

# South Dakota buffalo ranchers serving up what people want

By Charles Michael Ray, NPR

2011 wasn't a banner year for the stock market, and anyone heavily invested in the Euro zone might be biting their nails right now. But if your business is buffalo, you may be looking at some very happy holidays.

The buffalo market is booming. Look no further than the buffalo ambling across the wide open South Dakota prairie munching on grass as they go. Bison raised on grass don't require corn or grains to fatten up. That's part of why they're seen by many as better for the environment.

Dan O'Brien is the founder of the Wild Idea Buffalo Company. He raises free range, grass-fed bison near the South Dakota Badlands. O'Brien says the market for buffalo is exploding. "We've put 10 people to work during this recession – this horrible recession we're going through – and that makes me feel like we're moving the ball a little bit up the field here," says O'Brien.

This year O'Brien opened a new processing plant to package and ship buffalo meat. His company hopes to hit the \$1 million mark, double last year's revenue.

One of the buyers of O'Brien's buffalo meat is Tally's restaurant in downtown Rapid City – where Kevin Weiland chowed down on a buffalo burger. Besides being a lover of buffalo meat, Weiland is a medical doctor who wrote the book *Dakota Diet*. It touts the health benefits of buffalo.

**Read the whole story**