

# THE DAILY UTAH CHRONICLE

## Tall Grass Bison prioritizes ecologically friendly practices

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Bob Jackson, wildlife biologist and partner of the U's range science behavior initiative, is dedicated to a rare bison industry, which generates only a fraction of profit compared to the beef industry.

Helping the U with research in animal grazing behaviors, he has taken his expertise and built his own business, Tall Grass Bison.

"I have been to various universities, including the U, to speak with students and professors about more

ecologically efficient ways to raise herds, and how they originally grazed in the past without human interaction—like elephants, for example," Jackson said.

By raising herds in their extended families, social order can be used for the basis of their grazing, he said.

Jackson raises buffalo in family units—eliminating the weaning process of calves—in order to minimize the anxiety and stress of the animals. From his observations, an understanding of the relationship between grazing conduct and the animals' social interactions was realized.

"We have 400 to 500 buffalo raised on 1,000 acres of land at the moment, and those buffalo belong to approximately four family units," he said.

Jackson's knowledge and research offers customers of his bison meats the healthy diets they deserve and the ability to reconnect with the environment, according to Tall Grass Bison's website.



The clean, free-range meat comes from animals that have been fed only grass, and there is a strong emphasis on letting the customer know that the soil the buffalo are bred on is organic, natural and stabilized land.

"Bob's philosophy in using natural settings is becoming successful and the business is growing—people are starting to become more aware about where their food is coming from, and are understanding that certain marketing tools can be used to cover certain information when buying some meats," said Susan Chin, operations assistant for Tall Grass Bison.

Before becoming a rancher in his homeland of Iowa, Jackson was a ranger at Yellowstone National Park. The complexity of the bison herds that Jackson experienced in Yellowstone was a contributing factor to his change of direction in his career.

"By raising the buffalo in their social family units, the process is healthier and more economically sustainable," Jackson said. "The implications for recurring damage is eliminated, particularly regarding the tension in muscles when animals are stressed—our meat remains tender."

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