

Look for These Things at Tatanka Bison Ranch

- A Creek
- Bison calves
- "Big Boy" (large male)
- Bison Feces/"Buffalo Chips"
- Electric Fencing and Gates
- Bison Fur on a Tree
- Bison wallowing and Bison wallows
- Different types of Grasses and Trees
- The Barns and Farm Equipment
- Tree Swallows and Tree Swallow Birdhouses
- White-tail Deer, Rabbits, Eastern Box Turtles, Snakes

Listen for the Answers to these Questions on the Tour

- What does Holistic Bison Management mean?
- What grasses are grown at Tatanka Bison Ranch?
- What movie was filmed on the ranch?
- What does the word Tatanka mean?
- What information is found on a bison's ear tag?
- What do we call female calves?
- Are bison an endangered species?
- Can you tell the difference between a bull (male bison) and a cow (female bison) by its horns?

 Tatanka Bison Ranch

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Educational Tours and Private Tours Available

 TatankaBison



"Preservation, Education & Agritourism"



About the Ranch

The Tatanka Bison Ranch story began in 2015. Its owner, Fred Ilse, a native of South Africa, retired from the finance and furniture industry with a desire to do something new. He found some property with beautiful rolling hills in York, South Carolina and decided to purchase all 215 acres. For a time, he was undecided about what "new" thing he would do on this property. He considered aquaponics, but on June 24, 2015, on a trip to North Carolina, he saw bison for the first time. With his curiosity piqued, he began to research these animals, indigenous to South Carolina.

Fred found that bison once grazed the land near his property. In fact, when most people think of bison, they imagine herds of buffalo roaming the western prairies. Actually, bison lived all over North America, including Canada and Mexico. The fossil record indicates bison were common in southeastern North America since about 240,000 years ago. The oldest known American bison fossil, is an ankle bone found at the Ten Mile Hill Beds, in present-day Summerville, SC. This is amazing because these large animals originated in Asia crossing the Bering Land Bridge to reach North America, but no known fossils older than this one have ever been found. Many bison fossils have shown up in the American fossil record after this date.*

After much research, and training in Holistic Bison Management in Wisconsin, Fred purchased 18 bison for his South Carolina ranch. The closest veterinarian he could find was in Asheville, North Carolina. Completely off the grid, he slept in a camper on the property for the first year. His bison are 100% grass fed - they eat no grains, and they are given neither antibiotics nor growth hormones. At Tatanka Bison Ranch, a system of rotational grazing moves the herd from one pasture to the next every 2-3 days. This simulates the bison's natural movements in the wild. With this summer's expected births, there will be over 40 bison living and thriving, in York, South Carolina!

Tatanka Bison Ranch is a member of the **National Bison Association**, The **SC Agritourism Association**, and **Certified SC Grown**.

*<https://www.wildwill.net/blog/2015/07/12/the-history-of-bison-in-southeastern-north-america-2/>

Bison Facts

- Bison and American Buffalo are the same. "True" buffalo live in Africa and Southeast Asia.
- In 2016, President Obama named bison the national mammal. They are the largest land animal native to North America.
- Before the European settlers, it is estimated that over 40 million bison roamed North America. By 1895, there were fewer than 1000 bison left.
- Bison and cattle are related. They both belong to the genus *Bos*. They both originated in Asia and Europe.
- Adult males (bulls) stand about 6.5 feet at the shoulder and can weigh over 2,000 pounds.
- Bison are grazers. Adult bison eat more than 30 pounds of grass and other vegetation each day.
- After grazing, bison lie down to digest their food. Like cows they have a ruminant digestive system of 4 stomachs.
- Bison have both hair and fur. They shed their fur in the spring. Bison fur is used for knitting, and is sometimes blended with sheep's wool.
- Bison can run at speeds of 35 miles per hour or faster.
- Bison are strong swimmers. Wolves are their main predator.
- Both male and female bison have horns; the females are smaller. A bull (male) bison can be distinguished from a cow (female) by its wider, thicker horns; a wider skull; and a generally more massive structure.
- The gestation period for bison is 9½ months.
- Bison give birth to a single calf, generally born in the spring and calves weigh about 40 pounds. Calves can run within 30 minutes of birth.
- Wallowing, rolling in dirt, helps bison protect their hide from biting insects.
- Bison meat has less marbling than beef, due to its lower fat content. Compared to beef it is also higher in protein, and lower in cholesterol.
- Bison socialize as a matriarchal society. An alpha female leads the herd, and bison have a strong family structure.