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Partner Action Toolkit

Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act

S.258/ H.3866

Bison is a highly nutrient dense food because of the proportion of protein, fat, mineral, and fatty acids to its caloric value. According to the USDA, bison is clearly the better choice with significantly less fat and calories, less cholesterol and bison contains higher amounts of protein, iron and vitamin B-12 than beef, pork, chicken and salmon.

Part of the reason for bison's high nutritional value is because of how they are raised. Bison are handled as little as possible. Bison are not domesticated, they spend their lives on grass, with very little or no time in the feedlot. They are not subjected to questionable drugs, chemicals or hormones. The members of the NBA feel so strongly about this that the NBA bylaws oppose the use of these substances in the production of Bison for meat.

It's for these reasons that the National Bison Association has been dismayed that water buffalo is being imported in the United States and being marketed, in some instances, as "Wild Buffalo". This deceptive approach to marketing water buffalo as bison is dishonest to the consumer and threatens the supreme food safety that the bison industry affords to its customers.

Legislation is needed to provide clarification regarding the common or usual name for bison and compliance with section 403 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and for other purposes.

Now is the time for Congress to take quick action for this simple clarification of terms. With Congress negotiating 2023 Farm Bill priorities, there is an added opportunity to include this small legislation with the 2023 Farm Bill.

The *Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act of 2023 (H.3866)*, recently introduced in the House by Representatives Carol Miller (R-WV-1) and Yadira Caraveo (D-CO-8); and *A bill to provide clarification regarding the common or usual name for bison and compliance with section 403 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and for other purposes (S.258)* introduced in the Senate by Senators John Hoeven (R-ND), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Jon Tester (D-MT), Mike Braun (R-IN), Tina Smith (D-MN), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), John Thune (R-SD), Jerry Moran (R-KS), and Roger Marshall (R-KS) will provide this much needed clarification of terms for bison.

“Owning a bison farm, I am aware of what it takes to raise bison and the many benefits that come with the production of bison products for West Virginia,” Rep. Miller said. “When a product is labeled as ‘buffalo,’ consumers usually think that product contains bison. “This bill makes absolutely certain that only bison products are labeled as buffalo and that any water buffalo products have their own specific label,” she said. “This will help consumers make better choices and bolster the American bison industry.” ([Ripon Advance News Service](#), June 9, 2023)

“The Truth in Buffalo Labeling Act will prevent imported water buffalo products from being deceptively labeled as buffalo, which many Americans associate with American bison,” said Rep. Caraveo. “I’m glad to join Rep. Miller in this bipartisan effort to give consumers this clarity and peace of mind.” ([Ripon Advance News Service](#), June 9, 2023)

“Accurate labeling of bison products is not only good for consumers, but good for producers as well, and this legislation promotes transparency by ensuring products are properly labeled,” said Senator Hoeven. ([Senator John Hoeven Press Release](#), February 6, 2023)

“Colorado’s bison producers work hard to grow their markets and deliver high-quality meat. Misleading labeling undermines their efforts and deceives consumers,” said Senator Bennet. “Our bill helps support American bison producers and delivers transparency for consumers by requiring accurate labels for water buffalo products.” ([Senator John Hoeven Press Release](#), February 6, 2023)

Your voices have helped create and shape this legislation, and now is the moment we need your support to ensure this becomes enacted. This toolkit contains information about the marker bill, sample social media language, and an example press release. With your support, we can activate our networks to join us in calling on our Members of Congress to support this critical bill.

Need support sharing any of this information on social media? Please reach out to National Bison Association Program Manager, Lydia Whitman, with any questions at lydia@bisoncentral.com.



How You Can Engage

- Share our [member alert](#) about the bill with your networks.
- Share a partner post about the bill on social media. You can also collaborate with National Bison Association on a partnered post — contact lydia@bisoncentral.com to coordinate.
- Hold a meeting with your Member of Congress’ office to tell them about your support of the bill — your local bison association or the National Bison Association can help set this up and provide talking points if desired.
 - **S.258** is a bill introduced in the Senate by Senators John Hoeven (R-ND), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Jon Tester (D-MT), Mike Braun (R-IN), Tina Smith (D-MN), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), John Thune (R-SD), Jerry Moran (R-KS), and Roger Marshall (R-KS)
 - **H.3866** is a bill introduced in the House by Representatives Carol Miller (R-WV-1) and Yadira Caraveo (D-CO-8)
 - **Current policy goals:**
 1. **Senate:** Encourage senator to draft a letter to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
 - a. Requesting a hearing on the bill, with the goal of having the bill passed in regular order.
 - b. Requesting a waiver for the bill to be included in the 2023 Farm Bill.
 2. **House:** Encourage representatives to draft a letter to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce
 - a. Requesting a hearing on the bill, with the goal of having the bill passed in regular order.
 - b. Requesting a waiver for the bill to be included in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Overview of the Bill

- [National Bison Association One Pager](#)
- [National Bison Association Press Release](#)
- [S.258 Bill Text](#)
- [H.3866 Bill Text](#)
- [Press Release from Senator John Hoeven](#)
- [Press Release from Representative Carol Miller](#)
- [Congress.gov Senate Bill Page](#)
- [Congress.gov House Bill Page](#)

Talking Points

- Most Bison producers are selling meat to the general public, grocery stores, direct to consumers, or elsewhere. Currently, labeled buffalo in grocery stores can either be bison meat or from a water buffalo, but still have an overall label of “buffalo.”

- With this act, it would **prevent cheap, low-quality, imported water buffalo products from being deceptively labeled as simply “buffalo,”** which misleads consumers and negatively impacts the U.S. bison industry.
- The bipartisan bill provides the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with the authority to ensure that products with water buffalo are labeled as “water buffalo” so consumers aren’t misled to believe the product contains bison. Bison products would continue to be labeled as “bison” or “buffalo.”
- Bison ranchers have worked diligently to build a strong market-based relationship based upon quality and integrity.
- In North America, the term buffalo is generally considered to describe American bison.
- Recently, imported water buffalo has been showing up in regional retail stores, labeled only as “Wild Ground Buffalo – Free Range.”
 - Some retailers are switching from bison to the “Wild Ground Buffalo” because the water buffalo is about \$2/lb. less.
- The “wild buffalo” label is highly misleading and creates an extreme risk for bison producers everywhere.
 - Our customers—and potential customers—are being deceived into buying a product that has a distinctly different taste and quality profile than bison.
 - Any food safety issue arising from this product would likely only be reported as a problem with “buffalo meat,” thus leading the public to believe that there is a safety issue with bison.
- The National Bison Association met with USDA and FDA on September 13, 2018 to discuss this issue. Because the product is only being processed under FDA jurisdiction, that agency won’t act unless there is a formal complaint filed.
 - On September 19, 2018 the National Bison Association filed a formal complaint to stop the mislabeling of water buffalo. No action was taken by the FDA.
- Mislabeling had occurred in pet food.
 - Several products in the marketplace were including water buffalo ingredients, labeled only as “buffalo.”
 - In response to a request filed by the NBA, the American Association of Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), which developed the model regulations adopted by individual states, is working to address this mislabeling.

Social Media Posts and Graphics

Tag National Bison Association:

- Instagram: @nationalbison
- Facebook: @nationalbison

#Hashtags: #bisoncentral, #truthinbuffalolabeling, #nationalbison

Tag the lead sponsors and your Members of Congress:

- Lead senate sponsors:

- Senator John Hoeven (R-ND)
 - Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO)
- Other senate co-sponsors:
 - Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND)
 - Senator Jon Tester (D-MT)
 - Senator Mike Braun (R-IN)
 - Senator Tina Smith (D-MN)
 - Senator Jacky Rosen (D-NV)
 - Senator John Thune (R-SD)
 - Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS)
 - Senator Roger Marshall (R-KS)
- Lead house sponsors:
 - Representative Carol Miller (R-WV-1)
 - Representative Yadira Caraveo (D-CO-8)
- Tag Senate/House Agriculture Committees:
 - Twitter: @HouseAgDems @HouseAgGOP @SenateAgDems @SenateAgGOP
 - Instagram: @houseagdems @houseaggop @senateaggop (there is not currently a Senate Ag Dems account)
 - Facebook: @HouseAgGOP @senateagGOP (no accounts for House or Senate Ag Dems)
- Some tips for finding the social media handles of your Members of Congress:
 - First try @ + their full name (i.e. @JohnBoozman)
 - If that doesn't work, try using @+ Senator or Representative (i.e. @SenatorTester) or Googling Twitter/Facebook/Instagram + their name
 - Thanks to the National Kidney Foundation for putting together this list: <https://advocacy.kidney.org/congressional-social-media-accounts/>
 - For Twitter handles, visit <http://www.tweetcongress.org/tweeters>