

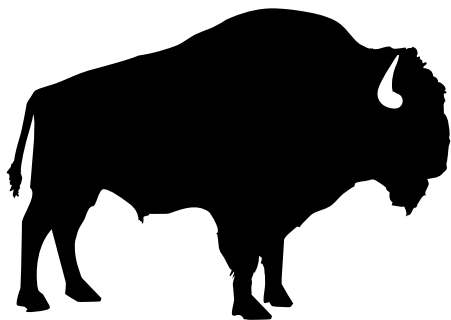
TEXAS BISON

2016-2017 JOURNAL

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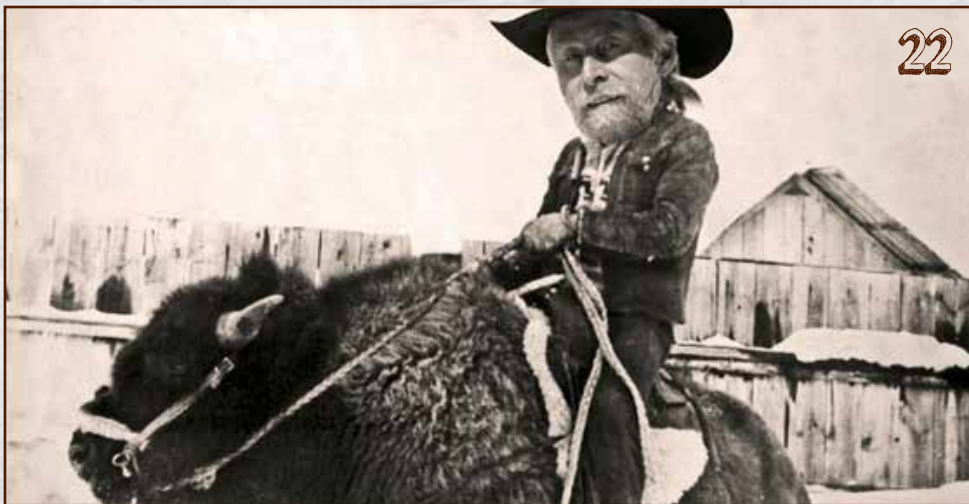
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Cover photo by Benjy Cox — Rusty was the 13 year old herd bull at Tai-Pan Station in Lytton Springs TX. He was purchased from John Russell's Rocky Hill Ranch in 2007. Rusty sired 31 handsome calves between 2008 and 2015 with another 10 to 12 expected in the spring of 2016. He was notable for his large majestic head that matched his confirmation and gentle disposition even though he was partially blind in one eye from an injury he suffered as a calf. Rusty was so mild mannered that some visitors picked up the ill-advised habit of hand feeding him cattle cubes, fortunately for the ranch and its insurance policy, without a hint of aggression on his part. Besides eating and entertaining the cows, his favorite pastime was rubbing on any stationary object; be it a pole guy-wire, mesquite tree, pickup truck, tractor, front end loader, portable panels anything it seemed but the medicated rub attached to the guy-wire for him and his herd. Sadly on March 3, 2016 he was shot and killed by unknown vandal(s). He still has his own modest fan club and will be sorely missed.

View from the Camphouse Porch



By Donnis Baggett

Drought is nothing but a distant memory on this steamy summer morning. The bison calves are chasing each other through grass as high as their chins, and the bull's horns are coated with mud from the dam of the stock tank. He seems to enjoy "bulldozing" almost as much as doing what a bull is hired to do.

A month ago, the bison was named the national mammal of the United States. Since then even more cars than usual have been pulling up to the ranch gate with folks craning their necks at the animals across the fence. Prices for breeding stock

and bison meat are hovering around historic highs, and the phone rings almost daily with calls that begin the same way: "Do ya'll have any buffalo for sale?"

The grass is green, business is good and bison are in the spotlight. It's a great time to be in the bison business. And Texas is a great place to raise bison.

Population-wise, Texas is very much an urban state now. But make no mistake: Whether we live in Dallas or Dalhart, Texans still have a strong sense of place and a longing to be close to the land. We may make our living tangling with office politics instead of ornery broncs, but we still harbor a deep and abiding love for this place called Texas, and we want a piece we can call our own.

Thankfully, that dream is still attainable. There are "miles and miles of Texas" sprawling between our big cities, and much of that rural property isn't in agricultural production any more. As granddaddy used to say, "That land's not doing anything but holding the world together." This means opportunity for people who love the outdoors and want to claim a piece of it for their own...and maybe pass it on to the kids someday.

If you're reading this, maybe you fit that description. If you'd rather spend your Saturday in a pickup than a golf cart, and if you'd rather spend money at the feed store than the mall, you might even own a little piece of Texas already.

If you want something on your land to help pay the bills — something a little different with a strong future and lots of "cool" appeal — maybe bison are for you. If so, the Texas Bison Association is a group of like-minded folks who'd love to help you get started.

Yes, it's a great time to be in the bison business. And it's a great time to be a member of the Texas Bison Association. You can find out more at www.texasbison.org.

See you at the feed store.

Donnis Baggett is president of the Texas Bison Association. He and his wife, Beverly Brown, are co-owners of Lucky B Bison near Bryan, Texas.



The Texas Bison Association

works to promote and preserve Texas bison through leadership, education and building public awareness for the bison ranching and meat industry. Founded in 1994, the Texas Bison Association provides assistance in raising and producing bison among our membership. TBA also promotes the nutritional health aspects of the North American

Bison to consumers. The TBA welcomes anyone with an interest in the preservation, promotion and production of the North American Bison.

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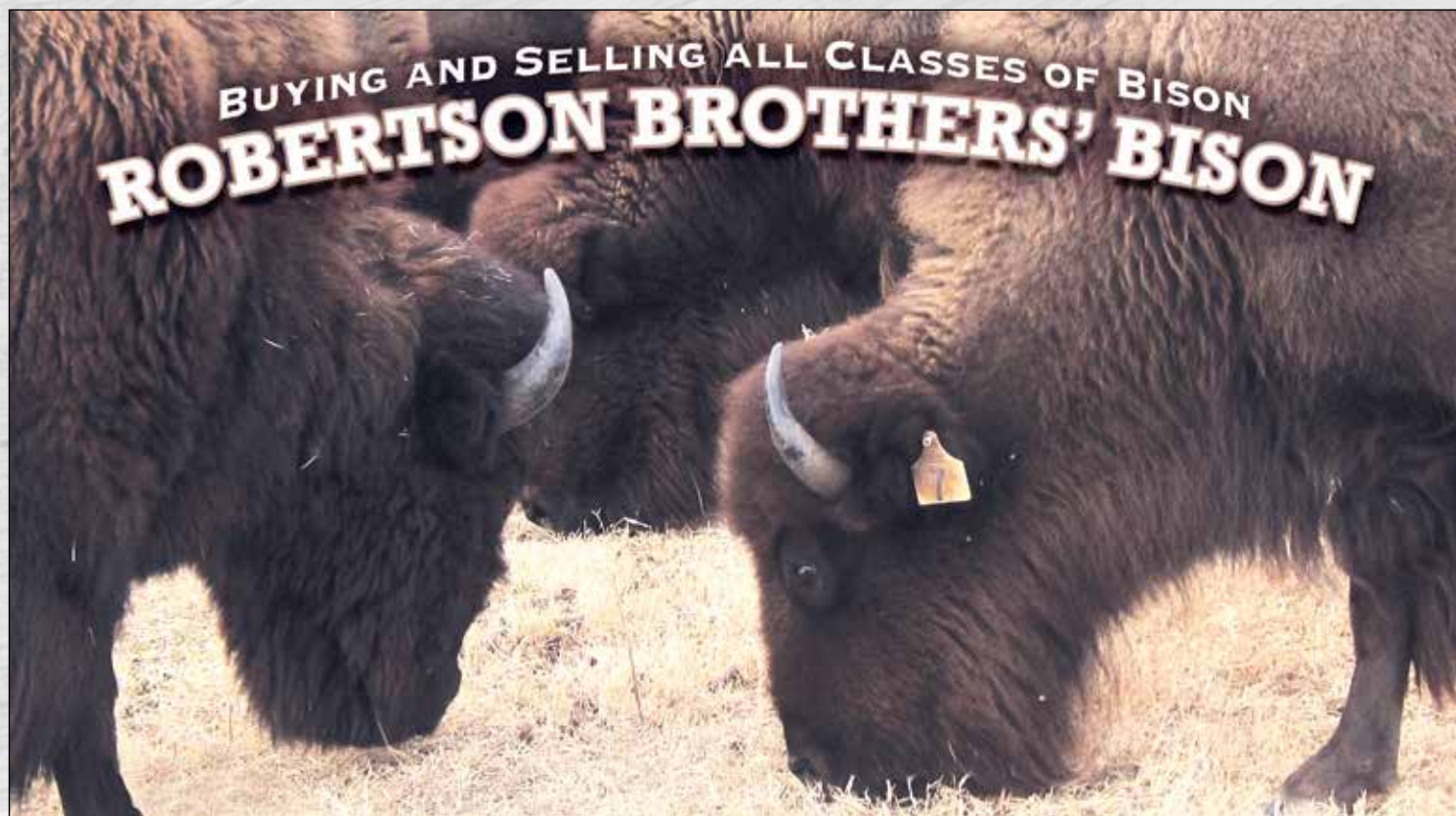
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Thoughts about American

Harold Lawrence — Museum of the Americas, Weatherford, Texas

Between 1913 and 1938 the United States Mint first issued the five-cent coin known popularly either as the “buffalo nickel” or the “Indian head nickel”. By this time both the American buffalo (*Bison bison*) and the American Indian (by whatever tribal name) were generally considered extinct. But this nickel affirmed the romantic notion that Indian culture had been a culture totally dependent on the buffalo—note the use of the singular to identify Indian culture. Artists in the West celebrated the almost symbiotic relationship between the Indian and the buffalo. Charlie Russell’s portrayal of this relationship is without doubt the finest of man and beast. Museums with significant holdings of Russell paintings have mounted special exhibits on artistic renderings of the buffalo. One exceptional exhibit was that described by Larry Barsness in the book *The Bison in Art: Graphic Chronicle of the American Bison* for the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1977. With limited resources but with all of the above in mind, the Museum of the Americas (which is primarily a museum of the American Indian) in Weatherford, Texas, undertook an exhibition focused on the buffalo.

Objects for the display came relatively easy. David Sherrill, a big-game trophy hunter, supplied us with a magnificent head mount of *Bison bison* as well as a mounted gray wolf. A collector of Western memorabilia had a full hide, several bison skulls, and tools used by the hide hunters of the 1870’s. A Russell bronze, a folk-art carving, and artistic renderings of the bison were assembled. The Museum collection supplied hide-working tools, Plains Indian ceremonial objects, drawings, and bead-work portraying the buffalo. What presented an almost insurmountable obstacle was literature related to the bison with up-to-date science-based materials on the history of the buffalo. To sort through what was readily available outside scholarly journals was the big challenge.

Historically, the first major study of bison was that of J. A. Allen entitled *The American Bison, [Living and Extinct]* (Cambridge: [Harvard] University Press, 1876)—now available mainly through print-on-demand sources. Within the year William Temple Hornaday, Director of the National Museum [Smithsonian], joined Allen in issuing a revised

edition. Hornaday then went on to complete a study in 1887 entitled *The Extermination of the American Bison* (first published 1889 and reissued in 2002 by the Smithsonian Press), which effectively became the catalyst for a national concern for saving the buffalo. Included in the original 1889 publication was Hornaday’s map graphically illustrating the time frame of the extermination of the bison across North America. He cited man’s greed as the singular driving force behind the near total elimination of the species but went on to raise concerns and suggested remedies to counter the trend. His solutions for preservation were particularly through government programs. Especially problematic was the question of what was to be the fate of the last truly wild herd in the Yellowstone. Hornaday observed that at that point private commercial breeding interests were primarily in crossbreeding, which he deplored. In 1905 the American Bison Society was organized with Wm. T. Hornaday as its first president.

Bison bison is a North American Phenomenon. Canadians have long been interested in preserving the species, so it comes as no surprise that one of the major modern studies of the bison comes out of Canada. Frank Gilbert Roe’s *The North American Buffalo: A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State* (University of Toronto Press, 1951 [second ed. 1970]) is more precisely a critical review of the history of the literature related to the bison. This is indeed a scholarly study that surveys a vast array of materials (all carefully footnoted) in a straight-forward narrative. In thirty-nine appendices, he treats a variety of somewhat extraneous materials. An example of the sort of criticism proffered is found in his discussion of Hornaday, whom he acknowledged as one of the three major “serious historical generalizers on buffalo”; however, “Hornaday is a zoologist of the first order, but a very inferior historian (7)”. Hornaday and Roe obviously had different agendas. Professor Roe’s study is without doubt the outstanding review of the historical record. What can only be described as a popular account of the historical record is Larry Barsness’s *Heads Hides & Horns: The Complete Buffalo Book* (TCU Press, 1985). However, in a comparison

bison bison, the Buffalo

of the two works, one would have to conclude Roe's study more nearly fills the bill as "The Complete Buffalo Book."

From a very different point of view is *North American Bison: Their Classification and Evolution* by Jerry N. McDonald (Univ. California Press, 1981). This is a remarkably detailed taxonomic study of bison. McDonald, in his own words, "attempts to test the ... major hypotheses that are currently jousting to dominate the theoretical sphere of bison evolution research"; he then goes on to list six distinct scientific approaches (2-5). One of the major problems with existing studies is that "much of the literature on bison taxonomy and evolution is not based on the firsthand examination of species" (41). How the science has changed! At the 2015 National Bison Association Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, Dr. Lauren Dobson, from Texas A & M, underscored the importance of establishing DNA profiles in order to understand the complex issues related to bison genetic purity (see "State of the Industry" in *Texas Bison, 2015 Journal*). For anyone interested in what sort of results come from taxonomic studies, McDonald's study is exemplary. What will come from future DNA studies promises to be interesting.

A book somewhat tangential to the study of *Bison bison* is Tim Flannery's *The Eternal Frontier: An Ecological History of North America and Its People* (Atlantic Monthly, 2001). Flannery traces sixty-five million years of ecological history from the standpoint of modern scientific research. The bison do not figure into the scheme of things till near the end. At that point, he makes a rather dramatic statement: "In terms of kilograms of matter belonging to one species, the great bison herds of the American prairie formed the greatest aggregation of living things ever recorded" (323). How an environment evolved that came to support this mass is an intriguing story, geological, biological, and especially human.

Hornaday placed the near total extermination of the bison on man's greed. Man was the major culprit, but, in all fairness, there were other issues. Environmental studies and history record what some of those natural causes for herd mortality were:

- Drought: severe drought destroyed native grasses, requiring a five-year recovery in many instances. Extensive drought occurred in the years 1761-1773, 1778-1803, 1822-1832, 1836-1851, 1846-1856 (Isenberg, 109-110).
- Snow and ice: rain atop snow turns a snow pack into solid ice, which was an impenetrable barrier for grazing buffalo—1865 was such a year; millions of buffalo starved (McHugh, 231ff.).
- Prairie fire: either from lightning strikes or man made, fire was essential in rejuvenating grasses, but fast moving fires were fatal to buffalo caught in their paths.
- Drowning: Swampy shifting sands along prairie rivers and streams entrapped bison; carcasses of bison often dammed rivers and streams increasing the problems; bison crossing frozen rivers often caused ice breakup, entrapping whole herds.
- Disease: ticks carrying Texas fever reached the buffalo herds as Texas cattle trailed north from the 1860s-1880s, brucellosis had little effect on bison; anthrax was brought in by European cattle; bovine tuberculosis was not an issue before 1923. Herd depletion through disease followed European contact.
- Predation: wolf and bear predation essentially limited to the old, the sick, the wounded, and young; had no real effect on herd numbers.
- Note: Before European contact inadequate forage reduced herd numbers more than any other cause, including all forms of animal and human predation. Checking the dates listed above for loss of range suggests that the total bison count before the advent of the great slaughter had been reduced in size considerably.

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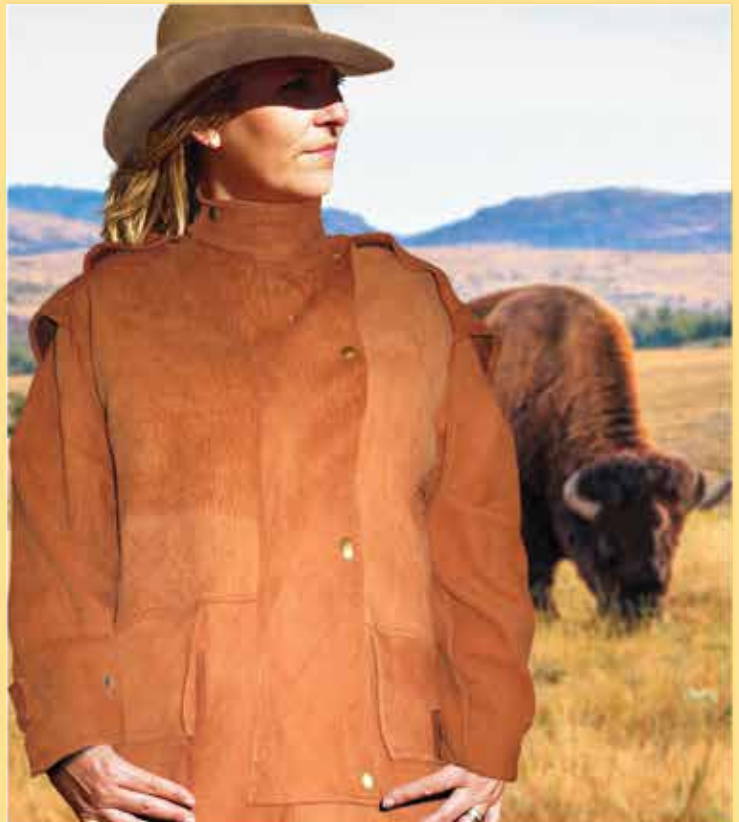
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American Buffalo

...continued from page 7

A further comment on the environment is in order: bison were not the only victims of these forces. A number of species on the prairies became extinct or seriously threatened. A partial list includes:

- **Bison bison** (the American buffalo)
- **Ursus arctos** (American brown bear and grizzly bear) now confined to Northern Rocky Mountains, Canada, and Alaska—human predation and loss of habitat on prairies
- **Ursus americanus** (black bear) loss of habitat and human predation
- **Canis lupus** (gray wolf) extinction of the American buffalo, loss of habitat and human predation; reintroduced
- **Cervus canadensis merriami** (Merriam's elk) extinct plains sub specie elk common to the prairies
- **Odocoileus hemionus** (mule deer) now limited to brush areas of northern plains
- **Cynomys** [five various sub species] (prairie dogs) endangered through loss of habitat and poisoning
- **Castor canadensis** (American beaver) population declined from 60,000,000 early 18th century to 6-12,000,000 currently. Hunted for pelts for 200 years, loss of habitat, population control for environmental concerns. Beaver ponds historically provided wetlands, water conservation, habitat for a wide ecological base.
- **Crotalus** and **Sistrurus** with sub species (rattlesnakes) reduced populations, reduced size—ecologically important for rodent control

The story of the bison appears to have something of an ironic twist in that *Bison bison* as a species may be the result of human involvement. Discovery of bison remains with embedded projectile points has led some archaeologists to speculate that early human hunters contributed to the extinction of the prehistoric bison and that subsequently *Bison bison* evolved on the vast grassland prairies of North America. One of the characteristics of *Bison bison* is that it is a grazer, not a browser. The open prairie provided the perfect environment for the evolution of this species. Prior to the introduction of the horse, the bison herds were relatively safe from human predation; the early marginal human presence was not a major threat to herd numbers and in fact may have provided a barrier between the *Bison bison* and bison subspecies of the forests. It is at this point that the calculations had herd population reaching 30,000,000. At the end of the eighteenth century the Indian acquired the horse. On horseback the Indian soon turned a hunter-gatherer society into a culture engaged in an economic system of trade and plunder. Soon the Euroamerican hunter converted the buffalo harvest into an

industrial trade. This trade had unexpected consequences.

What was happening in the West was to have devastating effects on the Eastern seaboard. Millions of buffalo hides were shipped to the east. Tanneries required tannin, and the source seized upon was the hemlock forests of New England. Harvesting of the eastern hemlock forests for the tannin in the bark led to the utter destruction of the forests themselves. The polluted of the rivers of Pennsylvania, New York, and neighboring states from tannin residue and animal by-products contaminated rivers, and subsequently affected coastal waterways, destroying fish runs and marine life: "Late nineteenth-century tanneries were thus an environmental malignancy that destroyed bison, razed forests, and fouled rivers." (Isenberg, 132-3).

What is missing from the picture now is a thorough DNA study not only of *Bison bison*, but of its closest relatives, living and extinct. The outstanding display of prehistoric bison at the Panhandle Plains Museum in Canyon, Texas, provides the taxonomic teaser for the ancestry; only the curious scientist can provide the DNA studies to link the past to the present and thereby provide additional possibilities for the conservation of the species.

What follows is a list of books of some interest to readers of books related to the bison. Some of these books may be available on Amazon or some similar search engine. Cross-referencing with the internet source: www.abebooks over a period of time will usually turn up the rest.

America's Fascinating Indian Heritage: The First Americans: Their Customs, Art, history and How They Lived. Reader's Digest, 1978. [See: *The Great Plains: Nomadic Horsemen*, pp. 154-203.]

Archer, David. *The Long Thaw: How Humans are changing the Next 100,000 Years of Earth's Climate.* Princeton Univ. Press, 2009.

Barsness, Larry. *The Bison in Art: A Graphic Chronicle of the American Bison.* Northland Press, 1977. [in cooperation with the Amon Carter Museum]

Barsness, Larry. *Heads, Hides and Horns: The Compleat Buffalo Book.* TCU Press, 1985. [Remarkable source book, but written before DNA studies]

Belden, George, P. Belden, *The White Chief; or, Twelve Years among the Wild Indians of the Plains.* Ohio Univ. Press, 1974.

Berry, William D. *Buffalo Land: The Untamed Wilderness of the High Plains Frontier.* Macmillan, 1961.

Bol, Marsha C. *American Indians and the Natural World.* Carnegie Museum of Natural History, 1998. [See: "The Lakota and Their Neighbors on the Great Plains," pp.93-134.]

Boller, Henry A. *Among the Indians: Eight Years in the Far West 1858-1866.* The Lakeside Press, 1959. [Reprint of an 1868 account from an employee of the American Fur Company]

Burdett, Charles. *Life of Kit Carson: the Great Western Hunter and Guide.* Philadelphia: Porter and Coats, 1865.

Cates, Jon. *Home on the Range: The Story of the National Bison Range.* Helena and Billings, Montana, Falcon Press, 1986.

Clark, Ann Nolan. *Buffalo Caller: the Story of a young Sioux boy of the early 1700's before the coming of horse.* Row, Peterson and Co., 1942. [a children's book]

Cook, John R. *The Border and the Buffalo: An Untold Story of the South Plains.* New York: Citadel Press, 1967. [First published by Crane and Company of Topeka, Kansas, 1907, with a note on the title page: "The Bloody Border of Missouri and Kansas, The Story of the Slaughter of the Buffalo. Westward among the Big Game and Wild Tribes"]

Dodge, Col. Richard Irving. *The Plains of the Great West and Their Inhabitants: being a Description of the Plains, Game, Indians, & of the Great North American Desert.* Archer House, 1959. [a reprint of the 1877 edition]

------. Our Wild Indians: *Thirty-three Years' Personal Experience among the Red Men of the Great West*. Archer House, 1959. [a reprint of the 1882 edition; this volume is by far more readable than Dodge's Plains of the Great West and covers much the same material]

Flannery, Tim. *The Eternal Frontier: An Ecological History of North America and Its Peoples*. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2001. [An Australian museum director and marine biologist traces the geological and biological history of North America.]

Haines, Francis. *The Buffalo*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 1970. [an historian's view]

Haley, J. Evetts. *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman*. Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1949. [a revised version of the 1936 text; the account of Goodnight's work in saving the bison in this biography differs from later accounts.]

Haley, James L. *The Buffalo War: The History of the Red River Indian Uprising of 1874*. Doubleday, 1976.

Haines, Francis. *The Buffalo*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970.

Hogben, Lancelot. *From Cave Painting to Comic Strip*. Chanticleer Press, 1949. [See discussion of cave painting.]

Hornaday, William Temple. *The Extirpation of the American Bison*. Smithsonian, 2002. [a reprint that does not include the map showing the decline of the bison]

------. *Smithsonian Report, U. S. National Museum, 1887*. See: "The Extirpation of the American Bison," pp. 367-548. [This is the original publication of the above title complete with Hornaday's map.]

Hummerville, J. Lee. *Twenty Years Among Our Hostile Indians* [1860's—1870's]. Stackpole Books, 2002. [Originally published: New York: Hunter, c.1903.]

Ice Age People North America: Environments, Origins, and Adaptations of the First Americans. Edited by Robson Bonnicksen and Karen L Turnmire. Texas A&M Univ., 2005. [Reprint of Oregon State Univ. publication of 1999, essays in memory of Edward J. Zeller]

Irving, Washington. *The Works of Washington Irving... Volume III*. Peter Fenelon Collier, Publisher, 1893. [See: Bonneville's Adventures, pp. 269-371.]

Irwin, R. Stephen. *The Indian Hunters: Hunting and Fishing Methods of the North American Indian*. Hancock House, 1984.

Isenberg, Andrew C. *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750 -1920*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Lange, Ian M. *Ice Age Mammals of North America: A Guide to the Big, the Hairly, and the Bizarre*. Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing, 2002.

Large Mammal Restoration: Ecological and Sociological Challenges in the 21st Century. Edited by David S. Maehr, Reed F. Noss, and Jeffery L. Larkin. Island Press, 2001.

Lee, Wayne C. *Scotty Philip, the man who saved the buffalo*. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1975.

Lott, Dale F. *American Bison: a Natural History*. Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 2002.

Lyford, Carrie A. *Quill and Beadwork of the Western Sioux*. Boulder, Colorado: Johnson Books, 1987.

Marcy, Colonel R. R. *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border*. Harper and Brothers, 1866. [Marcy arrived on the Plains in the 1830s, where he remained for the better part of the next thirty years. His descriptions of the Indian and the game herds of the Plains, therefore offer an interesting second view of that recorded by Col. Dodge cited above; of special interest are his comments on the southern plains, Texas and New Mexico.]

Martin, Cy. *The Saga of the Buffalo*. Promontory, 1973. [a good place for the novice to begin]

McDonald, Jerry N. *North American Bison: Their Classification and Evolution*. Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 1981. [the most significant taxonomic study of the bison—alas, before DNA studies began].

McHugh, Tom. *The Time of the Buffalo*. Alfred Knopf, 1972.

McMurtry, Larry. *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas*. Austin: Encino Press, 1968.

Meinzer, Wyman, and Andrew Sansom. *Southern Plains Bison: Resurrection of the Lost Texas Herd*. Badlands Blue Star Publication, 2011.

Rinella, Steven. *American Buffalo: In Search of a Lost Icon*. Spiegel & Grau, 2008. [a big game hunter's reflections on the American buffalo and an account of his recent buffalo hunt in the wilds of Alaska]

Rister, Carl Coke. *Fort Griffin on the Texas Frontier*. Univ. Oklahoma, 1956.

Roe, Frank Gilbert. *The American Buffalo: A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State*. 2nd edition. Univ. of Toronto, 1970. [Originally published in 1951, this is an historian's, not a scientist's study; Roe was a retired railroad engineer.]

Russell, Charles M. *Good Medicine: Memories of the Real West*. Garden City Publishing, 1930.

Rye, Edgar. *The Quirt and the Spur: Vanishing Shadows of the Texas Frontier*. Austin: Steck-Vaughn, 1967. [New edition of 1909 book]

Sandoz, Mari. *The Buffalo Hunters: The Story of the Hide Men*. Hastings House, 1954.

Schiel, Jacob H. *Journey Through the Rocky Mountains and the Humbolt Mountains to the Pacific Ocean*. Trans. and ed. by Thomas N. Bonner. Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1959.

Schultz (Apikuni), James Willard. *Blackfeet and Buffalo: Memories of Life among the Indians*. Ed. by Keith C. Seele. Univ. of Oklahoma, 1962.

Tibbles, Thomas Henry. *Buckskin and Blanket Days: Memoirs of a Friend of the Indian* [written 1905]. Doubleday, 1957.

Trobriand, [Gen.]Philippe Regis Denis de Keredern de. *Army Life in Dakota* [Selections from]. Trans. By George Francis Will. The Lakeside Press, 1941. [excerpts from a lengthy manuscript focusing on the Dakota frontier as seen through Army eyes (1867-1869), basically sympathetic to the Indian; remarks on the scarcity of the buffalo]

Webb, W. E. *Buffalo Land: an Authentic Narrative of the Adventures and Misadventures of a Late Scientific and Sporting Party upon the Great Plains of the West with Full Descriptions of the Country Traversed, the Indian as he is, the Habits of the Buffalo, Wolf, and Wild Horse, etc.* Cincinnati: E. Hannaford & Company, 1872.

Pamphlets

Belitz, Larry. *Brain Tanning the Sioux Way*. [Private printing, 1978]

Dippie, Brian. *Take Two: George Catlin Revisits the West*. Sid Richardson Museum Gallery Guide, 2015. See pp. 30-50 for discussion of Catlin's bison portraits.

Garrelson, Martin. *A Short History of the American Bison*. The American Bison Society, 1934.

Huebner, Jeffery A. "Late Prehistoric Bison Populations in Central and Southern Texas," Texas Archeological Research laboratory, Balcones Research Center, the University of Texas, December 1990.

National Museum of Wildlife Art: *Highlights from the Collection*. Jackson Hole, Wyoming, 1999.

Rozell, Ned. "Scientists stunned to find skeleton of steppe bison," *Alaska Dispatch News*, 5/21/2015. [<http://www.and.com>]

Singular Moments: Photographs from the Amon Carter Museum. Amon Carter Museum, 2001. [See p. 6 for photograph of carts transporting bison hides]

Spang, Jennie L., Wilfred F., and Alonzo T. *Cheyenne Way of Tanning*. [private printing, n.d.]

Harold Lawrence
Museum of the Americas
Weatherford, Texas

WHO IN THE WORLD IS JIM MATHESON?

Many of you already know and respect Jim. There are still, however, some among us who see Jim Matheson's name on Texas Bison Association emails and wonder what this Coloradoan has to do with keeping TBA moving. So, for everyone, here is the "rest of the story" on James Michael Matheson Jr.

He's a man who wears many hats in the bison business, one of which is communications director for the Texas Bison Association, a role he has served since 2013. In this position, Jim manages the TBA website, Texasbison.org, the association's Facebook page and is the editor of the bi-weekly Texas Bison Briefs. He also advises the TBA on events, outreach and more. Says Jim of the working relationship with the TBA, "I had enjoyed working with various members of the Texas Bison Association for the better part of a decade as the assistant director of the National Bison Association, so when the TBA board approached me to do some work with them on their communications, I knew it'd be a great fit. It's like working with your friends on a hobby and I'm proud to contribute to this great organization".

Jim has worked for the NBA since 2004. His interest in bison grew out of his time spent in Montana in the 90s where he earned his bachelor's degree in Economics from Montana State University. Jim lived and worked on a small farm across the road from a ranch that had a small herd, and was enthralled by bison he'd seen on his many trips to nearby Yellowstone National Park. Having grown up in New England, where his father managed paper mills in the



70's and 80's, he'd always wanted to venture west and followed that dream at his first opportunity - college. Upon graduating, he enrolled in the U.S. Peace Corps as an ag-development volunteer and worked for two years in the former Soviet republic of Moldova, where he incidentally met his wife-to-be, Mary Lou. Jim continued to stay involved in agriculture, working in the Napa Valley with grape growers at the local economic development corporation. He then moved to Colorado, where Mary Lou grew up, and earned his master's degree in public administration from the University of Colorado and upon graduating, began working for the NBA. Jim has now been working in sustainable agriculture for over 20 years and is just another of the quality ways the TBA is helping the bison community in its

mission of "Preserving the Legend."

As the TBA's communications director, beyond managing the website and editing the newsletter, he's also here to answer any and all questions you may have for the TBA. Did you know as a member you can send Jim an email at jim@texasbison.org to post a free classified ad? If you're not receiving the Texas Bison Briefs, please drop him an email to make sure we have your correct email on file. General questions about bison, ranching and the TBA? Ask away. Said Jim, "I'm here to help. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any issues regarding your membership, if you have a story lead for the Bison Briefs, or if you have a bison question you can't get answered. And if I can't answer it, I can usually find someone who can."

Roaming Wild IN THE CANYONS

Caprock Canyons State Park is home to the Official Bison Herd of the State of Texas! These descendants of the Great Southern Herd, saved from extinction by famed cattleman Charles Goodnight and his wife Mary Ann, were reintroduced to the canyons in 2011, and can now be seen roaming the park grasslands.

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A photograph of a bison running across a two-lane highway. Several cars are visible in the background, including a blue sedan and a white pickup truck. The scene is set in a wooded area with a river or stream visible on the left side of the road.

Recapturing

Escaped Bison

By Cecil Muskin

As a bison rancher you have done all you can think of to be sure your animals are in a secure enclosure. You have heard the stories and seen the news broadcasts: Bison on the loose; Bison escape; Bison running down the highway.

The odds of it happening to you are extremely low because of your good fences and hard work. But let's assume the unlikely has happened and your animals are out. What do you do? Where do you start?

This is why you (hopefully) have done your part — before you ever put the first hoof print in your pasture — to learn all you could about bison behavior. Now it is absolutely imperative to think like a bison. Toward the end of this article we will list the most prevalent of these behaviors for those of you new to bison.

But right now time is wasting and you need to get your animals back in.

THINK BEFORE YOU ACT.

The first things to be sure about are the facts of the escape. Where and how did they escape? Fence down? Power off on an electric fence? Gate left open? Did they run out of water and go in search of a drink? Storm damage? Vandals?

If the animals are still near the breakout spot, more often than not they can be led back the way they escaped. Outside is new territory, and bison like the familiar — especially when pushed or frightened. But you have to be sure that there is an unrestricted way for them to get back. If you need to tear down some additional fence, get the cutters and get it done. It

can be fixed, but if they can't find their way back in they will keep going. That is what you don't want.

So if you can get in front of them (at a safe distance) to block their path, move slowly to turn them around, then if you continue moving towards them they should start back toward their exit point. Once they turn and start, keep them moving steadily.

If your bison are accustomed to being treated to range cubes or sweet feed, then grab the feed sack. Many herds (and individual bison) know when you bring feed. They also usually know in what truck or container you bring the feed.

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Recapturing Escaped Bison

...continued from page 13

Ours knew the difference between the brown range cube bags and the red and white sweet feed bags.

If they know the feed sacks or feed truck, often just using that as a lead vehicle will get them to follow the driver back where they belong. But if you're having trouble stopping them and it becomes necessary, drop a little feed to stop them and start them feeding. That holds them where they are and keeps them from wandering further. Again, think like a buffalo. Stopping them is better than letting them get farther away. But once stopped, can you get them started again in the direction you want?

Of course, leading them home with the feed truck is Plan A. But always be ready with a plan B and C. No one way is always certain. Sometimes Plan A works for some of the "escapees" but others have other ideas. If your bull escaped scenting cattle females in heat and some of his cows follow, he has one idea and they have another. Don't get so set on making one thing work that you overlook another. That said, you may have to capture those you can and go back later for those who don't cooperate as easily.

GET EVERYONE WORKING TOGETHER

If you have to put out a lot of feed, try to get the bison into a calm place before you do. That is, a place where they can stand and eat while you figure out how to contain them or move them. You know what excites your herd: strangers, honking horns, people crowding them. If you must use feed to stop them, think how and where can you stop them safely to give you the greatest amount of time before they think about starting off again. Use feed (or feed vehicles) to lead them to where you want them if you can, or to stop them if that is all you can do, but also remember that once they are fed, then feed is no longer your best tool; once they're full they won't care.

Use familiar people and vehicles. Bison know members of their herd, you and your helpers included. They will move away from the unfamiliar, but let that which they know move more freely around them. People with good intentions can make the situation worse as the animals move further off from them. If needed, can you get one or two law enforcement officers to act as crowd control? The uniform will help people do what they are told, and the more people you can keep away from the animals the better everything is.

If your buffs are too far from home, is there any temporary containment available? Another farm pasture with fences...even if those fences aren't as good as the ones around your pasture? We were lucky after one escape to have them about a mile from home but near a beautiful pipe fenced horse pasture with no horses inside. In they went. They grazed for a day while we moved in a seven-foot-

tall portable panel corral that could contain them for loading. A residential fenced back yard with privacy fence? You can replace someone's lawn cheaper than you can a lost life. A vet clinic? Even a fenced schoolyard with no kids around would be better than having them run loose.

THINGS NOT TO DO ... IF POSSIBLE

We know that chasing bison to contain them or get them where you want them to be is usually futile. Their speed and ability to turn so quickly

make it a waste of time and energy. Whether you're aboard a horse, a motorcycle, an ATV or a truck, they are going to try and escape. That is what tens of thousands of years of survival have engrained in them. It is what the evolution of the species has built into them — running, turning, jumping. So try and make everyone involved in the situation — law enforcement, neighbors, strangers — understand. If you have to hold a quick meeting with your helpers, stress this and other important factors of bison behavior. Move surely but slowly, since fast and jerky movements startle them. Block paths if you can, but do it safely. Cars and trailers are useful for this but often not large enough. Rolls of black plastic sheeting can make very effective and rather long temporary barricades. If you don't have any available, consider keeping a couple of them on hand. Cheap emergency prep, for sure.

Roping bison is a tough job and not a good way to contain them. If you rope them around the neck they will most likely die from a crushed windpipe; accounts of this are way too frequent. And if you rope them around the horns you'd best have a bulldozer to tie off to, for they will turn right for the horse, rider or whatever they think is "holding" them. I've seen young bulls break the rope even when horn-roped. So unless you are someone that has practiced this, and is really ready, all you are going to do is aggravate the animal(s) further, making them more distrusting of everyone involved. Being roped is the antithesis of every normal experience for the bison— calm, unconfined, home, familiar, pecking order. Generally it is not just a bad idea, but a really bad idea.

Let's assume
the unlikely has
happened and
your animals are
out. What do you
do? Where do
you start?

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“That Dreaded Call”

Joe and Melissa Adams
Double Nickel Bison Ranch

We have probably all heard tales of getting that phone call, and a number of us have unfortunately been on the receiving end of it....“your bison are loose”!

Well, on the bright side it’s a good way (you hope) to meet your neighbors that you hadn’t gotten around to yet...in this case it was. There was a voice message on my phone from a neighbor back in 2010 that lives on a different county road, their home being around a half mile behind our farthest bison pasture. We actually share maybe a quarter mile of fence line (on the back 40 as we call it), but we don’t EVER let the bison back there as that fencing is pretty old and in poor condition, not to mention a couple of gap fences that get washed away regularly on a major creek that runs through that part of the ranch.

So the voice message went something like this – “I called and got your name and number from Jim down the road from you, and wanted to let you know your buffalo are loose. They are in front of my house grazing.” I of course called him back immediately, and he and his wife have since become good friends.

The bad news was we were probably two hours away. The good news was we were only two hours away, as with my job I travel frequently and could have easily been out of state. Yep, you guessed it...we made it there in record time, the whole way brainstorming on recovery strategies and “what if” scenarios, along with plenty of prayers.

We were driving straight to their place, calling for directions once we got close and he informed us that they got the bison back on our place right back through the broken old fencing they had escaped, then mended the fence enough to deter them. With that new intel, we instead drove straight to our place with the idea of jumping in our Mule and heading for the creek, hoping they were still close.

Now knowing that they were put back into the “back 40” with downed gap fences on that creek, I was scoping out neighbor’s pastures as we were driving and approaching our

place...just in case. Well, low and behold about a half mile before our entry gate I spotted our herd, which apparently had headed down that creek bed and then popped up onto that pasture and were grazing. After a couple of “Thank You Lord’s”, my heart slowed back down closer to normal, and I realized that this might just work out OK. The herd was all there, safe for now, and again... only about a half mile or so now from our place. Things could have been a whole lot worse. So, what now?

All (or certainly much of) the planning and strategies conceived while driving just went out the window, as they are not on our property (back 40 or the creek) and this is no longer a mission for the Kawasaki Mule leading them back through the woods. No, they are in a pasture adjoining the paved County road, with four fenced pastures between our place and them...so it looks like a buffalo walk down the county road is our best bet.

Luck would also have it that we spotted our closest neighbor Charlie between the herd and our place in his truck. We went over and explained the situation and he and his wife offered to help, and he also called his son to come over as well. We had made a quick stop for range cubes on the way out and within 10 minutes or so we were leading a buffalo herd down that paved county road, with Charlie and his son blocking any potential traffic well down the road on each end. Slow and mostly steady, moving at their own pace... we led them back into our ranch, shakin that bag of cubes and leading the way in our pickup (which they were used to).

After a few more “Thank You Lords” with the herd now secured, we searched out their escape route and were astounded to find that a gate had been left open to the back 40, at least 5 days prior to receiving that phone call...go figure.

Lessons learned:

- Open gates are not conducive to confining bison. Check and double check gates
- Stay calm; it is really easy to get all hyped up expecting the worse
- Have a plan in advance, and back up plans...situations can change quickly
- Enlist help if available, the sooner the better
- Train your herd to follow the range cube bag sound
- When you locate and start moving your escaped bison, be patient (just as when working them). The old saying “You can make a bison go anywhere he wants to go” applies here, and a continued regimen of patience and sound strategies will pay off
- To assist in preventing downed fencing, regularly check for fallen limbs, etc... especially after high winds. Proactively cut dead / dying trees or limbs which could fall on fences before they are blow down
- Proactively meet your neighbors, even if they are not on your same road, and exchange phone numbers. Bison don’t always take the paved road.

Recapturing Escaped Bison

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BETTER TO BE READY

If you personally are not close to the scene, get in touch with whomever you can – sheriff, neighbors, your ranch store owner – to give them this information and help them from a distance as much as possible. It's better to do what you can than cuss your luck. Get your mind around the situation by asking as many questions as you can.

In an absolute worst-case situation, be prepared to put the animals down or have someone ready to do it for you. As stewards, if we have failed we simply cannot put others in harm's way. Yes, it should be a last resort, but you need to be physically and mentally ready if it comes to this. Know how to take that proper shot or two. There is plenty written elsewhere on how the buffalo hunters took down their targets.

If you have a tranquilizer gun, be sure to have practiced with it...and have portable corral panels ready to put in place immediately.

When we moved to a new location on a U.S. highway carrying 30,000 cars a day, we contacted the county sheriff to let him know who we were and what we had planned. He welcomed the information and came out to learn what he could. He knew cattle, but talking with him gave us both a better idea of what we could do if we did have an escape. So far all is calm. A call to your local sheriff ahead of time might prove to be a good investment.

Keep in mind that no two escapes are going to start or end the same way. The similarities are that you want



the bison where you want them, and they are not there. Thinking like a bison, how many distinct ways are there to motivate them to get back? How do we minimize human danger? Animal danger? What resources do we have available? What do we need and can we get it in time?

BISON BEHAVIOR 101

When we first got into bison raising, we didn't give a thought to any of this ... and we are not alone. Even longtime cattle raisers get surprised by bison behavior, and not often pleasantly.

Tim Frasier's article - **Handle With Care** - is on the Texas Bison Association website and is a very good read. As Tim tells everyone,

"Bison are not cattle and, if you ever forget that, they will quickly remind you. Working 'with' these unique animals instead of against them is at the heart of humane handling that is both efficient and profitable."

- Bison are used to being in a herd, and will try to return to the herd if separated. If the whole herd is out, that is

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one thing. If just part of the herd is out, most likely giving them a path back to the rest of the herd will trigger their herd mentality.

- There is a pecking order within each bison herd. Some animals are leaders, some are followers and some are middle of the pack animals. Knowing which your “escapees” are will greatly help in figuring out how to get them back.
- Bison prefer to be home in familiar surroundings unless some other urge such as breeding, fright or lack of food motivates them to move.
- Bison are better led than pushed. Lead them with the feed truck rather than pushing them; it’s easier to herd cats.

As renowned animal behaviorist Dr. Temple Grandin writes in **Livestock Handling and Transport, 4th Edition: Theories and Applications** :

“Space precludes more than superficial coverage of this topic, but behavioural characteristics of bison... have yet changed little from those in the wild and are those of prey animals. Bison show marked flight behavior when threatened, but if escape is not an option they may turn and fight. When attempting to escape, bison tend to circle, and this characteristic can be exploited to handling operations. Isolated animals will always attempt to rejoin a group, often regardless of obstacles. In unfamiliar places, bison

will also attempt to return to familiar ground. Undisturbed behaviour focus on grazing and resting. The flight zone and point of balance for bison are similar to those of other livestock, except that the flight zone tends to be greater, especially with more nervous animals, and more so when exposed to novel conditions. When agitated, the flight zone is also greater and handling is more difficult overall. Thus, handling should be as calm as possible, and if animals become very agitated, stoppage of work and rescheduling of the operation should be considered.” Temple Grandin; page 370, CABI, Jun 17, 2014 (with permission) -

Here is a link to news of a recent escape incident. See how much of the above is seen in this particular incident. <http://wivb.com/2015/07/23/herd-of-bison-escapes-in-indiana/>

Likewise, here is another bison escape story with a not-so-happy ending. Could it have been different? <http://wivb.com/ap/ny-sheriff-killing-of-15-loose-bison-was-correct-call/>

So take a breath and relax; your bison are all safely inside their pasture, their corral or their pens. This was just a test. Like any other kind of emergency preparedness, thinking about what you would do if your critters started wandering is just a good part of bison management. May it never happen to you, but if it does, may yours be a safe and happy ending.

All comments and experiences are welcome. Sharing other thoughts may well keep some of our members and friends out of the news. Send your thoughts and comments to Cecil@texasbison.org and we will be glad to incorporate them into future uses of this article.



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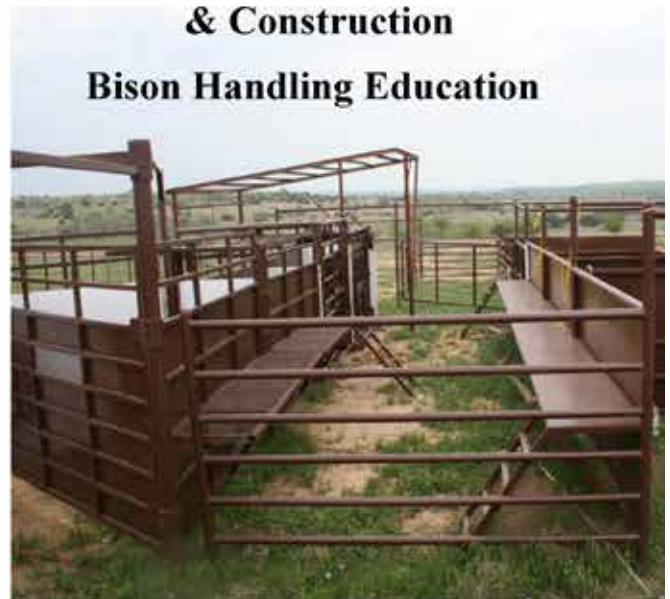
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Malignant Catarrhal Fever

Bison's Big Enemy

By Jim Matheson

You probably think of bison as hearty, tough animals that can stand up to the plains' fiercest blizzards, the Texas summer heat, and most any predation all the while being an incredibly efficient, smart and resourceful species. And you'd be right to assume so.

What you may not know, and what you need to understand as a bison producer, is that a single sheep herd can be the downfall of your bison herd due to a virus called Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF). MCF is an infectious, viral disease that many ruminants are susceptible to, including bison. It is caused by a group of viruses that belong to the herpes virus family. In North America, MCF is caused by ovine herpes virus-2 (OHV -2), which infects sheep with no ill effects but spreads to susceptible species like bison.

Sheep inadvertently spread the virus, mainly from their nasal secretions. Bison or other animals sharing

the same range, pasture, feed or, perhaps, water, with the sheep may come into contact with the virus particles shed by the sheep. Says lead researcher Dr. Donal O'Toole from the University of Wyoming, "The virus doesn't live very long once it's shed." An

early and telltale sign of the disease is a severe runny nose and often a custard like discharge that eventually encrusts the afflicted animal's muzzle. Other symptoms that follow may include mouth ulcers; cloudy, whitened eyes; swollen lymph nodes; bloody diarrhea; and a high fever—as much as

107°F, as compared to a healthy bison's normal 101° to 102°F.

The disease occurs as small to large outbreaks affecting adult bison, and typically results in heavy mortality. One outbreak in a bison feedlot in Idaho resulted in over 800 head lost, with losses in the vicinity



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of a million dollars. Coincidentally, Texas is frequently cited as the top sheep-producing state in the U.S. with an estimated 735,000 head in 2016, however, there has not been a single case of MCF reported in bison in Texas, according to Dr. Tommy Barton, Region 7 Director of the Texas Animal Health Commission. However, it is important to note that MCF is not a “reportable disease” in cattle or bison per the Texas Administrative Code, Title 4 Part 2 Chapter 45, Rule 45.2, so producers need to be aware and proactive.

What's being done?

The National Bison Association has long lobbied for increased funding to support vaccine development. The Animal Disease Research Unit, ARS-USDA, in Pullman, WA, in collaboration with the University of Wyoming, has been working on a vaccine for MCF for a number of years, as currently no vaccine exists to control the

disease because the virus responsible for infection has never been isolated. In spite of these limitations, the institutions have made practical advances in our understanding of how this disease is transmitted and progress toward control recommendations and are confident that there will be a vaccine developed. As to when, that depends on funding.

What can you do?

Primarily, you as a bison rancher need to be aware of any sheep producers in your area, and have a discussion with that rancher regarding the threat of MCF to bison. You can also lobby your national representatives each time an agriculture appropriations bill comes up at the federal level and insist that funding for further MCF research remains and is increased to further vaccine development and understanding of the virus.



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GUY ON A BUFFALO

Editors Note: This is a reprint of an online interview done Oct 24, 2011 @ 12:19 AM 66,928 views. Forbes online. Reprinted with permission of Michael Humphrey.



A Chat With The Guy Behind 'GUY ON A BUFFALO'

Interview and article by Michael Humphrey¹

"The story of this series of viral videos may start in middle 19th Century America. A man named Buffalo Jones roamed the range hunting, and eventually trying to preserve, North American bison.

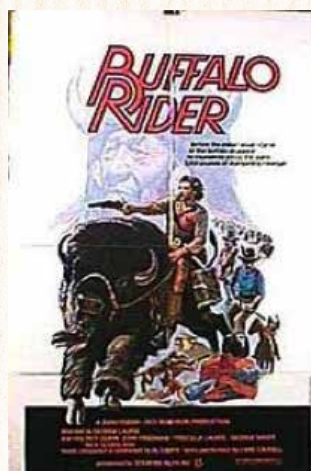
Jones became legendary and one manifestation was a 1978 movie very loosely based on his life called "Buffalo Rider." [Here's a link to the trailer: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=guy+on+a+buffalo] What the movie lacks in cleanly executed shots and plausibility, it gains in a guy riding a freaking buffalo.

Jomo Edwards, leader of the Austin-based band The Possum Posse, came across the movie on a website for public domain films. As he explains, inspiration took over. Last month, Edwards started posting videos aptly titled, "Guy on a Buffalo" with songs Edwards wrote and recorded to accompany clips from the movie. They are a blend of wagon trail story-songs and a funny

drunk guy narrating the late-night feature. But the notion of drunken rambling is belied by Edwards' unifying theme in each of the four pieces: there is, indeed, a guy on a buffalo and he should not be messed with. Combined, the quartet recently crossed 2 million views. (Ed, note – now over 10 million) Take a look at my favorite, "Episode 2 (Orphans, Cougars & What Not):"

In this email interview, Edwards talks about his inspiration for making the videos, how their popularity has helped his band and why buffalo capture our imagination.

How did you find this movie? And how did the idea of retelling this story in music start?



I found the movie (Buffalo Rider – 1978) through a website that offers public domain films for free. I had previously done a "music video" to one of our songs, Baptist Girls, set to an episode of the original Tom and Jerry cartoon (not the cat and mouse) that I found in a similar fashion. It's here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZd_QH-AuU8&feature=related.

I didn't have the means to go out and shoot new video for our music, so I decided there was probably plenty of ridiculousness residing in the public domain to feed our appetite. We recorded 4 songs on our debut E.P., "What's Goin' On With Grandpa?" and I was looking for something to use with another of the remaining three songs. The free download of the E.P. is here: soundcloud.com/contact-208-2/sets/whats-goin-on-with-grandpa-e-p/

I don't recall the specific site I was on, but once I saw the movie, I knew it needed to be put to good use somehow. I showed the video to my wife and asked her which of our songs would fit best with it. She recommended writing a completely new original song because the video was so over the top and amazing.

The following Saturday she went to work and I stayed home and devoted way too much time to editing the video. After cutting all the boring parts out, I was left with about 10 minutes of video... which was too long for one song, but too captivating to leave out. I decided it would be best to break it into episodes. I also decided a fairly literal and overly specific retelling would be funny, since there are some very absurd, but slightly subtle things that happen in the film (stepping on people's feet, etc).

That's exactly what I love about it. It reminded me of those old storytelling country songs, but also comedy bands like Flight of the Conchords and even Mystery Science Theater 3000. Do you track your inspiration to any particular influences?

I think that when they were shooting Buffalo Rider (1976 or so), film was a much rarer commodity. So when they shot something and captured it on film,

I think they felt some sort of obligation to not cut it. That's my theory on why so many superlative acts are included in the movie – and that really was the inspiration for the extremely-literal version of the song. I felt like there was so much funny stuff going on, and that pointing them out as if they were an important part of the storyline would be fun.

As far as the singing, I think it was an amalgamation of old narrators from those old Disney-esq films, with a little Johnny Horton thrown in there. I'm from West Texas, so the accent and terminology comes a little too naturally. I think there might also be a little bit of The Gourds in there as well. They're an Austin institution, and probably my favorite band ever.

I'm a huge fan of both Flight of the Conchords and Mystery Science Theater 3000. Both are amazingly brilliant in their own ways. What I love about the Conchords is that the music is really good. The humor in their songs could easily stand on its own, but it's amplified by the fact that the music gets stuck in your head (My #1 gauge for how good a song is). And I've always been dumbfounded by how smart MST3000 is.

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'GUY ON A BUFFALO'

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It evokes nostalgia, but also acknowledges how ridiculous those old movies were. I never realized it until now, but MST3000 was probably a huge influence on why I thought this was funny. It's a similar idea, just with music.

You uploaded the first video about a month ago? Did you have any guess it would take off?

I uploaded the video in mid September and had a feeling that it was more appealing on a broad level than many of our previous videos. With the exception of Baptist Girls, we had only released live performance videos of the band, and the maximum number of views on any individual video was somewhere around 300. I wasn't surprised when some of my friends shared the video on Facebook, but I never suspected it would spread as quickly or as broadly as it did. Now, when I type "Guy on a buffalo" into the Facebook search bar, my original link appears with the statement, "Rachel Pepper, Lincoln Edwards, and 121,293 other people have shared this." I would have been happy with 3 people sharing it!

You used the word finale in your last two videos. Is it over?

My dilemma has been that I only had an hour and a half of movie to use with this "series." I considered 3 episodes, 5 episodes, and finally landed on 4 as a nice, round number. There are certainly people who have asked that I keep making them forever, but there are also people who have said, "You should have stopped after two." I think the latter group is probably vocalizing what most people know in their subconscious. It is better to end with a bang than to let people tire of the series and feel like they've seen too much Guy On A Buffalo. That said, there are still a few amazing scenes I didn't have a place for, so there's always the possibility that I might do a "lost footage" or "return of" episode down the road. I also loved the idea of having a "finale" and of breaking that into parts as if it is an important piece of literature or a Harry Potter series.

How has this changed the prospects for your band?

The videos have definitely put us on some sort of map. We've been able to get some great opportunities as a direct result of Guy On A Buffalo. We've been invited to play across the country at several legitimate gigs. We've done several interviews, been on national TV, and sold a few t-shirts. We were approved for a kickstarter project, that will potentially allow us to fund our debut full-length studio album (here: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/thepossumposse/help-the-possum-posse-record-their-debut-album>) and I was interviewed by NPR's All Things Considered, though the interview was bumped from the programming schedule. This month has had some highs and lows, and the NPR interview was both.

One strange aspect of our the attention brought upon by the videos is the broad geography of it. On a national level, we've gotten some great attention, but on a local level, the videos have remained under the radar for the most part. Our facebook page has quadrupled in number of fans, but because of the large geographical distribution of the new fans, our local shows have not seen a huge jump in attendance. We also have created something of a primed audience now. For example, almost 4,000 people have "subscribed" to our YouTube channel. I think that can make a huge difference if and when we turn out new and relevant content. It also raises the stakes and keeps us from releasing things we're not entirely proud of, which we could do when nobody was watching.

Do you see other opportunities for this kind of musical narration?

I think there are endless opportunities to create videos from public domain films and other sources. People tend to ask if we will be able to find more Buffalo videos, but I think that viewers would tire of that fairly quickly, as they would if we had an endless supply of clips from the original Buffalo Rider film. I didn't plan on doing Guy On A Buffalo until I saw Buffalo Rider, so I think as long as I'm flexible and open, new and exciting ideas will come along. Oddly enough, we were contacted about doing some similar work for a production company that is working with 1970's-era film involving people and wildlife interacting, so who knows. We've also considered a live show involving a movie screen and the creation of a real-time soundtrack to an old movie on the fly. The possibilities are endless.



You're probably right about not overdoing buffalo humor, but it's amazing you could make four fresh videos from one movie. Another meme this year is the honey badger and I wonder if you have any thoughts on why certain animals make for such good comedy.

I think it comes down to machismo. It's sort of like the whole Chuck Norris craze, or the Old Spice, Dos Equis, Keystone, Jamesson, etc. character-driven marketing campaigns that have been so successful lately. I don't know exactly why, but for some reason, people like to watch people and animals that are "badass" (to quote the honey badger video), to root for them, and to spout off over-the-top claims about their invulnerability. I noticed comments on the Buffalo videos almost instantly. One person posted "I am serious. I am not writing hastily. The Guy on the Buffalo is all that is left in this world that is good and pure and true." There must be something cathartic about siding with the top dog... or badger... or buffalo. Maybe we want to believe that there are animals and people in the world who are powerful, trustworthy and just. Or maybe we don't get to experience enough manliness in real life. Whatever has made is such a success, I'm certain that it was dumb luck on my part.

Have you ever personally tried to ride a buffalo?

I have never considered riding a buffalo. I attribute this to the following:

- 1) In my experience, I cannot stay on a mechanical bull for more than 1 second. I once fell off a Segway scooter and seriously injured myself.
- 2) I once saw one of my best friends thrown from an actual bull and land directly on his back. He was on the bull for approximately 3 seconds. He was not seriously injured, but he never tried it again.
- 3) I have seen the Buffalo Rider scenes where the buffalo drags the Guy under trees, over stumps, etc., and I imagine that the deleted scenes were even worse. I don't think man was intended to ride buffalo.



END

Michael Humphrey
Michael can be reached at:
michael.lee.humphrey@gmail.com

¹ After writing about user experience for two years, I am back on the digital video beat. In addition to Forbes, I have written for The New Yorker, New York, Salon, National Catholic Reporter, Native American Times, and The Kansas City Star. I teach and study digital media at Colorado State University.

It's easy enough to find the four youtube videos of "Guy on a Buffalo". We've set out the web addresses below. Be prepared for some very interesting buffalo footage and some irreverent commentary that is actually quite fitting.



Guy On A Buffalo - Episode 1 (Bears, Indians & Such)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJ4T9CQA0UM>
The gripping first episode of "Guy on A Buffalo." The "guy" battles a bear and a mean-spirited Indian (Native American). Original music and narration by Jomo. <http://www.thepossumposse.com>

Guy On A Buffalo - Episode 2 (Orphans, Cougars & What Not)

► 2:16 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5Lmkm5EF5E>

Sep 20, 2011 - Uploaded by ThePossumPosse

The highly anticipated second episode of "Guy on A Buffalo." The "guy" discovers a human and tag-teams some predators with the buffalo. Original music and narration by Jomo and the Possum Posse. <http://www.thepossumposse.com...>

Guy On A Buffalo - Episode 3: Finale Part 1 (Origins, Villains and the Like)...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L55dKrjxcCY>

Guy On A Buffalo - Episode 4: Finale Part 2 (Rehab, Vengeance and What Have You)

► 3:04 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXtpNm_a4Us

Oct 6, 2011 - Uploaded by ThePossumPosse

The moving, extended final episode of "Guy on A Buffalo." The "guy" battles a mean case of gunshot wound, and exacts revenge on various people who have tried to kill him. Original music and narration by Jomo. <http://www.thepossumposse.com..>

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'GUY ON A BUFFALO'

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"Now, you want to know "who" the Guy on the Buffalo is actually? Here's the scoop from someone who actually knows him. Her name is Kristy Davidson. The Guy on the buffalo, she tell us, is Rick Guinn. He's still alive in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, guiding hunts at Guinn Outfitters and he is still craving adventure. See her article below.

Who is the Guy on a Buffalo



Rick Guinn – The Guy on the Buffalo

"Many of you will recognize this local cowboy (Rick Guinn) as the owner of Boundary Ranch and the world-renowned animal tracker from Guinn Outfitters.

But it may surprise you that he is also the leading man from a feature '70s film called "Buffalo Rider." In the film he portrays the character of C.J. Buffalo Jones, an olden-day wildlife conservationist and real life Chuck Norris. Rick delivers arguably the gutsiest performance ever seen in a small-budget film, all the while gallivanting around on a buffalo like it ain't no thing.

"Born in Banff, Rick's early life was spent with his family "rasslin' animals" out at Rafter Six Ranch. In his teens, he moved to Park City, Utah, scoring a job at a wild animal compound where the connection was made between his expertise with semi-trained wild animals and the commercial and movie industries.

One animal in particular intrigued him: Grunter, the buffalo. Everyone at the compound was petrified of the beast, but Rick promised himself he would tame and ride it, even if it killed him. It almost did, on multiple occasions.

One day, with the help of a few friends, Rick managed to saddle the buffalo and throw his leg over its huge, hairy back. In a split second, Grunter trampled across the pen, reared up, and smashed through a fortified ten-foot-high wooden fence, releasing himself into the wild.

There was only one thing holding him back from total freedom: the indomitable spirit of Rick Guinn. "I didn't want to lose my saddle," says Rick, so he held on for dear life as the beast ripped clean through not one, but three barbed wire fences before finally exhausting himself a few miles later. Rick casually hopped off and led him back to the compound. This was the first step in a year-and-a-half-long process of refocusing Grunter to the point where he could almost be controlled.

With his newly-honed skills, Rick was an obvious (in fact, the only) choice for the extremely dangerous role of "Buffalo Rider."



The film itself didn't make much of a splash on the big screen, but a compilation of clips have gone viral on YouTube (altogether nearly eight million hits to date) thanks to the

mockumentary series known as "Guy on a Buffalo." Rick's acting and buffalo-riding talents are both accentuated and spoofed by the clever lyrics and the toe-tapping country-swing in this four-video series. If you haven't seen it, check it out.

Next time your friends are beaking about how hardcore they are, keep them in check by reminding them of the time Rick karate-chopped a cougar in the face to save his own life (in an accidental on-screen attack). Or the time he was dragged a quarter of a mile at a gallop through dense underbrush with his foot stuck in Grunter's saddle. Or maybe the time he was attacked by two wolves at the same time and had to teach them a lesson with a walking stick. Or maybe the time when...

Kristy Davison



Kristy co-founded Highline Magazine in 2008, motivated by the pursuit of stories that both inspire and make us laugh at our wild ways. Her background in fine arts and design, love for reading and research, and a life spent wandering in the Rockies combine to lead the vision for the magazine.

And the story continues to get stranger. Not had enough yet; listen to this you tube story .. with an open mind and a grain of salt. Rumor has it that Rick has some weird pranky friends. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icxX8RQty0w>. Not saying it's true, but nothing about this whole story is ordinary, is it?







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Legislative Update

Texas Interstate Entry Requirements

(Editors Note – the following is a condensed reprint of the information on the “Texas Animal Health Commission” web page as of April, 2016. It is intended to be an educational starting point for determining what you may need in your individual situation and not necessarily the final answer. Hope it helps).

Got health papers?

State and Federal rules regarding animal movement, travel, entry and show requirements, and international import and export can be complex and involve more than one government agency, but the goal is always the same – to ensure the health of animals in our state.

The Texas Animal Health Commission specifically regulates the entry of many livestock, poultry and exotic livestock species into the state and into interstate shows and exhibitions. In addition to those requirements, this page provides background info and contacts for other relevant state and federal regulatory authorities to help you get your animals moving no matter what their species or their destination.

If you still have questions, we encourage you to call our Permits staff at 512-719-0777 or 800-550-8242 ext 777. Plan ahead, call ahead, consult the State Animal Health Official and your veterinarian!

Bringing animals into Texas from other states (Interstate Movement) & Moving within the state of Texas for shows or events (Intrastate Movement)

The following links summarize Texas entry requirements and requirements for animals attending a livestock show or exhibition in Texas. Complete TAHC regulations may be found in the [Texas Administrative Code \(TAHC Rules\)](#).

What's a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI or eCVI)?

Otherwise known as a Health Certificate, a CVI is a document signed by a veterinarian stating that an animal has been examined and is healthy and not showing signs of a contagious disease. An eCVI is an electronic CVI.

TEXAS ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION 1-800-550-8242, Ext. 777 or 512-719-0777



Summary of Texas Requirements

TAHC Note: The following summary is a condensed version of the Texas Animal Health Commission regulations. The regulations will supersede this summary if there is a dispute between the two.

Cattle Requirements (including Bison)

I. Intrastate (Cattle moved within the state of Texas)

- A. All cattle or bison originating in Texas and participating in:
 - 1. Intrastate shows, fairs, and exhibitions (those functions that require Texas livestock, poultry and ratites of the same species to be housed and exhibited separate and apart from livestock, poultry and ratites from out of state) are exempt from the certificate of veterinary inspection and testing requirements.
 - 2. Interstate shows, fairs, and exhibitions (those functions that permit livestock and poultry from other states to enter for show or exhibition and held in common facilities with Texas origin livestock and poultry of the same species) are exempt from

an entry permit, but must meet the same other requirements as for those species entering from out-of-state and be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection.

.....

B. Requirements for Change of Ownership within Texas

1. All dairy cattle must be individually identified prior to change of ownership.
2. All sexually intact cattle, 18 months of age and older, changing ownership within Texas, shall be officially identified within seven days of the change of ownership.
3. Trichomoniasis Requirements *(deleted as bison are exempt from Tric testing and certification)*
4. Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Requirements
No testing is required. Texas is a free state for both diseases.

II. Interstate (Cattle moved into the state from other states) Current as of January 15, 2016

- A. Any livestock, poultry or ratites that are infected, exposed or quarantined in any manner for an infectious, contagious or communicable disease may not enter the state. Contact TAHC at 1-800-550-8242.
- B. An owner-shipper statement may be used in lieu of a certificate of veterinary inspection in some instances (see below).
- C. Entry permits are required as noted in the following section and may be obtained by calling 512/719-0777 (24 hours) or 1-800-550-8242, ext. 777 or by writing the Texas Animal Health Commission, 2105 Kramer Lane, P. O. Box 12966, Austin, Texas 78711-2966.
- D. Entry Requirements for Cattle
 1. Certificate on Veterinary Inspection within 30 days prior to entry, except for the following:
 2. Official individual identification is required:
 - a. On all beef cattle over 18 months of age
 - b. On all dairy cattle
 - c. On all breeding bulls more than 12 months of age
 - d. On all cattle and bison used for shows, exhibitions, rodeo or recreational events
 - e. Types of official identification
 - 1) Official Alpha-numeric USDA metal eartags (bangs tags)
 - 2) Official Alpha-numeric USDA metal vaccination tags
 - 3) Official 840 or 900 RFID tags
 - 4) Official 840 or 900 flap or bangle tags

5) Official individual animal breed registry tattoos or brands

6) National Dairy Fair Tag or Dairy Herd Improvement Association Tag

3. A permit is not required unless bulls are entering for exhibition and return to the state of origin per the Trichomoniasis requirements section #6 below.
4. Brucellosis testing / vaccination requirements
 - a. A negative brucellosis test is required within 30 days prior to entry or be from a class free state, area or certified free herd.
 - b. Brucellosis vaccination is required for female cattle between 4 to 12 months of age or be from a class free state, area or certified free herd.
 - c. Brucellosis Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) (applies to all states)
 - 1) Cattle entering Texas directly from the DSA:
 - a) Breeding bulls and sexually intact females shall be tested for brucellosis 60 to 120 days post entry, except:
 - Cattle for immediate slaughter
 - Cattle for feeding for slaughter in a feedlot; and
 - b) Sexually intact females that have not calved must be held until tested negative 30 to 90 days after calving.
 - c) Nonvaccinated sexually intact females between 4 and 12 months of age shall be officially brucellosis vaccinated prior to entry, except:
 - Cattle for immediate slaughter
 - Cattle for feeding for slaughter in a feedlot; and
 - d) All cattle must also meet all applicable entry requirements.
 - e) All breeding bulls and sexually intact females require an entry permit.
 - 2) Cattle entering Texas from Idaho, Montana or Wyoming that do not currently reside in the DSA:
 - a) All breeding bulls and post parturient females shall enter Texas with one of the following statements on the Certificate of Veterinary Inspection:
 - The cattle represented on this certificate never resided in the DSA;
 - or

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Texas Interstate Entry

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- The cattle represented on this certificate tested negative for brucellosis at least 60 days after leaving the DSA.
 - b) Sexually intact females that have not calved must enter with an entry permit and be held until tested negative 30 to 90 days after calving or with a statement on the certificate that the cattle never resided in the DSA.
 - c) All cattle must also meet all applicable entry requirements.
- 3) Cattle entering Texas from states other than Idaho, Montana and Wyoming that previously resided in the DSA:
- a) Sexually intact females that have not calved must enter with an entry permit and be held until tested negative 30 to 90 days after calving or with a statement on the certificate that the cattle never resided in the DSA.
 - b) All cattle must also meet all applicable entry requirements.

5. Tuberculosis testing requirements

- a. *and b. deal only with dairy cattle.*
- c. Cattle from Accredited Free States or Zones require the following:
 - 1) Beef cattle (including bison), no test is required
 - 2) deals only with dairy cattle
- d. Cattle from Modified Accredited Advanced Free States or Zones require:
 - 1) A tuberculosis test within 60 days prior to entry or;
 - 2) Be from an accredited herd that has been tested within 1 year of date of movement or;
 - 3) The cattle or bison are moved directly to an approved slaughtering establishment or;

- 4) The cattle or bison are sexually intact heifers moved to an approved feedlot (dairy cattle are required to be accompanied by a permit), or are steers or spayed heifers; are either officially identified or identified by premises of origin identification.

e. Cattle from Modified Accredited States or Zones require:

- 1) A whole herd test conducted within 1 year prior from to date of movement and that the individual animals be identified and be individually tested within 60 days prior to entry or;
- 2) Be from an accredited free herd that has been tested within 1 year date of movement or;
- 3) The cattle or bison are moved directly to an approved slaughtering establishment or;
- 4) The cattle or bison are sexually intact heifers moved to an approved feedlot (dairy cattle are required to be accompanied by a permit), or are steers or spayed heifers; are either officially identified or identified by premises of origin identification; and are tested negative within 60 days prior to entry.

f. All "M" branded steers, which are recognized as potential rodeo and/or roping stock and used for either feeding or recreation purposes require:

- 1) A permit prior to entry and;
- 2) Be tested negative for tuberculosis within twelve months prior to entry.

6. Trichomoniasis Requirements:

.....deleted as ...

- 4) All bison are exempt from meeting the above Trichomoniasis testing requirements.

The following is a web site that is listed on the Texas Animal Health Commission website as a source of additional interstate livestock movement requirements.



InterstateLivestock.com

Interstate Animal Movement Requirements
Quick, accurate access to state import requirements for livestock.



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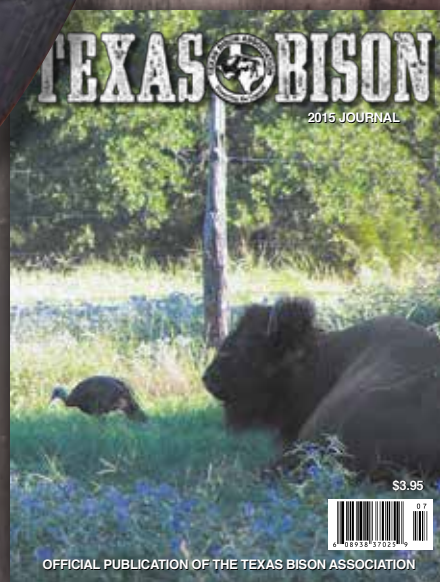


Whether you raise bison, or just love the magnificence of the animal. If your interest is to help promote bison conservation, stewardship and keep the herd building, and you just want to hang around people that are involved with bison, there is a membership for you in the Texas Bison Association. Whether you are young or not so young, we encourage you to join with us in the camaraderie, education and furtherance of our mission. It is a decision you will not regret.

Sign up for a TBA Basic Membership for only \$50 per year.

Or, sign up as an Active Member for \$100 per year and receive advertising discounts in the Texas Bison Journal.

New TBA Basic members receive a one-year subscription to Texas Bison Journal, TBA cap, our quarterly eNewsletter and a TBA key ring to proudly display that you are helping to preserve a true American icon — the American Bison



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***The Texas Bison Association delivers special announcements and alerts via email. Please include your email so we can keep you updated on important industry news and events.**

THESE LITTLE BISON GO TO (FARMERS) MARKETS



Several of our Texas Bison Association members actively and successfully participate in farm market sales as their primary bison marketing method. Here are two of the success stories – Patrick Bierschwale and his Katterra Exotics brand along with Corey Harris and John Russell's High Country Bison products.

By Cecil Miskin

Patrick Bierschwale has taken his family's three-generation love of bison ranching to a whole new place. Several new places, in fact.

Three days a week and once a month on Sunday (with some friendly and well-trained help) Patrick is selling his own ranch-raised bison meat at outdoor farm markets in and around Houston. He does it with love and passion. He also does it with his beautiful nine-year-old daughter Ella. They sell their meat rain or shine, and they have had plenty of both.

They are ambassadors for the animal and the industry that we all hold dear, making converts to a quality American meat one package and one person at a time. And they are making quite an impact.

"When I see people looking at our bison meat sign and turning up their nose, I take it personally," Patrick says with passion. "Have you ever tried it?" he asks the passersby. "I mean, have you tried my bison – raised naturally right on our family ranch? I know exactly on what it has grazed and I know you will be very surprised by how sweet and fresh...



and delicious it is. It will be the best steak you have ever eaten." With very few exceptions, Patrick says, they come back and tell him that he was absolutely right. That is what drives him onward.

Ella, too, knows the sales pitch. Patrick says she begs to go any time she can, and once the booth is set up, she is ready to take charge. Not to lose an opportunity for great parenting, Patrick uses the math part of each sale as a fun lesson for Ella. She's been nailing the calculations for quite a while.

The weekly markets Katterra Exotics sells at are:

- Rice University Farm market on Tuesday afternoons
- Westchester Market on Thursday afternoons
- Urban Harvest Eastside Market on Saturday mornings

Twice a month, Katterra's ranch-raised bison is available at the Galveston's Own Farmers Market.

Shoppers can also buy Katterra bison at the Memorial Village Farm Market (every Saturday), the Farmers Market at Bridgeland (second Sunday) and Friendswood Farmers market (second Saturday), thanks to Patrick's well-trained and passionate helpers.



In addition to his bison, Patrick has added fresh lamb, goat, chicken and locally processed wild hog. However, bison still accounts for three-fourths of Kattera's sales.

The other regular meat sellers have become more friends than competitors. After all, they don't have their own bison (in fact, up till now none of the others even sell bison in these markets).

Regular customers make up almost all of the weekday market sales. On weekends, people out for an event or

looking for something special and different to eat account for about half the sales. But repeat customers make up the other half. Each market seems to add more repeat customers as the Bierschwales' bison makes it to more and more Houston-area tables.

The biggest adjustment Patrick has faced in selling directly to consumers? "Finding out that not everyone loves bison as much as I do!" says the dedicated bison rancher/marketer. "But, I am working to fix that," he says with conviction and a track record to back it up.

As much as he works, this farm-market approach both keeps him deeply involved in the family bison business, but still leaves plenty of free time for family, which is just as important to Patrick Bierschwale as breathing.

Patrick is more than willing to share his experience with anyone wanting to get into farm-market selling. He can be reached at patrickbierschwale@yahoo.com, or you can visit him at one of his many market locations.



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THESE LITTLE BISON

...continued from page 33



AUSTIN FARM MARKETS

By Corey Harris and John Russell

Farmer's markets can be a profitable and fun business. Since John had an excess of bulls on his two ranches, the markets seemed an excellent outlet for thinning the herd and making some money. When we first started in 2009, there were fewer markets in the Austin area. Since then profits have decreased due to more farmer markets popping up and competition with Whole Foods, Costco, Trader Joes, and HEB. The markets are still a viable source of revenue for us, but more importantly, we believe in supporting local farmers and ranchers.

High Country Bison is currently selling at Barton Creek Farmer's Market in Austin on Saturdays from 9-1, Lone Star Market in Bee Cave on Sundays from 10-2 and Dripping Springs Farmer's Market in Dripping Springs on Wednesdays from 3-7. The Barton Creek Market is our largest market, but not necessarily the most profitable. I've nicknamed this market "my burger market" since we sell more ground bison. The other two are nicknamed "my steak market" since I sell less product, but at a higher margin. Everything from a UT football home game to Spring Break affects our market sales. Our product line changes with the seasons. For example, roasts and stew meat sell more in the colder months. Ground, steaks and hot dogs sell more in the summer months. I have seen an increase in customers wanting bones for bone broth and organ meats (liver, tongue). Our product list includes: ground bison, stew meat, brisket, chuck roasts, short ribs,

liver, organ meat, New York strips, rib eyes, sirloin, flank, skirt steak and tenderloin. I keep an eye on our pricing by comparing what is offered at Whole Foods, Central Market, HEB and various internet sites. In addition to meat items, we sell whole animals through our farmer's markets. John will deliver an animal to a local processor (does not need to be USDA inspected for personal consumption) and the customer assumes all responsibilities thereafter, i.e. processing costs, decision on cuts and pick up of final product.

Questions most asked are how is our meat processed, is it field killed, is it organic and how do you cook bison. The Austin area is a sophisticated market and as a vendor you must be prepared and knowledgeable. It's very important that our customers know where the ranches are, what John feeds them and the care given to the herd. Our bison are only grass fed and we select processors that respect the animal brought to them. Since I have a background in cooking, I provide the customer with recipes and cooking techniques in preparing bison. Recipes are most helpful.

A few downsides to participating with farmer's markets in the Austin area are keeping up with permits for being a vendor. The Health Department is constantly adding more documents to fill out and notarize. A simple "renewal by mail" does not exist. Once you have paid for your yearly health permit (approximately \$150), each market has a weekly vendor fee. We pay \$45 on Saturday, \$35 on Sunday and \$15 on Wednesday. In addition to weekly fees, some markets charge an annual fee.

In preparing for a day at the market, I pack the car with a tent (required in all our markets), weights, chairs, coolers with temperature gauge, table with tablecloth, framed Bison Food Facts, company sign, recipe book, bison skull (occasionally decorated for holidays), standing chalkboard for listing available product and prices, scale, calculator, moneybox (we keep \$200 in \$20's, \$10's, \$5's and ones with a roll of quarters). We accept credit cards for purchases over \$15. Once the coolers are packed with product, I make a stop at the grocery store for dry ice to keep product at the proper temperature. This is a must because if your product is not the right temperature and the health inspector pays the market a visit you will be shut down and fined.

I suggest, if someone is interested in selling at a farmer's market, go online and see the specific requirements for that market. Visit the market as a customer, checking out visibility, cleanliness, foot traffic, quality of produce, etc. Talk to the market manager and inquire about how the market is advertised, what special events are scheduled throughout the year, whether music is provided. Ask vendors why they selected this market to sell, are they making a profit, etc.



Cooking with Corey

Braised Bison Brisket In Coconut Milk

Braising bison in coconut milk might seem odd to most, but the sweetness and fat of the liquid is perfect for bison. Since this is a richly bold flavored sauce, my preferred side dish is a simple rustic mash potato. Use a combination of red potatoes and Yukon gold potatoes leaving skins on. Place whole potatoes in a pot of salted water and bring to a boil. Once the potatoes are fork tender, strain and place in a large bowl. In a saucepan, heat milk and cream with a few pats of butter. No need for exact measurements here. Since I don't have a potato masher, I've used a pastry blender, wooden spoon or fork. Drizzle in some of the liquid and mash away adding more until you reach your desired consistency (I like them chunky and firm). Season the mashed potatoes with salt and pepper.

3 Tablespoons olive oil
1-3 lb. bison brisket
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 6-ounce can tomato paste
2 14-ounce cans coconut milk, unsweetened
2 cups or more coconut water
1/3 cup whole coffee beans
2 star of anise

2 bay leaves
2 canned chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped
1 teaspoon or more adobo sauce
3 tablespoons of butter
Salt and pepper
Pickled red onions (recipe follows)
Cilantro sprigs

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Heat the oil in a heavy bottom pan over medium high. Season the brisket generously with salt and pepper. Sear brisket evenly on all sides until browned, approximately 10 minutes. Remove meat and set aside. To heated pan, add garlic and tomato paste stirring for 1 minute. Whisk in coconut milk and coconut water; bring to a boil. Add coffee beans, star of anise, bay leaves and chipotle peppers with sauce. Place brisket back in the pan with braising liquid. Cover and place in oven. Check brisket after 2 hours adding more coconut water if needed making sure the liquid covers the meat half way. Cook until brisket is very tender. Continue to check after 3 1/2 hours for tenderness. Once brisket is tender, remove from braising liquid. Strain broth to remove coffee beans, star of anise and bay leaves. Return broth to pan and bring to a boil over high heat reducing the broth slightly. Whisk in 3 tablespoons of butter for added richness. Slice brisket crosswise and transfer to a serving platter pouring sauce over the meat. Garnish with pickled red onions and cilantro sprigs. Serve with rustic mash potatoes.

Pickled Red Onions

1 medium red onion, sliced thinly
1 cup apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt

Bring vinegar, sugar and salt to a boil. Add sliced red onion. Cover and reduce heat to simmer. Simmer onions for 5 minutes. Let cool and refrigerate. Pickled onions will keep 2 weeks in refrigerator.

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TEXAS BISON

Spring Meeting - May 5-7, 2016 🌿 College Station

By Melissa Adams and Cecil Miskin

The TBA 2016 annual spring meeting was held in College Station May 5 and 6 this year. Dr. James Derr and Dr. Lauren Dobson from the Texas A & M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, along with a number of Dr. Derr's graduate students, planned and executed an extremely well-received event. Attendance was high, with old and new members mingling with a number of prospective members.

The weekend started strong on Thursday evening, with a gathering at the host hotel - Hampton Inn & Suites - for one of the TBA's traditional receptions. Attendees munched on bison summer sausage, bison pastrami and bison wieners, along with a host of other snacks, cold drinks and cocktails. It's always fun to visit with new and old friends, and the party lasted well past the 9 p.m. scheduled close.

Friday morning, Dr. Derr briefed attendees on the day's scheduled activities. Afterward, we convoyed to Texas A&M University for an exceptionally informative

tour of the College of Veterinary Medicine's Large Animal Clinic, Small Animal Clinic and the Genetic Research Laboratories. Adding to the excitement was the fact that final exams were in progress. We got to witness first-hand some senior vet students exiting their very last tests before they head out into the bigger world.

The tour was an eye-opening experience. Dr. Derr got us behind the scenes to see how the doctors and students actually handle the animals. The school and hospitals have the best equipment available so that they don't add additional stress to the animals. There is even a water treadmill for smaller animals in rehab.

Particularly impressive was the genetics testing laboratory and library operated by Dr. Derr. The results of genetic testing on over 60,000 samples of bison DNA all in one place. Wow.

After the tour we were treated to a tasty Texas barbeque lunch, complete with all the trimmings. The hosts had the lunch brought into the school so we could spend more time in discussion and presentations. Great

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Spring Meeting

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Attendees look over part of the Texas A & M large animal hospital handling equipment.

idea! Dr. Derr started off the afternoon sessions with an explanation of the history of the lecture hall we were using, Room 5. Every vet alive today who came through the A & M vet school attended lectures and took tests in that very room (and not all of the memories pleasant, according to Jim). It has had a long and glorious history, but this is the last of Room 5; the new College of Veterinary Medicine facilities is to be ready for the next class this fall.

Dr. Alan Roussel, Ph.D., DVM, professor and department head, Department of Large Animal Clinical Science, presented his "Welcome and Overview of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Science". Dr. Roussel told of the history and success, both academic and practical, that this college within the Texas A&M system has achieved over the years since its founding in 1916. He also talked about the new facilities and the plan to stay on the cutting edge of animal health. All good news for bison raisers.

Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association, presented his report entitled "Bullish on Bison – A Report from the National Bison Association." Dave examined the current state of the bison industry, the strong market pricing, the continuously increasing demand and the need for



Actual photo – early veterinary students at Texas A & M

more production herds to lead the way into the future. After years of volatile fluctuation in price, the future looks very stable and bright for bison ranchers. But the caution is that we as a collective group need to stay vigilant. There are always pitfalls – some that we have no idea are coming. So the takeaway is to stay true to the mission and adhere to the guidelines that have gotten bison ranchers this far. Never take for granted that old problems won't resurface and that new ones will always be easy to solve. But economically, socially and from a personal satisfaction point of view, raising bison today is a great way to go.

Dr. Thomas Craig, Ph.D., DVM, professor, Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, presented his overview of "Bovine Parasite Management." As Dr. Derr noted in his introduction, we were very fortunate to get to hear Dr. Craig. Not only is his message especially important to Texas bison raisers, but like so many graduating classes from the school, his calm and pleasant method of sharing his wealth of knowledge will give a new appreciation for learning. A key element of Dr. Craig's message is to pay attention to your animals. Learn from them. Parasites can devastate a herd quickly.



Lee and Sydney Hunka, Garland Texas

They turn profit into loss. You will never completely eliminate parasites, but you can, with good monitoring and quick action, control them in ways that make you a much better rancher.

Dr. Walter Cook, Ph. D., DVM, associate professor, Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, spoke on

“Important Bison Diseases.” Dr. Cook’s takeaway is also to pay attention. If you aren’t watching your animals you cannot possibly do anything to help them. Anything out of the ordinary – behavior, posture, hair loss, mucus discharge — talk to your vet. Texas has a very good handle on animal diseases, but things can turn in a heartbeat. So stay aware. Stay educated and keep talking to your neighbors and your vet about what is happening with diseases and vaccines.

Dr. Terry Hensley, MS., DVM, assistant agency director, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL), spoke on “Diagnostic Services Provided by the TVMDL” Dr. Hensley explained that diagnostic services are under the banner of Texas A&M University, but separate from the vet school.



Part of Southern Plains Bison Information; Dr. Derr’s Genetics Lab, Texas A & M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Science

Dr. Hensley, his colleagues and staff are a wealth of animal health knowledge and available to everyone for consultation and diagnostic of health issues. Dr. Hensley welcomed interaction, encouraging producers to let him know what is working as well as what is not. Their direct work with bison is fairly limited, and he would like to have more information to be more helpful to future generations of bison ranchers.

Donald Beard, park superintendent, Caprock Canyon State Park, Quitaque, Texas, entitled his address “Managing Bison as a Public Trust vs Managing Bison for Private Production.” Donald, a past TBA board member, is a partner in the Caprock Bison Partnership, which maintains its own breeding herd within 20 miles of the state park where he is in charge of the Texas State Bison Herd. He said that, bison being bison there is much similarity between a public and private herd, but the biggest distinction is that preserving a particular herd for the general population to be able to see, enjoy and come to better understand, requires



Darlene Wright & Cecil Miskin by doors to large animal exam room

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Spring Meeting

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more management from a distance – less “hands on” — than a commercial herd. Animal selection has to be done just as carefully, but for different purposes. You watch hereditary characteristics rather than just size and muscling. You are much more selective about bringing in new animals. He said both private and public herds have their place, and both are very important to the future of the American bison.

Friday evening, everyone gathered under the covered pavilion at the Lucky B Bison Ranch for the crawfish boil and fun auction. The evening was hosted by Beverly Brown and Donnis Baggett, owners of the bison cow-calf and agritourism operation. The weather was perfect — warm enough for a cold drink, but cool enough to



Dr. Alan Roussel



Dr. Terry Hensley



Dave Carter, Executive Director, National Bison Association

be comfortable. Benjy and Lisa Cox brought all of their well-experienced Cajun cooking equipment and talent, and pot after delicious pot of spicy and tasty crustaceans got devoured by the crowd. Our collective thanks to the Coxes (Tai- Pan Station Bison) for being the centerpiece of a great meal.

Donnis Baggett (incoming TBA President), Roy Liedtke (past TBA President and current NBA President) and Cecil Miskin, (outgoing TBA President) presented the Texas Farm Bureau with a commemorative plaque for their assistance in getting the bison estray law enacted. Gary Joiner of the farm bureau was there to accept the award. Also recognized was Steve Pringle, who offered extremely valuable advice and support to help TBA pass the estray law before he retired from the farm bureau.

Ronny Wenzel was there to accept a plaque for his beautiful wife, Sharla, in appreciation of her years of service to the TBA.

After dinner, Lucky B veterinarian Dr. Michael Glade presented his views on working with bison, along with a walk-through of the Lucky B corral and working pens. Everyone was treated to wonderful the music by Chris Martinez. Members gathered around a campfire and the kids participated in the auction by walking around the crowd displaying the items being auctioned. The auction was a great success, raising almost \$4,000. The crowd stayed late, talking, laughing and enjoying their time with fellow TBA members.

On Saturday, the TBA held its annual business meeting and officer elections, with 34 members and a good number of spouses and guests in attendance.

Ronnie Wenzel was honored for his years of untiring and enthusiastic leadership with the TBA show booth. Ronny demonstrated how he attracts FFA members to the booth with his colorful entertainment and animal-related quizzes. As Ronny will tell you, the TBA booth is always mobbed with kids wanting a copy of the TBA Journal, asking about bison ranching and trying to get one of the prizes Ronny gathers for correctly answering a bison-related or ranch-related question.

There was a thoughtful discussion about achieving higher calving rates and the cost of achieving this goal. A number of members shared their thoughts and



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experiences. Nobody was pushing an agenda; there were just bison ranchers sharing ideas and experiences related to bison ranching in Texas. It was a great and honest discussion.

The call for nominations for three seats on the board of directors came during the business session. Four names were placed into nomination: Paul Gengler, Lauren Dobson, Benjy Cox and Jason Moore. Members can vote for up to three nominees, but cumulative voting is not allowed. No proxy votes were submitted. Written ballots were distributed, the election held and the ballots collected and counted.

Elected were Lauren Dobson, Benjy Cox and Jason Moore. They join Rob Denkhous, Joe Adams, Donnis



Friday dinner at the Lucky B Bison Ranch Pavilion



Guests enjoying the Lucky B Bison Ranch view



Baggett and Chuck Wilson as the board of directors for this year. The new board met after the business meeting and elected Baggett as president, Chuck Wilson as vice president, Lauren Dobson as treasurer, and Benjy Cox as secretary.

Now the talk turns to our fall meeting, which will be held near Caprock Canyons State Park and the annual Texas Bison Festival. Stay tuned to www.texasbison.org for details. Hope to see you there!



Singer Chris Martinez entertains the crowd.



Dr. Don Davis and TBA member Charles Robertson enjoy the music.



Two of Dr. Derr's graduate students at the Crawfish Boil

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Emails to the Editor

"Many thanks for making the back issues of your Texas Bison Journal available on line to anyone who cares to look at them (and not just your membership). Your Association has captured a wealth of information about a real American. I didn't know you even existed until I got my copy of the 2015 Texas Bison Journal while on a driving trip through the Texas Panhandle. Keep up the good work!"

— Rocky T, Edinburg, Texas



"How about more "how to raise buffalo" articles and less about books and museums?"

— John F, Tulsa OK

Ed. Note. Hope this issue gives you more of what you wanted, John. And do check the back issues on line at TexasBison.org like Rocky T did. Lots of good information there, too.

However, we think it is important to explain just how pervasive and important the American bison has been to Texas and the United States on many different levels.

"I want to thank Corey Harris for helping me understand that cooking with bison meat is not a scary thing. My husband's cardiologist had suggested he might eat bison and I was frightened by the price of the meat and the thought of ruining it or it tasting unpleasant. None of that was true, but Ms. Harris's careful explanations have giving me the knowledge and courage to experiment with bison meat in my own recipes. We are now sold on bison meat."

— Ms. Sonja T; Greenville, Texas

Email your thoughts, comments and suggestions (as well as articles you might like to have included) to editor@TexasBison.org.

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