

Assessment of the risk to Norwegian biodiversity from import and keep of American bison, European bison, domesticated water buffalo and domesticated yak

The Norwegian Environment Agency, referring to the collaboration agreement between the Norwegian Environment Agency and the Scientific Committee for Food and Environment (VKM), requests VKM to carry out an assessment of the risk of negative effects on biodiversity resulting from the import and keep of American bison, European bison, domesticated water buffalo and domesticated yak.

Background

American bison, domesticated water buffalo and domesticated yak are subject to the requirement for permission to import, release and keep under regulations related to alien organisms. It is under consideration to exempt these species from the requirement for a permit in accordance with the regulations according to the entry in the §3, 2nd paragraph. Currently, only cattle and zebu are listed under this provision.

Terms of reference

As a basis for an assessment of how of American bison (*Bison bison*), domesticated water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) and domesticated yak (*Bos grunniens*) should be managed in the future by regulations relating to alien organisms, the Norwegian Environment Agency requests the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment (VKM) to carry out a scientific assessment of the risk of negative impacts on biological diversity resulting from importing and keeping these species. In addition, a similar assessment of European bison (*Bison bonasus*) should be carried out.

Risks caused by accompanying diseases or parasites shall not be included in the overall assessment of the risk of negative impacts on biological diversity. However, any other relevant accompanying organisms must be included in the overall risk assessment. The reason why diseases and parasites should not be included in the overall risk assessment is that American bison, domesticated water buffalo and domesticated yak are regulated by harmonized EU regulations. If the three species are associated with diseases or parasites that may affect biological diversity, the risk of negative impacts on biological diversity as a result of these shall nevertheless be assessed, but separately from the overall assessment of the risk of negative impacts on biological diversity. The assessment of European bison shall be carried out in the same way as for the other three species.

Any effects on ecosystem services must be stated in the report, even if this is not part of the assessment of negative impacts on biological diversity.

Legal background

Regulation on alien organisms

Terms

The report shall be written in English with a Norwegian summary. The report will be published in dialogue with the Norwegian Environment Agency.

The deadline for submission of the report is September 1st, 2021.

Contacts in the Norwegian Environment Agency

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