

Growing Farmers project - to support training workshops, online training, consumer education materials, and website directory to increase profitable participation of bison producers as vendors at farmers' markets.

The **National Bison Association** of Westminster, Colorado received **\$29,700** to develop curriculum, conduct workshops, develop educational resources, establish an on-line e-commerce site, and develop point of sale informational material, and conduct assessment of the these actions for farmers/vendors selling at a new farmers market in Colorado.

[Final Report FY09](#)



National Bison Association

8690 Wolff Court, Suite 200 Westminster, CO 80031-3646
www.BisonCentral.com Phone: 303-292-2833 Fax: 303-845-9081

Performance/Progress Report The Bison Connection National Bison Association

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Recipient Name: National Bison Association
Title of Project: The Bison Connection
Grant No.: 12-25-G-0920
Location: Westminster, Colorado
Contact Name/Tel. No. Dave Carter, 303.292.2833
Progress Report No. 4 (Final)

Introduction Overview

As the National Bison Association wraps up the activities funded through this grant program, we will be continuing to disseminate the materials and resources that were developed as a part of this project.

During the past two years, the funding provided through the Farmers Market Promotion Program grant enabled our association to conduct five field training workshops (plus an abbreviated session in Indiana in 2010), develop a series of marketing materials for use by our farmers' marketers, and support the development of the farmers' market section of our Bison 201 on-line training curriculum scheduled to go "live" in early December. In addition, we were able to bring together our farmers' marketers for a special planning/evaluation session in conjunction with the 2011 National Bison Association Winter Conference held in Denver in January.

Even as our formal support from FMPP concludes, we will be able to continue to extend our outreach activities. For example, we are scheduling a special farmers' market training workshop at the 2012 National Bison Association Winter Conference.

As mentioned in our previous report, much of the work this year focused on developing marketing materials to be used by our farmers' marketers. Two key items requested by the marketers attending the planning workshop last January were:

- A chart illustrating the cuts of meat that can be sourced from a bison carcass; and
- Individual recipe cards that can be distributed with the sale of specific cuts of bison meat.

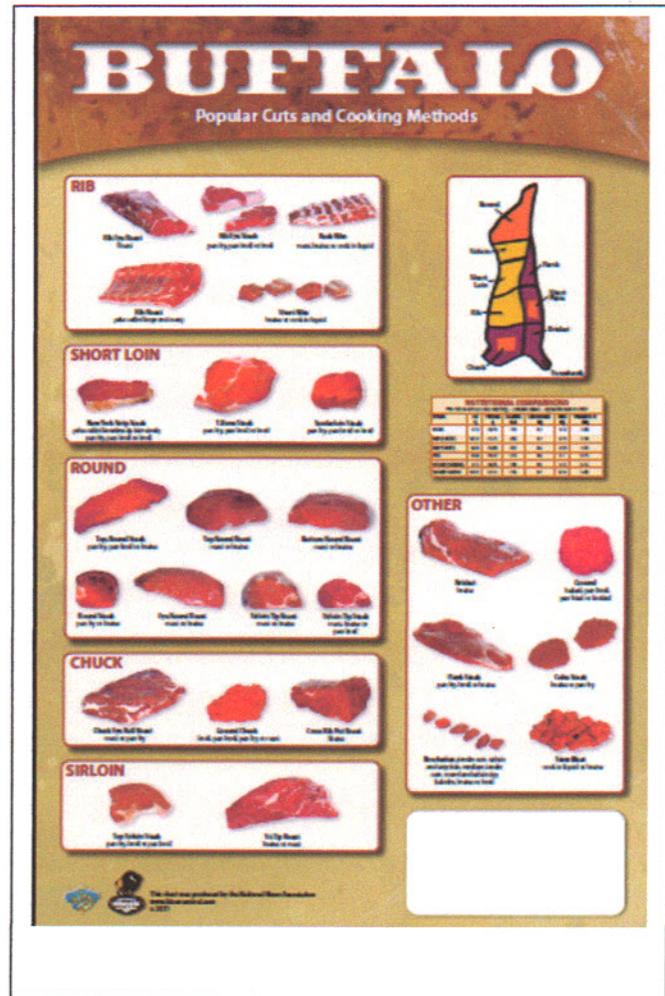
Bison Meat Chart

The starting point in that process was to develop a new library of specific cuts of bison meat. Previous marketing materials produced by the National Bison Association had simply utilized stock photos of cuts of beef in marketing materials. In February, Memphis Meats in Memphis, IN assisted the NBA in producing a new library of bison meat-cut photos. Memphis Meats fabricated a carcass into specific cuts, and then worked with a local photographer to produce professional-grade photos of the major meat cuts. Although we had funds budgeted to support this effort, Memphis Meats donated this work to the association at no cost.

Utilizing the photos, we have developed the Point-of-Sale materials requested by the bison vendors. We have printed this chart in two sizes:

Poster-size suitable for display at the farmers' market booth; and
8 ½" x 11" size that can be distributed to customers.

Each of these charts is designed to allow the marketer to imprint their business information.



Recipe Cards

Although the National Bison Association has a series of cookbooks and flyers listing bison recipes, our marketers requested that we develop a series of individual cards. As one marketer mentioned, “When someone buys some short ribs, I would love to be able to hand them a card with a short rib recipe.”

Accordingly, late this spring, we completed production of a set of 20 individual recipe cards featuring cuts of meat popular with farmers' market vendors. The full set of cards includes:

- Blue Cheese Burger
- Chili
- Kofta Kabobs
- Lasagna (Pictured)
- Oven Roasted Meatballs

- BBQ Ribs
- Sirloin Rice Patties
- Steaks with Bison and Red Wine Glaze (Pictured)
- Short Ribs
- Cilantro Lime Tacos
- Stew
- Farmer's Soup
- Fiesta Style Skewers
- Flemish Stew
- Grilled Bison Salad
- London Broil
- Bison and Veggie Skewers
- Mediterranean Bison Salad
- Peruvian Lomo Saltado
- Seared Steak

BISON STEAKS WITH BERRY AND RED WINE GLAZE



Ingredients:
4 9-oz. bison steaks, 1 1/2 inch thick (loin, strip, chop or filet)

Red Rub Ingredients:
1 tsp. crushed pink peppercorns
1 tsp. crushed white peppercorns
1 tsp. crushed black peppercorns
1 tsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. pickled brown sugar
1 tsp. orange zest, minced
1/2 tsp. cloves, ground
1/2 tsp. onion powder
1/2 tsp. juniper berries, crushed

Sauce:
1/2 cup fresh blackberries
1 cup dry red wine
1 1/2 cups beef stock
1/2 tsp. juniper berries
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. dry mustard
1 Tbs. honey
1 Tbs. butter (optional)

Serves four

Directions:
In a bowl combine the ingredients for the dry rub. Mix well and place on a large plate. Coat the steaks on both sides evenly. Place in the refrigerator wrapped tightly. Allow to marinate for 1 hour. In a medium saucpan place the berries, red wine, stock, juniper berries, and dry mustard. Cook over medium heat, reducing by 30 percent (about 15 minutes). The sauce should become thicker. Taste and add the salt and honey, cook 5 minutes more. Strain the sauce and reserve for the steaks. Remove the steaks from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before you are ready to cook them. You may broil, grill, or bake the steaks. For a medium-rare/medium temperature, cook each side of the bison meat for 7 minutes. If your charcoal or gas heat is on high, check after 5 minutes on each side. Serve the steaks with berry sauce. Enjoy the bison with roasted potatoes, sweet Vidalia onions or mushrooms. These vegetables blended in a light balsamic dressing accompany the meat well.



This recipe card was produced by the National Bison Association www.bisoncentral.com © 2011

Like the meat chart, each recipe card acknowledges the assistance of the FMMP program, and includes a space that allows the marketers to personalize the material with their business logo and information.

In the latter half of 2010, the National Bison Association undertook a complete redesign of the organization's website, www.bisoncentral.com. As a part of that upgrade, marketers are now able to personalize a listing that includes availability of their products at farmers' markets.

BISON LASAGNA



Ingredients:
8 oz. lasagna noodles
1 lb. ground bison
1/2 cup chopped onion
1 jar (about 26 oz.) spaghetti sauce
1 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp dried leaf oregano, crumbled
1/2 tsp dried leaf basil, crumbled
1 1/2 cups fat free ricotta cheese
2 cups shredded low fat mozzarella cheese (reserve about 1/2 cup to sprinkle on top)
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preparation:
Cook lasagna noodles according to package directions; drain and set aside on wax paper.
In a large skillet, brown the bison and onion. Stir in spaghetti sauce, garlic powder, salt, oregano, and basil.
In a large bowl mix the ricotta, Mozzarella and Parmesan cheese together.
Use 1/2 cup of sauce to coat the bottom of a 2-quart buttered baking dish (about 11x7x2-inches), then layer 1/2 of the lasagna noodles, 1/2 of the meat sauce and 1/2 of the cheese mixture. Repeat layer once or twice depending on the size of your pan. Sprinkle 1/2 cup of Mozzarella on top.
Bake lasagna covered with foil at 350° for 30 minutes, remove foil and bake for another 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let stand for 8 to 10 minutes before cutting and serving.

Serves 6



This recipe card was produced by the National Bison Association www.bisoncentral.com © 2011

Bison 201 Curriculum

Because of a complete re-design of the National Bison Association website last year, we delayed the development of our new Bison 201 curriculum.

At this point, we have developed the farmers' market section of that on-line training program. The farmers' market segment will be part of a larger curriculum that includes sections on business planning, animal handling, fencing and facilities, and other issues important to the bison industry.

The National Bison Association was notified this month that we will be receiving two grants from the USDA Risk Management Agency. A major component of those grants will support the

production of video segments regarding safe, humane animal handling. Those segments will be included in the Bison 201 curriculum as they are completed.

Here is the status of the activities funded through our FMPP grant:

Activities and Milestones

Below are the specific work plan objectives listed in the National Bison Association's grant proposal. A narrative following each of those goals summarizes the status of activities:

Curriculum Development: October – November 2009

FMMP Funding: \$5,400, supported by in-kind and volunteer contributions of material from co-presenters, as well as staff time in excess of FMMP funding level.

Roles and Responsibilities: Coordination provided by NBA Executive Director, with support from volunteers Jack Pleasant, Todd Gale and Jason Stephens.

Status: Curriculum completed. Additional copies of the curriculum were distributed through Extension Service offices and state farmers' market associations.

Training Workshops: November 2009 – March 2010

FMMP funding of \$9,520, supported by in-kind contribution from volunteer co-presenters, state/regional bison associations, and the NBA Communication Department.

Roles and Responsibilities: NBA Executive Director will coordinate each workshop. One volunteer vendor will serve as co-presenter. An individual from the applicable state department of agriculture or the state farmers' marketing association will also co-present.

Status: All workshops completed.

Advertising /Promotion: The National Bison Association has utilized a variety of advertising and promotional outlets to publicize the training workshops. In Pennsylvania and Colorado paid print media have been utilized to promote the seminars. Paid radio advertising was also utilized to promote the Colorado seminar. In Wisconsin, North Carolina, Texas and Colorado, local ag radio networks conducted on-air interviews with NBA Executive Director Dave Carter to promote the seminars. These interviews were conducted at no charge.

For the Colorado session conducted during this reporting session, the NBA utilized a combination of print and broadcast advertising. A sample of the print ad published in *The Fencepost* newspaper is included with this report.

In addition, informational flyers have been distributed to prospective participants through the Cooperative Extension Service, local farmers' market associations, and local Farmers Union organizations.

Bison Producers' Handbook: October 2009 – January 2010

FMMP Funding of \$2,500, supported by in-kind support from volunteer authors, and NBA publication budget.

Roles and Responsibilities: Volunteer members to author text. NBA staff and contract editor to edit material.

Status: Completed.

Bison 201 On-line: October 2009 – January 2010

FMMP Funding of \$2,500, supported through NBA staff editing of material, and on-going website support.

Roles and Responsibilities: NBA Assistant Director Jim Matheson to edit Growing Farmers curriculum for website. Programming to be conducted by contract professional.

Status: In development – scheduled to “go live” in December 2011.

On-Line Directory: February 2010 – April 2010

FMMP funding of \$1,000 for programming, supported by in-kind contribution of staff time to compile information, and to provide on-going website support.

Roles and Responsibilities: NBA Assistant Director to coordinate the compilation of material. Initial programming to be provided by a contract programmer, with ongoing maintenance provided by NBA staff.

Status: Website programming is complete. Individual marketer-members are now responsible to update their individual information on their website listing.

Consumer Education Materials December 2009 – March 2010

FMMP funding of \$6,500, to be matched with \$6,000 of funds from NBA checkoff program, and from ongoing staff support for fulfillment of on-line store orders.

Roles and Responsibilities: NBA Executive Director will develop the text for the materials. Direct Design, Inc. will provide professional graphic design, and will handle the printing. The NBA staff will handle distribution of printed materials.

Status: Food chart and individual recipe cards have been produced, and are available to farmers' marketers throughout the industry.

Project Evaluation: at Workshops, October 2010 & January 2011

FMMP funding of \$500, to be matched by in-kind support from NBA staff in conducting post-workshop surveys, evaluating the on-line survey, and in hosting the Debriefing Roundtable at the 2011 Winter Conference.

Roles and Responsibilities: NBA Executive Director will coordinate post workshop evaluations, and participant roundtable at the 2011 NBA conference. NBA Assistant Director will coordinate the on-line survey.

Status: As noted in our report through September 30, 2010, an on-line survey was conducted following completion of the first four seminars.

On January 20, 2011, a special Farmers' Market Roundtable was conducted in conjunction with the National Bison Association annual conference in Denver, CO. That roundtable was attended by 25 producers from eight states. Participants in the roundtable evaluated the seminars held in their region, and provided guidance to the NBA on the types of marketing materials that could best be utilized by individual vendors.

Conclusion and Summary

As mentioned above this Farmers' Market Promotion Program Grant has enabled the National Bison Association to provide significant, tangible resources for bison producers who are engaged in direct marketing. The services funded through this grant will continue beyond the funding period through our on-line Bison 201 course, our printed curriculum, and through the information in the *Bison Producers' Handbook*.