

**Australian Wagyu Association**



## **Wagyu Breed Verification Program**

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## 1. Introduction

The Wagyu breed is enjoying strong consumer demand through its promise of elite beef eating quality in terms of tenderness, juiciness and flavour. Product is sold widely in Australia and overseas under the Wagyu “brand’ or label, with consumers believing they are purchasing true Wagyu product with all its benefits. However, such products may range from Fullblood, carrying 100 per cent Wagyu genetics through to cross-bred F1 with 50 per cent Wagyu genetic content and even less. This raises the question of truth in labelling and the need to protect both the consumer and the good reputation of the Wagyu name in the market when claims are made as to a product carrying Wagyu content.

The Australian regulator for meat exports, AUS-MEAT, has advised that an Animal Raising Claim is a claim made in the Trade Description applied by an AUS-MEAT Accredited processor/packer to meat or meat products or export documentation about the animal from which the product is derived or supply chain specifically relating to animal husbandry conditions, feeding, handling, drug treatments and/or geographical references. Breed Verification programs are generally based on Genotype information (genetic makeup - hereditary information) or Phenotype assessment (observable physical characteristics). An approved program within the Quality Management System must be developed to provide integrity to the Trade Description where a Breed Content Raising Claim is used.

The Australian Wagyu Association (AWA) has provided Trade Descriptions (see Attachment 1) for Fullblood and Crossbred Wagyu animals to AUS-MEAT to assist when processors raise claims (Animal Raising Claims) of Wagyu content. AUS-MEAT has endorsed these Wagyu Breed Trade Descriptions.

In addition, the AWA Board of Directors has approved the development and trial delivery of a Wagyu Breed Verification Program. AUS-MEAT has endorsed this Program for use within an AUS-MEAT Accredited processor/packer’s Quality Management System as a suitable program to verify Raising Claims made according to the Wagyu Breed Trade Descriptions. The Program will be non-mandatory. As such, members and the Australian Wagyu industry will not be required to comply with the provisions of this Program or to utilise the services provided by the Program.

## 2. Purpose:

The purpose of a Wagyu Breed Verification Program is threefold:

- i) To protect the Australian Wagyu brand
- ii) To bring about integrity in the use of the brand; and
- iii) To assure domestic and international consumers of the degree of Australian Wagyu content in the products they purchase under the brand.

## 3. Extent through the Wagyu supply chain

The Program will only deliver live animal verification services through to the Brand Owner producing boxed beef product. The sectors involved will include:

- Breeders

- Producers
- Feedlots
- Processors/Abattoirs
- Brand Owners

Live animals for slaughter will be verified for Level of Wagyu Breed Content in the Breeder, Producer, Feedlot, Processor/Abattoir and Brand Owner sectors and any of these sectors may request live animal verification under the Program. Electronic Verified Commercial Wagyu certificates will be issued to individual animals verified by this Program.

Processors/Abattoirs and Brand Owners may license the use of the Wagyu Verified Series trademarks, provided they agree to only use animals carrying AWA Verified Commercial Wagyu certificates to produce boxed beef complying with the verified Wagyu Breed Content of the animals used to produce the beef. The Wagyu Verified Series trademarks on the boxed beef carton will assure the Level of Wagyu Breed Content to Wholesalers and Retailers.

Licensees for use of the Wagyu Verified Series trademarks shall not be required to carry the Wagyu Classification by Content descriptions through to their brand name or their marketing materials. These areas shall be the sole province of the brand owner.

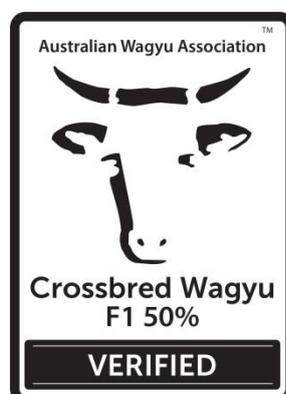
The AWA does not propose to be a policeman in the assurance that beef products claimed to be Wagyu are indeed of the Wagyu content claimed according to the Wagyu Breed Trade Descriptions.

#### 4. Wagyu Verified Series trademarks

Wagyu Verified Series trademarks for each of the Wagyu Breed Content Classification levels are under development and will be available to licensees as follows:

- Wagyu Fullblood 100%
- Purebred Wagyu F4 93+%
- Crossbred Wagyu F3 87+%
- Crossbred Wagyu F2 75%
- Crossbred Wagyu F1 50%

An example of the trademark series is as follows:



#### Program Licensing

Users of the Program and its Trademarks are to sign a licence agreement relevant to their supply chain sector as follows:

- **Commercial Breeders, Producers and Feedlot** licence holders may only use the Program trademarks on the Verified Commercial Wagyu certificates provided by AWA for cattle verified by the Program. The trademark applicable to the verified Wagyu Breed Content Classification will be placed on each individual animal verification certificate.
- **Processors/Abattoirs and Brand Owners** licence holders may only use the Program trademarks for placement on boxed beef cartons where all the animals used to produce the products in those cartons have been verified by the Program.

## 5. Assuring adherence to the Program in each sector

The Program shall be kept as simple as possible to minimise costs and its impact on the supply chain, as follows:

- **Live cattle verification**  
AWA is to provide Verified Commercial Wagyu certificates under its current ABRI registrar arrangements using the AWA Commercial Register.
- **Boxed beef and individual beef cut packaging verification**  
Processor/Abattoir and Brand Owner sectors will be verified based on the principle of self-assessment. The Program licence holder must provide their own process of assessment and comply with their own process.

AUS-MEAT Accredited Enterprises using the Wagyu Breed Verification Program within their approved Quality Management System will be subject to the normal verification process as detailed in the AUS-MEAT National Accreditation Standards covering Trade Description application.

## 6. Animal supply chain verification

The objective of the Wagyu Breed Verification Program's animal supply chain Registration and Testing component is:

***To assure a high level of integrity of Wagyu content in the commercial animals to be used for the production of Wagyu based products.***

### 6.1 Animal verification

Animals may be proposed for verification in batches of any size at the fee of \$6.00 (inc. GST) per animal. The Wagyu content level claimed for the animals in the entire batch is to be stated. Each animal proposed must have at least an NLIS visual identification number and a matching DNA sample (Tail hair or using the Allflex Tissue Sampling Unit) provided to AWA. Ear tag identifiers are optional but recommended to assist in their visual identification to buyers.

AWA will assess the veracity of the supplier's claim using a random sample of at least 5% (rounded to the nearest whole number of at least 1) of the submitted registration batch, tested at AWA's expense. The sampling level will be at AWA's absolute discretion and may be increased where there is a perceived increased risk of the claims being made on Wagyu content. For every animal in the batch that fails, an additional two (2) animals will be randomly selected by AWA and tested at the owner's expense, including administration costs. If further failure occurs the owner is to be given the option of either:

- i) Withdrawing the entire batch and paying the \$6.00 per animal batch fee plus the additional testing costs incurred to that point; or
- ii) Continuing with additional samples selected at random and tested at the owner's expense. Failed animals will be corrected where the correct sire and/or dam is identified in this process or removed from the batch. If a total of 10% of tested animals fail then AWA will cease testing and declare the batch failed, in which case the supplier shall pay the \$6.00 per animal batch fee plus all additional testing undertaken for the batch.

A supplier may request a higher testing rate than the proposed 5% but will be required to pay for the additional testing.

DNA samples will be tested using either:

- The standard DNA Parent Verification based on the claimed sire(s) and dam(s) - where the sire/dam is registered with AWA; or
- The Percentage Wagyu Content test - where sire and dam are unregistered/unknown. This test is under development and not available at the time of this version release.

While most commercial producers may be expected to use AWA Herdbook (HBR) registered sires, there may be producers who do not. Also it is anticipated that most commercial dams will not be AWA registered and they will be multiple-sire joined. These commercial animals will be verified as follows.

#### **6.1.1 Progeny from AWA registered parents**

Where the animals selected for verification testing have both parents registered with AWA, except for F1 animals where only the sire is registered, the animals are to be DNA Parent Verified and registered on the basis of:

- Wagyu Fullblood 100% - HBR registered Fullblood sire and dam
- Purebred Wagyu F4 93+% - HBR registered Fullblood or Purebred sire, HBR registered Purebred dam or Crossbred registered F3 dam
- Crossbred Wagyu F3 87+% - HBR registered sire, Crossbred registered F2 dam
- Crossbred Wagyu F2 75% - HBR registered sire, Crossbred registered F1 dam
- Crossbred Wagyu F1 50% - HBR registered sire, unregistered dam

#### **6.1.2 Progeny from unregistered and/or unknown sires and dams**

Where the animals selected for verification testing are from unregistered and/or unknown sires and dams AWA will use the Percentage Wagyu Content test to verify the Wagyu content level up to and including Purebred Wagyu F4 93+%. The test will not be able to identify Wagyu Fullblood 100%. The certificate will state the specific Wagyu Breed Content Classification Level and that this verification is based on the Percentage Wagyu Content test only and pedigree is unknown. This test is under development and not available at the time of this version release.

## **6.2 Commercial Register recording**

Batches of animals verified under the above testing will be recorded in the AWA's Commercial Register and Verified Commercial Wagyu Certificates provided for each individual animal according to the Wagyu Breed Content Classification Levels:

- Wagyu Fullblood 100%
- Purebred Wagyu F4 93+%
- Crossbred Wagyu F3 87+%
- Crossbred Wagyu F2 75%
- Crossbred Wagyu F1 50%

***The default level shall be Crossbred Wagyu F1 50% if higher levels of Wagyu content cannot be verified.***

### **Verified Commercial Wagyu Certificate production**

All verified animals will be provided with an individual electronic Verified Commercial Wagyu Certificate, supplied using a server for download with password access available to AWA, the vendor and the buyer nominated by the vendor.

The certificate will state that the owner of the animal has warranted the animal to be at level of Wagyu breed content specified and that the batch in which this animal was verified was tested through random selection at a minimum rate of 5% and testing of individuals in the batch by either DNA parent verification or the Percentage Wagyu Content genomic test.

## **7. AWA Full Membership**

Normally AWA would require all users of its Registers to be Full Members of the Association. However applicants for verification services will not be required to be members of the Association. Non-members will be charged a 20% premium for animals verified under the Wagyu Breed Verification Program.

### Wagyu Breed Trade Description

Wagyu Breed Content Classification	Definition
Wagyu Fullblood 100%	The offspring of a Wagyu Fullblood sire and a Wagyu Fullblood dam whose forebears originate from Japan and whose pedigree shows no evidence of any crossbreeding.
Purebred Wagyu F4 93+%	Has greater than 93% Wagyu genetic content. For example, the result of at least four generations of crossbreeding using a Wagyu Fullblood sire and a Crossbred Wagyu F3 dam.
Crossbred Wagyu F3 87+%	Has greater than 87% Wagyu genetic content. For example is the result of at least three generations of crossbreeding, using a Wagyu Fullblood sire and a Crossbred Wagyu F2 dam.
Crossbred Wagyu F2 75%	Has 75% or higher Wagyu genetic content. For example is the result of at least two generations of crossbreeding, using a Wagyu Fullblood sire and a Crossbred Wagyu F1 dam.
Crossbred Wagyu F1 50%	Has 50% or higher Wagyu genetic content. For example the first generation of crossbreeding a Wagyu Fullblood sire and the dam of another breed.