

BISON

History

Bison are native to North America and once roamed wild in Saskatchewan. It is estimated that at one time up to 60 million bison roamed North America and were a major staple for the Indigenous people. After the Europeans came to North America, bison were hunted to the point of extinction, with fewer than a thousand heads remaining in the late 1800s. The bison have recovered through the efforts of various conservationists.



An adult bison bull (male) will weigh around 2000 pounds and an adult bison cow (female) will weigh around 1100 pounds!

Food, Clothing, Shelter and Tools

In modern days bison are mostly raised for their meat but traditionally, bison provided food, shelter, clothing and tools for the Indigenous tribes. These tribes used every part of the bison for a variety of things including: bowstrings made from tendons, fuel made from manure chips, ropes made from hair, arrow points made from horns, knives made from bones and even pouches made from bison bladders!

A baby bison is called a calf

Bison can jump 6 feet high!



What do bison eat?

Bison are ruminants, which means they have four stomachs and can digest grass and hay (things that humans can't digest). From spring to fall, bison generally graze in the pasture on grass. In the winter, bison may graze on the grass under the snow.

Helping the Environment

Bison ranching helps preserve the last remaining native grassland habitats on the prairies. Many farmers in Canada have switched to the bison industry. This switch involves stopping using large areas of land for growing monocrops and instead planting a cover of grass on the land. This switch in land use has led to a huge expanse of formerly farmed land to be converted to pasture.

