

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

DIVISION OF MARKETING

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAM
(ADD)

1999 GRANT PROJECT FINAL REPORT

CONTRACT NUMBER: 13087

Trailblazing into the Next 150 Years with a 1999 Midwest Premier Bison Show and Sale

Project Beginning Date: July 1, 1998
Project End Date: January 31, 2000 (as per Dec. 21, 1999 extension)
Funding Awarded- \$20,900.00

Principal Contact: Mary Klecker Jenkins
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Submitted by: Mary Klecker Jenkins
Date: January 28, 2000

1. Describe the original intent of the grant project

- The project was intended to provide a market outlet for the small bison producer in the Midwest. The show provided an opportunity for producers to see other animals next to their own and to have them quantitatively evaluated. The coupling of a bison sale with a high quality premier show of bison provided the bison producer East of the Mississippi with a show they could participate in. (The National Western Livestock's Gold Trophy Show, being the only one currently that Wisconsin producers would look to participate in.)
- The objectives, or original intent were not changed during the projects duration.

2. Describe the work conducted in this project

- The work conducted with this project included the planning and execution of a three-day bison show and sale. The grant funds were instrumental in allowing the show and sale to be publicized and marketed, to put on a daylong educational, promotional event for the bison industry, to carry through with quality judging of consigned animals, and to culminate with an award recognition of the top bison along with a live auction.
- Many successes were achieved with the grant project, but accomplishing the original project intent was the greatest success.
- The challenges we faced with the grant project was to keep within a targeted budget, and staying' directed toward the original grant intent. Having one key person maintaining this direction, enabled us to stay on track

3. Describe the public outreach efforts of this project

Literature or educational materials produced through this project included:

1. 1999 Midwest Premier Bison Show and Sale consignment booklet.
2. 1999 Midwest Premier Bison Show and Sale event catalog
3. 'Marinated Bison' recipe

Presentations, field days or events given related to this project included:

1. 1999 National Bison Association Winter Conference booth display exhibitor
2. 1999 Wisconsin Farm Progress Days tent exhibitor
3. Hosting two 1999 Wisconsin Bison Producers Assoc. field days, July and October.
4. 1999 Wisconsin Bison Producer's March meeting - allowed all members to participate in a round table planning session.
5. 1999 Midwest Premier Bison Show and Sale (trade show and turn and learn presentations)

Media out reach as a part of the project included:

1. Advertisement in the National Bison Association publication "Bison World', Jan., Apr., July, and Oct. 99.
2. Advertisement in the Western National Livestock Journal
3. Advertisement in the Tri-State Livestock Journal
4. Advertisement in the Country Today newspaper
5. Event calendar listings in all of the above publications and the Wisconsin Farmer newspaper, National Bison Assoc. newsletter, Bradeen Auction and Real Estate Service listings.
6. Radio broadcast program with farm broadcasting out of Eau Claire, WI, the week prior to the show and sale, and during the two-day event.
7. Numerous local producer news articles promoting the bison industry.

4. The results of this project included:

Surpassing the original expectations of consigning 125 quality bison for the sale; registering 100 people for the turn and learn sessions; and having the countries best judges judging the show.

The product developed as a result of this project was the skeleton process of how to conduct a show and sale of bison for Wisconsin's industry. The consignment booklet discussed the criteria the judges would be using for judging, and this greatly enhanced the quality of bison displayed.

Things learned as a result of the project were:

-that this type of show and sale is a needed event for producers both in breeding programs and marketing breeding stock for the small family farm in Wisconsin.

The grant results enabled the small bison producer to show case their animals along side other quality bison and to sell them. This enables the small producer to operate efficiently with a timely market accessible to them. It also allowed the consignors the opportunity to have their bison judged by world respected judges in the bison industry. It provided exposure of our Wisconsin Bison and producers to others in the industry or some thinking of getting into the industry.

The Wisconsin family farm benefited from this grant project immensely as it allowed the farms (25 from Wisconsin, 35 total) to stay competitive in a rapidly growing agricultural industry. Other Wisconsin family farm operators were able to benefit by learning what it would take to diversify into this industry. Some farm operations may look to diversifying their operation (dairy, i.e.) to this industry.

Wisconsin agriculture was impacted by this grant project in that it enabled current bison producers with a market for their product. The show and sale, being the first of its kind in the n-Midwest, served as an incubator for business development of the bison industry in the area. Wisconsin serving as the Midwest host site was able to bring outside state buyers in, and their capital investment greatly helped Wisconsin businesses involved. Putting bison on the land keeps small farms in agriculture; for some it will lessen the danger of having to sell to residential development. Bison production can be a very environmentally friendly Wisconsin agricultural system.

5. How will the Wisconsin Ag industry use the information from this project?

Information from this project will be used by existing bison producers to better their production and farm management businesses. The results of the show combined with the sale event seemed to indicate that this style of an auction will provide a higher price for the animal. Although we may have suspected this would be the case, the opportunity to demonstrate this with the grant allowed WBPA to continue to be the leader in this growing industry. Being in this position allows for the continual growth and market potential of Wisconsin livestock across state lines. The event set a high breeding standard and set breeding stock prices at a somewhat acceptable level for new producers.

6. Include any research data that supports your conclusions for this project

The information recently taken off the NBA web site and is attached supports the prices discussed in the news articles and our conclusions. The information recently taken off the NBA web site and is attached supports the prices discussed in the news articles and our conclusions.

7. Any other information

- Samples of education materials included:
 - 'Why Bison' Brochure
 - WBPA directory of membership
 - Consignment and registration bookie
 - Event booklet
 - Scoring sheet used by the judges
 - Recipe prepared by the Mayfair group with their marketing bison to restaurants, presentation at the turn and learns
 - Photo of bodybuilder - provided during presentation on 'What Bison Meat Has Done For Me.'
 - NBA 1998 Association Report
- Clippings - newspaper sampling
 - pictures of some of the events from a video camera
- Other research to be done to further this industry
 - Feasibility of cooperative bison meat marketing groups within the state
 - Feasibility of cooperative advertising by Wisconsin bison producers
 - Double blind taste test consumer research
 - Focus group research - buyers of bison meat (individuals, chefs and restaurant owners)
 - Feasibility of statewide diversification workshops for commodity producers seeking alternatives
 - Linking organic food distributors with organic bison producers for current and future markets
 - Conduct a bison herd health survey and monitoring program coordinated by the UW School of Veterinary Medicine, emphasizing Johne's disease detection
 - Feasibility of direct marketing to four and five star restaurants within 500 miles of Wisconsin's borders, and production of marketing, and promotional materials appropriate to such a market
- Industry Leader, Tom LeFaive's comments as to the value of this project to bison industry

January 25, 2000

Mary Jenkins
Wisconsin Bison Producers Association
PO Box 423
Cambridge, WI 53523-5433

Dear Mary,

I have prepared the following comments as they relate to your bison show and sale held December 4-5, 1999.

Bison are increasing at an exponential rate, and new producers are joining the ranks each month in an effort to be successful with an alternative to raising beef. Bison provide for a feasible and viable income provided the surplus production created each year is marketed. To insure that the market is expanding at the same rate as the production, state, regional and national bison sales play an important role in getting the producer and the consumer together.

State and regional show and sales are important in educating new people about the bison industry. Regional and National sales cannot handle all the animals that producers wish to enter. The Wisconsin Bison Producers with their show and sale provide for an excellent opportunity for Wisconsin area producers to market their animals and to do so with a profit. The location in Wisconsin is critical to serve a good number of producers by providing a market place for their surplus. Many people that want to start a bison herd do not want to travel great distances to buy or remove animals from their herd. The Wisconsin Show and Sale is a successful marketing tool that bring together buyers and sellers without a lot of expense in traveling, and without a lot of stress on the animals.

I have enclosed the recent results of the National Western Gold Trophy Show and Sale. I was at the first show and sale held twenty years ago and it experienced a beginning that was much less attended and I have watched it grow to become the highest revenue of all sales held at the National Western for at least the last five years running. One only needs to reflect on the sale results to get a feel for the potential value of the Wisconsin Sale for the future. Many years ago I made the comment to the National Western Bison Show Producers, "This industry and this show and sale is like a freight train going down hill. It will pick up speed and no one will be able to stop it." The show and sale project for Wisconsin has no less potential. When the industry can duplicate what has happened in Denver and apply it to other regional events such as Wisconsin, then the grasp of the value of this project and the future for bison is a tangible and unique concept that becomes real.

Currently, bison meat sales make up less than one percent of the red meat industry and therefore certainly has room for growth. The result of this project is that bison are supported with a regional marketing plan that helps people market animals resulting in a profit and an alternative to other farming and livestock options where-by people are loosing their lively hood.

I know of no other livestock industry that has grown at the rate of the bison industry and one with the foundation so strong.

I hope these comments are of help in review of your recent event and the future of the bison industry.

Sincerely,
Thomas LeFaive, Bison Judge

GTSS Results

Total Sale: \$912,050

Total Animals: 211

Average Price per Animal: \$4,323

High Priced Bull – 2 year old - \$90,000 (Grand Champion Male) – consigned by Colorado Bison Co.

High Priced Female – 2 year old bred heifer - \$52,500 – consigned by Rock Creek Ranch

Grand Champion Male – 2 Year Old Bull - Colorado Bison Co.

Reserve Grand Champion Male – Yearling Bull - Colorado Bison Co.

Grand Champion Female – 3-4 Year Old Bred Female – High Point Bison (Show Only)

Reserve Grand Champion Female – Yearling Heifer – Trails End River Bison

Two Year Old Bulls

- total sold - 20
- average price - \$9,615
- high - \$90,000 – Grand Champion Male
- low - \$1,150

Yearling Bulls

- total sold - 47
- average price - \$4,231
- high - \$36,000 – Reserve Grand Champion
- low - \$850

Bull Calves

- total sold - 20
- average price - \$3,375
- high - \$18,000
- low - \$700

3-4 Year Old Bred Cows

- total sold - 13
- average price - \$4,177
- high - \$7,750
- low - \$2,100

2 Year Old Bred Heifers

- total sold - 10
- average price - \$11,530
- high - \$52,500
- low - \$2,800

Yearling Heifers

- total sold - 17
- average price - \$6,274
- high - \$17,000
- low - \$1,900

Heifer Calves

- total sold - 30
- average price - \$2,830
- high - \$13,000
- low - \$800

Pen of 3 Heifer Calves

- total sold – 18 (54 head)
- average price - \$5,133 per pen
- high - \$11,400
- low - \$2,550