

# Welcome to the 4-H Bison Project

**Howdy!**

We're excited that you chose to become a member of the 4-H Bison project. We hope you have a great time this year making new friends, taking part in 4-H activities, and learning more about bison and their agricultural value!

## **To complete your project year in 4-H bison, you must**

- Complete four to six of the units of this manual material per club year
- Take part in at least 70% of club activities
- Do a communication project
- Complete a record book
- Take part in your achievement day
- Have a lot of FUN!!!

## **About the bison project material**

Congratulations! You have made the decision to do the Alberta 4-H Bison project. We hope that you find the information in these manuals to be educational and fun! Prepare yourself to learn about the colorful past and inspiring future of bison.

Today's bison industry is relatively new despite the long history in North America. Because this industry is going through rapid evolution, information may change as more research is developed. We encourage you to add to the information provided in these manuals as it comes available to you. The project material will be covered in three member manuals, this is the first of those manuals. By placing this material in a three-ring binder, you will be able to create your very own "Bison Handbook". In years to come, this book will be a valuable reference, as you witness the progress of this growing industry.

## About your record book

You will be using the **Alternative Livestock Record Book** for this project. You must complete all applicable information in this book by the date specified by the club.

## Achievement day requirements

For achievement of this project, you may be required to prepare a display of the information depending on the individual project you have selected. This may be done using pictures, words or even demonstrations. Provincially, you are strongly encouraged to attend the Wild Rose Show and Sale held in the spring at Camrose. At this show members can meet other youth interested in bison from across the province. Members will also learn valuable skills and information needed in the industry.

## Other opportunities in 4-H

Your bison project is only a small part of 4-H. There are many fun and exciting activities that are offered at club, district, regional and provincial levels. These activities will provide you with the opportunity to attend social events, where you can meet other people your age. Clubs are encouraged to invite special guests, plan fun activities, tours and trips. Your district and regional 4-H councils may sponsor workshops, camps and exchanges as well as fun events. At the provincial level, members are encouraged to attend camps, shows and development programs. Many scholarships are also available to 4-H members who choose to continue on with their education.



## Why does 4-H have a bison project?

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development along with the Alberta Bison Association have worked together to bring you this golden opportunity to learn about one of the greatest land animals of North America. The bison was a major human economic resource for thousands of years! The recovery of these magnificent animals is not only important from an agricultural perspective, but it is also an important aspect of the history of this great province in which we live.

### The bison project does not follow the traditional 4-H livestock rules!

It can't be rode,



It can't be showed!



The bison project is a truly unique livestock project that will allow you, as a member, the opportunity to learn about the role that the bison played in our history, and the value they will continue to have in the new millennium!

### What is the "Bison Advantage"?

Your challenge, as you work through this project year is to answer this question. Actually, this is a question that is nearly impossible to answer!! However, one thing that all people in the bison industry do completely agree on is the fact that a bison advantage really does exist. Are you confused? Let's try to make sense of this. The bison advantage is all the benefits people gain from bison. This affects everyone from producer to consumer, and all those in between.

List a few bison advantages: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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There are many advantages, but a few that you may have come up with include:

- Healthy food value
- Benefits to the ecosystems
- Inspiration to many artists
- Naturally adapted to our province
- Major part of our history

And the list goes on...

### What are the project possibilities?

The possibilities are endless! There are three major categories that your project can fall under.

#### Exploring Bison



This is the ideal project for those members who are interested in the bison industry, but do not have access to a bison herd. Interested members may choose to get involved in a number of self directed projects that will allow them to learn about the Bison Industry. The options include items such as

bison history, folklore and the value of the numerous bison products and by-products. Achievement day for this project may require a display on one aspect of the industry they have studied, including their project book.

## Alberta 4-H Bison Project – Member Level One

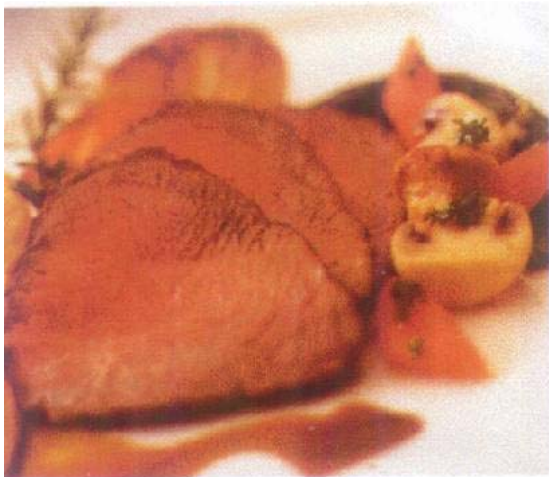
### Bison Herd Observations

Members, who have access to a bison herd, may choose to do a bison observation project. With this project, members will monitor a specific herd and record their observations in a record book.

Within the herd project, 4-H members may choose to select one project animal that they will observe and record the behaviour of. They will then monitor the social order of the entire herd, and determine the role of the selected animal within the herd. Other possibilities under the Bison Herd project may include the effects of the herd on the environment, methods of marketing a bison operation, developing a management system or raising a novice bison project. Senior members may even choose to develop a research project that will provide valuable information to bison producers.



### Carcass Bison



Members may choose a weanling bull, or market heifer, for their project animal. This animal will be fed until it is ready for market. At that time it will be sent for slaughter and the carcass information will be obtained. The member is responsible for choosing the time to sell their animal, so that it obtains the optimum carcass grade.

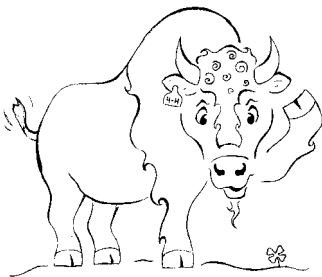
## Alberta 4-H Bison Project – Member Level One

The carcass project may also include marketing the meat, or even developing recipes for a variety of meat processing methods such as burgers and jerky. Achievement of this project may be a wide range of things from preparing a meal to a display of photos, carcass data and marketing strategies.

The best part of any 4-H project is that you will "learn to do by doing". There are a variety of fun **activities** to help you learn. Each time you see the following symbol, you will know that it is time to do an activity.



There is also a **Roll Call** at the beginning of each Chapter. When you see the following symbol you will know that there is a question to be answered. Share your answer with your fellow 4-H members during Roll Call.



# Alberta 4-H Bison Project - Member Level One

**Fill in** the following word puzzle using the list of words from below. *Unscramble the letters provided for you and see what it spells!* Remember - 4-H is fun!!



- |                 |                   |              |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| dense hair coat | longevity         | plains bison |
| happy           | manager           | Prairie      |
| health          | marshlands        | recovery     |
| heifer          | pasture rotations | safety       |
| ideal           | patience          | woods bison  |

The crossword puzzle grid is composed of several intersecting words. The letters shown are: D, A, T, O, G, Y, N, I, D, B, O, N, L. The grid is partially filled with these letters, and the rest of the grid is empty for the solver to complete.

## Word Unscramble

## Alberta 4-H Bison Project – Member Level One

— — — — —  
You can use the **Alternative Livestock Record Book** provided by your 4-H Leader  
OR create your own record book

**Congratulations for challenging yourself to complete a project that will be unique to you!**

### **Why do you keep records in 4-H?**

- To record information about your bison project.
- So you can see the actual costs involved in completing your project.
- To learn how to keep accurate records.
- To record your club activities and other activities.

### **What is involved in a good record book?**

- Completeness – a good record book has all the required information completed.
- Accuracy – your information and costs should be accurate.
- Neatness – is important in your record book. Because you are working on your record book throughout the year, always do your best to keep your book neat.
- Personality – this is your record book. Be original and personal in the information you keep in your book. Add photographs, newspaper and magazine articles on you, your club, your project area and 4-H in general.
- Make your book unique.



## Alberta 4-H Bison Project – Member Level One

- It will be an excellent record of your project and the 4-H year!

### **What is needed to create your own record book?**

In order to create your own record book you will need to include a few essential components.

#### **About me**

- Full name
- Address
- Phone number
- Age
- Number of years in 4-H
- Why did you join 4-H?
- What do you hope to achieve this year?

#### **About my club**

- Club name
- Number of members
- How long has the club been operating
- 4-H district that you belong to
- 4-H region that you belong to
- Club Leader(s) – names and phone numbers
- Club Executive – President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Club Reporter, Historian, Other positions.

#### **About your project**

- Explain what your project is.
- Set up a list of objectives and goals that you wish to accomplish.
- What is the best thing you have done with your project over the year?
- What would you like to do if you had the opportunity?
- What techniques and skills did you need to learn or did you learn to do this project?
- What did you like best about completing this project?

## Alberta 4-H Bison Project – Member Level One

### Equipment and supplies

- List all equipment and supplies you personally own or obtained to do your project. As accurately as possible determine what the real cost of doing your project might be.
- Record all the costs you incurred for this project.
- Remember to record dates of purchase, item and cost.

### Pictures from your club year

- Beginning of project year, during club year photos, fun times, whatever you think will help you to explain your project and club year to others.

### Record of your club's activities

- Keep a record of all the meetings and activities your club has had this year. Provide details and don't forget to mention any special responsibilities you had. **Remember to record the date of the meeting or activity.**

### Project story

- Write a summary of your 4-H year and project just to summarize everything that you did. You can include photos and news articles, etc. (If you do use news articles remember to reference and date them.)

**Congratulations! You have created your own special record book that is completely unique to you and your project!**