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Important DakotaFest Meeting

COME ONE, COME ALL!!!!!! WE NEED YOU.

A meeting of volunteer workers for Dakota fest in Mitchell will be held at Ralph and Mary Mahoney's Buffalo Ranch on Saturday June 14 at 1:00 p.m., CDT.

Mahoney's live north of Mitchell. The address is 41358 247th Street. If you are on highway 37, go to 247th (The Plano road) and turn east. Four and a half miles on the blacktop road. They are on the north side. Their phone number is 605-996-8900.

The purpose of the meeting is to work out the tasks to be done, sign up people to do those tasks, and to coordinate with our exec, Karen Conley, what we will need for the event.

To make this successful for the DTBA, both promotionally and financially, we need at least 50 eager, helpful members. The unwritten plan is to create three overlapping shifts each day. Assuming enough people come forward, we should be able to get by with people working only one shift on one day.

The dates for Dakota fest are Tuesday, August 19 through Thursday, August 21. Set up takes place late afternoon and evening on Monday, August 18. According to Karen, teardown on Thursday afternoon doesn't take long...packing the DTBA trailer does!!

IF YOU LIVE WITHIN 75 MILES OF MITCHELL I AM HOPING YOU WILL ATTEND THE MEETING AT MAHONEY'S. FOLKS WHO ATTEND WILL HAVE FIRST CHOICE OF THE JOBS TO BE DONE AND THE SHIFT THEY WANT TO WORK. THOSE WHO DON'T ATTEND WILL GET A CALL FROM ME ASSIGNING YOU A JOB AND THE DATE AND TIME FOR YOU TO DO IT. THERE IS AN INCENTIVE TO VOLUNTEER...

I want to make this a fun event for all of us. Your commitment to help will make it fun for the rest of us. Please mark your calendar for June 14. The meeting will not last more than two hours. Bring a lawn chair and I'll bring the pop.

If you would like to help, but are unable to attend the meeting, please contact me so we can find out when you would be able to work and what you would like to do. But please, do your best to attend the meeting. Nothing like a little gathering to get the ideas flowing!

Thanks, Rick Knobe, Lazy RRse Buffalo Ranch
rick@lazyrrse.com • 605-728-1472

Summer Board Meeting Scheduled

The DTBA will be conducting an open board meeting in July. It will be held in Chamberlain, SD on Saturday, July 19. The meeting will begin at 12 noon, CDT. The location will be the meeting room at Al's Oasis, right off of I-90.

In addition to regular business, the board is asking for member input on our Black Hills Buffalo Classic Show and Sale. Specifically, the board would like to know how members feel about the current health regulations for animals entered into the show and also their comments on the classes available and how the show operates. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, please contact one of the board members to give them your information or you may submit written comments to the association via letter or e-mail. Please refer to the contact information on the front page of this newsletter.

The board would also welcome your input and comments on anything to do with the association. Input is sought on products the association should offer for sale; advertising in the newsletter; advertising on the web page; promotional activities, fundraising ideas and anything else you would like to comment on.

As we move forward, the DTBA board realizes that there may be a need for some changes or updates to the current situation. Your input is the only way the board can make informed decisions on your behalf.





Newsletter Format Update

If you would like to have the DTBA newsletters e-mailed to you in pdf (Adobe Acrobat) format, please contact Karen at the DTBA office, (605) 923-8393 or send her an e-mail at: info@dakotabuffalo.com. Please include your e-mail address. She can send you the newsletters electronically if you prefer that format over having them mailed to you.

As soon as our new website is launched, you will receive a link to the newsletter. By clicking on that link, it will take you to our website's newsletter section where you can download the newsletter at your convenience.

Several members are currently receiving newsletters electronically and it's working very well. There is no need to worry about virus or attachment problems once the newsletters can be downloaded from the web site. Additionally, when Karen sends something to you, it has been scanned and is virus free.

Please consider using this option. Not only does it save money for the DTBA, it also saves time and gets you information the fastest way possible.

Nebraska Ranch Expo

It's short notice, but the DTBA will be participating in the trade show at the upcoming Nebraska Ranch Expo. The event will be held in Bassett, NE on Wednesday, June 18 and Thursday, June 19. The expo will feature nearly 400 exhibitors and has upwards of 12,000 visitors over the course of the two days.

Admission to the Expo is free and show hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. MDT on Wednesday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday. If you are in the area, stop by and say "hi". Karen will be manning the booth and if you have time, she'd welcome the company or the opportunity to take a break.

This will be our first time at the Expo and we hope to make it a regular event for our association. Hope to see you there!

Sharps Rifle Next Raffle Item

With the success of the buffalo leather chair raffle under our belts, the DTBA board has given the go-ahead for a new raffle.

In 1998, the DTBA had a series of rifles commissioned by A & A Engraving in Rapid City, SD. There were 20 numbered guns in the series in addition to an artist's proof of the gun. The guns are a Sharps LoGrade Buffalo Rifle in a 45-70 caliber. They are finished in antique nickel with a 24 kt. gold panels for the artwork. It features buffalo artwork and the former DTBA logo.

These guns are one of a kind and the series is all sold out...except the #20 rifle. The DTBA also has possession of the artist's proof, which will be the final remaining gun in the series.

With that in mind, and given the impact of the upcoming Lewis and Clark activities, the board made the decision to have the #20 rifle produced and offer it as a raffle item. The value of the rifle is set at \$3,500 and we will be selling tickets for \$10 each or 3 tickets for \$25. Ticket books will be printed up and will be available by the week of June 9. The drawing will take place at the conclusion of the Black Hills Stock Show in Rapid City, SD on Sunday, February 8, 2004.

If you would like to purchase tickets or would be interested in helping to sell them, we would LOVE to talk to you!! Karen will have the tickets and will take them to all the meetings and activities as well as booth appearances. Just let her know how many tickets you'd like to purchase or sell and they will be delivered to you. She can also supply you with posters about the raffle.

Look for a picture of the rifle on our new website (coming soon!) and get ready to do the great "Rifle Raffle"! Say that a bunch of times real quick!

Thanks again to everyone for your ongoing support of these raffles. They are an excellent fundraiser for our association.

Review Of Ted's Montana Grill

By Rick Knobe

This past February, on the annual trek to visit grandchildren, I made it a point to visit and eat at Ted's Montana Grill in Norcross (Atlanta) Georgia. I was curious and hungry.

The restaurant and bar has seating for about 150 people. Booths along the south wall, tables in the center, and the bar on the north end. Most tables and booths are set up for four.

The finished wood interior gives it a warm and somewhat western feel. Wooden tables and chairs are accented with red checkered table cloths, with brown paper on top. There is western art and a buffalo head on the wall. The buffalo head was old, with the sharpest horns I have ever seen.

The wait staff wore blue jeans and denim shirts with the "Ted's Montana Grill" logo on them. None of the staff I visited with had spent anytime with the animals on the hoof.

The menu was varied, plenty of buffalo burgers, and some other features. Prices for buffalo were a minimum of a dollar higher than comparable beef items. They menu stated that all buffalo meat was served fresh, not frozen.

We had three grandchildren (10,9, and 7) with us. They all ate buffalo burgers. The portions were large. The fries orders were huge. For the five of us, the bill was about \$70. That included a few glasses of wine for the adults, soup and salads.

Our visit was on a Sunday evening, around 7 pm. We did not call for reservations. The wait to be seated was about ten minutes. Fun things for the kids to do were provided.

I liked the feel of the place. Service was good, food presentation, appealing. Prices were a little higher than comparable places in Sioux Falls, but I figured since I was in/near a really big city, prices would be a little higher. If there was a Ted's in Sioux Falls, I would be a regular customer!

Submissions and information for the DTBA newsletters are always welcome and encouraged. The next issue will print and mail by September 1, 2003. Submissions for that issue are due by August 20, 2003.

Welcome New DTBA Members!

Bruce Prins, Prairie Sky Ranch, Veblen, SD

Jim & Karen Graham, The Buffalo Works, Milburn, OK

New Billboards Are Up!

The new DTBA billboards are up! We have two billboards and we just received word that the second one went up on the Tuesday after Memorial Day.

The billboards are similar to the ones we previously had, but the wording has been changed somewhat. A picture of the new billboards is below.

One sign is located on I-29, northbound, at mile marker 14, just south of Elk Point, SD. This one should have fantastic exposure with all the Lewis and Clark activities centered in that area.

The other billboard is located on I-90, westbound, at mile marker 344, just before the Alexandria exit.

Make sure and check out these great signs on your next trip!





The Reality Based Carcass Class Explained: How Does It Work?

By Bruce Anderson, owner, Western Buffalo Company

I have been asked by several people to go into more detail in a written article about the Dakota Territory Buffalo Association Reality Based Carcass Contest.

The contest was originally designed by Sandy Limpert, Slim Buttes Buffalo Ranch, Buffalo, SD, to award an animal and its producer strictly for its money-making attributes. Sandy thought that in doing this, we could isolate some characteristic that would lead to more profits for the industry. He approached me and together we worked out a contest format that has allowed us to begin compiling this information.

For three years now, we have worked together on this contest. It has taken this long to even begin to develop any conclusions. For the sake of discussion, I am going to divide this article into three parts, the first of which will detail the contest. The second part will go over what we have learned or maybe more importantly, what we have not learned. The third part will look at where we are taking this contest and what to look forward to in the future.

In the meat business, your profits are made up by what you are able to charge for the finished product versus what you paid for it. This margin for my business is comparable to what calves are worth to the producer. This margin is the basis for my income. For a plant that runs 2,000 head per year, twenty added dollars per head is \$40,000. It becomes imperative for anyone in the packing industry to know what the margins are. How do we figure these margins? In its simplest form, you only have to divide the total value of the cuts that come off a carcass by the price you paid for the carcass. Where this gets complicated is when you begin to factor in a marketplace with changing values, carcasses with different yields and different sexes and ages of animals. The marketplace and its corresponding effect on meat values is a vague place ruled by supply and demand. It is a shifting, chaotic world that would take hours to even begin to explain. The second part of this margin is the one Sandy and I tackled with this contest. We defined one select class of animals, coming two year old heifers and bulls. We set a defined value of the carcasses and value of 18 cuts that come from each carcass. We used North American Bison Cooperative pricing to define that value. Although prices have changed since then, we left the price the same as we wanted to make the contest comparable from one year to the next.

The animals are slaughtered and processed identically. We obtain assistance from South Dakota State University to oversee the cutting part of the contest, making sure that all cuts are trimmed to the same specifications. Each animal's information is put on a data sheet and then comes to my desk. I don't know the animal's owner, only the number of the animal. An independent party knows the animal's owner and corresponding number, but not the data that determines the winner. This system keeps the contest impartial. A winner is then declared based on the animal that yields the most percentage of profit.

What have we learned so far? We have learned that there is a

lot of difference in profit margins between the top animals and the bottom animals. In an industry that operates on single digit profit margins, the fact that the better animals are 10 to 15 percent more profitable is very intriguing.

How do we isolate this animal? This is where the contest has proven difficult. This best yielding buffalo is not the biggest or the smallest. It is not the longest. It is not consistently a bull or a heifer. It is not the one with the largest round or hindquarter. I can tell you that too much fat affects the bottom line more than most people realize. I can also tell you that the poorest animals are not well muscled in all parts of their makeup. We have also learned that certain individuals buffalo seem to do better year after year. Is this genetic? Feed? Something we haven't considered?

This past year we introduced another level of information. This information doesn't affect the contest itself, but is meant to give further insight into buffalo meat. We looked at color of meat, color of fat, pH balance and tenderness. We are able to compare all of this information with beef. Some information we already knew. Buffalo meat is somewhat darker than beef. Some information I did not know. Even with young, grain fed buffalo, the carcass fat on these animals has the slightest tinge of yellow as compared to beef.

The most fascinating, as far as I am concerned, test was the sheer test. This test takes a certain cut of buffalo (my favorite, New York steak) and tests it in a standardized method for tenderness. In this test a steak from each animal is cut to a uniform thickness and then aged seven days. The steak is then cooked on a special grill that guarantees uniformity. They then take plugs out of the steak. These plugs are taken at an angle to insure "across the grain" testing. A specialized machine then "tears" the meat and measures, in pounds, the force required. We are able to then compare this number with the same from a beef New York steak. What did we find out? The buffalo averaged more tender than the beef, but the most tender buffalo steaks were well under the beef steaks and the tougher buffalo steaks were way over the beef average. The Meat Science department at South Dakota State University was amazed at the variation. The heifers averaged a little more tender than the bulls. Interestingly, the winning bull and heifer carcasses produced some of the toughest meat. Once again, is it genes? Feed? Only with more contests and more testing will we find out.

Hopefully you can begin to see where we are going with this contest. Every year we hope to add more pertinent information and we intend to keep this contest on the cutting edge. We have a small enough industry for this information to make a difference. This next year, we are already looking at possibly doing some DNA testing to try to further isolate the animal that demonstrates the best traits. Keep in mind this is your contest. If you have any input or questions about the contest or the conclusions, feel free to call me at 1-800-247-3263.

DTBA member, Kim Sealine, Spirited Winds Tatanka Ranch, Caputa, SD, is opening a new "buffalo" store the beginning of July. The store will be called "Tatanka Trading Post" and will be located at Scenic, SD.

In addition to featuring their own brand of meat and other buffalo meat items, Kim and her family are doing lots of arts and crafts for the store.

Kim is currently looking for buffalo related consignments. If you have anything that might be of interest, you can contact her at:

*Kim Sealine, Spirited Winds Tatanka Ranch, 24300 173rd Ave., Caputa, SD 57725 • (605) 993-6102 • tatanka@gwtc.net.
GOOD LUCK ON YOUR NEW VENTURE!*

If you would like to order a copy of the buffalo carcass cut up demonstration that was held during our winter conference in January, copies are available. The cost for a VHS tape, with the hour long demonstration and talk, will be \$20 per tape. This price will include tax, where applicable, and shipping. Orders must be pre-paid. To order a copy, please call, write or e-mail the DTBA office. See the front page for contact information.

Dakota Territory Buffalo Association
P.O. Box 4104
Rapid City, SD 57709



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PLEASE SEND IN ONLY IF YOU ARE A NEW MEMBER OR HAVE NOT PAID YOUR 2003 DUES!

DAKOTA
TERRITORY
BUFFALO ASSOCIATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Ranch Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone(_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Mail to:
Dakota Territory Buffalo Association
P.O. Box 4104
Rapid City, SD 57709

\$50