



# North American Bison Cooperative

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Phono: 701-947-2505

Fax: 701-947-2105

1658 Hwy. 281

P.O. Box 672

New Rockford, ND 58356-0672

May 16, 2000

FSIS Docket Clerk  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Docket #00-008N  
Room 102 Cotton Annex  
300 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20250-3700

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

On behalf of 370 bison ranchers who own the North American Bison Cooperative, I am writing to support the consideration of extending the USDA Meat and Poultry Inspection program to additional species. This would include supporting the use of nitrates in non-amenable species.

Food safety and public health issues should not be confined only to certain species or determined by financial considerations. The bison industry and undoubtedly other food industries need the safety assurances provided only by federal inspection. Not only are issues of public health and safety involved, but in fact the outbreak of a food borne illness could virtually destroy the small farmers and ranchers engaged in the production of these species. We recognize that federal inspection is available on a voluntary basis. However, unless it becomes mandatory, food will continue to be distributed in commerce which does not meet the USDA food safety standards.

We feel that exempting bison from mandatory inspection because the numbers are relatively small compared to other species would be akin to exempting beef from inspection in states where beef numbers are small. We feel the size of our industry should have nothing to do with food safety policy.

Again, we wish to give our complete support to extending the meat inspection to additional species.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis O. Sexhus  
Chief Executive Officer

DOS/sas

cc: NABC Board of Directors