



Eastern States Bison Cooperative

Final Report
Grant #202121-00

Respectfully Submitted By:
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Introduction

Eastern States Bison Cooperative (ESBC) was established to address the growing consumption of bison meat and expansion of bison herds in the eastern United States. Thirty one bison producers from eleven eastern states formed this joint venture cooperative to establish a finishing farm, contract a USDA certified slaughter and processing plant and develop a marketing arm. The states include Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maine, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Over the past year, there have been six inquiries about membership from the following states: North Dakota, Maryland, Indiana, and West Virginia. But no new memberships have been added.

Accomplishments

The following accomplishments have been completed to date.

1. Market Plan: A one, three and five year market plan was completed and submitted to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Services in May 2002.
2. Contracts: Contracts were developed and implemented for all phases of processing of the products including the finishing farm, slaughter, processing and packaging, freezer storage and distribution.
3. Mailing/Customer List: A mailing list of approximately 400 names has been established and is continually added to as contacts are made, names become available or new customers are established. This is a specialized hand selected list and includes both customers and potential customers that are more apt to purchase bison meat. Typical restaurant mailing lists include all restaurants including McDonalds and Burger King which are not candidates for bison meat. There have been approximately six mass mailings from this list which have provided several sales and educated food service businesses. This type of education includes the nutritional benefits of bison, how to prepare it, how bison tastes, and where to order it.
4. Product Line: The Co-op has a product line of more than sixty five items from ground products like patties and bulk ground to full tenderloin and filet steaks. (Attachment A)
5. Point-of-Sale Material: Point-of-sale materials have been developed and distributed by mass mailings, handed out at taste testings and food expos, and hand delivered in professional looking packets that are left behind after visiting

- with prospective customers. These materials are also provided to establishments in bulk to distribute to their customers as point-of-sale materials at meat counters, cash registers and restaurant tables. They include: recipe cards with and without color pictures of the prepared dish, Bison Cooking Tips, Price List, Nutritional Facts of Bison, an introduction letter to the prospective customer, business cards, and three color self mailing brochures. (See Enclosure)
6. Distributors: The Co-op has developed distributor relationships with companies in West Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio and presently working with another company in Maryland.
 7. Taste Testings: ESBC has held taste testings with very good success. These taste testings actually swayed several beef eaters and even some vegetarians to buy bison meat. We handed out numerous brochures, recipe cards and other promotional literature and gave cooking demos and tips on preparation.
 8. Trade Show and Food Expos: ESBC set up a display at the Eastern Bison Association Winter Show and Sale in March 2002 and discussed with the members of the EBA the benefits the Co-op had to offer them as bison producers. ESBC also had a booth at the Mid-Atlantic Food and Beverage Show in Timonium, MD on October 23 and 24, 2002. This is the largest of its type in the Mid-Atlantic region. Samples of the raw product were on display in an attractive case and there were recipe cards, cooking instruction sheets, and other promotional literature available as hand-outs for the visitors. There were a minimum of thirty serious visitors requesting more information. There will be other shows similar to this in the future that ESCB will participate in. The Co-op has a professional display booth for events like this with graphics of several prepared dishes, nutritional facts chart, banner with logo and name, and example of our "Nature's Original Buffalo" brand labeling.
 9. Radio: ESBC developed an educational radio campaign that was centered in Cambridge, MD. The radio spots ran at two stations for ten days with a coverage area reaching Baltimore, Washington, Annapolis, and the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The results were fair with approximately twelve phone calls and two orders placed. The directors feel this type of radio spot will need to continue to run to get the best results. Bison meat is a product that needs to stay in the face of the consumer to continue to increase their share of the meat industry. (Attachment B)
 10. Web Site: We developed a website and placed it on the internet in early October, 2002. The site is located at www.easternbison.com. The site consists of nine pages entitled Home, About Us, Nutrition, Why Eat Buffalo, Buffalo Cuts, Cooking Tips, Recipes, Specials, and Contact Us. Within a few days of posting the site on the internet, we received a retail order in New Hampshire.

Conclusion

The marketing efforts by the USDA, the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the Eastern States Bison Cooperative have been an incredible boost in the education and awareness of the Buffalo or American Bison to the American consumer. Sales commenced in February 2002 and have grown tremendously since. Comparing March, 2002 through September, 2002 sales increased by more than 1100%. (Attachment C)

The \$44,000 Marketing Grant from the USDA and the tremendous support from the Maryland Department of Agriculture, have been the important building blocks for this multi-state member owned organization and for the entire bison industry. If it wasn't for these two organizations, this cooperative would not be here today. This grant and these efforts will pay dividends in the future for all bison producers.

(Attachment A)

ESBC UPC	Product	Size		ESBC UPC	Product	Size	
PATTIES & GROUND				PRIMAL & SUB-PRIMAL CUTS			
11369	Patties 2 oz.	8/1#		01030	Rib, Primal	20-24#	
11364	Patties 4 oz.	4/1#		01100	Rib, Roast Ready, <small>Boneless - R&T</small>	12-16#	
11363	Patties 4 oz. 12 lb. box	12#		01121	Rib, Ribeye, Lip-on	7-10#	
11365	Patties 5.33 oz. Circle	3/1#		01140	Hump Roast	3-4#	
11375	Patties 5.33 oz. Oval	3/1#		01162	Chuck Tender	1-3#	
01361	Ground Buffalo	1#		01164	Chuck Eye Roll	8-10#	
01362	Ground Buffalo	5#		01130	Chuck, Square-cut	2-3#	
01377	Trim - Run of the Table	15#		01020	Forequarter	175-225	
COOK'S FRIENDS				01010	Side	280-375	
01230	Rib Short Ribs	2-3#		01000	Carcass	550-750	
01240	Back Ribs- 7 ribs	3-5#		01550	Hindquarter	115-145	
01350	Stew Meat	1#		01580	Round, Primal	55-65#	
01355	Stew Meat	5#		01590	Round, Primal, Boneless	40-50#	
01352	Kabobs	2#		01662	Round, Steamship	40-55#	
01670	Round Knuckle Chipped	1#		01680	Round, Top (Inside)	14-20#	
01671	Round Knuckle, Peeled	8-10#		01700	Round, Bottom (Gooseneck)	15-19#	
01170	Foreshank OB Cuts	1.75#		01703	Round, Bottom	2-4#	
01619	Hindshank, OB Cuts	1.5#		01713	Eye of Round	2-4#	
01200	Brisket, boneless	3-4#		01720	Loin, Full Loin, Trimmed	27-35#	
71001	Tongue, Whole	2#		01740	Short Loin, Short Cut	12-18#	
73751	Liver, Portion	4-6#		01750	Strip Loin, Bone In	10-12#	
73690	Heart, Whole	3-4#		01800	Strip Loin, Boneless	8-10#	
73691	Heart, Slice	4oz		01810	SirLoin - Full "Country"	10-12#	
74662	Rocky Mt. Oysters (priced per pair)	1 pair		01840	Top Sirloin Butt, <small>boneless</small>	11-12#	
STEAKS				01842	Top Sirloin Butt, <small>Center Cut, Boneless</small>	2-3#	
11010	Cube Steak	6-8 oz.		01853	Bottom Sirloin, <small>Tri-Tip Butt, Boneless</small>	3-5#	
11032	Rib Steak, Bone In	12-14oz		01891	Tenderloin, Full <small>side muscle on, defatted</small>	4-6#	
11033	Rib Steak, Boneless Ribeye	8-10oz		01930	Flank	1-2#	
11144	HUMP Steak, Boneless	1.5#		01141	English Roast	2-3#	
11690	Top Round Steak Inside	16-24oz					
11730	Porterhouse Steak	14-16oz					
11740	T-Bone Steak	12-16oz					
11790	Strip Loin Steak, Bone In	10-12oz					
11800	Strip Loin Steak, Boneless	8-12oz					
11841	Top Sirloin Butt Steak, <small>Center Cut, boneless</small>	8-16oz					
11890	Tenderloin Steak, <small>Side Muscle On, Defatted</small>	6-8oz					
11901	Tenderloin Tips	1#					
				SPECIAL CUTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST			
				revised 10/01/02			
				Prices subject to change without notice.			
				Prices are FOB York, PA			
				\$20 Service Charge For Orders Under \$150.00			

(Attachment B)

WAAI Radio
P.O. Box 1495
Cambridge, MD 21613
410-376-3032 / 866-MTS-LIVE

Client: 38990 Eastern States Bison Co-op
For: Eastern States Bison 60 seconds
Begin: 8/23/02 End: 8/31/02
BUFFALO

EASTERN STATES BISON COOPERATIVE – BUFFALO - :60

“WHAT’S FOR DINNER????!!” YOU HEAR THIS EVERYDAY AFTER WORK.
PIZZA? NAH...MAC AND CHEESE? NAH...IT’S ALL GETTING TO BE THE
SAME OLD THING.

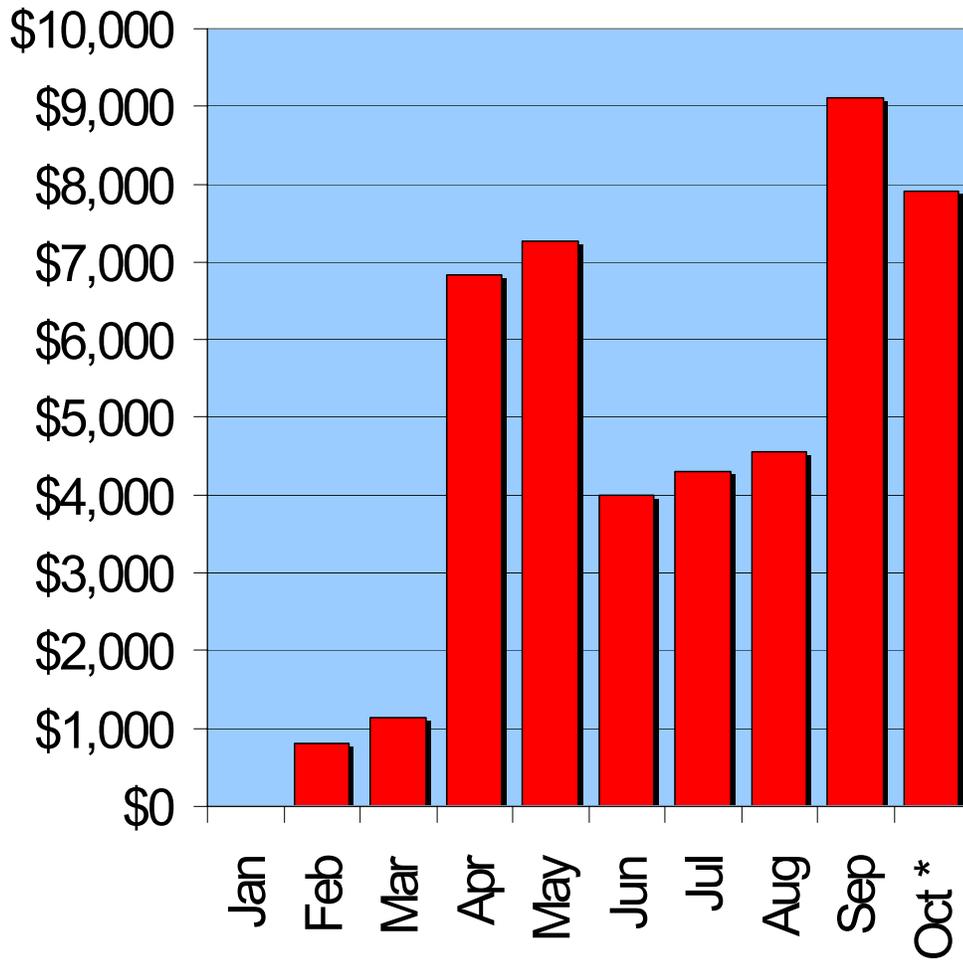
YOU’LL FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS CULINARY CRISIS IN AMERICA’S
ORIGINAL RED MEAT...BISON. EASTERN STATES BISON COOPERATIVE IS A
COMPANY DEDICATED TO RAISING AND PRODUCING AMERICAN BUFFALO
MEAT PRODUCTS FOR YOUR FAMILY.

BISON MEAT PROVIDES A HEALTHIER, SWEETER, AND RICHER FLAVOR
THAN BEEF. AND BISON MEAT FROM E-S-B-C IS ALL NATURAL, WITH NO
GROWTH HORMONES OR STEROIDS. THAT MEANS NO CHEMICAL RESIDUE
IN THEIR MEAT. YOUR MEAT FROM E-S-B-C IS LOWER IN CALORIES, FAT,
AND CHOLESTEROL THAN BEEF, CHICKEN, AND PORK...SO YOU NOT ONLY
GET AN ALTERNATIVE IN TASTE AND QUALITY, BUT BISON MEAT IS ALSO
A HEALTHY WAY TO FEED YOUR FAMILY. ALL BISON MEAT FROM E-S-B-C
IS AGED 7 – 10 DAYS, ENSURING TENDERNESS AND AN EXQUISITE FLAVOR.
AND, ALL MEAT FROM E-S-B-C IS USDA INSPECTED AND APPROVED WITH
YOUR FAMILY IN MIND. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE EASTERN
STATES BISON COOPERATIVE TODAY AT 240-420-0400. THAT’S EASTERN
STATES BISON COOPERATIVE, 240-420-0400. QUALITY SETS THEIR MEAT
APART.

(Attachment C)

Eastern States Bison Cooperative

2002 Meat Sales by Month



*October numbers not complete at time of this report.