



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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BUFFALO HERDS GO MODERN; DOCTOR VACCINATES CALVES

The buffalo herds on the National Bison Range near Moiese, Montana, are going modern. Twentieth century cowboys are rounding up the animals next month, not for the branding iron but for the hypodermic needle.

According to officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, each calf of the year will be separated from the herd and immunized against Bang's disease. The calves will be sent through a long chute where a wildlife doctor will quickly administer the vaccine and then release the buffaloes to their native range.

The vaccinations are purely precautionary measures, officials explained.

Bang's disease in animals is produced by the same organism, Brucella abortis, that produces undulant fever in man. Animals contracting the disease, however, often become sterile. Through long, continued experimentation with cattle, animal pathologists have perfected a method of effectively vaccinating young stock between 4 to 8 months of age. One application of this vaccine is said to immunize an animal for life.

Because the organism of Bang's disease is contagious for various animals, as well as man, the disease has been controlled in livestock by making blood tests periodically and removing infected animals.

"Handling adult buffaloes, however, is difficult," explained Dr. J. E. Shillinger, in charge of the Service's disease investigations, "and periodic blood tests of all the animals on the Bison Range has not been attempted."

Under present plans, the Bison Range herd will be rounded up once a year to meet the doctor, and all calves between 4 and 8 months old will be vaccinated. In this way, the Service expects eventually to have a herd of buffaloes that is immune to Bang's disease.

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