









## Craig Dummer

Craig Dummer has been a grain farmer for the majority of his adult life. However, he is now taking on a new kind of farming that is quite unique to this area. Dummer has been raising bison since 2002.

After a friend started buying bison calves out of the Dakotas for cutting horse practice, Dummer had the opportunity to buy seven calves in 2002 once they were retired from cutting horse practice

NUTRITIONAL COMPARISONS						
Per 100 Gram (3.5 oz.) Serving – Cooked Meat – Updated March 2007						
SPECIES	FAT g	PROTEIN g	CALORIES kcal	CHOLESTEROL mg	IRON mg	VITAMIN B-12 mcg
 BISON	2.42	28.44	143	82	3.42	2.86
 Beef (Choice)	18.54	27.21	283	87	2.72	2.50
 Beef (Select)	8.09	29.89	201	86	2.99	2.64
 Pork	9.66	29.27	212	86	1.1	0.75
 Chicken (Skinless)	7.41	28.93	190	89	1.21	0.33
 Sockeye Salmon	10.97	27.31	216	87	0.55	5.80

Bison, separable lean only, cooked, roasted, USDA NDB No. 17157  
 Beef, composite of trimmed retail cuts, separable lean only trimmed to 0" fat, choice, cooked USDA NDB No. 13362  
 Beef, composite of trimmed retail cuts, separable lean only trimmed to 0" fat, select, cooked USDA NDB No. 13366  
 Pork, fresh, composite of trimmed retail cuts (leg, loin and shoulder), separable lean only, cooked USDA NDB No. 10093  
 Chicken, broilers or fryers, meat only, roasted USDA NDB No. 05013  
 Salmon, sockeye, cooked, dry heat USDA NDB No. 15086

“We started with just a few and now the herd is up to 45,” said Dummer.

The Dummers currently sell live animals to local customers for meat. But, are hoping to commercialize their business soon and be able to sell their own bison meat after they have established a USDA Label. They are now in the process of putting up a new facility that will make handling the bison easier and stress free for the animal and the farmer.

When asked about his interest in the animal, Dummer replied with two answers; the history and the health benefits. According to Dummer, Bison meat is leaner when compared to other meats. “We have really noticed a difference now that Bison is what we eat. Bison meat has a clean greaseless taste,” said Dummer. He also said that since he was a kid, he has been fascinated with American History especially of the west and likes that a little piece of history is right there in his backyard.

“We are members of the National Bison Association and attend the annual winter and summer conferences. We belong to the Montana Bison Association so we get to go to these events and learn more about the Bison,” said Dummer. Their connections to these associations have given the Dummers the opportunity to meet Ted Turner, founder of CNN, who operates the largest bison ranch in North America as well as visit David Letterman’s ranch, another celebrity rancher.

According to Dummer, one saying in the Bison industry is: “You can make a Bison go anywhere he wants to go.” It is important to remember that these Bison are still wild animals and the Dummers make efforts on their farm to treat the Bison like they are still wild and provide for them a habitat that is much like their natural environment.

Dummer also claimed that the Bison industry is growing substantially in the US because of the health benefits. “Quite a few years ago, the Bison was almost extinct,” said Dummer, “at one point, there were 60 million bison in North America, but in the late 1800s there were between 100 and 500 bison. They were nearly gone. But, the increased interest and health benefits and the uniqueness of the animal have grown the demand back up.” The bison are extremely self-sufficient animals. “I check on them every day and make sure they have food and water,” said Dummer, “but for the most part, they take care of themselves.” As far as calving season goes, it is a completely natural process. “They wouldn’t let me help if I tried,” said Dummer. The animals are very protective of and connected to each other. “If you mess with one, the whole herd is on guard,” said Dummer.

“It is a tremendous animal in and of itself,” said Dummer, “They are unique and beautiful, native animals and as we continue to spend time around the bison industry, I enjoy it more and more.”  
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