



January 2025

The Bison Rancher

Official Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Bison Association

What's Happening

NBA Winter Conference

January 22-24, 2025
Westminster, CO

Bison @ National Western Stock Show (NWSS)

January 21-24, 2025
NWSS Yards

Larry Higgins Memorial Bison Junior Judging Contest

January 24, 2025
NWSS Yards

RMBA Spring Conference

March 1-2, 2025
Fort Collins, CO

WE'VE SEEN A THING OR TWO



A tumbleweed or two... thousand

By Michael Castle, Castle Bison Co.

My wife Tiffany and I own the Castle Bison Company in Carr, Colorado. Along with running things here at CBCo., I am also the president of the **U.S. Tumbleweed Ranchers Association (TWRA)**. I was asked to share a little bit about **Operation Enduring Tumble (OET)** and give readers some insight into the tactics and strategies used to combat this year's invasion.

Just kidding - the TWRA and OET aren't really a thing. But the great tumbleweed war of 2024 really is an ongoing battle and holy heck it's taken a toll on us!

It started in 2023. Our ranch was blessed with what seemed like record breaking rains. We had beautiful, thick, lucious, green grass all summer. It was incredible!

But when you have enough moisture to grow grass, you have more than enough to grow weeds. Our weeds were minimal, but I can't say the same for the thousands of acres directly west of us though.

Things dried up and we saw the typical seasonal changes. Carr, Colorado is not far south of Cheyenne, Wyoming. We get those beautiful breezes Wyoming is known for - **I'm talking about soul sucking, heart breaking, hurricane like wind** - it's brutal.

In February 2024, while I was out of state for a funeral, Tiffany was at home with our four week old son and the wind began it's reign of terror. We had constant winds in the 60 to 70 mph range for three days straight. That wind must have blown every bit of Russian Thistle (the common

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Rocky Mountain Bison Association

303 S. Broadway, Ste B522
Denver, CO 80209

Proof Reading: Patty Smith

Publisher and Advertising:

Jen Graves 720-891-9360
jennifer.nmn.gray@gmail.com

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303-887-9677

VICE PRESIDENT

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Nilisber Bison Ranch
303-995-2783

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SECRETARY

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720-641-0639

Michael Guenther

Quantum Bison & Cattle Co.
(720) 323-9972

Greg Nott

Big Heart Bison/Memphis Ranch
(720) 891-5810

Michael Stanley

Bison Canyon Ranch
(720) 550-3322

Elections are held annually at the Spring General Membership Meeting. Meeting minutes & financials are available from the Board Secretary.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Strong Industry, Bright Future

By John Graves, RMBA President

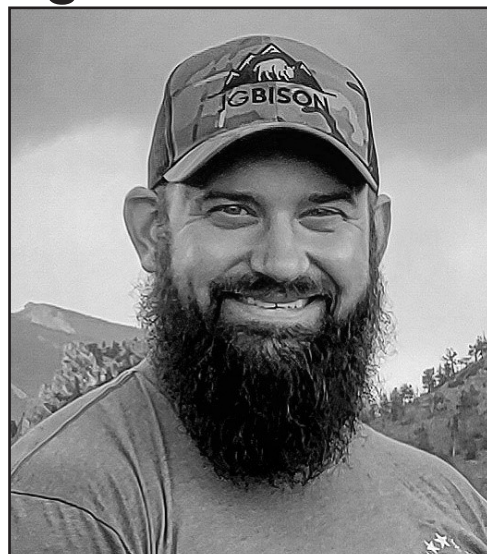
2024 brought ups and downs to our members on so many fronts. The year started off with live animal prices up from previous years, but not terrific, and we are ending the year with prices higher than the year prior - a positive trend we can all be hopeful with. On the meat price side of things, numbers in the USDA monthly report continue to go up, month after month and over 2023 price numbers as well, yet another thing to be hopeful about.

We all know our input cost went up this year as well, fuel, feed, materials, tools, equipment, all of it, we all felt that pinch, we all had to make tough decisions on what we could afford, and what we would put off until the financials aligned.

But our industry is strong. Demand for bison meat continues to go up, our members and our industry continue to put forward a great tasting and highly nutritious product that our customers keep asking for. Thanks to the efforts of bison ranchers at farmers markets, chefs, and other marketers in the industry, customers are learning about other bison dishes beyond just using ground bison for all meals. This is great news, the more value we can add to an animal, the more that animal is worth, and the more the producers can earn per animal.

Mentorship Program

In March of 2024, RMBA launched our new Mentorship Program. It is aligning experienced bison producers with those new to bison ranchers to help guide them on their bison adventure. We have been told that the conversations between mentor and mentee have been a huge step in the right direction to assist the mentees in making forward progress on their



journey. We also have been able to connect members who have very specific questions they need help with to other members who are experts in that specific field.

Legislative Issues

We have been very active on the legislative front, focusing on issues that directly affect our members, the bison industry, and the agriculture community.

We put our name behind the efforts to prevent the Denver Slaughterhouse ban, prevent the Denver ban on the sale of fur and hides, and successfully petitioned to have bison producers compensated in the event of loss due to wolf depredation.

We continue to work with other regional agriculture groups on the topic of wolves, trying to make the best of the situation we are in.

We are also closely watching potential legislation surrounding the classification of bison as wildlife and rumored fence law changes, both in Colorado. *A separate article is included in this newsletter, detailing all of our legislative efforts in Colorado and Wyoming.*

The 2024 US elections brought about a change in elected leadership, a change that a vast majority of



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED

Americans voted for. What changes may come, when they will come, and how much of a change we will see has obviously not yet been realized. What we do know is that like bison, we are built for any storm we may face. We will face it head on, we will continue to raise bison and provide a wholesome and holistically raised product that we take such great pride in. We will continue to market our bison and work to meet the needs of the customers.

I am always encouraged for the outlook of our industry, but I am especially encouraged that 2025 will be a great year for all of us, and the bison industry.

Get Tailored Advice: Sign up for a Mentor ***Share Your Knowledge: Become a Mentor***



The Mentor Program in Action

Lindsey and Forrest Hester were matched with mentor Jim Beauprez. "We absolutely love Jim and [his wife] Julie. They are so generous to have come to see our place," said Lindsey. "Thank you for the program!"

The RMBA Board is continually connecting mentors and mentees, matching skills to needs, and creating helpful connections - advancing our industry!

Get Tailored Advice

If you need advice, consider signing up to be matched with a mentor. If you are interested, please go to bit.ly/4gqY5zHo to complete the mentee sign-up form.

Share Your Knowledge

If you have knowledge to share, please consider volunteering! If you are willing to mentor another member, please go to bit.ly/3gZiQsP to complete the mentor sign-up form.

New Bison Resources & Upcoming Lecture on Grazing with Bison for Soil Health

By Jeff M. Martin, Jameson Brennan, and Kristi Cammack

The SDSU Center of Excellence for Bison Studies (BisonCOE) has been busy creating resources for bison producers. They are always freely available on our website: www.sdstate.edu/BisonCOE. There, you will find on the right-hand side links to resources and to Extension materials.

In particular, a new bison management planning document was released, developed in collaboration with USDA-NRCS, and can be found on our "Resources" page (<https://shorturl.at/87a2W>). This new document provides summary information for producers and USDA-Farm Production and Conservation agents to become more acquainted with applying various NRCS Conservation Practice Standards (CPS) with bison, such as CPS-528: "Prescribed Grazing". For example, CPS-528 aims to manage vegetation harvest with grazing animals to achieve ecological, economic, and management objectives that work with the natural behaviors of bison that are uniquely different from those of beef cattle, including daily movement



distances, forage preferences, and water use. Overall, the section emphasizes the importance of tailored, flexible grazing plans that consider the bison's unique behaviors and ecological impacts.

At this upcoming RMBA Spring Conference on March 1-2, Dr. Jameson Brennan will provide a presentation on how to make the connection between grazing practices and soil health and discuss measurement, monitoring, reporting, and verification practices to open up new markets for Climate Smart practices.

MINERALS THAT GO TO WORK NOT TO WASTE.



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Let's gather for the **2025 Spring Conference**

March 1-2, 2025
Fort Collins Marriott Hotel
Fort Collins, CO

Join us for two days that include:

- General Membership Meeting & Elections
- Delicious Bison Lunch & Dinner
- Bison Games, Fun Auction & Raffle
- Networking & Social Opportunities

We have great speakers lined up to present on:

- The latest on MCF research and vaccinations
- Soil health, monitoring, and management
- New technology to help manage your herd
- Opportunities to preserve your land & unlock funding
- *and much more*

The conference will be held at the Fort Collins Marriott Hotel
(350 Horsetooth Road, Fort Collins, CO 80525).

Register online at www.bisonranchers.com/events!

**** RAFFLE ITEM ****

**PNEU-DART Model 308 Projector
Long Range Package**



Questions? Contact Jen Graves at jennifer.nmn.gray@gmail.com.

Register for the Conference by February 22!

Members get a \$60 discount on
conference registration.

**** ELECTIONS ****

Elections for our Board of Directors will be held at the General Membership Meeting. President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer & two Directors are up for election every year. Questions? Contact Elections Chair Patty Smith.

RMBA's 2024 Legislative Efforts

By John Graves, RMBA President

For some, politics is a taboo subject, not to be talked about, and for some, politics are a daily conversation. For RMBA, politics are only addressed when the conversation revolves around our mission statement of "Promoting and Preserving Bison Through Education, Research, and Marketing."

The RMBA Board wants to do whatever we need to in order to support our members. When we come together as an association, our voice represents more than one or two upset ranchers in the impacted region - you have a voice with us!

In the last few years, our Colorado members have faced continual legislative challenges, needing RMBA to be a loud voice representing bison ranchers. The issues they face impact their herds today and their future moving forward.

Wolves in Colorado

In 2020, the citizens of Colorado passed Proposition 114, stipulating that Colorado Parks and Wildlife create a plan for wolves to be re-introduced in Colorado and managed by them. RMBA, along with countless other organizations, associations, and advocacy groups strongly fought against this ballot measure from passing. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) admitted that wolves were already in Colorado and that this ballot measure was not needed. The reasons for not wanting wolves re-introduced were numerous, but for us on the agricultural side of things, we all knew what would happen - wolves would kill livestock.

In 2023, wolves were re-introduced to Colorado, and since then livestock have been killed, some of the wolves have been killed, and some wolves have been relocated.

In three years (two years in planning, one year in

implementation), CPW has already spent over \$4 million in a \$5 million dollar budget designed for the first 6 years. It seems inevitable that they will go over budget in the next year.

While we were not successful in preventing the citizens of Colorado from voting for wolves to be re-introduced in Colorado, we were successful in changing and the CPW Wolf Management Plan.

Bob and Jim Beauprez, who live right in the middle of where the wolves were released, found that compensation of bison lost from depredation was not included in the plan. The Beauprez family and RMBA quickly jumped on this and with written testimony submitted, we petitioned to have CPW amend the plan to include bison in the depredation fund. We are grateful that the Commission listened to our testimony, and that of others, to correct this oversight. Though we wish wolves

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TAKE YOUR RANCH TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Regenerative ranching builds on the practices you already use, helping you tackle new challenges while staying true to your **commitment to your land**.



NOBLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Join our in-person workshops or explore online courses to get started. Learn more at noble.org/find-a-course/



FIND A COURSE



The Larry Higgins

BISON JUNIOR JUDGING

CONTEST

Friday, January 24, 2025 at 9 a.m.

Hosted by the National Bison Association (NBA) and Rocky Mountain Bison Association (RMBA). Held in conjunction with the Gold Trophy Show & Sale during the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver, CO.

CONTEST HIGHLIGHTS

- Participants will judge four classes of bison and provide oral reasons on one class, as selected by the judges.
- Open to individuals 8 to 21 years old who are academically eligible (i.e. passing all classes). Individuals will compete in one of three divisions:
 - Junior Division: Grades 3rd – 6th
 - Senior Division: Grades 7th – 12th
 - Collegiate Division: Freshman – Senior in College
- Everyone competes as an individual, but can choose to compete in the Team Division as well.
- Top 3 in each division receives a plaque.
- Scholarships will be awarded to the top three scoring individuals in the Senior and Collegiate divisions.
- NBA/RMBA membership not required, but available; no entry fee.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Register online at <https://bit.ly/jrjudging> or in-person. The contest will be held in The Yards at the NWSS, by the bison pens. Day-of registrants are asked to check-in early. Check-in begins at 8:30 a.m.; judging begins by 9 a.m. Awards will be presented around 12 noon.

For more information: Visit <https://bit.ly/rmbajrjudging> or contact Jim Matheson at jim@bisoncentral.com or 303-292-2833.

Hosted by:



@NationalBison

@RMBisonAssociation

SENIOR DIVISION SCHOLARSHIPS

1st - \$1,000

Sponsor: Twin Brook Farm



2nd - \$750

Sponsor: Canadian River Bison



3rd - \$500

Sponsor: Texoma Bison Company



COLLEGIATE DIVISION SCHOLARSHIPS

1st - \$1,500

Sponsored by the National Buffalo Foundation



2nd - \$1,200

Sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Bison Association



3rd - \$900

Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Natural Meats



Legislative Updates (continued)

Continued from page 6

were not released, at least now bison ranchers will be compensated if wolves kill their bison.

We continue to work on navigating the wolves and livestock conversation and the daily encounters seen by ranchers. CPW is currently in the process of getting more wolves from British Columbia to release them in Colorado this winter. In response, we have just signed our name (along with 25 other agriculture entities) on a letter sent to CPW asking them to not release more wolves and to work on more mitigation strategies to reduce wolf depredation and livestock conflicts.

We also signed a letter sent to the government of British Columbia, outlining the problems that have occurred in Colorado since wolves were released, and insisting that they do not send Colorado move wolves.

Although the wolves are here, steps can be taken to help lessen their destructive nature, and we will continue to work to do all we can to fight the battles needed to be fought.

Slaughterhouses & Fur Bans

In July of 2023, I first saw mention of a City and County of Denver proposed ballot initiative that would ban all slaughterhouses from operating within their jurisdiction. RMBA once again jumped into action and issued a release strongly against this proposed ban. Our release was picked up by several agricultural news outlets and got people talking.

A year later the initiative had gathered enough signatures to be included on the ballot and was designated Ordinance 309. We were approached by the campaign working to defeat this ban and we

donated money to help them in the fight. While this ban would not directly affect bison, or bison ranchers, it would negatively affect the agricultural community not just in Denver, but in all of Colorado.

The supporters of the ban admitted to wanting to move us all to a meatless society and said that this ban was just a start for them. We could not let something start in Denver and spread from there.

At the same time, another group

RMBA's political efforts are based on our mission of:

"Promoting and Preserving Bison Through Education, Research, and Marketing."

proposed a ban on the sale of fur in Denver, which also included anything made from animal skin or hair, with similar backing and ideology as the slaughterhouse ban. This ban was designated Ordinance 308. We of course signed our name in opposition of this effort. We worked with both campaigns that were in opposition of 308 and 309 to get the word out to Denver voters to reject them both. Thankfully the citizens of Denver voted against both ordinances, with 64% against 309 and 57.7% against 308. We won this time - but it was by no means a landslide. I do not think this is the last time we will be these topics brought up for discussion in Colorado.

Wildlife Classification

We have been monitoring and working with organizations surrounding the classification of some bison in Colorado as wildlife

for a few years now. There is a group that has petitioned CPW to classify the bison leaving the Book Cliffs of Utah and crossing into Colorado as wildlife to prevent them from being killed. A claim which has no evidentiary backing, only anecdotal evidence. We of course do not want to see bison killed illegally, but feel that further investigation and understanding is needed in this topic.

A group has now petitioned the Colorado Legislature on this topic as well, and a bill has been drafted for the next legislative session that would classify bison that are not privately owned in Colorado as wildlife, falling under the protect of the CPW. The draft bill would put in place a law much similar to that of the law in Wyoming. I have reached out to those Senators who will sponsor the bill, seeking to have a conversation to ensure bison rancher's concerns with this classification are addressed and there will be no potential downside for our industry.

These efforts have helped us ensure we are doing things related to our mission and supporting our members. We are also seeing an additional benefit in getting name recognition with political leaders and the various agencies and organizations in Colorado, showing that RMBA has a strong membership base that will fight to ensure agriculture and bison are protected in Colorado.

While I know all of these efforts have been in Colorado, we continue to monitor other legislative actions happening in surrounding states. If you hear of something coming down the pipeline, please let me know so we can investigate, monitor, and take action when needed!



R	B	B	S	E	O	B	U	F	F	A	L	O	S
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C	S	T	L	M	L	W	U	R	N	I	E	N	D
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SALES
ASSOCIATION
MEAT
WATER
BUTTON
MARKETING
RANCH
EAR TAG
BUFFALO
VENDOR
ROCKY
HAY
NETWORKING
BISON
CONFERENCE
ROUNDUP
HIDE
TALLOW
FENCE
MOUNTAINS
FAMILY
LEARNING
MEMBERS
WALLOW

RMBA Word Search

Answers on page 11

RMBA Crossword

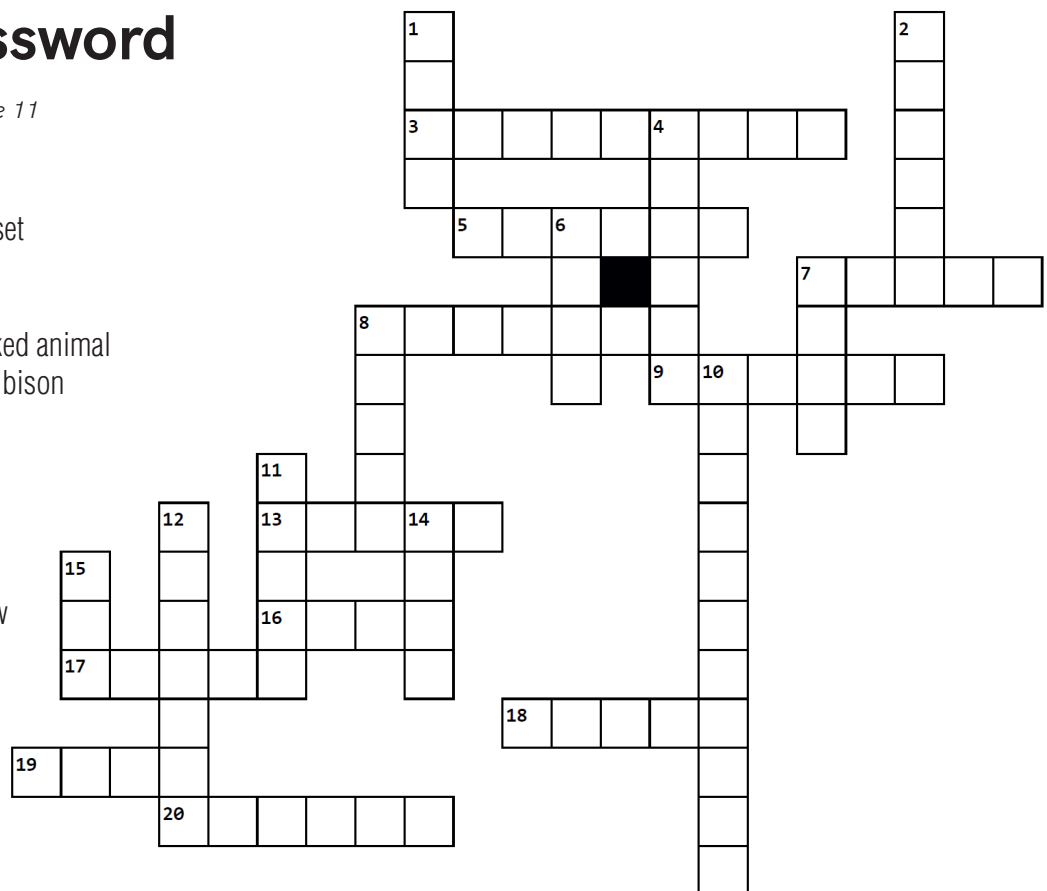
Answers on page 11

ACROSS

3. farm animal regarded as an asset
5. those related to you
7. a physical barrier
8. common name for a humpbacked animal
9. depression in soil from rolling bison
13. place where we raise bison
16. upper layer of earth
17. plants we don't like
18. vocal bison communication
19. a group of bison
20. time of year when things grow

DOWN

1. a male bison
2. a small horn on a calf
4. rendered animal fat
6. what we produce
7. time of year
8. our national mammal
10. a group of like-minded people
11. something bison eats
12. people you like to be around
14. a young bison
15. a female bison



A Thing or Two About Tumbleweeds (continued)

Continued from page 1

tumbleweed out here) from here to California straight onto our fences and then through our fences. **The tumbleweed takeover put my fences on the ground.**

We run 6 strands of high tensile electric wire with the top strand at six feet tall.

I thought we had built a pretty good bison fence - but it seems I built an even better tumbleweed strainer.

The fault of bison fence here is the height - those top two wires catch way more tumble than typical shorter cattle fence. The height added leverage and with a wall of tumbleweed acting like a ship's sail for three days at 60+ mph, it couldn't take the strain. I got a call from my crying wife (holding our infant and recovering from a c-section), panicked about what to do. I'm not used to feeling helpless, but I was across the country and couldn't do anything - other than make phone calls. So we called in the calvary. (**Huge shout out to Greg and Tami Nott at Memphis Ranch!**) In quick order, we had assembled a small militia to combat the invasion. They managed to get our entire herd moved into an interior holding pen, reinforce that pen, and patch things up just enough to get us through until I was home to rebuild.

When I returned home, I had about two miles of fence either on the ground, or barely standing. It was devastating. I had never seen this before, and in talking to neighbors, they said that in the 40+ years they had been here, they hadn't either. The whole region was in shambles.

With a lot of hard work, long days, and help from friends, we were able to get the fence kind of, sort of, for the most part, put



The Castle's side-by-side (which is approximately 6 feet tall) is parked beside a mountain of tumbleweeds - behind which is their fence.

back up and functional. It was the kind of "ranch functional" we are all well acquainted with - the functional we get when desperate times meet desperate measures - "good enough for now" until we can do it the right way later.

After a week straight of sun up to sun down fencing, I got the herd out of the pen and back out to pasture. It was great! At the end of that last day, I took a much needed shower, threw on my "nice jeans" and ran down to Fort Collins to have dinner at the RMBA Spring Conference. But while we sat there enjoying a nice meal and great company, the wind picked up again. When I got home, I saw all of the fence I had just cleared and fixed was littered with tumbleweeds again. Fortunately the fence was still standing - for now.

A little more than a month after mother nature's first beat down, she sent a second - and with a new kind of wrath. Wind gusts that night were recorded up to 93 mph. I got home that evening and went out in the dark to check our

fence lines. Our west line, the one that takes the brunt of the wind and collects most of the tumbleweeds, was flat on the ground and pretty much didn't exist anymore.

There was nothing I could do for the fence, and the herd wouldn't move for me in those conditions under nightfall. **There was nothing to be done but go to bed and pray the herd would stay put.** Needless to say, I didn't sleep well that night.

Assessment: I woke up early and went to check the herd. Praise God - they were right where I left 'em! Tiffany has a way with our lead cow and with her magic shake of a cake bucket, she got that stubborn old girl to follow her into the pen again and the herd followed suit. Hallelujah - crisis averted - the herd was contained.

Next I hit the ground to sort through the damage. One thing I noticed about the fence throughout all of this was that every single component and piece of hardware had failed somewhere. Ratchet strainers, spring tensioners, wire

crimps, high-strain insulators, t-post clips, t-post insulators, t-posts themselves, utility pole line posts... every component failed in one spot or another - except the wire. I didn't have a single piece of broken high tensile wire from the wind and weeds. I was pretty surprised by that.

Strategy: Dig out and rebuild. I can't tell you how long it took to clear the tumbleweeds because 11 months later - we're still not finished. We just had to prioritize which sections of fence were most important and start clearing. But how?

I would love to tell you that I called a few friends with water trucks and just lit a match - but remember those lovely breezes I mentioned? Yeah - **I don't want to be the guy who sets the whole wide wild west on fire.** Plus, burning those weeds on the fence line would melt the insulators and leave the wire brittle.

We tried pulling the weeds off with various skid steer attachments but the weeds were so hard packed that pulling with equipment ended up breaking the wire (the

200k psi wire I just mentioned was nearly indestructible). We tried every creative technique we could come up with but at the end of the day, it was good ol' ranch labor that did it. We just had to pull em by hand. Now I've heard legend of a unicorn-like tractor implement with paddles that will clear the fences, but I could never find one in real life. It seems to exist only on the internet and in my dreams. (But if you have one I can borrow - let me know!)

Rebuild: We found it was better to just start over - rip everything out and start new. That was a painful realization but it is what it is. We found that trying to bend t-posts back up right just resulted in them snapping at the base where they had been bent in the first place. (Straightening a slight bend is one thing, but we had near 90 degree angles on these suckers). I kept the design pretty much the same as it had been for interior fences, but added more line posts where I could.

I did however change things up for our perimeter lines that run north/south because our harshest

winds blow west to east. I plan to replace those lines over the next few years with pipe fence. To start, I bought as much 2" oil pipe as I could afford (since all of us ranchers just have tons of extra cash on hand right?) and cut it into 10' posts. I sank those posts on 20' intervals and put those six high tensile wires back up.

Oil pipe is a big step up in strength and rigidity from t-posts.

Next year I plan to get more pipe and go back to those same lines and put posts in between what's there, which will leave me with 10' spacing. The year after that, I'll get even more pipe and start welding out a top rail and eventually lower rails along our most vulnerable areas.

Pipe fence might sound overkill. And maybe it is. But we're a small operation with some neighbors who are not keen on bison. More importantly, I've got a day job that is about a 90 minute commute away and - given the nature of my work - I can't just up and leave at the drop of a hat. So it's important to me to have confidence in my fence. And while I have great confidence in the original design to contain the herd (even though we all know those animals can and will do whatever they want), the collapse and crumble of that design under the pressure of wind and weeds has me needing something more stout. I think pipe is the ticket.

Throughout all of this, people gave us all kinds of advice and suggestions, but this is what ended up working for us. I'm a big believer that 2+2, 3+1, 5-1, and 1+1+1+1, all equal 4. What I mean by that is **there are a million ways to get a job done and nothing in bison stewardship is a one size fits all solution.** Just work hard, trust God and take it one day at a time.



Winter games at Castle Bison Co. include the "Tumbleweed Tumble," and "Find a Fence." Athletes are still welcome to qualify for these Olympic games.

RMBA & NBA Fall Event: A Successful Gathering for New and Seasoned Producers

By Michael Guenther

Quantum Bison and Cattle Co.

Sept. 14, 2024 — This fall, RMBA partnered with the National Bison Association (NBA) to merge their Colorado regional event with our fall tour. This event proved to be a resounding success, bringing together a vibrant community of bison producers from across the region for a day of learning, networking, and collaboration. Held at the picturesque Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch near Limon, Colorado, the conference featured insightful presentations, delicious food, and an opportunity to connect with industry experts and fellow producers.

The event kicked off with a warm welcome from the hosts at Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch, who expressed their ongoing commitment to supporting the growth and success of bison ranchers. The day was filled with engaging discussions led by experienced bison producers, covering a wide range of topics essential to the industry, including bison health, sustainable farming practices, and the future of bison production in a changing agricultural landscape.

Great Presentations, Valuable Insights

One of the highlights of the conference was the diverse lineup of presentations. Topics ranged from improving herd genetics to exploring new marketing strategies for bison products. Producers shared their knowledge and experiences, offering practical advice that attendees could immediately apply to their own operations.

"It's not just about the ranching side; it's about building the future of bison ranching," said one of



the presenters. "This conference allows us to exchange ideas, learn from each other, and forge relationships that will help all of us succeed in the long run."

A Chance to Speak as a New Producer

For myself, the event was particularly special, as I had the opportunity to present on my experience as a new bison producer. Speaking to an audience of seasoned ranchers, I shared insights into the challenges and rewards of entering the bison industry as a newcomer.

"It was a great honor to speak at this conference. As a new producer, I was able to share my journey and the importance of support and mentorship in the

industry. The relationships I've built with others, especially here at Prairie Ridge, have been invaluable as I continue to grow my operation."

Networking with Fellow Producers

Networking was another key component of the event, as it allowed both new and established producers to share ideas and foster connections. Many attendees commented on the value of the connections made at the event, with several producers noting the importance of collaboration and mutual support within the bison farming community.

"I've learned so much from others today," a new producer who attended the event for the

first time. "It's inspiring to meet people who have been in the business for years and to hear about their experiences. I'm walking away with new ideas and a strong sense of community."

Delicious Food and a Warm Atmosphere

No conference is complete without great food, and this event did not disappoint. Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch provided a delicious spread that showcased the best of bison cuisine.

Attendees enjoyed bison steaks, burgers, and a variety of other dishes, all highlighting the versatility and flavor of bison meat. The food was a perfect complement to the relaxed, friendly atmosphere that characterized the entire event.

Building Stronger Relationships for the Future

As the conference came to a close, there was a palpable sense of optimism and camaraderie among the attendees. The

relationships fostered at this event are expected to lead to long-lasting collaborations, with many producers already looking forward to future gatherings.

"I'm so grateful to be part of this community. This event has reinforced the importance of supporting each other, whether you're a new producer like myself or someone who's been in the industry for decades. Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch has done an incredible job bringing us all together."

With its mix of valuable learning experiences, meaningful networking opportunities, and a chance to celebrate the shared passion for bison production, this event stands as a shining example of what collaboration in agriculture can look like.

As the bison industry continues to grow and evolve, gatherings like this will undoubtedly play an essential role in shaping its future.

RMBA Hosts 3 Events Every Year:

- 1. Larry Higgins Junior Judging Contest:** At the National Western Stock Show each January
- 2. Spring Conference:** 1 or 2 day(s) packed with knowledge and networking, held the first weekend in March
- 3. Fall Tour:** An outdoor excursion of 1-3 bison ranches

These events are open to everyone (but discounted for members) and a great opportunity to meet fellow ranchers and learn.

See upcoming RMBA events at bisonranchers.com/events.



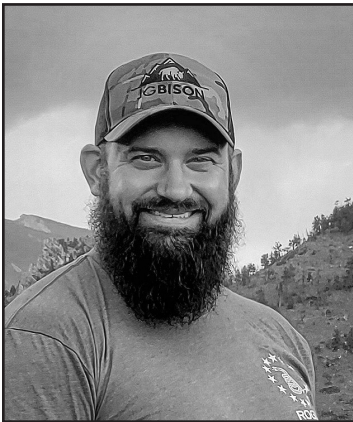
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Get to Know Your RMBA Board



John Graves

- RMBA President
- Ranch: JG Bison near Sheridan, WY
- 10+ years on RMBA Board
- Chair of NBA Committee of State/Regional Associations
- Brought first bison to WY ranch in Fall 2023



Tiffany Castle

- RMBA Director
- Ranch: Castle Bison Co. near Carr, CO
- Photographer
- First generation rancher
- Started with absentee ownership of small herd
- Unloaded bison at home in Spring 2023



Nicole Jeffries

- RMBA Vice President
- Ranch: Nilisber (Nih-l-ih-s-ber) Bison Ranch
- RMBA Lifetime Member
- Father started bison ranch in 2002 with 13 calves
- Also a horse enthusiast



Michael Guenther

- RMBA Director
- Ranch: Quantum Bison near Simla, CO
- Firefighter
- Purchased land in 2020 to start bison ranch
- Loved seeing the Genesee Park bison herd and Ralphie growing up in CO



Patty Smith

- RMBA Treasurer
- Foundational RMBA Member (here from the start)!
- After selling her own herd, she helps with Lay Valley Bison Ranch near Craig, CO
- Retired but very active in the multiple communities



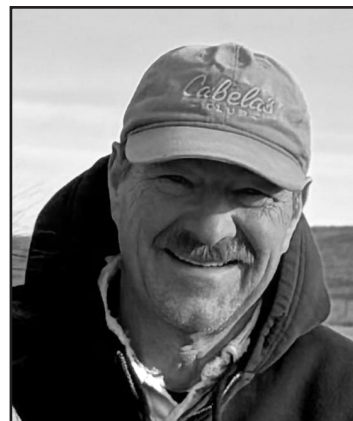
Greg Nott

- RMBA Director
- Ranch: Big Heart Bison / Memphis Ranch near Carr, CO
- First generation rancher
- Started bison journey in 2013
- Active member in multiple bison associations



Mellisa Kuper

- RMBA Secretary*
- Ranch: Wild K Ranch near Limon, CO
- First generation rancher
- Started bison adventure in 2020
- Also loves cooking, decor and history



Michael Stanley

- RMBA Director
- Ranch: Bison Canyon Ranch in Weld County
- Wanted bison since the age of 6
- Unloaded first bison at his ranch in 2021
- Ranch is part of the Hightower Spring Ranch, where bison were hunted in the 1800s

* Mellisa Kuper was appointed by the board in November 2024 when the previous Secretary vacated office.

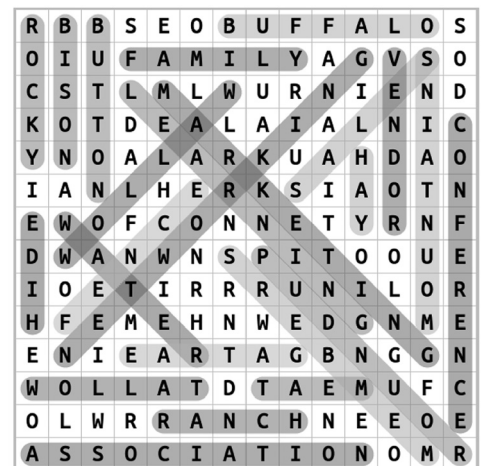
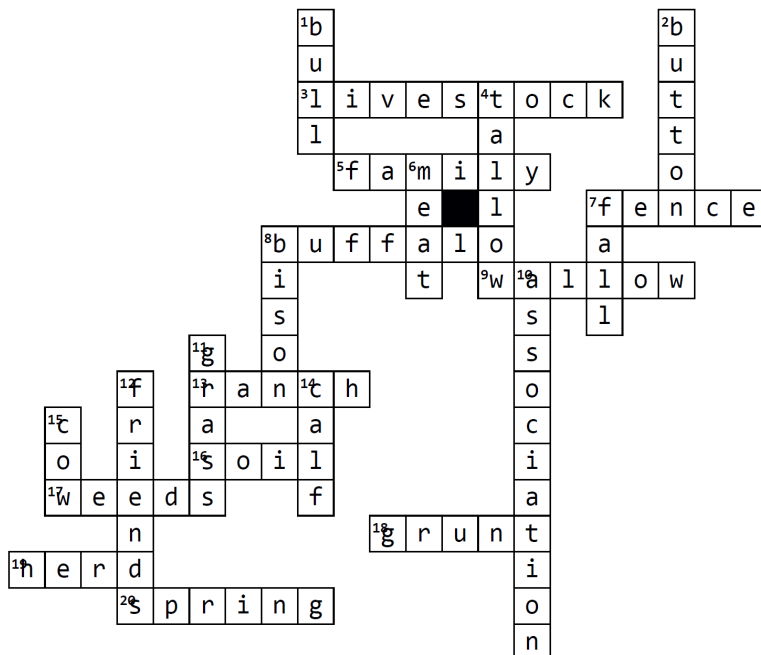


Philip Vandekerhoff models his new bison robe, which he won in the annual raffle during the **2024 Spring Conference**. Raffle proceeds are used to help pay for RMBA events and initiatives, as the board prioritizes keeping the conference fees as low as possible.

John Graves explains the **Larry Higgins Bison Junior Judging Contest** to the 2024 participants and their advisors. RMBA partners with the NBA to provide this competition every year at the National Western Stock Show and is the sponsor of one of six scholarships awarded.



Game Answers from Page 7





303 South Broadway
Suite B522
Denver, Colorado 80209
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