

Division of Marketing
Agricultural Development and Diversification (ADD) Program
1993 Grant Final Report
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Grant Title Marketing Bison to an International Conference

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MARKETING BISON TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Program Summary

A. The intent of the project was to improve public awareness and understanding of the low cost production, environmentally friendly benefit to society, and highly nutritional advantages of raising bison. The objective was to use a cooperative effort among state bison growers and stimulate consumer education and understanding regarding bison meat. Using the First International Bison Conference as a forum, the project was able to:

- 1) Provide expanded visibility of Wisconsin's Bison Industry.
- 2) Increase awareness in the agricultural community of bison as an alternative meat product.
- 3) Improve meat consumer awareness of the availability of bison meat from local producers.

B. The project was able to demonstrate agricultural diversification opportunity, market expansion potential, improvement in the competitive position, and efficient use of farm land resources by:

- 1) Providing a Wisconsin Bison Producer's booth to promote the Bison Industry through promotional efforts initiated in conjunction with the Wisconsin Bison Producers Association hosting of the First International Bison Conference and Trade Show in LaCrosse, Wisconsin.
- 2) Involving print, radio, promotional items, and trade booth design and production for the international trade show.

C. Results and benefits of the project included:

- 1) Increased meat consumer awareness of bison meat and bison producers in Wisconsin.
- 2) Increased awareness of bison as an alternative meat animal by agriculture producers in Wisconsin and adjacent states.
- 3) High profile by the Wisconsin Bison Producers Association at the International Bison Conference and Trade Show.
- 4) Trade show booth set up and use at Wisconsin Farm Progress Days one week prior to the LaCrosse conference.
- 5) Bison conference discussed on WTSO (Madison) radio noon farm report prior to the conference.

- 6) Channel 27 (Madison) featured local producer in a 90 second on farm report for ten o'clock evening news, July 26, 1993.
- 7) Attracted the attention of a handful of Animal Rights People, and with the help of Jane Fonda and Ted Turner (producers from Montana who attended), substantial regional and national news coverage was obtained at the conference.
- 8) Increased level of inquiry at and following the conference by potential producers.
- 9) Increased animal and meat sales by Wisconsin and regional producers.
- 10) Increased identity and recognition of the Wisconsin Bison Producers Association as a viable industry representative.
- 11) Demonstrated that Wisconsin's Department of Agriculture supports and recognizes bison meat opportunities for farmers in Wisconsin. This recognition encourages Wisconsin Bison Producers to work with departments in promoting Wisconsin's agricultural industry.

D) The Informational Material Developed Was As Follows:

- 1) A Directory of Wisconsin Bison Producers with 4,000 copies printed, identifying Wisconsin Bison Producers.
- 2) A 'Welcome' banner produced and displayed on the LaCrosse Convention Center.
- 3) The Wisconsin Bison Producers designed and constructed a trade show booth display which includes a banner, display board with locator map and producer business cards, video monitor/VHS player and bison industry marketing video.
- 4) Radio time was purchased in Madison and LaCrosse markets to promote conference attendance and awareness by consumer and agriculture community audiences.
- 5) Promotional items produced for use at the conference included ceramic mugs with conference logo, hats and t-shirts with similar logo.

E) Future projections resulting from receipt of the grant funds:

- 1) An accelerated growth in live animal sales to new producers and absentee owner consumers.
- 2) An accelerated growth in meat sales to consumers.
- 3) An increase in the number of restaurants serving bison meat.
- 4) Use of the producer directory to expand industry and bison meat awareness and access among target consumer audiences.

- 5) Positive networking benefits with industry and producer contacts fostered by the International Conference, as a positive image was generated for the Wisconsin Bison Producers Association. Sale of animals to other states and Canada will be more easily accomplished.
- 6) Greater access by Wisconsin Producers to the marketing of bison industry handling and production equipment both as distributor and consumer of these products.