

INCORPORATING
**BUFFALO
MEAT**

INTO THE SCHOOLS' LUNCH MENU

INTERTRIBAL
—BUFFALO—



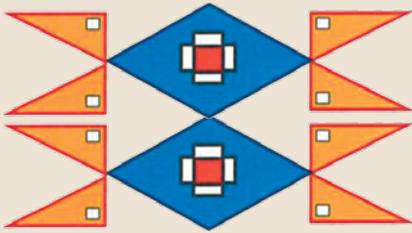
COUNCIL

2013 - 2016



Joaquin Rodrigues from Taos Day School





INCORPORATING BUFFALO

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THE 62 TRIBES IN 19 STATES PROUDLY SERVING THE BUFFALO NATION

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor | Pit River Tribe |
| Blackfeet Nation | Pojoaque Pueblo |
| Cherokee Nation | Ponca Tribe of Nebraska |
| Cheyenne and Arapaho | Prairie Band Potawatomi |
| Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe | Prairie Island Dakota Community |
| Chippewa Cree Tribe | Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma |
| Cochiti Pueblo | Rosebud Sioux Tribe |
| Confederated Salish & Kootenai | Ruby Tribe |
| Confederated Tribes of Umatilla | Round Valley Indian Tribe |
| Crow Creek Sioux Tribe | Sac and Fox Tribe of Iowa |
| Crow Tribe | Salt River Pima |
| Eastern Shoshone Tribe Flandreau | San Juan Pueblo |
| Santee Sioux | Sandia Pueblo |
| Fort Belknap Indian Community | Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska |
| Fort Peck | Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma |
| Ho-Chunk Nation | Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community |
| Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma | Shoshone-Bannock |
| Jicarilla Apache Nation | Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate |
| Kalispel Tribe | Southern Ute |
| Lower Brule Sioux Tribe | Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe |
| Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe | Standing Rock Sioux Tribe |
| Mesa Grande | Stevens Village |
| Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma | Stillaguamish Tribe |
| Nambe O-ween-ge Pueblo | Taos Pueblo |
| Nez Perce Tribe | Tesuque Pueblo |
| Northern Arapaho | Three Affiliated Tribes |
| Northern Cheyenne Tribe | Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa |
| Oglala Sioux Tribe | Ute Indian Tribe |
| Omaha Tribe of Nebraska | Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska |
| Oneida Nation of Wisconsin | Yakama Nation |
| Picuris Pueblo | Yankton Sioux Tribe |



Contact us!

INTERTRIBAL
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Rapid City, South Dakota 57702

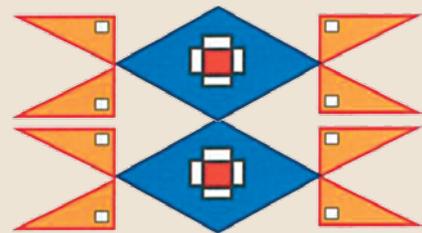
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O MEAT

INTO THE SCHOOLS' LUNCH MENU



ITBC MISSION

“Restoring buffalo to Indian Country to preserve our historical, cultural, and traditional and spiritual relationship for future generations.”

THE HISTORY

The American buffalo, also known as bison, has always held great meaning for American Indian people. To Indian people, the buffalo represented their spirit and reminded them of how their lives were once lived free and in harmony with nature. In the 1800's, the white-man recognized the reliance Indian tribes had on the buffalo. Thus began the systematic destruction of the buffalo to try to subjugate the western tribal nation. The slaughter of over 60 million buffalo left only a few hundred buffalo remaining.

To reestablish healthy buffalo populations on tribal lands is to reestablish hope for Indian people. Members of the InterTribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC), now called InterTribal Buffalo Council, understood that reintroduction of the buffalo to tribal lands will help heal the spirit of both the Indian people and the buffalo. The InterTribal Buffalo Council (formerly InterTribal Bison Cooperative) was formed in 1990 to coordinate and assist

tribes in returning the buffalo to Indian country. In February 1991, a meeting in the Black Hills of South Dakota, was hosted by the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. It was obvious to everyone that the ITBC organization to assist tribes with their buffalo programs, was not only desired, but also necessary. With the hard work and dedication of the Society, Congress appropriated funding for the tribal buffalo programs in June of 1991. This action offered renewed hope that the sacred relationship between the Indian people and the Buffalo might not only be saved, but would in time flourish.

ITBC TODAY

ITBC has a membership of 62 tribes in 19 states with a collective herd of over 15,000 buffalo. Membership of ITBC remains open and there is continued interest by non-member tribes in the organization. ITBC is committed to reestablishing buffalo herds on the Indian lands in a manner that promotes cultural enhancement, spiritual revitalization, ecological restoration, and

economic development.

ITBC has been reorganized as a federally chartered Indian Organization under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act. This was approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2010. ITBC consists of a Membership that includes all the Tribes that have joined the organization and is governed by a Board of Directors, which is comprised of five elected officers and four regional representatives.

The role of ITBC, as established by its membership, is to act as a facilitator in coordinating education and training programs, developing marketing strategies, coordinating the transfer of surplus buffalo from national parks and tribal lands, and providing technical assistance to its membership in developing sound management plans that will help each tribal herd become a successful and self-sufficient operation.



Incorporating Buffalo Meat into the Schools' Lunch Programs

The InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) represents 62 Tribes throughout 19 states. The role of ITBC, as established by its memberships, is to act as a facilitator in coordinating education and training programs, developing marketing strategies, coordinating the transfer of buffalo from national parks and tribal lands, and providing technical assistance to its membership in developing sound management plans that will help each tribal herd become a successful and self-sufficient program.

ITBC received an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Grant that was a three year grant, this grant was to help to decrease the risk of diabetes by the incorporation of buffalo meat into children's diets. Grass fed buffalo has many health benefits, it is low in fat and

rich in omega 3's, a quality which helps to fight against cancer. It is a nutrient dense food, is low in calories and has a greater concentration of iron and Vitamin E. All of these qualities have a positive impact on helping to combat diabetes, heart disease and other health issues.

ITBC also received a one year USDA Farm to School Support Service Grant. This grant involved the schools on the reservations in South Dakota, with the goal of procuring buffalo meat and fresh produce for their school lunch program, developing school gardens and developing educational curriculum. ITBC conducted onsite visits with 33 schools and assessments of the schools and corresponding 9 Tribes to determine their ability to provide locally raised Tribal buffalo meat into their school lunch

programs. The assessments included the tribes and schools infrastructure (cold storage, corrals, etc.), available buffalo, staff training levels and local support. ITBC assessed the ability of the schools to procure other locally produced food products and development of school gardens. ITBC has worked with Tribal Schools, they were evaluated by the schools abilities to participate in the Farm to School program.

As of today, there are 13 schools that have incorporated buffalo meat into their school lunch program through these ITBC projects. ITBC's ultimate goal is to help the younger generation become healthier by incorporating buffalo meat and other traditional foods into school lunch programs throughout the United States.





We enjoy buffalo meat at school.



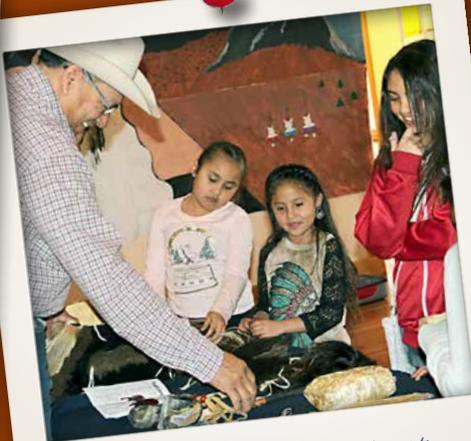
Smiling faces tell the true story!



I am proud to eat buffalo meat at school!



Yep! Lunch is delicious!



Students learning about the buffalo parts.



Student enjoying her meal that was cooked with buffalo.



Buffalo meat is very lean and low in fat.



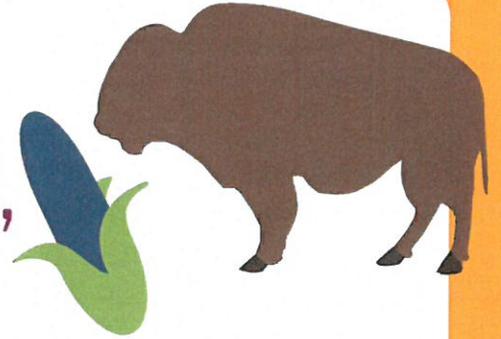
What yummy buffalo stew!



Circle of Nations students love the new buffalo meal program!



BRINGING TRIBAL FOODS AND TRADITIONS INTO CAFETERIAS, CLASSROOMS, AND GARDENS



* * * * *

SCHOOLS AND NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES across the country are incorporating traditional foods like bison, wild rice, and ancient varieties of squash and corn into school meals and providing complementary educational activities that teach students about nutrition and Native American food traditions. There are more than 560 tribes recognized by the U.S. government, each with its own food and agricultural history and culture. Operating a farm to school program in a tribal setting or in a school with a high Native American population can help connect students to this history and expand markets for local and Native American farmers. This fact sheet explores how schools and tribes are integrating traditional foods into child nutrition programs (CNPs), buying traditional foods locally, and incorporating multicultural nutrition education into classroom curriculum and hands-on lessons in school gardens.

Incorporating Traditional Foods into Menus

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages Indian Tribal Organizations, along with all operators of CNPs, to serve traditional and locally grown and raised foods. The Child Nutrition Programs and Traditional Foods memo (TA01-2015) explains that traditional foods may be served in CNPs and includes examples of how several traditional foods may contribute towards reimbursable meals. The USDA Food Buying Guide (FBG) is a great place to start when creating menus that incorporate traditional food items since it includes crediting information and portion sizes needed to meet the nutritional standards for federal reimbursement.

The Circle of Nations Boarding School located in Wahpeton, North Dakota, a charter under the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribe, incorporates bison meat from the Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate herd into lunch meals. Bison meat is substituted for ground beef in items such as chili and spaghetti sauce. In addition, food from the school garden is served daily on the salad bar. Lise Erdrich, School Health Coordinator, says that the students rated her salsa verde recipe, made with traditional green tomatillos, "better than guacamole!"

Meat from domesticated and wild game animals, including many traditional foods like bison, may be served in child nutrition programs.

For information about serving meat, see the memo, Procuring Local Meat, Poultry, Game, and Eggs for Child Nutrition Programs (SP01 CACFP01 SFSP01-2016).

While the FBG provides a list of products commonly served in CNPs, it is not an all-inclusive list. If a food is served as part of a reimbursable meal, but not listed in the FBG, the yield information of a similar food or an in-house yield may be used to determine the contribution towards meal pattern requirements.

Since traditional foods may provide a different nutrient yield than the substitutes listed in the FBG, it is important to pay attention to preparation techniques and the nutritional content of the foods being substituted.



Enhancing Food Sovereignty and Supporting Local and Native American Farmers

According to USDA's 2012 Census of Agriculture, there are more than 46,000 American Indian or Alaskan Native farms and more than 2,000 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander farms in operation in the United States. When CNP operators purchase traditional foods from these farms, everyone wins: Kids have an opportunity to eat nutritious, local, traditional foods; producers get an economic boost; and tribal communities enjoy more food sovereignty.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians operates the largest reservation based school system east of the Mississippi with over 2,200 students. The Nutrition Director works closely with local vendors, both on and off the reservation, and has incorporated muscadine grapes, sweet potatoes, squash, catfish, peas, tomatoes, melons, and blueberries from local vendor, Choctaw Fresh.

Traditional Food and Agricultural Education for Native American Students

Lessons in history, health, math, English, and science can all be used to teach students about Native American foods, food traditions, and agricultural practices. Incorporating nutrition education related to traditional food items into cultural activities such as ceremonial songs or story telling helps students to identify with food as part of Native American culture. Additionally, Native American school gardens can give students a first-hand look at traditional farming practices. For example, a Three Sisters garden (where corn, squash and beans are planted together) is a great way to connect traditional agricultural practices to healthy food choices.

Cherokee Central Schools in North Carolina, a district whose three schools (elementary, middle and high) are all on the same campus, is home to a thriving garden program. Foods grown in the garden come primarily from heirloom varieties of seeds saved for generations by Cherokee people. Students are regularly brought to the garden for soil-related lessons, seasonal garden rotation days, and more exploratory days of tasting and learning. The garden harvest is used in classroom cooking lessons, cafeteria taste tests, and in the high school life skills class. Additionally, special guests from the community are invited to teach students about traditional Cherokee uses— edible, medicinal, and ceremonial—for the plants.

Additional Resources

- **Farm-to-Cafeteria Initiatives: Connections with the Tribal Food Sovereignty Movement**
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/113799805/Tribal-Farm-to-School-project>
- **Indigenous Farm to School Programs: A Guide for Creating a Farm to School Program in an Indigenous Community**
http://www.firstnations.org/sites/documents/INDIGENOUS%20FARM_TO_SCHOOL_PROGRAMS.pdf
- **Native Food Systems Resource Center: Farm to School**
<http://www.nativefoodsystems.org/communities/farmtoschool>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Traditional Foods Project**
<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/ndwp/traditional-foods.htm>
- **National Farm to School Network Native Communities Page**
<http://www.farmtoschool.org/our-work/native-communities>

* * * * *
For more information, and to sign up for the bi-weekly e-letter from the Food and Nutrition Service's Office of Community Food Systems, please visit www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool.
Questions? Email us at farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov.



Four Winds Tribal School Welcomes a Wind of Change!

InterTribal Buffalo Council Project Director, Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, works with the Administration for Native Americans Grant, which strives to bring buffalo meat back to the diets of Native American children. She taught the summer school students about the history of the buffalo within their culture by use of a buffalo box.

She told the children about the diet of our ancestors before they were confined to the reservation and about the status of their health at that time. It was a time in which our Native ancestors grew to be old with relatively good health. It was a time that people maintained a great deal of

physical activity in their daily routines. Buffalo was the main menu and eaten daily.

more hunting, there was no more work in preparation of the hides and tools made from buffalo. The people had to stay in one place on the reservation so physical activity was greatly reduced. The commodities given to Natives were high in fat, cholesterol, and carbohydrates. From that time, health among Native Americans began to deteriorate. Sickneses such as diabetes and heart disease came to our Native relatives and have steadily increased. Today we all know someone who has diabetes. Dianne told the children about having buffalo meat back in our diets and how good it is in taste and for our health. Board member, Raymond Jetty, fielded questions from the children about how buffalo live, how much they weigh, and what they eat.

The children learned that when their ancestors were confined to reservations, they no longer had access to buffalo, but instead were given beef and commodities to eat. Since there was no



Students learning about the buffalo parts.



The children were then invited to have a piece of buffalo jerky and to see and feel the buffalo box and its contents. The use of the bones, the hair, the tail, the bladder, and the horns were explained by Amiotte-Seidel to the children and they were given the opportunity to touch each item. To think that the children see buffalo in pastures far away and here in front of them were the things that the buffalo gives to us. The children's fingers felt the coarseness of the buffalo hair on the box and the tail. They felt the strength of the braided hair made into rope. Then they felt the strong buffalo bone and the sharpness of it. Most of the children touched the bladder that was used to carry water and wonder that such a thing was done came to their eyes. Then at the end of the table were the horn caps that had been boiled and worked into spoons and other utensils. The smoothness of the horn was hardly able to be comprehended

after feeling the coarseness, strength and texture of the other items.

Meanwhile pizza for the students and community was being created by the Four Winds School cooks. A bread dough was used and patted into pans, topped with pizza sauce, chopped zucchini squash, ground buffalo and mozzarella cheese. While some children were reluctant to try the new dish, most really enjoyed and were up for more!

Future dishes will include other ground buffalo recipes, ground patties, and stew meat for soups.

Four Winds Tribal School Superintendent, Charles Morin, and school cooks are taking a step toward bettering the health of their students by making use of their tribally raised buffalo.



Yum! Pizza made with buffalo meat!



Isna Wica Owayawa - Loneman School

Students of Loneman School in Oglala, South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Sioux Indian Reservation started the school year right. One of their first meals consisted of buffalo gravy and wild rice. This year, school lunches for the 205 students at the school will include buffalo meat once or twice a week. The buffalo used in the program are purchased from the tribe's buffalo herd.



Neona Yellow Horse, Head Cook

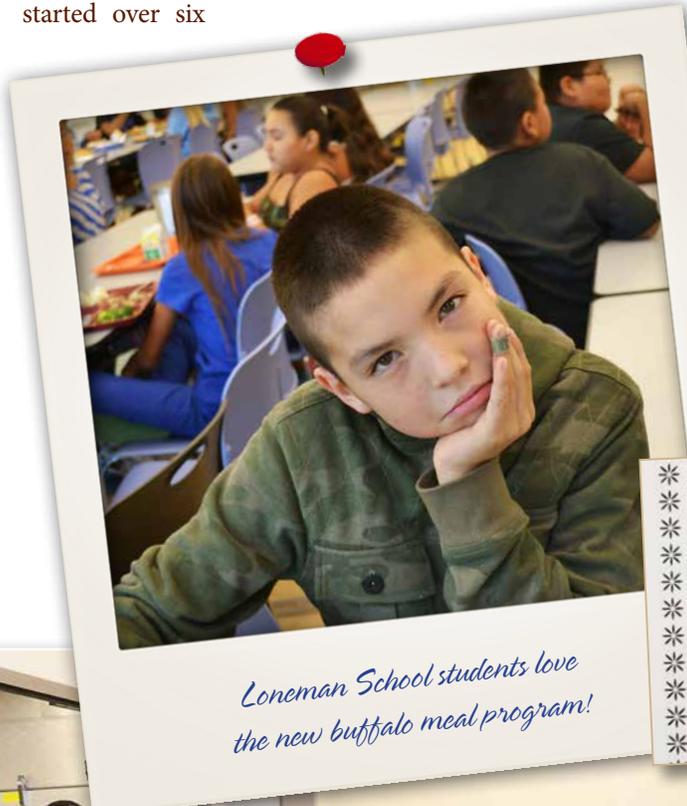
years ago. It blends well with Michelle Obama's school lunch guidelines, which the school is following. Those guidelines provide for eight to ten ounces of meat each week for the students. The school uses roast cuts, stew meat, and ground buffalo.

thanks for the sacrifice of the buffalo to take care of us and that the hunt will go in a good way. Just after the kill is made the buffalo is prayed over by the Spiritual Leader and the students. The liver is then cut from the animal and pieces are passed to everyone to be eaten. All of the students then help to skin the buffalo.

Loneman School is continuing an effort to include buffalo meat in school lunches that started over six

Ed Starr, Lakota Studies instructor, described how the students are involved on every level with the buffalo. The day before the hunt, the girls are led into a sweat lodge by Shirley Weston, while the boys are led by Ed Starr. Prayers are given in

The buffalo is processed under USDA criteria and the meat is processed into cuts used by the school. The skull and the hide are taken to taxidermy where they are processed and then returned to the school. The school now has enough hides for each classroom to begin a winter count. Pte San Win (Lakota) or "Babe" Poor Bear (English), fifth grade teacher,



Loneman School students love the new buffalo meal program!



* Breakfast & Lunch Menu *	
September 2-September 6	
Week 2	
Monday Sept 2 nd	NO SCHOOL HOLIDAY (Labor Day)
Tuesday Sept 3 rd	Coffee/C, Sausage Links, Pineapple Tidbits, Skim & 1% Milk, Breakfast: Raisin Bran/Cottage Cheese/Apple, Lunch: Ground Buffalo Gravy over Whole Grain Rice, Fresh Broccoli & Cauliflower w/Ranch, Mandarin Oranges, Skim & 1% Milk
Wednesday Sept 4 th	Breakfast: Whole Grain Cheerios, Assorted Yogurt, Orange Halves, Skim & 1% Milk



will help some of the children tan a hide.

As part of the traditional teaching that Loneman School is immersed in, the students are taken on field trips to the spiritual and historical sites in the Black Hills and Badland areas. This, in addition to the student's involvement in obtaining their own food, is giving the students a basis steeped in their culture with historical and practical knowledge.

Charles Cuny Jr, new principal at Loneman Public School, is fully supportive of the buffalo meat inclusion in the lunch program and of the cultural knowledge that is being imparted to the students.



Observing the Lower Brule Students

On the day that the InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Project Director, Dianne Amiotte-Seidel visited Lower Brule School to observe the use of buffalo in the school lunch program, buffalo roast was being served along with mashed potatoes and corn. According to Adam Cook, the head cook, the students really like the buffalo meat and look forward to having it in their menu. Superintendent Cody Russell agreed and said that, in his

observation, "The kids don't even notice the difference between beef and buffalo."

Karil Harmon is the administrative assistant that oversees the national school lunch program in the summer food program and told ANA Project Director, Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, that the school had recently changed their menu to include 100% buffalo meat in all of the meat offerings making it the first school under the ANA grant to do so. The school uses ITBC buffalo meat recipes.

school lunch program. This defined just one of the benefits that ITBC and the ANA grant are trying to educate people about with regard to buffalo in the diet.

The afternoon was spent having the students fill out a survey regarding their feelings about buffalo meat. Kansas and Kyal Middleton, teacher aids at Lower Brule, helped in getting the surveys out and then in the collection of them. Both aids are involved in the sports programs at the school and in helping in algebra and geometry classes.



Amiotte-Seidel was told about the school social worker who had been a vegetarian for years, but in learning about how buffalo are raised and the fact that they have no hormones or chemicals used in their raising, has come to enjoy the buffalo served in the



Cody Russell, Superintendent

Those skills came in handy in the tallying of the surveys, which indicated to ITBC that the students like having the buffalo meat in their school lunch and have an appreciation about the cultural aspects of the buffalo.

Lower Brule School has moved far ahead in their buffalo meat inclusion in going 100% buffalo. It is hoped that others will be able to follow their example.



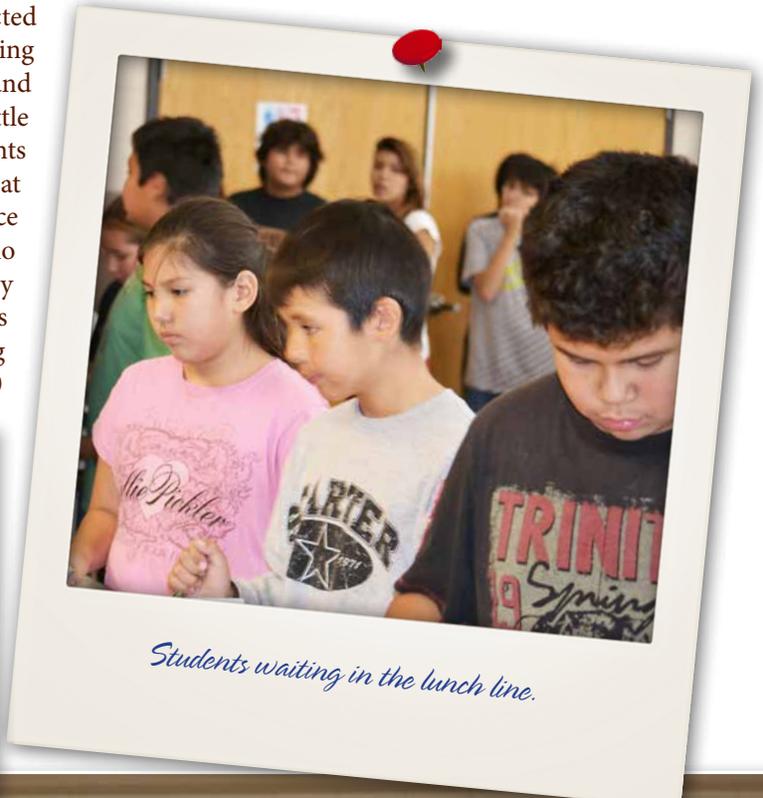
Enemy Swim Day School

School meals just got healthier at Enemy Swim Day School thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Food Service Team, Sisseton Wahpeton Buffalo Farm and the InterTribal Buffalo Council! According to Barb Danley, the ESDS school food authority, buffalo was first served to students in super nachos without their knowledge, as it is the goal of the school food service to incorporate buffalo meat into the school menu in a natural transition without making it seem like a dramatic change. Buffalo meat was a regular staple of the traditional Dakota diet and placing a lot of attention and fanfare on bringing it back to daily menus can cause students to resist trying it, because it is not as widely accepted

as the more fatty beef hamburger. The collective work of the group and the culturally responsive environment at the school is changing old perceptions.

April Rouillard, a cook's assistant at ESDS, reflected that she liked cooking with the buffalo meat and "that there is very little waste from the students when the buffalo meat is used. The difference between the buffalo and beef meat is very evident as the beef has grease in it." Serving two school meals to 170

students and the adults in the learning center and Family and Child Education (FACE) takes over 100 pounds of buffalo meat and it is well received by students and adults alike. FACE adult learners reflected that they are happy to see



Students waiting in the lunch line.



inclusion of buffalo meat in school lunches.

Enemy Swim Day School is the smaller of two tribal schools serving Native students in the Glacial Lakes region of NE South Dakota, and is the pilot school for incorporating buffalo in school menus in the area. Justin German, Sisseton-Wahpeton Tribe's Natural Resource Director, explained that the tribe can supply the smaller school with buffalo meat to be served weekly without adversely impacting the herd.

Justin German and Cody Toutges, the Tribal Conservation Officer, were pleased to be a part of the partnership

and observe students and adult learners enjoying buffalo as part of their lunch. The SWO Buffalo Farm lies directly south of the school and the school first began trying to get buffalo on the school menu in 2011. The wellness coordinator and the school food authority worked to partner with the tribal buffalo farm who then worked with the council to bring the project from awareness to action.

The InterTribal Buffalo Council's Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Director, Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, works with 62 tribes throughout 19 states interested in incorporating buffalo meat into their schools or tribal entities. Dianne does a feasibility study on each

tribe to see if there is herd capacity buffalo to supply the schools not just for one or two years, but as a long term goal of bringing a more healthful source of protein to food menus in educational and public settings. The InterTribal Buffalo Council also assists public programs and schools in identifying USDA certified plants, product labeling and assurance of quality standards in the slaughter and packing process. The initiative to use more buffalo in Native food systems is funded by a grant from the ANA. Dianne projects that in the project time frame, eight schools will be serving buffalo as a regular menu item as she currently works with six schools and this is the second project year!



Incorporating Buffalo Meat into the Schools' Lunch Menu

The Circle of Nation Boarding School

The Circle of Nation Boarding School is located in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and is an inter-tribal off-reservation boarding school established in 1904, as a charter under the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota Oyate and funded by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), takes fitness to a whole new level. The Circle of Nations School serves American Indian youth in grades 4 through 8. As of February 2014, there were 87 students from 30 different tribes that were served buffalo meat in their lunch menu. I, Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, Project Director/ Marketing Coordinator, observed the students eating spaghetti with buffalo meat in their spaghetti

sauce. I asked the students if they liked their spaghetti and 99% of the students said that they like their spaghetti and that they like buffalo meat. The head cook, Janet Danks, from the Three Affiliated Tribes has worked as a cook since 1996, and said that she learned to cook with buffalo meat by experimenting. She also stated that when she cooks with buffalo meat she noticed that there is a lot less grease compared to beef. She is really excited to have buffalo meat in their lunch program. Janet did an excellent job cooking the buffalo meat!

The cultural teacher, Jason Kingbird, stated that not only eating buffalo meat is good for the students, but learning their cultural heritage is just as important. The students learn

about their Native heritage and most of all respect. Jason also stated that he would like to see buffalo meat in every meal rather than once a week.

The mission of the Circle of Nations School is to build academic achievement and foster healthy development of the whole child in the Native American cultural environment. Circle of Nations School received a Healthier United States Schools Gold Award winner and the first Green Ribbon School in the state of North Dakota or the entire 184-unit Bureau of Indian education system. They are also a P.E.P. school!

They actively pursue Farm to School initiatives and any opportunity to promote local sustainable food systems,



Enjoying lunch with friends.



Incorporating Buffalo Meat into the Schools' Lunch Menu

environmental health and physical activity/nutritional improvement for their 100% free and reduced school lunch eligible American Indian 4-8th grade students.

Their nutrition partner, InterTribal Buffalo Council, is incorporating buffalo meat into the school lunch menu. Mission Statement: "Restoring buffalo to Indian Country, to preserve our historical,

cultural, traditional and spiritual relationships for future generations." ITBC works with 62 tribal units in 19 states, striving to re-introduce or maintain buffalo herds on tribal reservations.



Smiling faces tell the true story!



Friends learn about the buffalo meat in Schools.



Taos Day School

Spirits were high on the morning of Monday, February 10th, when Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) Project Director/Marketing Coordinator, and Lucy Bull Bear, Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Administrative Assistant, journeyed to Taos, New Mexico, to observe the students at Taos Day School to eat buffalo meat for the first time. The representatives were greeted by Delbert Chisholm, buffalo manager and Region 4 Director with ITBC. Delbert has been caring for the buffalo at Taos Pueblo since 2008, which currently has 105 head of buffalo on 500 acres of land.

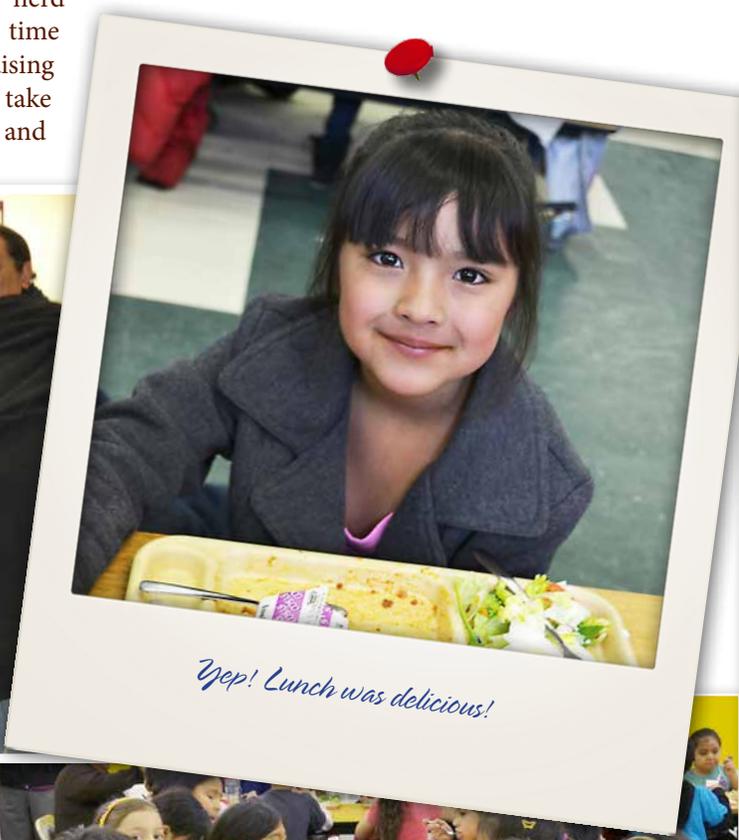
Delbert approached the Day School about the idea of including buffalo meat in the student's lunch, but due to lack of funding he decided to ask ITBC on

this matter. Once the new budget was available, things really started to move forward. Taos Day School is the first Southwest school to incorporate buffalo meat in their lunch. Since this was the first time students will have buffalo meat in their meal, Delbert invited tribal officials to join in on the occasion.

During the visit, Delbert shared a brief history of when the Taos Pueblo began herding the buffalo. From time immemorial Taos ancestors would go hunting in the plains area and bring buffalo back to the village. During the 1820's the first buffalo herd was acquired. Since that time the Taos Pueblo began raising buffalo. Families would take turns caring for the buffalo and

eventually War Chiefs of the tribe took over the responsibility. To this day, this is how the buffalo are monitored. The War Chiefs are selected yearly and 12 positions are held. The herd is managed by the War Chiefs and by Delbert.

The principal of Taos Day School, Patricia Kessler, oversees 160 kindergarten through eighth grade students. The school, which has 100% enrollment of Native students, teaches the Native language and culture. There is also an after school cultural program that is available to tribal students.



Head cafeteria cook, Theresa King, and Cafeteria Assistant, Meredith Sandy, talked about a cooking summit they attend once a year, where the cooks from area schools compete. They understand that recipes are changing to more nutritious foods such as using more grain and less processed foods. With this understanding the cooks

prepared 35 pounds of ground buffalo with pasta, salad, wheat dinner roll, and Jello. Second grader, Monet Chisholm, was one of the students that were present to enjoy the new experience. She was familiar with the meat and enjoyed the meal that was presented for the day. Rosemarie Lujan, a language and culture teacher with the school, was also present. She teaches classes on the weekend to the

community. Rosemarie spoke about the significance of cooking with buffalo meat and how important it is for the culture.

The Taos Newspaper was also present to document the new experience with the students. As the students took their turns trying the new dish, the Governor and War Chiefs also assembled in the cafeteria to join in.



St. Francis School

The St. Francis Indian School staff and students were treated to a tasty surprise on March 5, 2014. They were informed by Wayne Frederick, Rosebud Sioux Tribe's Buffalo Coordinator, and Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, InterTribal Buffalo Council's Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Director, that they were eating buffalo meat in the soup being heartily consumed that day via the school lunch program.

According to Thetis McCloskey, Food Service Director, the students had been served buffalo meat in spaghetti, chili, sloppy joes and soup for the past month

without their knowledge. No one other than the Superintendent of the School, Richard Bad Milk, Thetis and the nine school cooks knew about the buffalo meat being substituted for beef. Kudos out to the cooks for knowing exactly how to turn the usual beef recipes into delicious buffalo dishes! When quizzed, the cooks, however, were unwilling to share their culinary secrets.

Ms. McCloskey said, "I am excited to be able to serve buffalo meat to our students for the school lunch program. I would

like to eventually be able to serve buffalo meat at least twice a week. The kids need to know their ancestry and this is a good way to bring it back."

Rosebud Sioux Tribe's buffalo herd is the school's meat source. Frederick says, "We have been able to provide enough buffalo to serve at least once a week for the rest of the school year and plans are underway for providing it for the 2014-15 school year."

When the students were told about the buffalo meat in their soup, their



Buffalo meat tastes great and is good for me!



Thetis McCloskey, Food Service Director and daughter



comments included, "I could not tell the difference," and "I had no idea it was buffalo!" Frederick said that two little girls talked about having eaten buffalo meat at ceremonies by eating bits of the liver and kidneys. When surveyed, one whole table of students all said they liked the buffalo soup. From all observations, the buffalo soup was a huge success.

One of the schools cooks, Destiny

DeCory, said, "My grandma would always cook buffalo meat. She would boil the meat first, then cook it. At that time, she got the meat from a locker in Valentine, NE, but then they quit selling it and we had to start eating beef. It was very hard to get used to the beef."

St. Francis Indian School, K-12, is located on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. It first opened its doors to educating

students in 1886 with around 40 students and currently has an enrollment of 620 students. The school is administered by Superintendent, Richard Bad Milk.

InterTribal Buffalo Council is working toward a goal of assisting all our member Tribes in providing buffalo meat to schools and other programs via an ANA grant, administered by Dianne Amiotte-Seidel.



Incorporating Buffalo Meat into the Schools' Lunch Menu

Shoshone-Bannock Jr./Sr. High School

On May 9th, students at the Fort Hall Jr./Sr. High School were visited by representatives from InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), to view firsthand the healthy leap that the school has taken for the benefit of the children, and included buffalo meat into the school lunch menu. The representatives were met by Lance Tissidimit, the Buffalo Manager and ITBC's Board of Director's Treasurer. The buffalo meat used in the lunch menu is provided by the Tribe's own buffalo herd, which currently has 377 head on 5,000 acres of land.

Project Director/Marketing Coordinator, was helping put buffalo meat into other schools and wanted to help their children do this as well. In December, Lance met with Dianne about the prospect of a buffalo program for their school and things progressed quickly. Lance got the Council involved and they agreed this needed to get going as soon as possible. To date, the school is the only school in the state of Idaho that has buffalo meat in their lunch program.

During this visit the cooks and ITBC

representatives revealed to students and staff that they have been eating buffalo for the past month. There was no prior knowledge to this, so it was a surprise to many at lunch that day. The school's Math Interventionist, Kristin Dahlquist, stated that many staff had noticed the meals were slightly better the past few weeks.

On this day, the students were served buffalo gravy with mashed potatoes, broccoli, and watermelon. The food is prepared daily by Rebecca Racehorse, Ivan Tinno Jr., and Linda Jay. Rebecca Racehorse, the Food

Lance heard Dianne Amiotte-Seidel,



Service Manager, reflects on the success of the buffalo program so far. Rebecca mentioned that some of the students knew it was buffalo, because they have it at home. Rebecca states, "It is better than ground beef, it is less fatty." According to Rebecca cooking buffalo is easier, because it is leaner. You don't have to drain all of the grease that comes with beef. The cooks usually plan for 150 people for lunch. The cooks have been substituting the beef with

buffalo in all of the recipes, and the kids had not noticed the difference. Rebecca, who has not eaten a lot of buffalo herself, has started eating it more in the last couple of years. Lance communicates with Rebecca about the upcoming menu and Lance will deliver buffalo meat based on that. Lance will bring in meat every two weeks to split up the month's total order.

The local Sho-Ban News was also present

to witness the event. After the meals, Lance spoke about the success of the meals. As the students went through the line and tried the food, Dianne walked through to share with the students the healthy significance of the food. Many students were happy with the meal and they liked it very much. The school is looking forward to the future with the program and plans on continuing with the buffalo meat incorporation.



Northern Arapahoe Tribe, Fremont County School #38

Many of the comments about the Buffalo chili lunch were of surprise. Many students and staff had not tasted buffalo before and were pleasantly surprised they liked Buffalo chili. I am sure students and staff are looking forward to having another meal involving buffalo.

Hohou (Thank you),
>> **Cheri LeBeau**



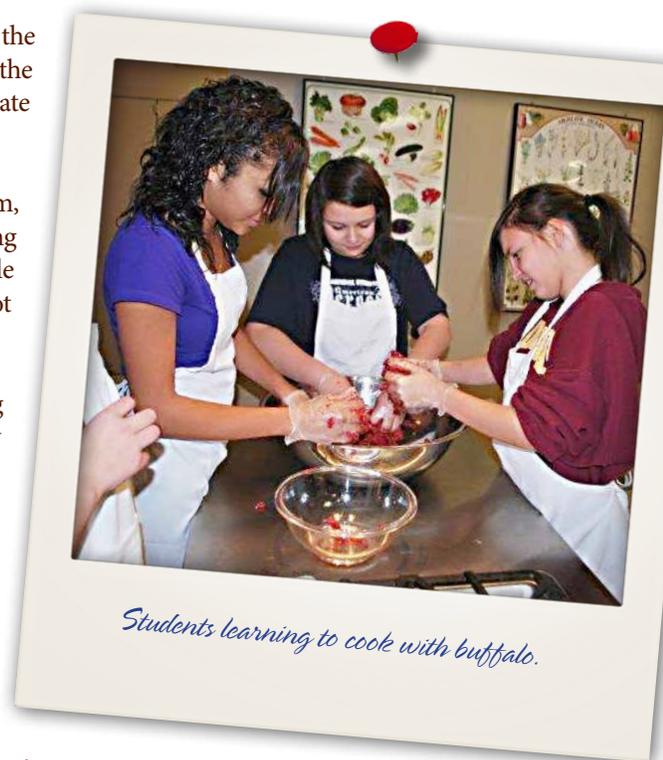
Flandreau Indian School

Three years ago, Flandreau Indian School in southeastern South Dakota broke the mold in school lunch programs. They began to offer buffalo in the menus that the school used. The program was initiated through a grant won by South Dakota State University.

In that first year the students were treated to buffalo, in ground or patty form, once or twice a week. Students had an option of dining on the buffalo or eating beef. Some students knew about buffalo and welcomed the buffalo dishes while others thought of it as wild game such as deer or elk. The students who were not acquainted with buffalo generally opted to go for the beef.

Staff experimented with placement of the meat in the food line, sometimes putting it first and sometimes second in the line. They observed the students and generally found that placement did not matter in the number of students choosing the buffalo, but did note that those who wanted the buffalo, were students who had more cultural knowledge about it. Experience also showed that if the students had one on one contact with the lunch personnel and were taught that buffalo was an advantageous food when dealing with diabetes and heart disease, they

started to eat the buffalo, because most of them had a close relative who was dealing with one of these conditions.



Students learning to cook with buffalo.

Recipes used were generally the same as for ground beef except that procedures needed to be changed just a bit. While beef may be cooked from the frozen state, it was found that buffalo is best cooked from a thawed state and at a lower temperature and for a longer time than beef. In general, it was felt that if not told, the students would not have known that a change was made.

ITBC Brings Buffalo to the Cuts Wood School Lunch Program

The students at Cuts Wood School, a Blackfeet language immersion school in Browning, knew something was up on Monday, March 14, but not exactly what. A pair of adults from the Intertribal Buffalo Council conducted a demonstration of dozens of items made from buffalo, holding objects up and asking students what they thought the items were used for. While the question and answer session was interesting, the object of the talk was a bit deeper.

“The Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) represents 62 Tribes throughout 19 states,” said Dianne Amiotte of the ITBC. “The role of ITBC, as established by its membership, is to act as a facilitator in coordinating education and training programs, developing marketing strategies, coordinating the transfer of surplus buffalo

from national parks and tribal lands, and providing technical assistance to its membership in developing sound management plans that will help each tribal herd become a successful and self-sufficient operation.”

Together with head of the ITBC and director of the Blackfeet Buffalo program Ervin Carlson, Amiotte had arranged for Cuts Wood School to begin serving buffalo meat to the students as part of the school lunch program. “I was hired as the Project Director/Marketing Coordinator under an Administrative for Native American (ANA) grant, which was a three-year grant incorporating buffalo meat into Tribal schools’ lunch menu. As of today, there are 13 schools that have buffalo meat in their

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CUTS WOOD SCHOOL CONTINUED

school lunch program,” Amiotte said. “The Piegan Institute-Cuts Wood Academy in Browning is the most recent school that I have been working with. ITBC donated buffalo meat to the school for the students to have at least once a week, and the students have been eating buffalo meat for the last month but have not been told yet.”

“They loved it,” said Kendall Edmo of Cuts Wood. “We didn’t tell most of them till that day because we have some picky eaters.” While the experience was new to some of the students, Edmo said many had already tried buffalo before in ceremonies. “But it’s the first time it’s been at school on regular basis.”

Edmo explained the inclusion of bison in the school’s lunch menu is part of a broader school health initiative aimed at reducing the incidence of diabetes. “We’re hoping to expand the diabetes prevention program and the school garden,” Edmo said. While Cuts Wood already sports a small garden on-site, a recent grant should enable raised beds to be installed, as well as bringing a collaborative arrangement with Blackfeet Community College to build composting bins as part of the building trades program at BCC. Edmo says she hopes to involve parents and students in building the garden, and then using the produce to feed students in the school’s lunch program.

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Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, ITBC Project Director/Marketing Coordinator and Diana Bird, Cuts Wood Academy Cultural Teacher.





“When I asked the students if they liked buffalo meat, I would say 98% of them raised their hands,” Amiotte said. “By observing the students and talking to them, they seem to like it, and a lot of the students went for seconds. They said, “The cook is doing an excellent job cooking with buffalo meat. I didn’t even notice the difference myself.” She served nachos with ground buffalo meat,

green beans and peaches for desert. This is the first school in Browning that has buffalo meat in their school lunch program, and the school cooks buffalo meat at least once a week. It was an honor to be there to observe the students,” Amiotte concluded.

>> Reprint By: John McGill, Glacier Reporter Editor



Kendall Edmo, Director of Philanthropy, Piegan Institute- Cuts Wood Academy, with students.



Iowa Tribe Of Oklahoma Bison Leading The Herd In Oklahoma School Lunch Program

A high-fat, high-sodium, low-fiber menu is a typical lunch at many American elementary schools. Deep-fried popcorn chicken, tiny taters tots, bread, barbecue sauce, ketchup, and milk are menu mainstays routinely featured alongside fatty items such as pizza, french fries, hot dogs, and a mystery pork product called “ribicue.” On a national level these typical offerings to school age children have galvanized not only high-profile chefs such as Jamie Oliver and Rachael Ray but also First Lady Michelle Obama.

On a local level the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma through its Bison Program has decided to do something about the local Perkins-Tryon ISD lunch menu. The Inter-Tribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) offers a grant used to help decrease the health risk in our educational systems by incorporating buffalo meat into children’s diets. As a recipient of the ITBC grant The Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma Bison program, the Oklahoma Farm to School Program, the Perkins Family Clinic Community Health Department and the Perkins-Tryon Independent School District will offer their first buffalo meat integration into the school menu November 13th of this year.

Bison – the red meat of the new millennium is a delicious, healthy alternative to beef, pork, chicken, and fish. Bison is nutrient dense, low in calories and has a greater concentration of iron and Vitamin E, which has a positive impact on combating diabetes, heart disease and a number of diet related health issues.

Curtis Washington, Agriculture Director and Buffalo Herd Administrator, “the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma has been preserving our buffalo herds since early 2000, it’s part of our heritage as Ioway people. Our connection to the buffalo has always been in existence in our oral traditions, in our dances and in our clans, those ties still exist today. We take every precaution to make sure our 72 member herd is healthy and thriving. Part of that means DNA testing to insure we have a diverse healthy buffalo herd. Our entire herd is grass fed and hormone free being able to share the benefits nutritionally with our surrounding community is exciting.”

“Perkins-Tryon Independent School District is our initial attempt at incorporating bison meat into area school lunch programs and we are the first and only tribe in Oklahoma to participate in such an endeavor. Hopefully, other tribal herd programs will want to follow the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma lead. If they do, bison will dominate school lunch programs in Oklahoma”, said Chalis Cox Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma Business Committee Secretary.

>> By Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma press release



Todd County School District

In April 2015, Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, InterTribal Buffalo Council Project Director/Marketing Coordinator made a presentation to the Todd County School District about incorporating buffalo meat into the school lunch program. The Todd County School District consists of twelve schools: Todd County High School, Todd County Middle School, Todd County Elementary, Rosebud Elementary, He Dog School, Klein Elementary, Lakeview Elementary, Littleburg Elementary, O’Kreek Elementary, Todd County Resource Center, Spring Creek Elementary, and Wanbli Wiconi Tipi. Food Service Coordinator, Robyn Pyner, showed great enthusiasm about the project and included all twelve schools in the taste test. InterTribal Buffalo Council provided buffalo meat for the schools’ taste test.

Robyn Pyner reported all twelve schools participated in the taste test. Most of the schools served a spaghetti lunch using the ground buffalo. The students were not told they were eating buffalo meat until afterwards. The majority of the students liked the buffalo meat and could not tell the difference from beef. She



also stated the staff really liked the meal, and the idea of having buffalo meat as a regular part of the school lunch program. The taste test was a success in the Todd County School District. The continuance of serving buffalo at the schools will

depend on availability and cost. Robyn hopes to work with Rosebud Sioux Tribe Buffalo Program to provide this healthy staple to the schools of Todd County.

>> Wanita Vanderwalker



Special Day, Special Meal at St. Joseph's Indian School

CHAMBERLAIN, S.D. – A special day calls for a special meal, wouldn't you agree? At St. Joseph's Indian School, that day was Friday, May 20. On that day, 18 eighth-grade students were honored for their completion of grade school and blessed as they looked toward the next stage of their lives – high school.

Special recognition was also given to St. Joseph's alumnae Julee Richards who received the Distinguished Alumnus Award for her work in combatting meth use on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

"We're very grateful to work with an organization like the Inter Tribal Buffalo Council," said Mike Renbarger, St. Joseph's Food Services Coordinator. "They provided 100 pounds of ground buffalo meat, which fed approximately 200 people who came to celebrate eighth grade graduation and our Distinguished Alumnae."

At St. Joseph's Indian School, all students take Native American Studies classes, which includes Lakota language instruction as well as other aspects of the culture and traditions. Of course, the buffalo is featured prominently.

"We learn all the parts and traditional uses of the buffalo," said LaRayne Woster, one of St. Joseph's Native American Studies teachers. "After the initial lesson, we're able to visit the Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center on our campus to enhance what students have learned."

In the museum, students see a full-size buffalo mount, as well as artifacts used in everyday life – spoons, bladders for carrying water and bowls.

"The buffalo is a healthier alternative to ground beef," noted Renbarger. "It also tastes great and it's easy to prepare."

Everyone enjoyed the meal!"

St. Joseph's has made significant efforts in the last few years to offer students healthier choices by increasing options for fresh fruits and vegetables, and also reducing sugar and salt. Healthier meat choices are the next logical step.

"These efforts are really improving the future for students by helping them lead healthier lifestyles," said Renbarger. "And it's wonderful to help bring what they've learned culturally about the buffalo full circle by serving the meat on such a memorable day."

St. Joseph's Indian School, an apostolate of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, partners with Native American children and families to educate for life – mind, body, heart and spirit.



Santee Community School

The staff and students at Santee Community School are eating and enjoying buffalo meat that was donated by the InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC). The school cook, Chris Klug uses the buffalo meat to make burgers, meat loaf, spaghetti, tacos, and roast. The students couldn't tell the difference if it was beef or buffalo meat; however, a Science teacher, Shelly Avery admitted the difference from the taste while eating buffalo roast, she enjoys eating buffalo meat, because of the

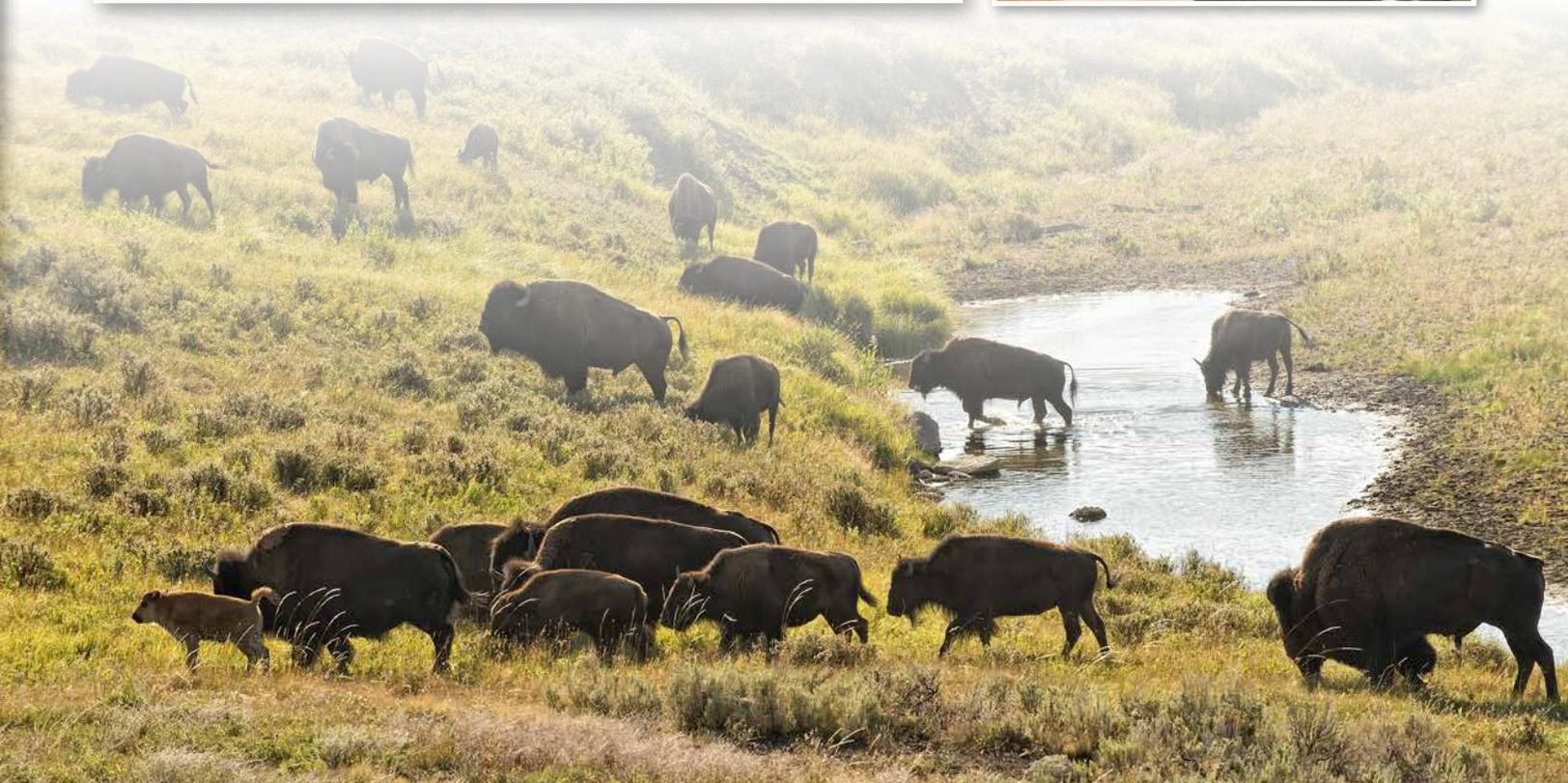
taste and the health benefits of buffalo meat.

Wakiyan Lyons, a junior at the Santee Community High School were happy to learn that the school now serves buffalo meat in their school lunch program, "It's healthier and taste better than beef," said Wakiyan. The cooks, staff, and students express the same view as Wakiyan.

Everyone interviewed for this article, were also happy that the buffalo meat is used in the schools lunch program and hopes that

more will be served. One of the freshman suggested that the school serves buffalo jerky in their snack program.

The buffalo meat that was donated by ITBC to the Santee Community School has been a success. The cooks enjoy preparing the traditional foods, and the staff and students feel good about eating it. This will hopefully be a larger step for our Native children to become healthier, by having traditional foods back in our daily diet.



Red Cloud Students Take Part In Ceremonial Buffalo Kill

It was just as he remembered in his dream; a vision the night before. A large male buffalo stood on a ridge near Slim Buttes, just north of the Red Cloud Indian School campus. Steam rose from the shaggy animal's nostrils in the quiet, frosty-blue luster of early morning on the reservation. Vance Blacksmith stood watching the animal as the sun rose behind it. For a few moments everything was still and quiet.

Blacksmith then motioned to Bailey and Chris to ready their rifles. The two high school students had accompanied him and other staff to the pasture. They got into position and took aim. A few weeks earlier, the two had asked the school's administrators to help them bring back the school's annual Buffalo Kill after a two year hiatus. And, they explained to their principals that, as part of their Faith & Justice class, they would use the opportunity as a service project to educate their fellow classmates on the historical and gastronomical connections between Tȥatȥáŋka (the buffalo) and the Lakota people.

"When I was a freshman we did this and I really liked it—thought it was really cool," said Bailey. "I've always been a hunter, so I wanted to help do this for the school and get back into the culture."

"There are always kids doing recycling, and don't get me wrong, it's a great thing," Bailey continues, referring to other student's service projects. "But this—this is more for us, as Native people."

Two hours later, Blacksmith and his crew unloaded the massive, 1,000-pound animal from the back of a truck bed with the help of a Bobcat. Students from across campus began to walk over to the bus garages where they were told they would witness the ceremonial harvesting of Tȥatȥáŋka. As they approached, the elementary students whispered and gently wiggled between their peers to get a closer look at the sacred animal that lay before them.

"Students want more cultural activities and events," says Blacksmith, activities coordinator for Red Cloud's Lakota Language Program. "This a step in the right direction; to incorporate more Lakota cultural and language activities into the student's education. It gives the kids a hands on experience to supplement the classroom lessons on language and culture."

Red Cloud Indian School is a multifaceted, nonprofit educational organization and K-12 school system celebrating 126 years of education in the Catholic & Lakȥóta traditions on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. www.RedCloudSchool.org



For many students, this may have been the first time they have been able to witness the sacred act, which had traditionally provided food, clothing and shelter to their ancestors for millennia.



How is the National School Lunch Program Working in Indian Country?

New guidelines for the National School Lunch Program are aimed at providing the nation's children with healthy, age-appropriate meals in an effort to reduce childhood obesity and improve the overall well-being of kids, especially poor kids, across the country.

A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

The federal government established the school lunch program in the early 1930s to try to prevent widespread childhood malnutrition during the Depression and to support struggling farmers by having the federal government buy up surplus commodity foods. By 1942, 454 million pounds of surplus food was distributed to 93,000 schools for lunch programs that benefited 6 million children.

But when the U.S. joined World War II, the U.S. Armed Forces needed all of the surplus food U.S. farmers were producing. By April 1944, only 34,064 schools were participating in the school lunch program and the number of children being served had dropped to 5 million.

In the spring of 1945, Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, a former school principal, told the House Agriculture Committee that as many as 40 percent of rejected draftees had been turned away owing to poor diets. "Whether we are going to have war or not, I do think that we have got to have health if we are going to survive," he testified. Within a year, Congress passed legislation to appropriate money to support the program on a year-by-year basis and by April 1946, the program had expanded to include 45,119 schools and 6.7 million children.

In 1946, Congress established a permanent National School Lunch Program (NSLP). In the legislation, adequate child nutrition was explicitly recognized as a national security priority.

The program was administered by the states, which were required to match federal dollars. Nutritional standards were set by the federal government, and states were required to provide free and reduced priced lunches to children who could not pay.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY EPIDEMIC

Fast-forward half a century. By 2009, the Department of Defense reported that more recruits were being rejected

Childhood obesity, reports the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), has more than doubled in children (to 18 percent) and quadrupled in adolescents (to 21 percent) in the past 30 years. In 2012, more than 30 percent of American children and adolescents were overweight or obese. These children are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem,



for obesity than for any other medical reason. This was around the same time that First Lady Michelle Obama was taking on childhood obesity as a national health crisis.

according to the CDC. By 2030, 50 percent of Americans are predicted to be obese, according to the Harvard School of Public Health.

In the American Indian community, the

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rate of obesity is even higher. In 2010, the Indian Health Service reported that 80 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults and about 50 percent of AI/AN children were overweight or obese.

Obese and overweight children have access to too many cheap calories with too little nutritional value, leading to the paradox of malnourished overweight children. Poor nutrition, often in the form of too much sugar and other simple carbohydrates, can lead to diabetes, which is rife in AI/AN communities.

HEALTHY, HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT

Michelle Obama's child health initiative included her "Let's Move!" exercise campaign, the first-ever task force on child obesity and her backing for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which passed

Congress with bipartisan support in 2010.

The act set new standards, which went into effect in early 2012, for school lunches. These include reduced calories, reduced sugar and reduced sodium combined with increased fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains. In some cases, schools' inability to prepare nutritionally adequate, attractive, kid-friendly meals under the new guidelines has led them to drop out of the NSLP altogether. Despite the fact that as of September 2013, only 524 out of 100,000 schools participating in the NSLP, or one half of one percent had dropped out. News coverage has been extensive, complete with photos of unappetizing meals, accounts of student protests and a good deal of criticism of Michelle Obama, who as the point person for the healthy school lunch initiative, is an obvious target.

POOR CHILDREN NEED SCHOOL LUNCHES

But the schools dropping out of the program are mostly schools with few students who qualify for free and reduced-price school lunches. The federal government mandates that schools participating in the NSLP provide free lunches for children from families whose income are 130 percent of the poverty level or less. That is, if the poverty level for a family of four is \$24,000 per year, then children from families of four whose income is under about \$31,200 per year are eligible for free lunches. Reduced-price lunches must be provided for children from families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level. So if the poverty level is \$24,000 for a family of four, children from families of four earning between \$31,200 and \$44,400 are eligible for reduced priced lunches. Reduced price lunches may cost no more than \$0.40.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 68 percent of AI/AN students are eligible for free and reduced-price school lunches, compared with only 28 percent of white student. USDA data indicate that 70 percent of children receiving free lunches through the NSLP are children of color, as are 50 percent of student receiving reduced-price lunches.

The very public criticism of the new guidelines poses a threat to AI/AN and other children of color, as well as poor children in general. If the loudest voices cause the federal government to back down on the nutrition standards, the children who will be most affected are those who rely on school breakfasts, lunches, snacks and summer food programs for a significant portion of their nutrition—that is, poor children, the ones receiving free and reduced-price lunches, as do more than two-thirds of AI/AN children in public and non-profit private schools.

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SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Not everyone is having trouble meeting the new guidelines.

Joe Rice (Choctaw), executive director of the Nawayee Center School in Minneapolis, says his school started serving healthier meals to its 55 American Indian high schoolers long before the new guidelines went into effect. “We’re sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education so we have a licensed food and nutrition service that allows us instead of buying food from the local district to buy through a caterer who serves healthier food in line with our diabetes initiative. The fresh food from our garden and the healthier food from the caterer mean that we’re addressing one of the two modifiable risk factors for diabetes, which is diet. We’re getting away from sugar and saturated fat and more into healthy whole foods.”

And that’s having an impact. The school screens the kids every year and those who have been with the program for a while “typically have better blood glucose levels, and they report exercising eating more healthy foods throughout the week. We also see healthier BMIs for kids who have been in the program longer. Overall, we get good health results.”

The garden is a kid-centered endeavor. The students designed and built the garden and decide what crops to grow. The garden, says Rice, is “reconnecting kids to the earth. I remember the first time we had some stuff from the garden, the kids refused to eat it because it came out of the ground.” It also serves as a means of teaching biology, botany, math and language. “We found that gardening could be the starting point for a very rich curriculum and for cultural preservation revitalization.”

The STAR School just outside Flagstaff, Arizona, serves about 120 Navajo students in grades pre-K through 8. There, too, gardening is a key component of the

nutrition program, although until the school can get its gardens and food safety practices certified by the government, garden produce is used only for cooking classes and community events.

Louva Montour (Diné) is food services manager. She says the school has had no trouble meeting the new guidelines. STAR School has its own garden and greenhouses, and students also work on a Navajo farm about 20 miles from the school, where they help with planting, watering, weeding and harvesting. “It really helps that they get hands-on experience working with food, from planting, even preparing the soil, composting (Our kids know a lot about composting!), the whole cycle,” says Montour.

Montour gives an example of the value of having kids grow the food they are going to eat: “We’re on our third year now using our salad bar. When we started putting out different types of vegetables, like beets, the student didn’t really know what beets were and they weren’t really trying it. But then they grew some in our greenhouse. Once they harvested them—those things are really big, about half a pound!—kids were saying ‘What is it?’ and ‘I want to eat it.’ They cleaned it and then we just cut it up right there because they wanted to eat it right there. And we let them because that’s the time for them to try it, when they’re willing.”

Beets have become a salad bar favorite, she says, as have other unlikely vegetables such as kale. Even though the school cannot yet use produce from its own gardens or those of local Navajo farmers, they are able to get local and organic produce through their regular food distributor who works with local producers.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, Oglala Sioux, project director/marketing coordinator for an ANA grant awarded to the

InterTribal Buffalo Council in South Dakota, which is a coalition of 62 tribes committed to reestablishing buffalo herds on Indian lands in a manner that promotes cultural enhancement, spiritual revitalization, ecological restoration, and economic development.

Amiotte-Seidel has already more than met the grant’s requirement that she introduce bison meat, which is much healthier for kids than beef, into eight school lunch programs, but it hasn’t been easy. “You can’t just put buffalo meat in the schools. You have a lot of different steps to take and each state is different,” she says.

In order for a school to serve bison, “a tribe has to have enough buffalo to supply the school for one meal a week or a month, or whatever, and then they have to have a USDA plant nearby. They have to be willing to sell the buffalo meat to the school for the price of beef and they have to be able to have a supplier from USDA plant take the meat to the school. The meat needs to bear a child nutrition label. The school has to be able to have a supply area big enough store the bison meat they need for the year, since tribes usually only do their harvest once a year.”

Amiotte-Seidel adds, “The biggest obstacles is the requirement to have USDA-certified slaughtering plants, because on the reservations that I’m dealing with, let’s use Lower Brule, for example. Lower Brule is four or five hours away from a certified USDA plant. They have to haul buffalo four to five hours to have USDA certify the meat for the school.”

This is one area where perhaps guidelines should be modified to better fit the unique circumstances in Indian Country and other areas where they present such a burden so severe that the NSLP fails to meet its original goal—feeding poor children—as well as it could.

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INTERTRIBAL — BUFFALO —



COUNCIL

ITBC invites you to contact the Project Director, Dianne Amiotte-Seidel, with any questions, suggestions, or information that you might have regarding this project.

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