

MSGA Bison Policy

CH 010 - INFECTED BISON - 1996 (Renewed 2006)

WHEREAS recent media reports about shooting of bison outside of Yellowstone Park relate the reasoning to the possible brucellosis infection of cattle by infected bison; THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that MSGA launches a media and public relations campaign emphasizing that brucellosis is a "human health" issue, not just an animal health issue.

CH 014 - BISON QUARANTINE FACILITY – 2005 (Renewed 2010)

WHEREAS brucellosis is a concern to the Montana cattle industry; and
WHEREAS the bison quarantine facility at the Dome Mountain Game Range will displace elk onto private land increasing interaction with cattle and the possibility of disease transfer; and
WHEREAS the MT Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks' elk brucellosis management plan is in direct conflict with the bison quarantine facility;
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED MSGA opposes the bison quarantine facility on the Dome Mountain Game Range or any other facility that would increase the likelihood of elk/cattle interaction.

CH 016 - REGIONALIZATION OF LIVESTOCK FOR BRUCELLOSIS CONTROL - 2007 (Revised 2009)

WHEREAS managing for brucellosis is an action of great importance to the Montana cattle industry; and
WHEREAS mandatory testing of all breeding cattle into and out of a region around Yellowstone National Park (YNP) would be costly and impede commerce; and
WHEREAS regionalization has negative international ramifications; and
WHEREAS APHIS and state veterinarians have the authority to downgrade Montana's class free status and they have indicated the practice of a state utilizing regionalization would not insulate that state from having its status downgraded;
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that MSGA supports the following priorities:
Priorities Regarding Brucellosis and Bison in Yellowstone Area Recommendation

1. Eradication of brucellosis in the Yellowstone's National Park bison and GYA elk for a clean and healthy environment that benefits both livestock and wildlife.
2. Support for private property rights as they pertain to land use including grazing rights.
3. Request that any increased monitoring or testing of livestock in the Greater Yellowstone area be approved by the state veterinarian and funded out of the APHIS Yellowstone Park Brucellosis funds.
4. Continue to support the GYIBC recommendations that call for the removal of bison from the state of Montana prior to calving, thereby reducing the increased environmental contamination from calving activities.

State-Tribal Relations Committee
October 3, 2014 - Day 1
Fort Belknap Indian Community Council

CH 019 - MANDATORY AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY - 2007

WHEREAS the state of Montana has confirmed the existence of brucellosis in a commercial cattle operation; and

WHEREAS the need exists for the protection of Montana's livestock industry against brucellosis and human health against undulant fever; and

WHEREAS infection of private cattle herds is from "public" wildlife;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that MSGA pursues actions including appropriate legislation or legal action if necessary to hold the MT Department of Livestock, Park Service, APHIS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, State of MT, and the MT Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks responsible for their role in controlling brucellosis in all MT elk and Yellowstone Park bison herds including, financial responsibility for costs of testing and losses incurred from disease transfer to private livestock.

CH 020 - IMPLEMENTATION OF IBMP - 2007

WHEREAS a result of the Montana bison hunt was to delay and disrupt the Montana Department of Livestock's ability to fully implement the IBMP;

THEREFORE, BE IT RECOMMENDED MSGA works with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Montana Board of Livestock to ensure that the IBMP is fully implemented and the Montana bison hunt does not interfere with that implementation.

CH 025 - BRUCELLOSIS VACCINE - 2009

WHEREAS agriculture is the number one industry in the state of Montana; and

WHEREAS the loss of Montana's brucellosis free status has adversely impacted the market of breeding beef cattle;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED MSGA supports the development of a more effective vaccine and testing measures that will accurately detect presence of brucellosis; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MSGA encourages state, federal wildlife and park agencies to comply with measures necessary to minimize the spread of brucellosis from elk and bison.

JOINT AH/LU 002 - INTERAGENCY BISON MANAGEMENT PLAN - 2006

WHEREAS the existing Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) is designed to protect the Montana livestock industry from the threat of brucellosis, and protect Montana's brucellosis Class Free status; and

WHEREAS there is a proposal to modify the existing IBMP by removing cattle grazing from areas adjacent to Yellowstone National Park and utilize public hunting to replace many of the management actions contained in the existing IBMP; and
WHEREAS similar plans have been proposed in the past and have been unacceptable to state and federal animal health authorities because they would be ineffective in protecting the

Montana livestock industry from the threat of brucellosis or sanctions associated with the disease; and
WHEREAS the only real solution for the continued threat of brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area to both human and animal health is to take measures to eradicate the disease from bison and elk; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and Dept. of Interior in conjunction with the animal health authorities and state wildlife agencies of the states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming have the ability and responsibility to take measures to reduce and eventually eradicate the disease from the Greater Yellowstone area;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED MSGA exhausts all avenues to get the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and Dept. of Interior and the States of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming to sign the GYIBC MOU agreeing to develop and implement a Brucellosis Elimination Plan in the Greater Yellowstone Area bison and elk herds and their environment to protect Montana citizens, wildlife, open space and the Montana livestock industry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED MSGA opposes any mandatory modifications to the existing IBMP calling for the elimination of livestock grazing in the area designed to expand the range for bison leaving YNP and entering Montana; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED MSGA supports the use of public hunting as a secondary measure for the management of YNP bison entering Montana.

JOINT AH/LU 003 - DESIGNATION OF BISON - 2006

BE IT RESOLVED in the area of Montana not covered by the IBMP, MSGA supports the designation of any bison as domestic livestock managed by the Montana Department of Livestock.

LU 042 - WILDLIFE RESERVE - 2009

WHEREAS the planned conversion of millions of acres by the American Prairie Foundation from cattle ranching to a prairie wildlife reserve featuring bison will have a significant effect on the customs, culture, environment and economy of local communities in Montana; and

WHEREAS brucellosis affects a substantial number of bison and elk in the state of Montana and poses a health threat to area cattle; and

WHEREAS the conversion of State and Federal grazing permits from cattle and sheep that are managed as part of a wildlife reserve and not a traditional livestock operation will threaten the sustainability of local ranches and the local economy; and

WHEREAS the natural migration of bison may create containment issues and threaten public safety; and

WHEREAS an assessment of the cumulative impact that a multi-million acre wildlife reserve would have on the natural resources, economy, and communities of Montana has not been conducted;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that MSGA pursues and supports a moratorium on the conversion of State and Federal grazing leases from cattle and sheep;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MSGA stands opposed to the conversion of any acres in Montana to a wildlife reserve.

LR 029 - YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK - 1992

(Renewed 2007)

WHEREAS MSGA supports the proper management of all the nation's rangelands for sustained use, and protection of plants and soils; and

WHEREAS current mismanagement by Yellowstone National Park of the elk and bison populations on the Northern Winter Range has caused desirable plant communities (such as riparian shrub communities and native grasses) to be destroyed by these vast populations of elk and bison; and

WHEREAS serious degradation of soil and water resources has caused accelerated soil erosion; and

WHEREAS this indicates the Park's inability to follow its mandate for proper land management; and

WHEREAS an expansion of Park boundaries would only perpetuate and expand the mismanagement of the nation's resources;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED MSGA urges the National Park Service to manage these lands consistent with NRCS rangeland guidelines.

**LR 034 - CHARLES M. RUSSELL WILDLIFE REFUGE
BISON REINTRODUCTION - 2008**

BE IT RESOLVED MSGA opposes any bison, wild or domesticated, from any private entities, federal or state parks, to be imported and set free to graze within the boundaries of the CMR Wildlife Refuge.