



# Climate-Smart Markets for Tribal Buffalo

South Dakota Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Meeting  
May 29th, 2024

# CSMTB Background & Logistics

- The Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant, or “Climate-Smart Markets for Tribal Buffalo,” is a \$5M grant that was awarded to ITBC in 2023
- 3- Year Award period; July 2023-June 2026
- \$ 3.5M for Tribal Producers to support management of buffalo herds
- Incentives for implementation of NRCS Climate-Smart Practices
- Tribal Buffalo Markets Initiative
- Climate-Smart Practices
- MMRV and Incentives





# USDA Goals

- To prove regenerative agriculture practices can store carbon in the soil
- Increase number of Tribal partners and producers participating in USDA-NRCS Programs





# ITBC Goals

- Support ITBC member Tribes with Buffalo Management practice costs
- Prove that buffalo are in *inherently climate smart species* by tracking their effect on:
  - Cultural and Communal Sustainability
    - Biodiversity
    - Soil Health
- Strengthen partnerships between USDA-NRCS and Tribes
- Create useful market tools for Member Tribes
- Expansion of markets and community use



# Climate-Smart Practices

Practice Name	Definition
Brush Management	The management or removal of woody (nonherbaceous or succulent) plants including those that are invasive and noxious.
Herbaceous Weed Treatment	The removal or control of herbaceous weeds including invasive, noxious, prohibited, or undesirable plants.
Prescribed Burning	Planned fire applied to a predetermined area.
Critical Area Planting	Establishing permanent vegetation on sites that have, or are expected to have, high erosion rates, and on sites that have physical, chemical, or biological conditions that prevent the establishment of vegetation with normal seeding/planting methods.
Pond*	A water impoundment made by constructing an embankment, excavating a dugout, or a combination of both.
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation	Establishing, enhancing, or renovating windbreaks, also known as shelterbelts, which are single or multiple rows of trees and/or shrubs in linear or curvilinear configurations.
Silvopasture	Establishment and/or management of desired trees and forages on the same land unit.
Fence*	A constructed barrier to animals or people.
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	Grasses, sedges, rushes, ferns, legumes, and forbs tolerant of intermittent flooding or saturated soils, established or managed as the dominant vegetation in the transitional zone between upland and aquatic habitats.
Riparian Forest Buffer	An area predominantly covered by trees and/or shrubs located adjacent to and up-gradient from a watercourse or water body.
Dam*	An artificial barrier that can impound water for one or more beneficial purposes.
Wildlife Habitat Planting	Establishing wildlife habitat by planting herbaceous vegetation or shrubs.
Irrigation Water Management	The process of determining and controlling the volume, frequency, and application rate of irrigation water.



# Climate-Smart Practices (continued)

Pasture and Hay Planting	Establishing adapted and compatible species, varieties, or cultivars of perennial herbaceous plants suitable for pasture or hay production.
Livestock Pipeline*	A pipeline and appurtenances installed to convey water for livestock or wildlife.
Prescribed Grazing	Managing the harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals with the intent to achieve specific ecological, economic, and management objectives.
Range Planting	The seeding and establishment of herbaceous and woody species for the improvement of vegetation composition and productivity of the plant community to meet management goals.
Heavy Use Area*	Stabilization or protection of an intensively used area.
Spring Development*	The collection and use of water from seeps or springs.
Stream Crossing*	A stabilized area or structure constructed across a stream to provide controlled access for people, livestock, equipment, or vehicles.
Tree/Shrub Establishment	Establishing woody plants by planting, direct seeding, or through natural regeneration.
Water Well*	A hole drilled, dug, driven, bored, jetted, or otherwise constructed into an aquifer for agricultural water supply.
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management*	Provide and manage upland habitats and connectivity within the landscape for wildlife.
Early Successional Habitat Development Management*	Manage plant succession to develop and maintain early successional habitat to benefit desired wildlife and/or natural communities.

# Incentives to Tribes

- \$3.55 million for all Tribes enrolled in CSMTB
- Practice implementation costs calculated according to Practice Scenarios by State (EQIP)
- Amount paid to each Tribe (as fraction of cost) determined when enough Tribes have enrolled
- Payment amount written into contract signed between ITBC and each enrolled Tribe
- Up-front payments by ITBC to Tribes; ITBC to be reimbursed by USDA



# Site Visit and MMRV

## Pre Visit

- Planning with herd manager
- Review of application
- Preliminary data: web soil survey, aerial imaging
- Field Design



## Site Visit

- Presentation of field design
- Tour of pasture and facilities
- Community Asset Mapping (CAM)
- Data Collection
  - COMET Planner
  - Pasture Condition Score
  - Soil Health assessment
  - Brix Measurement
  - Soil Sampling for Hailey and food web



## Post Visit

- Data entry to USDA
- Data report back to Tribal Partners





# Technical Trainings

- As a part of the ITBC CSMTB, ITBC will look to host technical trainings
  - Soil sampling;
  - Plant assessments;
  - Buffalo Management and Education;
  - Pasture condition scoring;
  - And more!
- TBD



# Tribal Buffalo Market Initiative (TBMI)

- The Tribal Buffalo Market Initiative will provide technical assistance for the development of market opportunities, providing outreach and education materials that market buffalo as climate-smart.
- Outreach products developed will be distributed to Intertribal Buffalo Council Member Tribes and their 1million+ enrolled tribal members, including educational materials highlighting buffalo as a climate-smart commodity, with infographics showcasing the buffalo's place in the carbon cycle, along with educational videos, pamphlets, and other materials relating to the health benefits of consuming buffalo meat.
- A label will be created to use on your meat packaging marketing your buffalo meat as climate-smart and tribally managed. Tribes may begin to use the label 6 months after they have started the climate-smart practices. Based off of enrollment, decide which meat processing facility tribes may use. The label must be accepted by all facilities before any tribe can use it.
- An online platform will be developed to link partners and stakeholders and foster the development of market opportunities.



# Program Procedure

- Optimy Enrollment: April 15 to June 15
  - Establishment of FSA Records required
  - Tribal Council Resolution upload required
- Preliminary Practices Chosen
- Contract Signed
- CPA-52 → Submitted and Approved
- Site Visit
- Incentive Payment
- Practice Implemented
- Practice Standards Checked
- Year 2 MMRV
- Technical Training
- Year 3 MMRV



# Conclusion

Enrollment is live→ login to Optimy platform

Ireah sent out email on 4/15 with documents: Climate Smart Memo, Guidelines, and Template for Tribal Council Resolution

Michael ([michael@itbcbuffalonation.org](mailto:michael@itbcbuffalonation.org)) and Gusti ([augusta@itbcbuffalonation.org](mailto:augusta@itbcbuffalonation.org)) are available for enrollment support

**Thank you!**

