

WHAT IS WAGYU?



— world's best tasting **tender beef**





THE WORLD'S BEST TASTING TENDER BEEF

WAGYU – THE WORLD'S BEST TASTING TENDER BEEF.

WAGYU beef is finding its way into the repertoires of gourmet cooks and fine restaurants across Australia and the world.

What makes it so distinctive over other beef breeds is its eating quality and taste. Described as buttery, silky, tender and juicy, the unique properties of WAGYU beef are unsurpassed creating demand as a luxury product.

Abundant fine marbling, which is the unique fat characteristic of WAGYU, is distributed evenly throughout the muscle. Comprised mostly of monounsaturated fats, it has a low melting point and when cooked, distributes evenly through the meat for that unique sweet and extra juicy flavour.

With a range of cuts to suit a range of cooking styles, WAGYU is finding favour in high-end steak restaurants to low and slow barbecue for both Western and Asian-inspired dishes.

Australia's reputation for 'clean and green' has ensured a strong demand in markets in many overseas destinations including Asia, Middle East and Europe, while the Australian interest in WAGYU continues to grow.

There is significant expertise surrounding the production of WAGYU beef with Australia having the largest WAGYU herd outside of Japan. WAGYU carcasses yield a high proportion of premium cuts, commanding significant returns over and above any other beef breed.

WAGYU PRODUCTION IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian production of WAGYU involves highly integrated supply chains that seek to optimise production quality from seedstock to retail.

FULLBLOOD WAGYU refers to cattle that registered with the Australian Wagyu Association that can trace 100% of their genetics back to the original Japanese exports, with no evidence of outcrossing.

PUREBRED WAGYU result from crossing a Fullblood WAGYU with another breed to create an F1, then re-breeding female progeny back to Fullblood bulls to generate an F4 or 93% or higher WAGYU content animal.

F1 CATTLE are typically a Fullblood WAGYU bull crossed with an Angus female. A large proportion of commercial production within Australia is from F1 cattle.

Breeding of WAGYU cattle in Australia relies on a National performance recording scheme, with breeding values for key WAGYU traits reported by the Australian Wagyu Association. Breeders use this data and strain characteristics to guide breeding decisions.



WAGYU – THE MARBLING BREED

30 YEARS IN THE MAKING

WAGYU were originally a Japanese draught animal, selected for their physical endurance, which in turn led to the development of fat deposition within the muscle (intramuscular fat) – known as marbling in meat, which is used as an energy source by the animal.

The word WAGYU, when literally translated is 'Wa' for Japanese-like, 'gyu' meaning cattle. There are several strains/breeds that have developed over more than 35,000 years from Asiatic bovines. These have been influenced by infusion of genetics from different Western breeds within certain prefectures during the modern era.

The first Japanese WAGYU to be exported to the US occurred in 1976, establishing the fledgling American Wagyu herd. The first purebred animal to arrive on Australian shores was in 1990. By 1993, the first fullblood WAGYU cattle had arrived in the US – Michifuku, Haruki 2, Suzutani, Rikitani and Okutani, giving the Australian and US herds greater genetic diversity. In all, a total of 221 fullblood WAGYU cattle were exported from Japan in the period 1990 - 1997.

Thirty years on, Australia has the highest number of WAGYU outside Japan. Within Australia, the three major black WAGYU strains are from the Tajiri or Tajima, Fujiyoshi (Shimane) and Kedaka (Tottori) regions, while the two red strains are Kochi and Kumamoto.

Similar to Japan, approximately 95% of WAGYU production in Australia uses Japanese Black genetics, with Red WAGYU accounting for a small volume of production.

Today, the production of WAGYU beef in Japan is highly regulated and progeny testing is mandatory. Only the very best proven genetics are kept for breeding. Realising the value of their unique product, the Japanese government have now banned the export of WAGYU and declared them a national treasure.

WAGYU PRODUCTION CHARACTERISTICS

WAGYU are renowned for their outstanding calving ease, especially across other breeds

WAGYU are very fertile: bulls have a higher serving capacity at a young age and females reach sexual maturity at a young age

WAGYU are versatile: environmental adaption in Australia, from Tasmania to North Queensland, Mudgee to the Pilbara

WAGYU have a quiet temperament and very responsive to quiet handling

WAGYU thrive in feedlots

WAGYU beef has high marbling, softer fats, higher ratio of monounsaturated fats and above all, flavour

WAGYU meat texture is fine

WAGYU carcasses have a high yield



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