

## 2021 WAGYU BRANDED BEEF COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

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General Release

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The announcement of the Australian Wagyu Association 2021 Wagyu Branded Beef Competition winners is an annual highlight for Australia's leading luxury beef brands. The medallists were recognised during a much anticipated Gala Dinner during the 2021 WagyuEdge annual conference on the Gold Coast last night.

With 36 entries from across the country, the competition represents the very best Australian Wagyu has to offer. Judged across three classes – Fullblood, Crossbred and Commercial – the competition is the only one of its type that is supported by an independent breed organisation. The aim of the competition is to promote the excellence achieved by Australian Wagyu brands and to recognise the continuous focus on optimising quality in Wagyu beef production.

Champion awards are presented to the highest scoring entry in each category. The highest scoring entry across all categories is presented the Grand Champion Award.

This year, marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Wagyu Branded Beef Competition since its inception in 2012. A hallmark of the WBBC has been the fierce competition and improvement at the leading edge of Wagyu brands, with no brand in past years ever achieving back to back category or Grand Champion titles.

The 2021 Wagyu Branded Beef Competition has provided a first for the industry, with Stone Axe Pastoral taking out the 2021 Grand Champion titles for its Class 1 Fullblood entry – repeating its performance of 2020.

The Stone Axe entry was also the Champion Class1 Fullblood entry again, and achieved 54% marbling and an eye muscle area of 99cm<sup>2</sup>. The judges found it to have unbelievable richness, complex flavours that are sweet, dairy and cereal, with a melt in your mouth juiciness that was exquisite.

Champion of the Class 2 Open Crossbred category was Direct Meat Company with their Connors Wagyu brand. This entry sample achieved a very high marbling of 45%, with an eye muscle area of 78cm<sup>2</sup>. Judges described the sample as having a wonderful balance of rich and clean beefy flavour with lasting juiciness and tenderness.

In another first for the 2021 Branded Beef Competition, Pardoo Beef Corporation's Okan Wagyu Brand became the first commercial category entry to defend its title, winning the 2021 Class 3 Commercial Champion title to defend its 2020 title. This entry was 35% marbling and a rib eye area of 102 cm, the Pardoo Okan entry is a beautiful example of commercial wagyu steak. Visually this steak rated very well. The judges described the cooked sample as a delightful balance of clean flavours, fresh aroma and buttery tenderness with lasting juiciness.

Judging of the Wagyu beef is based on five criteria: visual appeal (raw and cooked), juiciness, flavour, aroma and the physical sensation in your mouth. The judging process was overseen by Chief Judge Pete Lewis and Chief Steward, Ron Fitzgerald, with a panel of 18 judges from across the industry and affiliated industries.

"I would like to thank the Australian Wagyu Brands for the continued, growing support they are showing for the Wagyu Branded Beef Competition," said Ron Fitzgerald, AWA Branded Beef Competition Coordinator.

"I count it a rare privilege to be in a room where so many extremely high quality steaks are displayed together, representing the best beef Australia has to offer. It is great to see the depth and quality of the Australian Wagyu

Industry being demonstrated in the entries and I think the ensuing awards and publicity are an appropriate recognition of the excellence these brands are achieving as they provide the Australian Wagyu Producers a conduit to supply the Australian public and the rest of the world.”

The Champions and Gold medal winners from each class are:

**Class 1: Fullblood Wagyu**

Champion: Stone Axe Pastoral, Stone Axe

Gold: Stone Axe Pastoral, Stone Axe  
Mayura Station, Signature Series  
Irongate Wagyu, Futari Wagyu  
Rangers Valley, Infinite  
Direct Meat Company, Connors  
Kilcoy Global Foods, Carrara 640

**Class 2: Crossbred Wagyu**

Champion: Direct Meat Company, Connors  
Gold: Direct Meat Company, Connors  
Mort & Co, Master Selection  
Pardoo Beef Corporation, Okan Wagyu  
Poll Wagyu, Poll Wagyu

**Class 3: Commercial Wagyu (Marble Score 5-7)**

Champion: Pardoo Beef Corporation, Okan Wagyu  
Gold: Pardoo Beef Corporation, Okan Wagyu  
Kilcoy Global Foods, Carrara 640  
Stockyard Beef, Stockyard Silver

“The level of quality and range of brands continues to increase year on year, highlighting the high level of competition and the continual focus on excellence in producing Wagyu, the world’s luxury beef,” said Australian Wagyu Association, CEO, Matt McDonagh.

“We congratulate Stone Axe Pastoral on being the 2021 Grand Champion and the only company to have attained Grand Champion Wagyu brand in successive years.

“With ever increasing numbers of entries, I would like to Mr Ron Fitzgerald, the organising committee and Judges for their time to make this happen. I would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Prime Cut Meats and Comcater Brisbane for hosting the event for preparation and judging to give such a stellar outcome.”

press release

For full results, the Wagyu Branded Beef Competition results booklet is available for download here:

<https://www.wagyu.org.au/wbbc>

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