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January/February 2017



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Old Ways - New Beginings

Sutton Creek Cattle Company has been a staple program of the Wagyu breed. The program has much Wagyu history as it has been around through most of the makings of the Wagyu industry in the United States, As with everything in life, this program has changed over the years and is in the process of reinventing itself.

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CHANGE

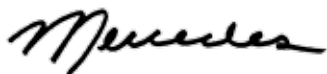
Change in life is inevitable; without it all things would stay stagnant, people wouldn't better themselves, and life as we know it would be a bore. However much change in life is needed, it is also at the same time daunting. As we enter a new year, I've taken some time to look back at the last three years of my life and how they seem like an entangled web of over ten years at a glance as so much has changed in my life. If I started to bullet point all of the changes that life has presented to me, there wouldn't be enough space on the page to list them all. Some of these changes have been absolutely wonderful and welcoming while others have been the nightmares that unfortunately life brings.

I've been very blessed in many aspects of my life but for now, I am ready for life to be a bit boring or steady for a while. I welcome a moment where I'm looking for something to do rather than just keeping up. This feeling could be greatly associated with a three month old and all it takes to keep up with the duties that come along with a new family member but I feel I'm not alone when I say I'd like to be bored for just one day. A day to digest all that life has put on my plate: the people I have lost, the relationships I have gained, new responsibilities both big and small, the new scenery I wake up to now every day and I guess the whole new me. I'm not asking for life to stop changing but it would sure be nice to catch my breath and reflect on it once in a while. The busy body that I am makes me a bit of a hypocrite. As soon as I have that time, it will only let me brainstorm what new project I need to start or task I need to accomplish.

The industry that we all love is also always in flux. Some familiar faces over time are replaced with new, sought after genetics that are hot one day turn cold the next and prices will always be up and down. As a breed, this makes one appreciate all that is constant; consistent high quality beef, foundation genetics and those programs that have been rock solid, continuous supporters and a base for the breed. Things will always be changing for better and for worse but as a small breed it is so important to have the consistencies that are present in the breed today.

As with everything, this magazine has also changed to better serve the breed. This issue we have included a page to be an outlet for the American Wagyu Association's leadership team. This issue includes some words from both George Owen and Weldon Mahan. Also this issue we bring you the details to the new VFD rule and also get an insight from Dr. Jimmy Horner and his thoughts on the new ruling. We also visit two great Wagyu programs in our Ranch Reach sections while the Market Matters pieces this issue focuses on the meatier side of things with a look into the Kansas City Royal Steak competition and its true competitors and investigates a new read that claims most "Kobe" beef is fake. The Out & About is extremely busy this issue and let's not forget the hot new finds in the Living Prime featuring a new look in footwear.

I hope you enjoy this issue; it's full of good reads that will both inform and entertain you. Give yourself a moment to enjoy it. I too will try to take my own advice and take a moment. I think this is going to start with an appreciation of the beautiful view from my office in which I am going to share with you. California is going to be very green this spring. Until next time, all the best to you.

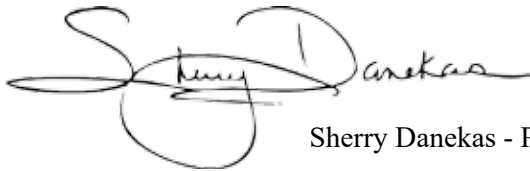


It's hard to believe that spring is supposed to be right around the corner, in our part of the world the rain just hasn't let up and Mother Nature has shown her force up and down the west coast. Just last Saturday evening the three counties north and east of us were evacuated because of a possible dam failure, and just watching the news it looked like a movie set when the aliens were arriving on earth. Pretty frightening stuff, but so far in the man vs. nature fight, man is winning, but time will tell.

On yet another exciting front it was really great to see so many familiar faces at the National Western Stock Show at the Wagyu show. The exhibition as usual was very competitive and the camaraderie amongst the breeders was the best ever. The American Wagyu Association and staff must be commended for an excellent booth at the show, with a very impressive display of Wagyu cuts. The enthusiasm didn't stop there it carried on over to the Mile High sale that evening. From a packed house where I personally signed up more buyers in an hours' time than any other sale I can remember to the list of buyers and bidders that participated on Live Auctions, it was an action packed sale to be sure.

While I enjoy the show and the sale it is the breeders that I relish getting the opportunity to spend time with. The breeders outdid themselves this year with great displays and a big salute and thanks goes out to Gabriel Family Farms for the warm hospitality they brought to the entire event. Great Wagyu was had by many after the show, when the AWA grills got going and the Gabriel Family Farms smokers kicked out great fare for everyone.

There are a lot of exciting events coming up and I'm really looking forward to seeing everyone at the Houston Stock show for the Wagyu show and then in April back to Salado, Texas for the "Steaks are High" sale, always an impressive occasion. If you're working on your spring calendars another Wagyu experience you need to mark down to be in attendance at is the Lone Mountain Production sale May 20th. This is one that all breeder's won't want to miss, not often does the opportunity to purchase fullblood Wagyu with as much data and background on them occur. It will indeed be an exciting spring for all Wagyu breeders.



Sherry Danekas - Publisher



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DISCOVERY

This Issue's Four Contributors Share Themselves With Us.



**KINDRA
GORDON**
Rancher/Writer



If I could travel anywhere, it would be... back in time to my Grandma's kitchen on the farm, with her preparing a wonderful meal of fried chicken and dumplings. I'd love to spend an afternoon with my grandparents again.

If I could live anywhere other than where I presently reside it would be... Heaven of course tops the list. But if it were an earthly place, I'd give Hawaii a try.

The last book I read was... actually a magazine! I don't have a lot of time to commit to books, but I enjoy keeping current and feeding my brain with magazines. Inc. Magazine is a favorite. However, on my reading list is Simon Sinek's book *Start With Why* - I've heard many people reference it in a positive light.



**JERI
TULLEY**
Writer



If I could travel anywhere, it would be... Estes Park, Colorado, early in the month of October. The Aspen leaves are golden, the air has a crisp coolness to it, and tourists are not as prevalent as in the summer. Elk are bugling, and it seems like the entire Rocky Mountain National Park is yours alone to enjoy.

If I could live anywhere other than where I presently reside it would be... the small coastal town of Rockport, Texas. My family has vacationed there my entire life, and when I drive over the long, arching bridge that leads into town, my whole body relaxes. It has an ice cream shop, a book store, a well-stocked grocery store, and a movie theatre. What more do you need in life?

The last book I read was... *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J.K. Rowling.



**HEATHER
SMITH-THOMAS**
Rancher/Writer



If I could travel anywhere, it would be... to the next annual World Burn Congress. My daughter (who is a burn survivor) and I went to the one in North Carolina in 2008 and it was an awesome experience, connecting with other burn survivors and their families—inspiring some of the recently injured ones who were still struggling to cope with this horrific detour in their lives, and being inspired by many who were farther along in their journey than we were.

If I could live anywhere other than where I presently reside it would be... maybe a cabin in the summertime on the upper end of our ranch. There's a great view from that mountain pasture; you can see across the valley and down the valley about 40 miles. It's very quiet, peaceful and soul-refreshing, up there—unless it's a bad fire year.

The last book I read was... *"The Way We See It: A Fresh Look at Vision Loss"*



DR. JIMMY HORNER
*Nutritionist / CEO
Protocol Technologies*



If I could travel anywhere, it would be... No place in particular, but a remote location near water and devoid of noise and politics.

If I could live anywhere other than where I presently reside it would be... In the mountains of Colorado near a trout stream.

The last book I read was... Robert E. Lee on Leadership : Executive Lessons in Character, Courage, and Vision.

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Tony Tristani



Trevor Tristani



Trevor & Dylan Tristani

Just four years ago Tony Tristani and his family, owners of Diamond T Ranch, knew very little about the Wagyu breed – or ranching in general. But today, Diamond T Ranch at Jacksonville, TX, has a herd of 300 cattle consisting of registered fullblood, black Wagyu cattle and recip cattle used for their embryo program. In those few short years, they've amassed a keen grasp of the Wagyu breed – and

have a grand champion steak award to prove it.

The Diamond T Ranch earned the title of Grand Champion Grain Fed Beef in the 5th Annual American Royal Steak Contest held in November 2016 in Kansas. Of the accomplishment, Tristani notes, "We've only been in business three-and-a-half years. The steak we entered was from a fullblood Wagyu steer that was born, raised, and

fed here; so it was pretty rewarding to achieve that."

He underscores that everything Diamond T Ranch has achieved in establishing their Wagyu program over the past few years has been the result of a team effort from the entire Tristani family, as well as other workers at the ranch. Of course the Diamond T cowherd and sires are the real working team for the operation.

CHAMPION BEEF

by Kindra Gordon

Winning Wagyu

Winning Wagyu

CHAMPION BEEF

Why Wagyu?

How did Tristani come to be involved with the Wagyu breed? It started from a business trip he was on, and at a restaurant he had “the best steak he had ever tasted in his life.” Being the business man that he is, he inquired of its origin and learned it was Wagyu.

That is when the research began about Wagyu cattle for Diamond T Ranch. Several hundred acres were

purchased and sons Dylan and Trevor Tristani began working and laying out the plans for the ranch. Several Wagyu ranches were visited and the purchases began.

The first truckloads of Wagyu cattle arrived at the ranch in June 2013; the milestone moment was likened to a movie as they were being unloaded. The excitement was high – which fueled the family’s goal to raise the very

best beef in America.

Diamond T has begun selling some Wagyu beef via word of mouth to consumers, but their ultimate goal is to source their beef to restaurants under the brand name Pinnacle Beef. With metropolitan areas like Dallas, Houston, and Shreveport just a few hours from the ranch, the ranch operators anticipate those opportunities exist, and as they grow and develop, a full-time

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marketing manager will likely be added to their team.

Eventually, Tristani's intent is to have the ranch be a place that will be a retreat for children suffering from illness and their families to come and enjoy animals and the outdoors. Additionally, the cattle on the ranch would help keep the operation sustainable by generating a source of income.

Learning Journey

As Tristani reflects on the last few years, he says it takes dedication and a constant willingness to learn, change, and improve where you can to reach the goals set by a working productive ranch. Everything has been pieced together by learning from others – whether it be good or bad,

and being able to take information and put it into action.

Diamond T team members have traeled to Wagyu

events in Florida, Denver and the World meetings in Australia to learn from speakers and other breeders in attendance – gaining pieces of information to help put the puzzle together.

Ahead, Diamond T ranch has their sights set on their next goal – they are gearing up to enter the World Steak Competition.

Learn more about Diamond T at <http://diamondtwagyu.beef.com/>. 🌱

Two Wagyu operations took Grand and Reserve honors in the 5th Annual American Royal Steak Contest. Diamond T Ranch of Texas was announced winner of the Grand Cham-

pion Grain Fed Beef (see a feature about their ranch operation on page XX), while Reserve Cattle Company, of Garden City, Missouri was awarded Reserve Grand Champion Grain Fed Beef. Awards were announced in November 2016.

The Wagyu breed was well represented with Wagyu genetic steaks taking the top six spots in the grain fed division of the 2016 competition. The contest also annually includes a grass-fed beef division.

Chris Brant, who established Reserve Cattle Company in 2010 with his wife Veronica Anwuri, has entered the contest the last two years. In 2015, his Wagyu steaks earned first in the grain fed division and second in the grass fed division. His 2016 Wagyu entries took second, third and fifth in the grain fed division.

Brant was pleased with the performance of the Wagyu breed all around. He notes that he was the one who had encouraged Diamond T to enter, so he didn't mind passing the Grand Champion title to them this year, given that he had three steaks in the top five. Brant's previous life was in construction, when that industry slowed, he and his wife decided to start a farm. When asked why Wagyu, he says, "We're kind of food snobs, too."

They began by buying embryos and putting them in Angus cows. Today, they boast a herd of 60 fullblood Wagyu. Their primary business is selling embryos and semen, and they've connected with customers worldwide. Of their award-winning beef, Brant says, "The beef is a byproduct of our



genetics."

Brant notes that finishing Wagyu animals takes time for the marbling to develop. He acknowledges the finishing period of 30 months, compared to 18 or 24 for conven-

tional beef. But, he's a firm believer that the extra time is worth it in a superior product – and he's got the awards to prove it.

Contest Details

For the competition, three, unseasoned ribeyes had to be shipped frozen on dry ice in late October to the K-State Olathe Campus. Ribeyes also had to be bone out and cut to a thickness of one and one-half inches.

On November 14, a panel of invited judges in the fields of production, journalism, and culinary arts assembled in the test kitchen on the campus of Kansas State Olathe to participate in a blind judging of steak entries. The assembled judges evaluated 40 steak entries submitted from 16 states. Event organizers report that this year's contest was the largest in its history with nearly double the number of entries from the previous year.

Steaks were judged in a blind taste test based 60% on Flavor (Overall 30%, Sustained 15%, and Finish 15%) and 40% on Texture (Juiciness 20% - 10% Initial, 10% Sustained, and Tenderness 20%).

Of the contest, "Lynn Parman, President and CEO of the American Royal, stated, "The American Royal Steak Contest provides beef producers with the opportunity to put their best steaks up against steaks from other top producers for the chance to be named the best tasting steak in the country. The contest continues to grow and this year we saw an increase in the number of entries and the number of states represented." 🌱



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

by Heather Smith-Thomas



As of January 1, 2017, beef producers must comply with a new rule regarding use of antibiotics in feed. This rule is aimed at better management of certain antibiotics that are considered medically important to humans—putting them under more veterinary supervision. This is part of a larger movement to minimize the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

The Food and Drug Administration

(FDA) has taken several steps in recent years to change how these antibiotics can be legally used in livestock production, particularly regarding the addition of antibiotics to feed and water to enhance growth of the animals. The FDA's goal is for more judicious use of antibiotics, to protect public health (with no antibiotic residues in meat) and to prevent potentially resistant bacteria.

Many cattle producers are wondering if and how FDA's new Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) applies to them. David R. Smith, DVM, PhD, DACVPM (Epidemiology) Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Dept. of Pathobiology and Population Medicine describes it this way:

“Beginning January 1, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

will require that medically important antibiotics delivered to livestock in feed or water be administered under the supervision of a veterinarian. Adding medically important antibiotics to livestock feed or minerals will require that a veterinarian, licensed in the state where the animals reside, write a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD). Medically important antibiotics delivered to livestock via water will now require a veterinary prescription. In order for a veterinarian to write a VFD or a prescription there must be a valid veterinary client patient relationship (VCPR)," says Smith.

He describes a veterinary client patient relationship as a specific set of conditions required before a veterinarian can write a VFD or prescription. "The exact requirements differ by state, but in general, the veterinarian has agreed to take responsibility for the medical care of the animals, the producer has agreed to follow the veterinarian's orders, and steps are taken to avoid chemical residues in the harvested food. When the state does not define a VCPR then the federal definition applies," says Smith.

Thus the VFD that ranchers will need after January 1, 2017 is a written statement from a licensed veterinarian authorizing the producer to purchase and use certain antimicrobial drugs in and on livestock feed. It does not apply to antimicrobial drugs that are injected into individual animals for treatment of disease or to medications added to drinking water, but any antibiotics put into the water will require a prescription. The regulations for injectable livestock drugs have not changed.

Russ Daly, DVM (Extension Veterinarian/Professor, South Dakota State University) says that the way the new VFD works is to also think of it in terms of a prescription. "For instance, if a person needs some medication and goes to a doctor, you get a form filled out by the doctor and you take that to the pharmacy to have the prescription filled. In this instance, you take the form from your veterinarian to the feed



DEFINITION of a VETERINARIAN-CLIENT- PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

When discussing extra-label drug use in animals, the FDA allows this only when there is a valid VCPR.

In their terminology [under §530.3 Definitions], a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship is one in which:

(1) A veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of (an) animal(s) and the need for medical treatment, and the client (the owner of the animal or animals or other caretaker) has agreed to follow the instructions of the veterinarian;

(2) There is sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s); and

(3) The practicing veterinarian is readily available for follow-up in case of adverse reactions or failure of the regimen of therapy. Such a relationship can exist only when the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by virtue of examination of the animal(s), and/or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept.

store or supplier and they sell you the medication for your cattle," he explains.

This process is designed to give veterinarians more say, and more overview of how certain medications are used in livestock feed. "This was FDA's intent, to add a layer of checks and balances regarding certain feed

additives. It is important for beef producers to know that it doesn't affect every feed additive. For most beef producers in our part of the world, we are looking at the tetracyclines, which are drugs that seem to be used very often. So things like CTC crumbles and oxytetracycline are the antibiotics for which the new order will affect most of the producers who use feed additives," Daly says.

There are many other products that are not affected. "If people are only using ionophores like lasalocid (Bovatec) or monensin (Rumensin) or melengestrol (MGA) and other things that are not on the list, the new directive won't affect them at all. When combinations of these products are used with VFD drugs, however, the VFD form would be required, since they include one of those drugs that are on the list," says Daly.

"It's a good step for producers to talk with their veterinarians ahead of time to discuss the feed-grade medications they are currently using and find out which ones will be affected. It would be good to talk with a veterinarian about how the process is going to take place in their particular operation. Some producers will find that it won't affect them as much as they thought it would," he says.

The client-veterinarian relationship is important, to discuss the medications being used, and the ones the client might plan to use. "Producers also need to understand that the VFDs can only be written for what's on the label of the medication. This includes the feeding rate, length of time it will be fed, and the uses of the drug. When a veterinarian fills out the VFD, he/she is required to follow exactly what's on the label as far as approved dosages, etc." The beef producer must stay within those directives.

"It always has been, and continues to be, illegal to use any medication in a manner that is not on the label. In the past, however, because these were drugs that were available very freely over the counter, there was no way to make sure these rules were being followed. Now that a veterinarian is

What are medically important antibiotics?

“The medically important antibiotics are those classes of antibiotics considered important for treating human infections (some examples are penicillin, chlortetracycline, and tylosin),” explains Smith. The ionophore antibiotics, such as rumensin and lasalocid are not medically important antibiotics.

Why is this happening?

“The World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other international agencies describe antibiotic resistance as one of the world’s most pressing public health threats,” says Smith. “Antibiotic resistance is a problem in hospitals and communities, but it may also present a serious challenge to cattle producers, due to negative impacts on animal welfare –antibiotic resistant bacteria may make cattle infections more difficult to treat,” he says.

“This new rule also came about because of concern expressed by many people that antibiotics used in cattle and other food animals is a public health hazard; they feel that humans may ultimately become exposed to antibiotic-resistant bacteria in their food. The FDA estimates that 94% of the medically important antibiotics are delivered to livestock in feed or water, so having more oversight on feed and water medications seemed prudent,” says Smith.

are eager to show the public that the industry is using and always has used these medications in a responsible and appropriate manner,” says Daly.

We want to make sure that our industry continues to have a good reputation. The issue about antibiotic use has been a controversial one but we don’t want to get into a situation where the public thinks we are abusing this use and responsibility, in food animals.

“It is frustrating for producers and veterinarians in dealing with some of the new regulations because there is not a lot of hard science behind them regarding how this actually is going to affect antibiotic resistance in humans. At the same time, we want to be able to keep using these drugs, and have them still available for us to provide treatment,” he says. When we have a sick animal, we want to be able to treat that animal and have it recover.

“Thus this is also an animal welfare issue. We have to make sure that these drugs continue to work for our animals, and will still be available for us to use for the animals,” says Daly.

“By the January 1 start point, the drug manufacturers will have all of their labels up to date, reflecting the FDA requirements. Anyone wishing to use those antibiotics after January 1 will need to have the form in hand. That also goes for any of these drugs that you may have purchased earlier, and still have on hand and want to use. The VFD is considered an authorization to feed that medication, and not just to buy the medication.”

Every producers’ situation is a little different, so it will be helpful to talk with their veterinarian. The veterinarian is the one who initiates and fills out the VFD, giving a copy to the producer, who can then take it to their supplier. “There will be various ways this can be done. It can be done in paper form, or electronically through on-line services. This is another reason why producers should talk with their veterinarians, to understand the logistics of how this will happen, with their own operations,” Daly says.

“The new rules did leave a lot of flexibility in terms of how these can be written. Many of the antibiotic compa-

How will this affect me?

Smith says the regulation will affect the way many producers obtain and use antibiotics in feed. “Feed mills will require a VFD to mix or distribute feeds containing medically important antibiotics. Some producers will need to establish a Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR) with a veterinarian to obtain a VFD or prescription. Antibiotics may only be used in feed exactly as labeled. Some producers may learn that the way they had been using antibiotics in feed was illegal.

The VFD will be limited to a specified use, for specified animals, for a specified time. Medicated feeds already in stock will require a VFD to be fed after January 1, 2017.”

Where can I learn more?

“If you have questions (and you should have questions, if you use medicated feeds), contact your local veterinarian,” says Smith. “You can also look for information from your state’s extension service, contact the drug manufacturers, or go to the FDA website,” he says. You can search the Internet for FDA,VFD or go to: <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/ucm071807.htm>

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involved, and has to fill out the form in a very specific manner, there won’t be any leeway regarding going off label in a different dosage rate, or using the drug for a disease that is not on the label,” says Daly. As in the past, here is no provision for off-label use, at all. Thus everyone is assured that these medications are being used in the manner they were designed for. This is just one more step toward assuring the consumer that the beef industry is providing a safe and healthy product, and not contributing to possible development of antibiotic-resistant pathogens.

“Most producers and veterinarians

nies will be coming out with their own forms that are specific to their product, and in some cases this will be very helpful,” he says.

Along with changes in the authorization needed for use of these medically important food grade drugs in feed, there will be changes in medically important drinking water medications. These water medications will now be classified as prescription drugs. “It will be very similar to how producers currently go to the veterinarian to get a prescription for antibiotic treatment of respiratory disease in a certain animal. This includes water formulations

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of tetracyclines and sulfas. Being a prescription drug means there is some flexibility in their use. Veterinarians could authorize extra-label use for these if they think it is necessary, on a case-by-case basis," he says.

"In some cases, with some diseases, we might find that water medication is more feasible for a certain group of animals than feed grade medications, because there may be more options available," he says. Your veterinarian will be aware of the options and possibilities for treating your animals in the best and most appropriate manner. This is another reason to discuss all of this with your veterinarian.

"It's also helpful to talk with your veterinarian, not just regarding how this regulation affects you, but also to discuss your total health program and all the various things you deal with in your particular herd. There are many producers who use feed-grade medications out of habit. These additives may not be based on a real need; it's just the way they've always done it. This could be a chance to discuss their feed pro-

gram with their veterinarian and maybe have a chance to simplify and reduce some costs as well. Their veterinarian could work with them on different ways to prevent and treat diseases besides what they've traditionally used in the feed," explains Daly.

"There will always be more details for some producers, but these are best hashed out in meetings with their veterinarians." There will be some questions for some producers that won't apply to others. Beef production is always an evolution, dealing with the various circumstances that come along, and the new VFD is just one of these.

"I think it will go pretty well, though there may be a bit of a learning curve as some people tackle this new challenge, yet I am confident that it will all get sorted out. There will be some producers (such as the ones who raise grass-finished beef) who won't be affected at all," he says. The feedlot and backgrounding operations will be most affected, and need to come up to speed on this new directive. 🌐

OUT & ABOUT

Wagyu Sales, Shows, and Other Happenings

2017 National Western Stock Show
National Wagyu Show
DENVER, COLORADO



January 18th, 2017





>>The Results

Judge: Kirk Stierwalt Leedey, OK



Champion Black Fullblood Female
CMC Genie D3
Exhibited by: CMC Livestock
Greeley, CO



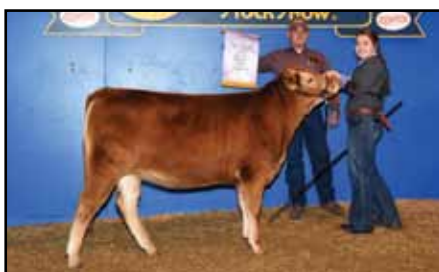
Champion Red Fullblood Female
L7 MS SYB 004C
Exhibited by: Lucky 7 Ranch
Hamilton, TX



Champion Black Fullblood Bull
ECC Little Willie
Exhibited by: Emerson Cattle Co.
Owensville, IN



Reserve Champion Black Fullblood Female
MCH Miss B011
Exhibited by: Emerson Cattle Co.
Owensville, IN



Reserve Champion Red Fullblood Female
L7 Lauren's Ginger Maru 001C
Exhibited by: Lucky 7 Cattle Co.
Hamilton, TX



Reserve Champion Black Fullblood Bull
CMC Genesis 2
Exhibited by: CMC Livestock
Greeley, CO



Champion Black Purebred Cow
Bailey's No-No
Exhibited by: Bailey American Wagyu
Branch, IA



Champion Black Purebred Female
Bailey's Sweetness
Exhibited by: Bailey American Wagyu
Branch, IA



Reserve Champion Black Purebred Female
YAR Mikomi Fujiko
Exhibited by: CMC Livestock
Greeley, CO



Champion Percentage Female
ECC Miss 5E01
Exhibited by: Emerson Cattle Co.
Owensville, IN



Reserve Champion Percentage Female
ECC Ellos Angel
Exhibited by: Emerson Cattle Co.
Owensville, IN



Champion Percentage Cow
ECC Wilma 4E03
Exhibited by: Emerson Cattle Co.
Owensville, IN



Champion Red Fullblood Bull
RMW Kotsukari D5
 Exhibited by: Rocky Mountain Wagyu
 Rexburg, ID



Champion Black Purebred Bull
BSW 4
 Exhibited by: King Ranch
 Durkee, OR

Junior Shomanship

Junior Division

12 Years Old & Younger

Champion: **Miranda Shea Greeley, CO**

Res. Champion: **Cole Bailey Branch, IA**

Senior Division

13 Years Old to 18 Years Old

Champion: **Lauren Lee Hamilton, TX**

Res. Champion: **Cassidy Shea Greeley, CO**

Sales

Mile High Wagyu Experience

January 18, 2017 Denver, CO

Averages

Bulls	Avg... \$5,750
Females	Avg... \$7,858
Embryos	Avg... \$786/Embryo
Semen	Avg... \$348/Unit



Top Selling Live Lot

Lot XX – \$40,500 - CMC Genie D3, 3-01-2016, sired by GENESIS; consigned by CMC Livestock. 1/3 interest purchased by BAR V Wagyu of Abilene, KS.

Top Selling Embryo Lot

Lot 24 – \$1500 per embryo – Rueshaw X LAG B0589N, 3 embryos; consigned by Legendary Akaushi, purchased by Thomas Greco of Topeka, KS.

Top Selling Semen Lot

Lot 42- \$1100 per unit – MT FUJI, 5 units; consigned by Crescent Harbor Ranch, purchased by Theresa Olson of North Branch, MN.

Donation Lot

7 Day South African Safari - \$2300 – donated by Wagyu Breeder.Net, purchased by Troy Gabriel, Gabriel Family Farms of Ashville, OH. All proceeds go to the A.W.A.

A beautiful day in Denver set the tone for a wonderful evening on January 18th, 2017. The Mile High Wagyu Experience Sale followed the Wagyu Show at the 2017 National Western Stock Show and was hosted at the Cowboy Lounge in Downtown Denver, CO. A large crowd filled the Cowboy Lounge to enjoy an array of good eats and participate in an exciting Wagyu auction. The added lots of a few of the day's champions helped to fuel the anticipation which brought in over 70 registered buyers to the event. All in all, the evening was enjoyed by all and Wagyu genetics sold to 10 states and Canada

Location: The Cowboy Lounge

Sale Manager: James Danekas & Associates, Inc

Auctioneer: Butch Booker

Wagyu Experience

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**C.D. “Butch” Booker
 Auctioneer**

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Save the Date **Upcoming Events**

2017

MARCH

- 15** **Houston Livestock Wagyu Show**
Houston, Texas

APRIL

- 22** **Texas Wagyu Assoc. Annual Steaks
Are High Sale**
Salado, Texas

MAY

- 20** **Lone Mountain Cattle Company
Female Production Sale**
Albuquerque, New Mexico

JUNE

- 10** **Passion for Prime Sale**
Springfield, Missouri

SEPTEMBER

- 27** **Grandeur Frozen Genetics Sale**
Kansas City, Missouri
- 27-29** **2017 A.W.A. Annual General Meeting**
Kansas City, Missouri

In the News

2016 Champions of the World

The 2016 “Wagyu - Champion of the World” Competition took place from 1-7 December 2016. This was the 5th time that this annual competition had taken place, but the 3rd time for the Wagyu breed.

It was sponsored by WagyuBreeder.net LP, The-CattleMarket.net LLC and Cowtown USA.

Champion Wagyu cattle from 40 different countries were judged by 4 Official Judges:
Hector Bonomi (Uruguay)
Glenn Trout (Australia)
Einar & Miranda Lysell (Sweden)
Mark McClintock (USA)



United States of America - Akaushi



HB Miss Olympia V7231U



Australia - Red



Academy Red Wagyu Tambo H18



Australia - Red



Academy Red Wagyu Reiko F10



Canada - Red



Rapid Bay Verlie





Germany - Red



2016 American Royal Steak Contest

American Royal Announces Winners of the 5th Annual American Royal Steak Contest

Kansas City, Missouri – The American Royal is pleased to announce the results of the 5th Annual American Royal Steak Contest. Congratulations to the following American Wagyu Association Winners:

Diamond T Ranch, TX – Grand Champion Grain Fed Beef
Reserve Cattle Company, MO – Reserve Grand Champion Grain Fed Beef
Reserve Cattle Company, MO – 3rd Place Grain Fed Beef
Bailey American Wagyu, IA – 4th Place Grain Fed Beef
Reserve Cattle Company, MO – 5th Place Grain Fed Beef
Neuner Farm, MO – 6th Place Grain Fed Beef

On November 14, a panel of invited judges in the fields of production, journalism, and culinary arts assembled in the test kitchen on the campus of Kansas State Olathe to participate in a blind judging of steak entries. The assembled judges evaluated 40 steak entries submitted from 16 states. This year's contest was the largest in its history with nearly double the number of entries than in 2015.

“The American Royal Steak Contest provides beef producers with the opportunity to put their best steaks up against steaks from other top producers for the chance to be named the best tasting steak in the country,” said Lynn Parman, President and CEO of the American Royal. “The contest continues to grow and this year we saw an increase in the number of entries and the number of states represented.”

Steaks were judged in a blind taste test based 60% on Flavor (Overall 30%, Sustained 15%, and Finish 15%) and 40% on Texture (Juiciness 20% - 10% Initial, 10% Sustained, and Tenderness 20%). Entries were submitted from two categories, Grain Fed Beef and Grass Fed Beef. Full results from the contest can be found at Americanroyal.com/our-royal-events/steak-contest/.

Wagyu World Photo Contest

The *Wagyu World* Magazine will be hosting the first ever Wagyu photo contest this summer. Everyone will be eligible to submit entries. There will be categories and a winner will be chosen in each. All photos should feature everything and anything Wagyu. Start taking photos as the submission deadline will be June 15th, 2017. The winners and results will be published in the July/August issue. The winning photographer will be receiving an award and be featured on the cover of the *Wagyu World* magazine. More information will be on the Wagyu World website - www.buywagyu.net - and in upcoming issues.

1. Contestants must be paid subscribers to the *Wagyu World* magazine.
2. Photos are to be 8 x 10-inch color or black and white prints, mounted on 11 x 14-inch black poster board. Photos not securely mounted will be disqualified. Make certain your name, address, and phone numbers are attached to the back.
3. Photo must include Wagyu. Photos can't be altered or image-enhanced in any way.
4. Categories will be divided up after all of the entries have been received.
5. Junior category is for shutterbugs 15 years of age and younger.
6. A maximum of 25 photos per contestant can be entered. Entries cannot have appeared in any other contest.
7. Photos become the property of the *Wagyu World* for use in the publications and promotions.
8. Winning entries will be published in the July/August 2017 issue.
9. Awards will be given to first place winners. Photo chosen as the “Editor's Choice” will appear on an upcoming *Wagyu World* magazine cover

AWA Officers Announced

The American Wagyu Association announced the newly elected officers for 2017. They are:

President, Weldon Mahan
1st Vice President and Secretary, Justin Jackman
2nd Vice President and Treasurer, Janell Henschel
Member at Large, Ralph Valdez

AWA *From the Board*

Greetings from the AWA.

I hope everyone had a safe and joyous Christmas and New Years. The holiday season is always a great time to reconnect with family and friends.

2017 is off and running at a busy pace. The NWSS in Denver began January 6th and just finished up on the 22nd. The AWA was represented both on "The Hill" and in the yards. Around 35 head of Wagyu cattle from around the country were exhibited on January 18th down in the yards show arena. I would like to congratulate and thank everyone who participated in the show for making it a success. A big thank you goes out to Ken Tew and Dennis Kuempel for donating the meat for the AWA hospitality tent sample cooking after the show. This is a much anticipated event that people would stop by the booth all week and ask when we would be cooking in the yards. So thank you to all that helped!

To help build a bigger presence and visibility within the cattle industry the AWA showcased a booth that was located at the main show arena on the hill. Within the booth we had information handouts as well as a meat display. I have worked many trade shows in my day and I have to say I was unsure how this would be received. The feedback was amazing! There was a steady stream of consumers and breeders who would stop and look at the display meat in disbelief. The consumers would either say that they had eaten Wagyu and it was the best they have ever had, or they had heard of it and wanted to know where they could buy some. Not one person who said they had eaten Wagyu had a bad word to say! The comment was always "it's the best." The number of breeders who stopped by to learn more was also great. Many either knew someone who was using Wagyu bulls or they had been looking into adding Wagyu bulls into their own herd and wanted to learn more.

We as breeders know the strengths and value of the Wagyu breed, but to hear this echoed from outside the association is very exciting and encouraging to hear! As Wagyu breeders we have an end product that is viewed as "the best" by the consumer, AND cattle that are a great option for cattlemen too use for calving ease and to increase carcass quality. What a valuable combination for the cattle industry.

While at Denver we had the first board meeting with the newly elected President Weldon Mahan and newly elected board directors. We had a very productive meeting and I look forward to working with the board in the upcoming year.

In the upcoming months I will be attending the NCBA meetings in Nashville and the Houston Livestock Show. If you are attending either show please take the time to introduce yourself, I always enjoy meeting and speaking with our members.

Keep up the hard work and God Bless

George Owen,
Executive Director

Our Board met in Denver at the National Western Stock Show to set committees and plan for this year's activities. We have a number of initiatives we are going to tackle that should help the AWA be a great organization and move the breed forward to the next level.

Better visibility of Board work, objectives and activity will be a theme this year. Communication of committee progress will be bi-monthly toward written goals or objectives. We will be communicating each committee formed, the members, the objective and projected schedule. Some of these are as follows:

- Marketing Wagyu and Communications - Marketing is one of the most important things that members want to see action on. I am very pleased to announce that we have formed a Marketing & Communications Committee co-chaired by Mike Kerby and E.D. George Owen.

- Facebook and Social Media – Dennis Kuempel will chair this effort, working closely with the marketing committee, to get the AWA a page for our member communications. This will not be a "chat room" format similar to some others on Facebook.

- EPD's including Genomic EPD's – E.D. George Owen Chairman

- Handbook and Rules – George is Chairman with Janell Henschell and Julie Barnes. The updated version will be out very soon.

Hopefully this will end most of the frustration all, including George Owen, have had with our renewed enforcement of "Rules".

Without good rules and enforcement, we will not become a great Breed Organization.

- Shows – Justin Jackman Chairman with Eldon Clawson

- Carcass/Steak Committee – Eldon Clawson Chairman

- Auction Sales - George Owen Chairman

- Lipid Study – Continued effort to manage the ongoing study - Ralph Valdez Chairman with Martin Anderson

- Audit - Martin Anderson Chairman

- AWA Youth Scholarship Program – Justin Jackman Chairman


- World Wagyu Congress - Ralph Valdez attended and the first International meeting in May of 2016. He will provide leadership and support to George and Weldon in further developing our AWA WWC program.

When I think of the AWA's greatest challenge, the word "Diversity" comes to mind. Definition: Diversity - The condition of having or being composed of differing elements: variety: the inclusion of different types of people in a group or organization. Wagyu were first exported from Japan to the United States in 1976 with the importation of two Full blood Black Bulls and two Full blood Red Bulls. All the Wagyu the AWA had until the 90's were percentage and Purebred Wagyu. The 90's saw various exports of Fullblood Wagyu. So with Reds, Blacks, Red-Blacks, and all the diverse wagyu membership markets, we have a very complicated organization. I think we all need to think about the fact that our members have different wagyu cattle and different needs from the AWA.

On behalf of the AWA Board and our new Executive Director, George Owen, I ask for your patience and spirit of cooperation as we move forward this year. Let's make the AWA a great breed association and grow!

Sincerely,

Weldon Mahan
AWA President



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In the Texas Two-Step, couples take two steps forward followed by one step backward all the while turning and circling with the flow of the music and the other dancers around them. Van Nichols likens the journey of A Bar N's creation through where it is today to that dance – “It feels like we take two steps forward and then one step backward...” and then they reassess the market, turn a bit, and go again.

Van, along with his long-time partner, Greg Allen, founded and owns the ranch. Van grew up in Frisco, Texas, which at that time had a population of roughly 2,000 people. It was a small farming community in which his grandfather lived and farmed. Van helped on the farm during the summers where he learned to love agriculture. He studied at Texas A&M University and earned his Bachelor's degree in agriculture in 1978. While in college, he also earned his real estate license. After graduation, he became a Landman for Hunt Oil Company in Tyler, Texas. He met his wife, Kathy, and in 1981, they were married. Van was transferred with Hunt to the Dallas office where he worked for several years before striking out on his own in the oil and gas business which then evolved into his real estate business.

Greg Allen grew up in Dallas. Like Van, he worked on his grandparents' farm when he was young. After attending Texas Tech University to earn a marketing degree, he married his wife, Sherri, and became a Landman in Oklahoma, where Greg brokered the purchase of oil and gas leases. When

he moved back to Dallas, he started his own oil and gas company with his brother. He made the acquaintance of Van Nichols through industry contacts, and they have continued to work together on various projects for over thirty years.

Through the years, both Van and Greg have been blessed and done extremely well in their respective businesses. They own two properties just north of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex – one in Sherman, Texas, and the other in Celina, Texas. Seeking to utilize the land, they bought Angus cattle. However, in 2009, after Greg tasted a

Wagyu steak, he told Van, “This is the best thing ever!” Allen and Nichols quickly decided that they wanted to get into something that they both really liked to eat, and Wagyu fit the bill.

Wanting to remain light on their feet and able to follow wherever the market would lead, Nichols and Allen decided to take two different routes with their two properties. The umbrella organization of A Bar N Ranch is over Celina Cattle Company, LP, the fullblood seedstock operation in Celina. Van says, “We’ve built it up over the years and really haven’t sold anything to speak of. Our goal was to get a wide





By Jeri Tulley

spread of the best genetics throughout the U.S. We feel that we have reached that goal and that we do have some of the best genetics available.” To the best of Nichols’s knowledge, A Bar N has the only TF146 female in the US. Currently they are running approximately 200 fullblood females on this ranch, which they have grown through purchases, embryo transfer work, AI, and some IVF.

A Bar N Ranch runs their meat operation out of the Sherman ranch property. They raise F-1’s bred by their own fullblood Wagyu bulls from the Celina ranch crossed with Angus. Nichols

explains that “at first we sold live cattle and carcasses because we did not feel that we had enough of a continuous supply and a consistent high-quality product. However, we realized early on that there is such a thin margin in only selling live animals and carcasses that we were going to have to take it all the way through the process to really make any money.” Also, with the end goal being to provide the best quality, control of the entire process had to paramount. While working to develop their genetic base on the fullblood side, A Bar N tried four or five different feedlots before finding the right fit

for them in Morris Stock Farm. “Joe is feeding them the best and doing a really good job for us,” states Nichols. Van also believes that the less humid climate of the Texas panhandle has a positive affect on how the cattle feed out. F-1’s are raised in the Sherman ranch’s grow yard until approximately one year of age and then are sent on to the feedlot. After hiring a nutritionist to formulate specific creep, growth, and finishing rations, along with improving genetics, they saw a large jump in the consistency and quality of their end product.

A Bar N has increased their herd mainly through in-house growth. However, they have also contracted to do a calf buy-back program with a few select ranches using A Bar N bulls. When they reached the numbers necessary to provide a consistent year-round supply of meat, A Bar N began its branded meat program selling directly to restaurants in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and to select meat markets. This past October they expanded to online sales. Similar to dancing with a new partner, they are still trying to figure out the exact rhythm and intricacies of that market. In the future, they are looking to hire a meat salesman.

As the operation has grown through the years, A Bar N has added several members to its team. Early on, Cade Nichols, Van’s son, came on full-time to manage the day-to-day ranch operations. Cade graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in agriculture. A Bar N brought him on board as ranch coordinator to oversee *Page 30 >>*





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both operations and their breeding program. Cade is also in charge of registrations and is the front man for all ranching contacts. Mike Norman, the Celina ranch foreman, Tommy Williams, the Sherman ranch foreman, and Danny Perkins,

manager for the meat side of the business under A Bar N Ranch Meats, LLC., all work closely with him, and Cade says, "I kind of beat the road up and go back and forth between the two ranches."

Allen's daughter, Katie Allen Bolner, recently joined the crew.

She graduated from Texas A&M and then spent time in New York at a culinary school. Katie worked for several years for a food magazine and restaurant marketing group. She uses her knack for mar-

keting and her culinary background knowledge to deliver to A Bar N customers exactly what they want. Van says, "She really

understands the restaurant industry and has been a big plus for us on that side of the equation." Katie is in charge of all social media and marketing to promote the A Bar N brand.

The two families feel very blessed to be working together in a business that they are passionate about. As strong Christian families, they are very conservative and have always tried to keep integrity at the forefront of all their business dealings. It is incredibly important to them to keep a good name and be true to their word. Van says, "There have been times that we might lose money on a deal, but we always try to do the right thing."

The biggest challenge that Van and Cade see for the Wagyu market in the future is lack of a consistent product. "Wagyu is not necessarily Wagyu," states Van. He goes on to explain that without industry-wide standards mandating the percentage of Wagyu required for a product to be labeled as Wagyu the end consumers' eating experience may vary widely. This is one of the main reasons that A Bar N decided to pursue a branded meat program – to give its customers confidence that they will receive a consistent, high-quality product with each bite. To that end, A Bar N signs an affidavit with the processor stating that the product they provide is what they say it is. Nichols assures, "We give our word. We have done everything that we know to do to produce the best meat possible."

Greg and Van were recently privileged to attend a two-day brisket camp at Texas A&M University. People from all over the US apply to go to the camp, and Van estimated that about five hundred applied for the fifty slots. The class addressed different types of smoke, a variety of spices, how to cut a brisket, different types of



smokers, how they like to handle their fires, how to handle the meat, and many other brisket related topics. The presenters even brought out a carcass of meat and showed where the brisket is cut from on the animal. When asked if they addressed Wagyu, Van said, “They talked about Wagyu and pointed out how good of a cut it was, and we got to do a taste test. The camp really made you appreciate the brisket as a cut of meat.”

Each A Bar N team member has a favorite way to eat Wagyu. Van loves the flank steak. “Just add a little salt and pepper and sear it and cook it until it’s about a medium. It doesn’t need a lot of seasoning really – because it just has a great flavor.” Cade’s favorite is the brisket, but he comments that the stew meat is fantastic and gives stews a ton of flavor. Greg is the foodie in the group and appreciates all cuts of Wagyu, but he especially loves to cook and eat a four-pound sirloin roast. They joke that kind of like Blue Bell, they eat all they can and then sell the rest.

In the future, A Bar N hopes to continue to grow as their meat market grows. By keeping careful control of their quality in-house and by envisioning the twists and turns of the market, they hope to remain flexible enough to respond to wherever the music and the dance may take them. 🍷





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Rooted deep in Kentucky resides a world-class Wagyu operation. The Cane Ridge Cattle Company is defined by excellence and rooted in heritage. The Clay Family legacy of cattle stewardship dates back to 1817 when Senator Henry Clay imported Herefords to the United States. Cane Ridge has continued the Clay family legacy of innovation and excellence that redefines the quality of beef.

For many years Cane Ridge Cattle Company has committed to bringing the highest quality Wagyu to the market. Cane Ridge Cattle Company is situated on 1,100 acres in Paris, KY. They have modeled their practices after Japanese paradigms of perfection and patience. They are one of the most technologically advanced cattle farms in the entire United States. From their 25,000 square foot barn with its own state of the art laboratory to its radiant heated bio-flooring floors, no expense has been spared at CRCC. The CRCC Wagyu cattle have grazed pastures that have been meticulously laid out in order to optimize the land and the animals' use of it. Cane Ridge genetics are both well-known and extremely highly regarded. Their experienced staff includes an on-site veterinarian advised by premier bovine embryologists, which has helped to ensure that the animals' care, breeding practices and quality control created has all worked in their favor to insure the best possible environment to produce the most superior Wagyu animal.

Cane Ridge Cattle Company adheres to a USDA-approved comprehensive nutritive management plan. It ensures that the cattle are continuously getting the nutrients needed to maintain the highest level of health. All the feed at CRCC is analyzed and documented for nutrient values. The cattle are fed an all-natural vegetarian diet with no added hormones or antibiotics.

As of 03.6.17 the Cane Ridge Cattle Company Wagyu operation will come to an end. Cane Ridge Cattle Company would like to cordially invite everyone to attend their complete and final dispersal sale.

DISPERSAL

Sale Schedule ...

Sunday, March 5, 2017

Noon Sale cattle available for viewing
5:00 p.m. Social hour

Monday, March 6, 2017

Noon Cane Ridge Wagyu Complete & Total Dispersal

Sale Location ...

Chenault Agriculture Center
2130 Camargo Road, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353

Sale Management ...



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FAKE FOOD

By Kindra Gordon

New book claims most Kobe beef is not “real.” It’s a marketing wake-up call that continual communication to the public and consumers is essential.

It’s definitely not what Wagyu breeders want to hear: an author classifying Kobe beef in the U.S. as “a lie.”

Indeed, that’s part of the content featured in the book titled *Real Food/Fake Food* authored by Larry Olmsted. The subtitle for the book is: “Why you don’t know what you’re eating and what you can do about it.”

Olmsted is an award-winning journalist – primarily a food and travel writer – who has written for *USA Today*, *The Boston Globe*, *Financial Times* and dozens of other publications. He has traveled extensively, acquired numerous cooking class certificates and currently has a popular column on *Forbes* online.

The premise for his book was to help consumers recognize when they are being fooled – when premium ingredients are replaced by lower-cost substitutes.

Among the “real foods” he says people can trust are champagne, whole lobster, parmigiano-reggiano, scotch whisky, and wild caught Alaskan seafood. In his book, Olmsted details the laws and labels that ensure these items are the “real deal.”

The “fake foods” that Olmsted calls out – and there are many

– include red snapper, extra-virgin olive oil, truffle oil products, tuna sushi and kobe beef. Honey, coffee, wine, and even rice are others that he mentions.

Because no laws exist on the labeling of many of these products, Olmsted explains in detail and story after story how substitutions are often made in place of the real food item – and in a means of offering it at a lower price or capturing a higher markup margin.

Olmsted is particularly harsh toward the seafood industry, which he has said is “rife with fakery,” but in one news commentary he also took a jab at Kobe beef. Olmsted said, “Kobe Beef is the most prized and famed meat on earth, but I found in my reporting that less than 3,000 head make the quality standards each year, and only 10 percent are actually exported from Japan. Most of those go to Macau, Singapore and Hong Kong. The amount that reaches the U.S. would not meet the average beef consumption of a hundred Americans and only eight very specialized eateries in the U.S. ever serve the real thing. The rest is a lie, including almost every Kobe beef dish you

see on a menu.”

It’s a comment that indicates the American Wagyu industry still has much work to do in communicating and sharing information with the food industry – and consumers – as to the modern day efforts of producing high-quality differentiated beef in the marketplace.

In his book Olmsted advises consumers to become “smarter shoppers” by looking for labeling and certification from food producers. His food shopping tips include:

- Read labels carefully
- Avoid artificial colors and what he says are “so-called natural flavors”
- Buy whole rather than processed foods when possible
- Cook more, which gives you control over your own ingredients. (Olmsted is highly suspect of most restaurant menu claims.)

So, is it a book to be ignored because the message makes you mad? Or is it a reality check that suggests food producers had better get busy helping the public “know your farmer, know your food.” And, specifically the Wagyu breed must take strides to ensure understanding – and the integrity – of their product. 🌱

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ANTIBIOTICS WAGYU & YOU

By Dr. Jimmy Horner

The majority of the U.S. Wagyu industry is already producing all-natural beef, so the new VFD rule should have little to no impact on most Wagyu operations. However, there are still some feedlots with Wagyu placements that have continued to rely on oral antibiotics, especially in receiving cattle, and these operations will be affected to some extent. Frankly, I have never been a big fan of oral antibiotics in animal feed since I feel they can become a crutch or potential substitute for good management and due to the fact that antibiotics are indiscriminate in that they not only destroy harmful bacteria

but beneficial bacteria as well. We've been preparing and assisting our clients to be able to discontinue their use of oral antibiotics in feed over these past 23 years.

Our firm conducted the first cattle study in the U.S. in 1995 comparing traditional oral antibiotics versus an all-natural approach head-to-head with the all-natural approach not only demonstrating superior results with calf health, but also proving to be the most economical option as well.

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lowing year and our all-natural approach once again proved to be a superior alternative.

Japanese Wagyu producers have been producing all-natural beef since commercial beef production began there over 100 years ago and they produce the undisputed premier beef worldwide. So, I'm absolutely unconvinced that U.S. Wagyu or other cattle producers must still depend on oral antibiotics in order to survive and produce premium beef.

U.S. regulations for injectable antibiotics have not changed with the new VFD rule, so producers can still treat sick cattle

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via injectable medication when warranted.

Undoubtedly, the Wagyu industry is already well ahead of other U.S. cattle breeds in the continued shift towards all-natural beef production and I genuinely hope the Wagyu industry continues to set the standard in this segment. It is obvious that all-natural production is the future of the food animal industry and producers should already be re-calibrating their management systems for all-natural production and away from dependence on oral antibiotics.

On a final note, I will add that after visiting with several of my veterinarian colleagues, I have found most are highly concerned about their potential liability increasing under the new VFD rule and they seem fairly adamant that if they do not have

an acceptable veterinary client patient relationship (VCPR), they will refuse to write any prescriptions for oral antibiotics.

So, those Wagyu producers or feedlots that are planning to continue use of oral antibiotics in their operations should certainly ensure their veterinarian is satisfied with their current relationship and this will likely involve seeing the veterinarian more than just once or twice per year.

But, I believe the best counsel I can provide to those producers planning to continue with oral antibiotics is don't and instead contact me or other professionals that have been involved in all-natural beef production for many years to learn about all the viable natural alternatives available." 🌱

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OLD WAYS New Beginning

By Heather Smith-Thomas

This Wagyu breeding program was started by Richard and Marcie Hammond in Silverton, Oregon. They moved the ranching operation to eastern Oregon (near Baker City) in 2001 and hired Ken Tew and his wife Julie to manage it. "I had been friends with the Hammonds for several years but didn't know anything about Wagyu when I first got acquainted with them," says Tew.

"When they told me they had this breed, Julie and I looked at these cattle and were a bit shocked because we were used to Angus, but we became involved with the Wagyu and joined the Wagyu Association. After the Hammonds brought their cattle here to Baker, we took care of their herd because by that time Richard and Marcie were semi-retired and living in Mexico," he says.

Then Richard passed away in 2002. "We continued with an informal partnership with Marcie for a couple years and in 2004 we bought their Sutton Creek Ranch at Baker and their cattle herd. That's when we formed a corporation with Julie, myself and a friend of ours—Jeff Penick—and named it Sutton Creek Cattle Company, LLC."

The

annual Wagyu convention was held in Baker City in 2003 and again in 2007. By this time, Tew was president of the American Wagyu Association and had been on the board for a number of years. "We had the convention here and we were Producer of the Year for 2007. The Hammonds were Producer of the Year in 2003. In 2010 I got off the board; I had been on it for 10 years. Julie got on it shortly after I got off, and is still a board member," he says.

"A couple years ago Julie and I bought another ranch, and now our friend Jeff wants to retire. We also want to slow down and get smaller, so this year we are dissolving the Sutton Creek corporation.

Ju-

lie and I will continue, but our operation will be called Rockin' 2 Ranch."

The focus will still be to produce fullblood and purebred Wagyu.

"We've always had both, and have done very well with both. At the Sutton Creek Ranch we have a USDA quarantine facility. We flush cows and sell embryos. We've sold purebred and fullblood embryos all over the world and we'll continue doing this even after we downsize," he says.

Sutton Creek Cattle Company has been very diversified. "At one time, we had 180 Wagyu cows of our own and took care of 150 head for Agri-Beef/Snake Snake River Farms, and also took care of 400 Simmentals. We leased about 4000 acres. The irrigated pastures had 2 fulltime employees plus Julie and I and we realized it was too much work. We decided to get rid of all that work and came back to our current ranch, which is 302 acres, mostly irrigated. We cut back to 80 Wagyu, giving me more time to concentrate on my Agriculture Insurance business. We also have a 168-acre place. When we cut back to just that place we will be down



to about 20 to 30 Wagyu cows,” says Tew.

“We’ve sold semen also, and in the beginning we had F1 cattle. We had Red Angus cows bred to Wagyu bulls. We’ve done every aspect of Wagyu except the meat production business—with the exception that we do have a very successful hamburger business, utilizing the meat from old bulls,” he says.

“We sell a lot of bulls. At our peak, we sold more than 200 bulls (with our partners) in 2013. When we sell bulls, I have always had an arrangement in which I buy back the old bulls. We bring those home and grind them into hamburger.” A couple of restaurants and food stores have been buying all the hamburger for 6 years now, which works very well. It wasn’t always easy making a go of raising Wagyu seed-

stock. “It was great experience, however, trying to figure out how we were going to make this work, raising Wagyu, and how to convince the banker that we could make it work.

I remember trying to get an operating loan one time and the banker looked at me when I said Wagyu, and told me to come back and see him in a few years. He wanted to make sure we would still be around!” says Tew. The banker was a little nervous and didn’t want to gamble on this new breed.

“We had a real problem in the beginning, with this breed. People brought in bulls from Japan and bred them to create really high-marbling bulls to produce F1 cattle. Bulls like the famous Fukutsuru 068 with high carcass quality when bred for F1s (to produce exceptional meat) were not the kind of bulls you want to breed to a Wagyu cow. He wasn’t bred to have milk or the other characteristics you need in a cow herd.” This bull’s best role was to create a terminal cross for meat.

“When we were taking care of Snake River Farms’ herd of cows, they were primarily breeding them to create bulls that would be used to create F1 cattle with good carcasses. Subsequently the female side of that were not very good as cows. Even though they had super-high marbling, they lacked milk and didn’t have enough for their calves. The inside of our barn looked like a hospital emergency ward, trying to keep those calves alive. We had some on IV fluids,” says Tew.

“At the time, when we took over the herd for Snake River Farms, they had a 68% calf crop; only 68% of the calves survived. We took care of that herd for 3 years and turned that whole herd around—and I give all the credit to my wife Julie. We got it up to a 94% calf crop. This improvement was basically due to redesigning the genetics to improve

the cow end of it,” he says.

“It was interesting, learning about all this. Most of those animals that went out into the Wagyu breeding pool are not there anymore because over the years people have learned that we must have cows with the proper traits to raise calves. If you don’t have a good factory, you can’t raise a good bull. You can’t raise anything,” says Tew.

“The embryos we’ve sold out of our herd have been designed for females. We might get a bull instead, but that’s ok. Those bulls are still great, but it’s important for the females to be really good. You want more than just a good terminal cross for the carcass,” he explains.

“We’ve had excellent fullbloods and excellent purebreds. The Hammonds had the first female fullblood born in this country, and she came with the herd we got from them. She was Fujiko and she’s on our website. Chris Brant (Reserve Cattle Company, in Missouri) bought her DNA and cloned her. We’ve had some amazing animals, and I give the credit to Julie for the breeding and genetics; she designed them, and does her homework very well. She pretty much runs the ranch and I just build the fences!”

He feels the Wagyu breed is on a roll. “Looking at where this association has gone, our membership has more than doubled since we had our convention here in Baker City. I remember farther back when we were sent to the convention at Reno in 1999 to represent the Hammonds (when I got elected to the board); when we got there I was expecting a larger group, like several hundred people at the Nugget. When we arrived, there was no one there and I looked at the marque and it listed the American Wagyu Association



<< Page 41

convention in room 259. We went to that room and opened the door and there were only about 15 or 20 people there. That was it, and they elected me to the board right then! We had a 9 person board and about a 20 person membership!"

For the first couple conventions he attended, the president bought dinner for everyone at the convention. "Our membership has grown quite a bit since then, but some of the people who were instrumental back then are still helping guide the association. I hope that everyone still remembers the lessons we learned from the past because it was a long struggle for most of us, trying to figure out how to make ends meet, with this breed."

The Association had a magazine in the 1980's and 1990's, before the fullbloods came into the picture—when it was just purebreds and people were getting started with Wagyu. Sutton Creek Cattle Company had a purebred cow early on that lived until she was 22 years old. She sold as a purebred, for \$35,000, and her sister brought \$55,000, at a sale at Washington State University. The cattle in that sale were all purebreds, before there were any fullbloods available.

"When I started working with the Hammonds I never really understood the difference between the fullbloods

and the purebreds because there is really no difference, in raising them. I love my fullbloods, but I always enjoy working with purebreds—maybe because they have a little more hardiness and hybrid vigor due to a bit of commercial blood in them. When it came to selling them, it also made no difference. The commercial cattlemen didn't care. They had good results with the high percentage purebreds," says Tew.

Companies like Snake River Farms that were buying the offspring didn't care, either. Purebred or fullblood-sired cattle didn't matter; it came down to the genetic line. "People wanted the bulls that came from the Tajima lines, and you can have that whether the bull was fullblood or purebred," he explains. In the years Ken and Julie have been involved with Wagyu, they feel they've had some really great mentors, like Charlie Gaskin and Shane Lindsey. "Shane was my main go-to guy when I had questions about this breed. There are a lot of amazing people in this breed but those two have helped me the most," says Tew.

"We also made some mistakes. When we bought out the Hammonds, we had semen tanks full of Michifuku semen. We didn't realize how valuable that semen would be, so we just bred

our Angus cows with it and sold the F1 offspring. The red bull Rushaw that is so valuable now, we bred all of our Red Angus cows with his semen. We were using very expensive semen to create some F1 cattle because we didn't know the value of it! It's a learning experience when you see that semen later selling for \$5000 a straw, and you don't have any more of it!"

Wagyu cattle have the best-tasting and most tender meat of any breed. The first time Tew ever tasted Wagyu was when he went to the Hammonds' home. "They cooked a steak for me and it was phenomenal. The second time, Mr. Hammond and I were at a field day in American Falls, Idaho for Snake River Farms. They had a barbeque for all their F1 producers, and cooked some F1 steaks—and gave us plastic forks and knives to eat it with." The meat was so tender there was no risk of breaking those utensils.

"The next time I tasted Wagyu was when I went to Omaha for the Annual American Wagyu Convention. You lined up to get a steak, and it tasted so good that I wanted another one. My friends told me to just turn my hat around and go through the line again, so we all came back around for another steak!" he says.

"Now we are spoiled. When Julie

and I talked about downsizing our ranching operation we realized that one thing we have to concentrate on is being able to have our own meat. We can't eat anything we buy at the store, anymore. But we'd been raising Wagyu for 2 years before we ever butchered one of our own animals to eat—because we always sold everything. Then we had a fullblood bull that got injured when he was young, so we cut him and fed him out and butchered him as a 3-year-old and that meat was awesome,” says Tew.

He has also enjoyed showing some of his Wagyu cattle. “It was fun in 2014 when we won Grand Champion with our Black Fullblood Wagyu bull at the Denver Stock Show. When we won, I received congratulations from Bobby Harrell, president of the Hereford Association here, and from Thomas Angus Ranch, and all the other breeders around here who are famous for winning at Denver. They all came and congratulated us for winning. We are going back this year to try to do it again, with our heifers,” he says.

“We are helping a friend/neighbor who now has a couple hundred Wagyu cows, and he has developed some polled homozygous purebred bulls. We are taking one of those to Denver to show also—and then he will put it in the auction there. I think this will be a plus for the Wagyu breed, too, to get rid of the horns,” he says.

“I hate to say it, but a Wagyu with horns looks like a Corriente or somebody's roping steer, rather than a beef animal. If they are polled they look nicer and we don't have to keep them out behind the barn anymore; we can put them out in the front pasture.

I'll never forget the time we were in Kentucky for a convention and went out to one of the ranches in a bus to look at someone's Wagyu cattle. As we were pulling into the place, one of the Wagyu producers looked out the window at a bunch of black cattle, and said those were really good looking Wagyus. Someone else told him those were Angus; the Wagyus were behind the barn—and it was true!” he says.

“In my quest to keep educat-



ing people, here at our County Fair we show Wagyu heifers alongside other cattle. Julie and I won a carcass contest in Oregon with an F1 once, and every year we've shown cattle. We started out with just one Wagyu in the show and now there are several. The neighbors have Wagyu and he's a large commercial rancher. He has 600 Charolais and 200 Wagyu and his kids are showing Wagyu at the County Fair, too. Last year those kids showed against each other because we only had two heifers in the contest,” says Tew.



Little by little, however, more people are learning about and getting a chance to see Wagyu cattle. Even having this breed represented at a fair, getting the name out in front of people, starts to make a difference.


In Baker County, ranchers participate in a program to feed all the school children. Every rancher has cull cattle and most ranchers just take them to a sale to get rid of them. “In our county we donate cull cattle to a program where they are ground into hamburger and go to the schools. We feed all the schools in this county. One year when Julie and I first got into the hamburger

business, we learned a lesson about hamburger.” Traditional wisdom is that you should always make good, thick half pound hamburgers so they will stay juicy. If you make them too thin, they dry out if you cook them too much. The restaurants all wanted half-pound patties.


“We had 900 pounds of quarter-pound patties, so instead of selling it to the restaurants we donated it all to the schools. They put an ad in the paper stating that Sutton Creek Cattle Company donated all this Wagyu hamburger which is referred to as Kobe beef by many people. They said the problem is that it was great to have it in the school for their lunch program but they couldn't keep the parents out of the lunchroom!”

“We also put on a few team-roping events here in town to raise the money to have the beef processed. That's our other big passion. Julie and I enjoy our horses and love to team rope. We went to Arizona for two weeks in late January to team rope. Horses and cattle are our passion, and we wouldn't want to do one without the other. Julie told me one time that if she couldn't have horses on the ranch she didn't want to raise cows.”

The ranch where they are now is so flat, however, that they don't need horses to take care of the cattle. “We move cattle with Japanese horses (4-wheelers) but we are still very serious about our horses,” he says. Raising Wagyu and enjoying their horses makes ranching a pleasure on both counts. 🐾



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