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
John Church	Thompson Rivers University	Researcher
Jayson Galbraith	Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development	Technical Expertise

# Review Process

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- *Pre-meeting steps*
  - Direct communications with individual CTP members to:
    - i. discuss review process & purpose
    - ii. invite any perceived Code challenges or concerns
  - Identified topics of highest interest and anticipated meeting foci
  - Invited three panelists to review 2017-2023 research topics as identified by CDC



# Review Process

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- *Review meeting #1 [April 20, 2023]*
  - Detailed presentation of recent research findings
  - Second meeting scheduled to enable collection of additional information regarding Code value/relevance before final panel recommendation
- *Between meetings*
  - Meeting minutes and preliminary Report discussion shared with CTP members
  - Presentation of Summary Review process made to CBA Board, May 2, 2023.

## Review Process



- *Review meeting #2 [May 15, 2023]*
  - Summary Review completed, and final recommendation determined
  - Five-year Code review report with CTP recommendation submitted to NFACC on May 29th, 2023

# Review Summary

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## *Animal welfare research needs [CDC: 2017]*

- Parasite impact and management
- Special pathogens of bison
- Nutrition
- Bison behaviour and handling
- Pain mitigation
- Transport
- Segregated feeding
- Aggression management
- Space allowance
- Thermal impacts on nutritional needs
- Diet
- Lameness
- Identification
- Bison horn physiology and related behaviour
- Bison production and greenhouse gas emissions



# Review Summary

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- Only minimal research available in limited areas; not changes
- More research needed in many areas
- Challenges to research include:
  - Small pool of researchers available
  - Funding limitations
  - Minimized demand based on low-risk to industry and/or limited practices
  - Lack of options available, regardless (e.g., treatments)
- Recent published literature plus ongoing research will aid 10-year update

# Review Summary - Additions to Update

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- The next version of the Bison Code should:
  - Consider expanding scope to include on-road transportation
  - Include more emergency planning and response content
  - Only include horned bison images (as dehorning is a declining practice and prohibited among non-breeding bison)
  - Update *Resources for Further Information [Appendix H]* to include:
    - Emergency planning and response
    - Biosecurity
    - Health management
    - Producer mental health supports



# Review Summary - Code Awareness and Implementation

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- No “*Animal Care Assessment Program*” largely due to a lack of producer and market demand
- Industry leaders, veterinarians, and others involved in original development process have promoted Code at significant producer events
- The Code is a primary training resource for the “Bison Assurance System Producer Program”
- Animal protection officers have not reported issues/grey areas within Code
- Animal Health Emergency Management [AHEM] Producer Handbook content supports Code

# Review Summary - Code Value and Relevance



- Valuable and relevant to:
  - Producers
  - Handling facilities
  - Domestic marketplace
  - International marketplace
  - Regulators

# Review Summary - Minor Challenges Identified with Current Code

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- Few minor wording changes would be helpful in 2027
- Request made that professional designations be added to participants list in the current Code [online only]



## CTP Recommendation



- The Code Technical Panel's recommendation is to:  
Reaffirm the current Code

# Bison Code of Practice: Postscript

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- 2017 Code as “Built tough”
- Collective work of CDC reflected a truly synergistic, successful collaboration



# Bison Code of Practice: Health and Welfare Considerations post-2023

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- CBA-related bison health and welfare considerations post 2023 (and pre 2027)



Thank you /  
Questions?

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## Next Steps

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- Include professional designations on the participants list in the current Code [as minor errata]
- Post the Code with errata revisions to NFACC and CBA websites



# Outline

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- About the Bison Code
- Code Technical Panel [CTP]
- Review Process
- Review Summary
- CTP Recommendation
- Next Steps

