



Doc Ken's Korner

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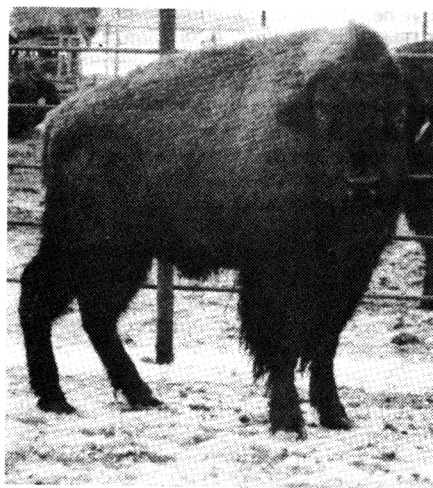
Buffalo Bulls: Part I—Inbreeding

Are you ready for a lot of bull? I would like to discuss bulls for three more articles. I am going to start out by destroying one of the earlier myths about buffalo.

"They say it doesn't hurt to inbreed buffalo." We are a young industry and I for one have a hard time accepting some of the "They say's" I hear in the industry. As a farm boy, I know if there are any recessive genes of undesirable characteristics, these characteristics are more apt to show up by inbreeding than by outbreeding within the species, provided that the animal you choose does not come from a herd with the same gene pool.

This is true of all species of animal and plants. I do not know if this is true in all buffalo, but I have seen several herds in this area where inbreeding has definitely hurt. Thank goodness these people either quit buffalo or changed their management practices.

Some of the most noticed points of inbreeding are 1) decreased fertility—including many bulls that are sterile or have very little sex drive; 2) decreased weight—very inefficient to feed—it takes an extra year or two to get a decent carcass; 3) poor appearance—dished in, shortened faces (more feminine look); 4)



Notice: 1) "rabbit legged" hind end; 2) smaller more feminine head; 3) smaller, poorer overall condition.

unsoundness—poor legs—you get what we call rabbit legged buffalo. This has to be a recessive gene since if you take a cow that has

rabbit legged calves and breed her to another bull that is proven, she will have a normal legged calf. I have personally done this with bred cows that I have purchased. After having a normal calf the next year, I culled those cows. I have seen these rabbit legged calves so bad that you question if they will make it—they can hardly walk for the first few days of their life, whereas a normal calf can run before the end of day one.

We have in the past purchased rabbit legged bull calves to feed and it is a very unprofitable practice. They are very slow gainers and they never do get any weight to speak of on their hind quarters.

What does this have to do with bulls? We all have to either trade or buy outside bulls to keep our herds improving. And when we select these bulls we can't really look the whole herd over so we know if there are undesirable characteristics present in the parent stock. I'd hate being a "Red Neck" but I think someone has to question the "They say" group. In a large wild population, the weak characteristics did not have a chance to be a dominant breeder. Your recessive gene characteristics did not have a chance to appear or if they did they would have had a very hard time to survive let alone multiply.



South Dakota Introduces Bison Bullion Coins

By Judi Hebbing

South Dakota recently entered the precious metal market with its introduction of the **South Dakota Bison**, a bullion coin designed by artist Jim Pollock of Pierre. Along with the unveiling ceremonies held April 15th, was a proclamation by the governor declaring this to be the "Era of the South Dakota Bison."

Pollock's work has been featured on the cover of **BUFFALO!** magazine and the NBA has been an outlet for his art prints and note cards for many years. Though he gained national recognition as a war artist in Vietnam he is now best known for his simple natural depictions of common Western scenes. Pollock competed with numerous other South Dakota artists for the privilege of designing the South Dakota Bison, a simple, elegant design which lends itself well to the engraving methods of the Tri-State Mint, producers of the bullion coins.

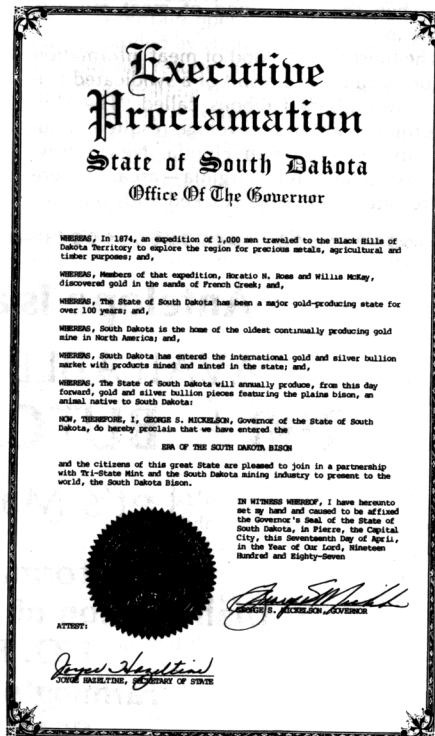
The South Dakota Bison reproduced on this page will be offered through 1987. The state will issue a new buffalo design annually, a fact that will appeal to collectors, I'm sure. South Dakota's entry into the world bullion market is unique in that gold coins are offered in eight weights and silver is offered in five, for a variety of sizes and prices that is seldom



The South Dakota Bison features a design by Jim Pollock on the front and the South Dakota seal on the back.

available. Gold is offered in 1/20 ounce, 1/10 ounce, 1/4 ounce, 1/2 ounce, 1 ounce, 2 ounce, 5 ounce and 10 ounce sizes while silver is offered in 1/2 ounce, 1 ounce, 2 ounce, 5 ounce and 10 ounce sizes.

The cost of the coins is determined by the spot market price (daily) and ordering information can be obtained by calling the Tri-State Mint toll free at: 800-843-9854.



South Dakota Governor George Mickelson declared this to be "The Era of the South Dakota Bison."