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January/February 2024



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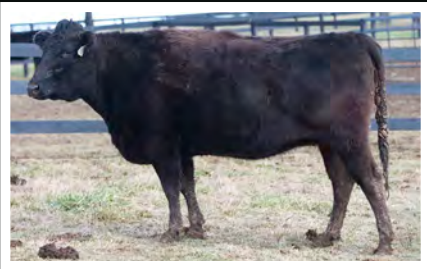
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WAGYU WORLD

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We usually discuss feeding steers but this time we take a look into what it takes to feed your bulls for not only optimum growth but overall performance.

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Fellow Wagyu producers came together to make magic happen at the border; not only were they feeding our troops and bringing some cheer during the holidays, they were also promoting the breed in the most positive fashion. Also, take a look at the calendar; you wouldn't want to miss the upcoming opportunities that are on the horizon.



COVER>>

Courtesy of: New England Wagyu
Location: New Hampshire

PURE JOY

These last 30 days has been put me in recovery. I had a second knee replacement and am on my way back to my normal full speed. The first two weeks landed me at my mom's house on the ranch as she lives in a one story and my home is three – not suitable if you can barely walk. I'm not going to lie, I didn't mind being there; she made me meals, brought me coffee and took care of me the way only a mother can. I am so very blessed and thankful that she is so close to me and my family and involved in not just our family businesses but also my life. Not only was she tending to me these last 30 days, she also made my son's school lunches, took him to and from school, worked with him on his homework and made him dinners.

I haven't been completely out of commission, I even was back at my office the day after surgery – mind you it was not the normal amount of time I spend but I made it in. I could only handle 3-4 hours at a time before I needed to lie down and rest. One of the afternoons I was back at my mom's resting, my mom had just gotten my son home from school. I overheard there conversations about the day, get an afterschool snack before digging into to homework. As I laid there resting, I was overwhelmed with the love that the two have for each other. Maybe it was the narcotics but I shed a tear of joy listening to them chatter back and forth.

This simple moment, albeit in pain, made me realize how truly lucky not only I am but how blessed my family is. God has allowed us to stick together – multiple generations closely integrated in life. I have since moved back into my house which is nice and all but I do miss being taken care of. So if you see me this spring and if it looks like a have a catch in my get along, the reason being is a new knee.



Handwritten signature of Mercedes Danekas-Lohse.

Mercedes Danekas-Lohse - Editor

The weather has really been a fright this winter, from the cold storm that enveloped the Midwest and Texas in January to the rains and winds that have been battering California for the last few weeks. As I write this the East coast is currently experiencing snow and winds that are creating havoc for everyone. In California no matter how much flooding we get most of us hesitate to ever bad mouth the amount of rain that keeps us out of the drought that lasted way too many years.

Talking about the weather in this article is about the only safe port I have to stay in as the political environment, sport teams and just about everything else would get me into hot water with folks I'm sure. I live in California so I've learned to be very careful about what I say. I'm too old to learn about the several new genders that make up this population let alone ever get their pronouns correct. So.... I just stay as far away from the crazy as I can. That's a whole lot easier than staying away from the homeless population that has invaded our once quaint Agriculture town.

We've talked often about getting out of California and moving to a new state, it's just not as easy as it sounds. Being native Californians I'm not sure how we would fare through some of the winter storms that blow through these states, It's still a part of our conversations and if we didn't live in one of the most beautiful spots in California the consideration would be easier.

Before I go down a rabbit hole I can't back out of let's flip the narrative back to the weather, which currently the sun is shining and we better enjoy it, because an atmospheric river is headed right for us. Be sure and support the great sales we have coming up this spring and as always if this office can be of help regarding the sales, entries or simply questions involving anything Wagyu, do not hesitate to call.



Sherry Danekas - Publisher



P: (530) 668-1224

W: www.buywagyu.net

M: P.O. Box 8629
Woodland, CA 95776

Publisher: Sherry Danekas

sherry@jdaonline.com

Editor & Advertising: Mercedes Danekas-Lohse

mercedes@jdaonline.com

Circulation & Billing:

Emma-Shane Cowan

emma@jdaonline.com

(530) 668-1224

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DISCOVERY

This Issue's Two Contributors Share Themselves With Us.



**HEATHER
SMITH-THOMAS**
Rancher/Writer



This year for the Super Bowl I was cheering on... I didn't even know it was going to happen or when....so I had to ask my husband. I don't root for any football teams, so it doesn't matter to me who wins..... That way I don't offend anyone (unless I already just did)!

My favorite winter activity is...feeding cows.

So far my New Year's resolution has been going... going, gone? Which one? Some of my resolutions are holding steady and others seem to be slipping.



DR. JIMMY HORNER
*Nutritionist / CEO
Protocol Technologies*



This year for the Super Bowl I was cheering on.... Brock Purdy and the 49'ers since my Cowboys choked once again.

My favorite winter activity is... watching my two oldest grandsons, Luke and Beau Wood, giving 100% when they're playing basketball together on their junior high team.

So far my New Year's resolution has been going... I never made one but I'm hoping and praying I can be significant in at least one person's life this year.



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New England WAGYU

By Heather Smith-Thomas





Sam Rowse and his wife Diana Templeton initially wanted to raise Wagyu beef for their own family on their farm in Mason New Hampshire. “We started with two Wagyu steers in 2017 just for ourselves,” Diana says. “We wanted to know where, and how our meat was being raised, what breed it was, etc. Going to the grocery store for meat was becoming discouraging. We were worried about animal welfare, and what conditions the animals were living in, and this was very important to us. This is what drove us to start raising our own beef,” she says.

Sam grew up in Mason and still has his family farm so that’s where they started their cattle program. “We chose Wagyu because this beef is a healthy with the monounsaturated fat content. Plus, the flavor and tenderness the breed offers is incredible,” Diana says.

“From the beginning, we started consulting with Dr. Jimmy Horner on what to feed our steers. They grew to four animals and now there are more than 200 head in our program.”

Their mission quickly transformed from personal consumption to a passionate calling as the exceptional quality of their Wagyu beef became evident to their friends and family. Their commitment to ethical husbandry and excellence, led to the expansion of their farm and creation of a Wagyu herd with outstanding genetics.

“This was a big jump. We also bought a USDA federal inspected processing facility in November 2022, so we could process our own animals and control the program from start to finish. The processing plant is in Barnstead, New Hampshire. A couple of our team members there have been to Temple Grandin’s training. This is also very important to us to make sure the animals are treated humanely on their last day. There is a USDA inspector there at all times.”

At the processing facility, they use a carcass camera—the MIG camera and Program that Desi Cicale runs. “Desi has been a wealth of information for us, and we have been collecting carcass data on all the animals we are processing.” Sam and Diana also will be featured in Desi’s podcast in the





months to come talking about the triple crown steak challenge hosted at Auburn University.

Their program has several outlets for selling their beef. "We do a couple different farmers markets in New Hampshire, and sell to local restaurants and some restaurants in New York City. We are expanding our sales reach and recently launched an online shipping section, we have designed a beautiful custom shipping box made with bio degradable insulation to keep it more earth friendly for the people who want their meat shipped to them," Diana explains. "We are trying to help make people more aware of Wagyu Beef and why we are raising these animals and why we chose Wagyu beef."

The farm has seven baby calves, and there are 20 more on the way. Those calves will arrive throughout the year, since they will be born on a dairy farm that calves year round. "We use a surrogate program, putting embryos in recipient cows. The cows we use are on a dairy farm in Maine; we place full blood Wagyu embryos into those cows created with Wagyu semen. The results are DNA verified full blood Wagyu. This is a win-win for both our program and the dairy farm."

It keeps the dairy cows in milk production, and having the cows carry Wagyu calves is financially beneficial, since dairy farms have been struggling to stay in business with low milk prices.

"We select top genetics to create the embryos and will be selecting the top heifers and a couple of our top bulls to sell at auction next year and the year after in one of the Wagyu auctions run by Mercedes. We are finally getting our herd built up enough to do that," Diana says.

"All of our calves produced are kept at the family farm in Mason, New Hampshire. Our farm managers, Cheryl and Brian Moran give them expert care. Brian is a paramedic by trade and army ranger. Cheryl grew up showing sheep and is a natural at talking care of the calves and loves her work. Wagyu calves are a little different and require a bit more care than other beef calves," Diana says.

"We have all our finishing steers at our private home in Peterborough, New Hampshire but our breeding stock is currently in Mississippi. It would be difficult to have them all here, because feed is



very expensive in the Northeast. It makes more sense to have some of the cattle where the feed is, and where the weather is more conducive to birthing and calf survival."

This breed is unique, and the cattle are easy to work with. Wagyu have mellow dispositions, and are very user-friendly. "This is one of the other things that attracted us to the breed along with the quality of meat. These cattle are very calm and gentle. For the most part, we are able to move them on foot or on horseback. They are docile, non-aggressive and beautiful animals," Diana says.

"We have a mix of polled and horned cattle, and it is fun to watch them out here walking around; we are feeding 100 steers at our house right now. At the farm in Mississippi we have 100 head of breeding stock, bulls, cows, and heifers. We pride ourselves in doing rotational grazing; it is important to us to have our cattle on pasture as much as possible, regardless of what age they are," she says. The finishing steers on pasture all of the time.

"We get our hay in New England and have it tested, and nutrient levels analyzed. Dr. Horner then creates our grain formula and vitamin blend. We feed TMR (total mixed ration) using the Jaylor 5425. Jaylor is a Canadian equipment manufacturing company located in Orton Ontario. This is a big part of our feed program for optimum nutrition."

The steers are typically processed between 26 and 31 months of age. Her husband Sam goes out to feed the steers every day. "We also have a farmhand named Hunter Weston, who helps Sam. Sam also hauls the finished steers to our processing plant, which is about an hour's drive away," Diana says.

"I am primarily involved with the beef sales so one of my jobs is to take the beef to farmers markets, as well as helping with a daily care of the cattle. The steers are individually weighed every month to see how they are coming along health and weight wise. I am constantly explaining how to cook various cuts of Wagyu beef to people at farmers markets. That has inspired me to start the process of making YouTube videos on cooking Wagyu. Most consumers want something quick and easy to cook like sausage, steaks, burgers, rather than roast and larger cuts. Wagyu beef has something





for everyone with many versatile cuts that don't have to be hard to prepare. Nor do those cuts have to be super expensive. Beef shanks for instance, are very economical and make a wonderful meal," she says.

Many people feel that Wagyu is very expensive and are hesitant to try it, but not all of it is expensive. "Sure my ribeyes, tenderloin and New York strips are expensive but my beef shanks are always around nine dollars a pound which I feel is economical for a family dinner. I also try to keep my ground beef, very reasonable at the stores and farmers markets. It's not out of everyone's budget range. I feel that we should keep it affordable so that everybody should be able to try it. This is all about educating consumers and making this beef available, putting it in front of them and showing them why it's a healthy food choice," Diana says.

"We have a really good time with this program, taking care of the cattle and selling the meat. This is a wonderful pastime for us. This is the next career that my husband chose in his retirement. Sam was in the beverage industry, and when he retired, we were looking for something to keep us busy-- something fulfilling that we could enjoy and be passionate about. Farming is challenging in these economic times, but raising cattle is a worthwhile enterprise and very satisfying when done right."

Diana's Horses

Diana's hobby is competing in reined Cow Horse events. "Dr. Roger Osinchuk who works with Vermont Wagyu recommended that I get into this discipline of riding because he knew I was an equestrian and wanted to get some horses. He said why would you get dressage horses when you live on a cow farm?! I had no idea what reined Cow Horse was. That sent me into a whole new level of riding. I never thought I would ride western, but I fell in love with it, just watching these horses being able to move cattle - and learning how to move our cattle with horses, with less stress. This is very important to me," she says.

Diana competes at a national level throughout the US and will be headed to the world championships and NRCHA (national reined Cow Horse Association) event in Fort Worth on February 11. "I qualified in my divisions. My little palomino mare Princess in Platinum and I won the intermediate southeastern regional non-pro boxing title. I bought her from Puntaci Ranch in Gainesville Texas," Diana says.

"I compete in the intermediate and unlimited non-pro boxing division. I have two Quarter Horses that I keep in Bowling Green Kentucky because it's very difficult to find a reined cow horse trainer in the northeast who is competent in the sport. It's been a wonderful thing for me, between the folks in the Wagyu community and the equine community. I've made a lot of great friends in each group. These people work together and like to see each other succeed and this makes it a lot of fun." 🍷





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The best way to make consumers aware of your breed is to advertise the beef produced and let them know why it is something they ought to purchase. This strategy was begun almost 50 years ago, starting with innovative Angus breeders, and several other beef breeds have followed their lead.

CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF

The Certified Angus Beef® brand was started by a group of ranchers in 1978. This was the first branded beef program—a rancher-driven nonprofit focused on beef demand and ranch profitability. It all began in 1975 when an Angus rancher from Marshallville, Ohio, Harold Etling, was out to dinner. He was excited to order a steak advertised as “Angus” on the menu, because he knew this breed of beef cattle – his breed – could deliver a great eating experience.

After a few disappointing bites, however, he knew there had to be a better way to give consumers an indication of quality beef—it’s tenderness, juiciness, and most of all, it’s remarkable flavor. The USDA grades can tell part of the story, but in the 1970s, those grades had been redefined with a focus on the leanness of meat. But as any beef lover knows, the greatest factor in beef’s flavor and quality is the amount of marbling—those flecks of fat within the meat that melt during cooking.

Determined to find a way to let consumers who which beef is best, Etling reached out to some like-minded cattlemen, who also wanted to help market their quality Angus beef to consumers who would recognize and appreciate the benefits. Beef at that time was simply a commodity product, with no way to differentiate any of it from the rest. They had to create a brand, as well as a system to ensure its quality, consistency and integrity at every point along the way.

The result of their efforts, in conjunction with the American Angus Association, was the Certified Angus Beef® brand, the world’s first branded beef. They teamed up with Dr. Bobby D. VanStavern, a meat scientist with Ohio State University, to develop the brand’s signature quality specifications: the checklist of characteristics that Angus beef must meet to earn the brand name.

Eligible beef would be evaluated against these standards after harvest by USDA graders. This unbiased, third-party approval ensures objectivity and integrity of the brand name. If beef doesn’t meet all the brand’s standards, it can’t earn the label. Angus beef not meeting Certified Angus Beef® brand standards may be marketed under another label or brand of “Angus beef.”

The first pound of Certified Angus Beef® brand product was sold October 18, 1978, at Renzetti’s IGA store in Columbus, Ohio. More than 22 billion pounds later, the result of Harold Etling’s efforts (after his unsatisfying steak dinner) has helped sustain thousands of family farmers who receive higher prices for their cattle, due to increased demand for high-quality Angus beef—driven by consumer recognition of the brand.

In 1979, the first distributor, Oxford Trading Company in Westwood, Massachusetts, began delivering Certified Angus Beef® brand products to Northeast retail stores and restaurants, and in 1980 the first restaurant, Maple Root Inn, in Coventry, Rhode Island featured the brand on its menu, helping push broader recognition and demand. In 1982 DeBragga & Spitler, New York City, was the first dis-

tributor to offer restaurants a direct source of Certified Angus Beef® brand products, and by 1985 the first Certified Angus Beef® brand deli meat, corned beef, was introduced.

In 1988 CAB launched its first international chain of restaurants in New Tokyo in Japan and by 1993 CAB ground beef gained national availability. The Certified Angus Beef® brand stimulated growth of thousands of other partners, including distributors, meat packers and processors, restaurants and markets, who count on the brand's quality to boost their business and keep customers returning. 1997 CAB partners marketed, on average, more than 1 million pounds each business day.

In 2001 a new Certified Angus Beef® Prime brand extension raised the bar even higher on the brand's signature standards, offering a super-premium option for exclusive restaurants and high-end grocery service meat counters.

As a supplier of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah, the brand served more than 1.5 million pounds of beef and claimed an even higher profile on the world stage. In 2004 Certified Angus Beef® brand Natural was introduced, for consumers who prefer naturally raised beef from cattle that have never received antibiotics or added hormones, and fed only grass and grain.

The innovations for additional markets kept coming. By 2010 beef lovers across the United States could purchase premium steaks direct at CertifiedAngusBeef.com. In 2012 the Certified Angus Beef® Culinary Center opened on the Wooster, Ohio, campus, with interactive, fully immersive trainings and ideas for new programs for brand partners.

By 2016, with ranchers responding to ever-rising consumer demand, more cattle meeting the brand's standards led to record consumer purchases of more than 1 billion pounds for the year. In 2018, to celebrate its 40th anniversary and ranching heritage, 40 barns in rural communities across the country were painted with the brand's logo.

In 2019 the Rural Relief Fund was launched to aid farm and ranch communities when a natural disaster strikes. "Sheltering Generations—The American Barn" book was released to support the relief fund. In 2021 Certified Angus Beef launched the Certified Angus Beef Takes You There campaign. The spotlight moment featured an exclusive reservation: a cliff-side, four-course dining experience. The idea is that even though every meal doesn't have to be extreme, every meal can be memorable with the best beef.

CERTIFIED HEREFORD BEEF

This branded program had its beginnings in 1991 when the American Hereford Association undertook an ambitious and comprehensive cattle breed study to determine the contribution of Hereford Beef to the American beef supply. In 1995, the American Hereford Association established the Certified Hereford Beef program. Today, the brand continues to uphold a time-honored tradition of providing American families with tender, juicy and delicious Hereford Upper 2/3 USDA Choice beef and USDA Prime beef.

This beef is held to a high standard, allowing nothing but the highest quality beef into the program. The comprehensive 1991 cattle breed study by Colorado State University confirmed that Certified Hereford Beef was superior in every category, including flavor and tenderness. In a 2019 Kansas State University study, consumers also consistently rated Certified Hereford Beef steaks higher for juiciness, tenderness, flavor, and overall satisfaction than other steaks with the same amount of marbling, including USDA Prime beef and Upper 2/3 Choice Black Angus beef products.

The natural efficiency of the Hereford breed also helps sustain the ranches where these cattle are raised. Compared to other cattle breeds such as Black Angus, studies show that on average, Hereford cattle eat significantly less feed per day. This efficiency helps conserve crops, water and other resources that today's consumers are concerned about saving while supporting retailers' and foodservice operators' ongoing sustainability initiatives.

In 2003, Certified Hereford Beef surpassed 25 million pounds sold, and by 2005 the Certified Hereford Beef Choice program was launched into the market. In 2014 Certified Hereford Beef surpassed 50 million pounds sold. In 2017 Certified Hereford Beef launched their Premium program – an upper 2/3rds USDA Choice and Prime program.

RED ANGUS

Tom Brink, CEO of the Red Angus Association of America, says one of the priorities of their Association is for Red Angus to be included in more branded beef programs, most notably, those with an Angus label. Red Angus can now be included in Angus-labeled branded beef programs, at the request of each individual brand program.

"We are currently part of the Brazen Beef brand with Adams Land & Cattle and Tyson, and are starting to put quite a few cattle through that program," says Brink. "Red Angus is also included in the WR Reserve Premium Angus brand, which is based in Nebraska. AgriBeef's St Helen's beef is another brand Red Angus is in. There are numerous other higher-end brands that are non-breed specific that Red Angus cattle end up being a part of due to their superior marbling ability. We anticipate this list to grow significantly during the next 12-24 months as more of the industry realizes that Red Angus cattle produce Angus beef," he says.

SIMMENTAL

Chip Kemp, with the American Simmental Association, says the majority of American Simmentals today—probably 90%—are black, so they can be eligible for Certified Angus Beef. "Most mainstream breeds have some black genetics or black composites now, and that program can be beneficial. It has been very beneficial to our Simmental breeders. Many SimAngus cattle find their way into the CAB program. Today, the CAB does not have any requirement that the animal must be 100% Angus; there is no breed composition requirement," he says. Many Simmentals, Limousin, Gelbvieh and even some Brangus and other crosses with Angus can qualify for CAB.

CHAROLAIS

Creating consumer demand for Charolais and Charolais-influenced beef is critical to long-term growth of the Charolais breed. In April 2023, the American-International Charolais Association (AICA) Commercial Committee voted to fund staff dedicated to marketing Charolais-influenced beef at the retail and consumer level. The breeders felt bringing support on board was the right move to make while pursuing the larger focus of building value for the Charolais breed.

In September 2023, the AICA board hired Stacey Rincker and David Bisek to provide focus on marketing Charolais and Charolais-influenced beef in the marketplace. Both Stacey and David come to the AICA with a background in the beef and food industries. Stacey's background includes working with Tyson Fresh Meats while employed at Midan Marketing, the leading meat marketing agency in

the United States. Stacey has prior experience with the Illinois Beef Association and JBS/ Pilgrim's. Stacey has a dual degree in animal science and animal industry management from Illinois State University.

David's background includes working at Cargill beef where he provided marketing support for most of the beef brands in Cargill's portfolio. He then spent time with Whole Foods Market and most recently as an independent consultant for packaged food startups. David has an Integrated Marketing Communications degree from Wichita State University.

The long-term goal is to create consumer awareness and demand for Charolais-influenced beef across the supply chain, from producers to consumers. The short-term focus is finding opportunities to build a partnership with packers and the distributor sector to build a beef marketing program.

BRANGUS – don't have a specific program yet for their own breed, but are hoping to create one in the future.

CHIANINA – also don't have a breed-specific program but may address this in the future.

GELBVIEH – does not currently have a branded beef program, but does have a registered and trademarked crossbreed called Balancer (Gelbvieh x Angus). As time goes on, more and more breed associations hope to get on the band wagon and find ways to draw consumers to their own products and show why branded products are better than the average cut of beef offered in a grocery store.

WAGYU

Dr. Sheila Patinkin, president of the American Wagyu Association recently announced the AWA's plans for a voluntary Process Verification Program (PVP) that will help Wagyu breeders authenticate and add value to their meat products. Some products today are marketed as Wagyu beef but the animals are only a small percentage Wagyu bloodlines. The PVP would be a way to label the beef's actual Wagyu percentage on branded products.

This PVP, once approved, would allow Wagyu breeders to add specific claims to labels of the beef they market themselves. Those claims would include Source and Age verification for Traceability Cattle (born, raised and processed in the U.S. with the month of birth recorded). To ensure authenticity, one parent must be a registered fullblood or purebred, so participants in this voluntary program would submit DNA samples to ensure parentage and traceability. Random samples would be audited to ensure authenticity.

Quality standards would be based on achieving or exceeding USDA marbling scores (abundant for fullbloods, and slightly abundant for percentage Wagyu beef). Standards will be developed using instrument grading to establish levels of marbling above the levels used by USDA grading.

After the PVP is approved and implemented, participating Wagyu breeders can add the PVP logo to their branded beef labels, as can retail stores and restaurants. This can serve as a marketing tool so U.S. customers will know what American Wagyu beef is, and create more value for the producers. 🍖

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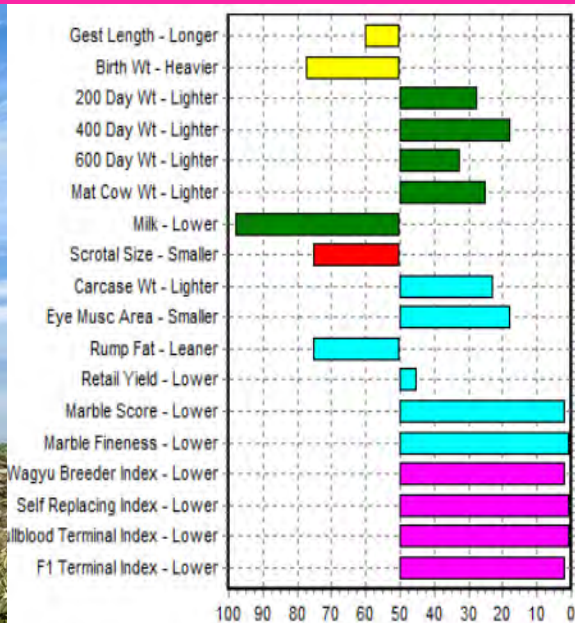


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WILDERS

WAGYU

GENERAL STORE

By Heather Smith-Thomas

Wilders Wagyu in Sampson County, North Carolina was founded by Reid and Jaclyn Smith, who originally started a business in real estate, construction and development. The Smiths founded the RiverWILD family of brands (their real estate development company in Clayton, North Carolina) 9 years ago, and their new venture with Wagyu was their first agricultural business. Their mission to build the local economy through a program that offers products people can count on.

The name “Wilders” comes from the name of the township Reid grew up in. He grew up around Sim-Angus cattle, and developed a passion for agriculture. When the pandemic came along, he and Jaclyn wanted to find ways to get their family outside and involved in agriculture. Wagyu cattle grabbed their attention. They already had Angus cows on their small farm and added some Wagyu as they learned more about this breed and genetics.

“We fell in love with Wagyu and so did our team—the people in our company—and they all rallied around this

breed," Reid says. "A key thing with our company is that our purpose is to impact and develop people. So from the beginning, we've seen the farm as an opportunity to bring as many people along for the agriculture ride as possible. This is a big part of what we try to do every day—to try to include people. We are raising cows, but to us it's even more important to enjoy doing it with the people we're doing it with," he says. It was an opportunity to introduce people to Wagyu in eastern North Carolina and also bring the best beef in the world to people in the local community.

"We opened a general store on the farm at the beginning of November, 2023," says Danielle Lantz, VP of Brand and Operations for Wilders Wagyu. "We timed this opening to be the same weekend as our first production sale on the farm. Our Wagyu cattle customers were therefore the first folks to come shop at our store," she says.

"Our farm is in eastern North Carolina, in the small town of Turkey. Sampson County is the largest agricultural county in North Carolina. It is well known for hog farming, row crops, and we are one of the largest cattle operations. The farm itself was once an old cutting horse farm, built by Jeffrey Matthews. He created an awesome program and awesome farm to house those horses. When he moved out a few years ago, we purchased the farm and switched it from a horse to a cattle operation. There are some beautiful buildings and facilities that were already here, and we didn't need to build much; he already had it wonderfully set up and we didn't need to change it very much," Danielle says.

"He had some old tool sheds and buildings like tobacco barns and hay barns and we renovated one of the tool sheds into a general store so we could have a beef outlet right here on the farm for consumers. It was important to us to be able to have a place where people could come shop and experience the farm. It is a beautiful place and we wanted to be able to share this with our customers and people in our area," she says.

"Our hope is that we can offer farm tours on Saturdays so the people who come to shop can also tour the farm. They can then see what we are doing, and how we raise our cattle. We also pasture-raise Berkshire hogs here on the property. Our main goal is to educate consumers and have them become excited about agriculture. This is our passion and focus, in connecting to the local community by allowing people to come and see how their food is raised. They can experience North Carolina agriculture. This was the purpose behind opening the store."

The beef program has been tremendously scaled up and is now an e-commerce Wagyu beef business. "We sell beef and pork direct to consumers through our online website at wilders.com but we never had a true retail space. With the general store we can now allow our customers to come pick up orders. We do some special in-store only bundles and discounts to encourage people to come shop in person. All of our beef is frozen, so we have several freezers in the general store; people can come shop and pick out their individual cuts," says Danielle.

The biggest thing she noticed is that people really love to buy the bundles. "We try to offer a different bundle every other week, and our customers get excited about that. We tell them to come back again because we will be switching out the bundle and they can come back and try something different. This is a good way to help

Page 30 >>



move cuts that people might not normally buy, and we can educate them about different parts of the cow. Not everyone knows what a flat iron is, or a hanger steak or flank steak. By putting those in the bundle it allows us to sell the entire animal and get people to try those lesser-known cuts. They come back and tell us they never knew about those, but love the flat iron, and want to buy one of those again separately," she says.

"We try to keep our bundles under \$100 so they are an easy price point, allowing people to come in and try a variety of things that aren't really expensive. This is also a great way to move ground beef. We always include some kind of ground product in the bundle as well, and this helps us move the ground beef quicker," Danielle says.

"We are fullblood Wagyu beef producers, and we use this in all of our branding and messaging. I think the biggest hurdle for us is to educate the customers about why we are charging so much for beef, compared to what they are used to. By having face-to-face interaction at the store, they can ask questions and we can help them learn more about it—and overcome those hurdles. By contrast, people buying beef online don't get the full story or picture," she explains.

Currently the store is only open on Fridays and Saturdays, but during the summer the plan is to expand the hours. The farm is in an ideal location for people to come by, between a big city area and a popular beach town "We are right off the interstate highway that connects Raleigh and Wilmington. There is a lot of traffic, especially during the summer when people are going back and forth to the beach. This is a prime spot for people to just pull off the highway and grab something they want, on their way in and out of town," says Danielle.

"We hope to expand our hours as we go into spring and summer, to help accommodate the people traveling back and forth. We also offer more than just beef and pork in our general store. We have a lot of awesome branded items with our farm name, like T-shirts and hoodies, cups and stickers, cutting boards, hats, key-chains, etc. that have our logo on them for our cattle brand," she says. It's a place where farm meets flavor and fun.

"This all connects back to our core values as a company. That's what WILD stands for – doing business the WILD way, which stands for our core values: with a Will to win, we Intentionally adapt while Living compassionately with Disciplined execution. We try to live by this every day, regardless of what we are doing—whether in agriculture or in our day-to-day business," she says.

"The way we do business is basically driven by relationships. We are glad to offer a space where we can connect with our customers, that goes beyond just a transaction. This means a lot to us, along with being able to educate people about agriculture, and specifically Wagyu beef, since there's a lot of misconceptions about it." The interaction with customers really helps.

"We just started offering some cooked products like summer sausage and snack sticks. We hope this will take off and become popular; it gives people something to instantly try, as opposed to buying a frozen steak that they can't really try right there on the spot," she says.

"Maybe on down the road we might be able to offer more than just our own products in the store. We have met many great producers across the state at farmers' markets. Being able to eventually offer some of their products in our store would be our ultimate goal. This could help connect consumers and producers," she says.

"Our success at the store thus far is due to a great relationship with our local county extension office and our state department of agriculture. Both have helped promote our store and beef program extensively, and we are lucky to live in a state that values agriculture as much as we do," Danielle says.

"We focus on relationships and customer experiences, which is important when you are offering a high-quality product, such as locally-raised, 100% fullblood Wagyu beef. We want people to feel like they're buying into something that's more than just buying meat – that they understand where it comes from and that they're excited about the brand that we've built." 🍖





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Photo courtesy of Iron Table Wagyu*

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WAGYU BULLS

*By Dr. Jimmy Horner
President/CEO/Founder
Protocol Farms & Protocol Naturals*

As in many cases with this highly unique breed, there is limited information available for Wagyu producers on feeding and developing Wagyu bulls. Though basic principles are not significantly different from other beef breeds, there are a few considerations to take into account which specifically apply to Wagyu.

Just exactly what makes a Wagyu bull so different from other beef breeds? One of the very first things I learned early in my career working with Japanese Wagyu producers is that all classes of Wagyu cattle require higher levels of dietary protein than most other beef breeds and this applies to Wagyu bulls as well. Most Wagyu bulls are obviously phenotypically different than many other bulls often being smaller in stature, finer boned, more angular, and slightly less muscled in appearance thereby necessitating the higher levels of protein or amino acids (building blocks of protein) in their diet in order to build structural frame and muscle tissue. In my experience, ration formulations for Wagyu bulls require 10-20% more dietary crude protein (CP) or in other words, if a young Angus bull requires a 12% CP daily ration, a young Wagyu bull will need a 14% CP daily ration.

Wagyu bulls also usually attain sexual maturity at an earlier age and are a breed known for a remarkably high libido often servicing up to 50% more females than other breeds. Both of these traits lend themselves to the need for a high-quality ration. Lastly, Wagyu also tend to have a slightly higher need for trace minerals and vitamins than many other breeds except for Jersey cattle. Much like Jersey cattle, this higher requirement appears to stem from a slightly lower efficiency in mobilization of these essential micronutrients from storage sites in the liver. We typically formulate rations for Wagyu breeding herds with 10-15% higher levels of both trace minerals and fat-soluble vitamins, and often include chelated or organic trace minerals as part of their overall mineral program too. Trace minerals play a vital role in both semen quality and production. Wagyu producers can benefit by incorporating these unique aspects into designing their bull developer programs.

Bulls that are in moderate body condition, physically fit, structurally sound and disease free are critical for a successful breeding program. Though body condition score (BCS) may fluctuate throughout the year, BCS should be highest immediately prior to turn out for breeding, ideally a BCS of 5-6 (on a scale of 1-9) and is usually at its lowest at the end of breeding season. If a producer errs on one side or the other when it comes to ideal condition, a slightly thinner bull (with his working clothes on) is always preferred to an overly fat bull. Over conditioned bulls service fewer females and tend to deposit fat in the scrotum which in turn increases scrotal temperature resulting in reduced sperm production and quality. The best practice is to aim for moderate body condition year-round trying to avoid bulls which are extremely thin or extremely fat.

Our firm recommends that potential breeding replacement heifers and developing herd bulls be separated from meat prospects after weaning. Though they may be fed a similar growing/developing grain as the meat prospects, they need to be fed less grain and more forage. A developing bull may be fed a high quality, properly balanced grain at 1-1.5% of bodyweight (depending on condition and forage quality) along with all the hay or pasture they can consume, whereas a developing meat prospect may receive as much as 2% of their bodyweight in grain along with unlimited forage. We routinely recommend creep feeding of Wagyu calves prior to weaning with meat animals continuing to be creep fed up until entering the finishing period, however; we strongly encourage producers to hand-feed or limit-feed those cattle designated for breeding to help minimize over conditioned, under-performing cattle. A high-quality forage-based program with adequate supplementation is usually the best option for both optimum growth and economics.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM DAILY RATION NUTRIENT LEVELS
(DM BASIS) FOR WAGYU BULLS

Nutrient	Starter	Grower	Maint+Gain	Maint
Crude Protein %	16	14	12	10
TDN %	72	70	65	55
NEg, Mcal/lb	.50	.48	.45	.30
Ca %	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4
P %	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2

**Note: The "maintenance" levels above should support 0.25-0.5 ADG and the "maintenance+gain" levels should support 1.75-2.25 ADG. Also, these minimum daily nutrient levels assume a minimum total DMI (dry matter intake) of 2.5% of bodyweight.*

Both seedstock and commercial beef producers want bulls that are capable of producing quality semen and are physically able to seek out females with the end result of a successful mating. Nutritional management plays a critical role in ensuring your bulls meet expectations. Feeding programs should focus on avoiding both over and under conditioned bulls with an optimal body condition score of 5-6 at the start of breeding season for maximum reproductive success.

NEWS FLASH

We recently completed our second year of operation at Protocol Farms Wagyu Feeding and Research Center. We would like to thank all our loyal customers for entrusting their cattle to our care. We would also like to thank all those customers and Wagyu enthusiasts from all over the world that have taken the time to visit our operation. We recently opened our 2nd finishing barn (4 weeks ago) and currently house almost 1300 head of beautiful, high-quality Wagyu finishers with approximately 90% fullbloods and 10% crosses or high percentage. We are beyond pleased with the quality of beef produced from our facility over these past 2 years with over 40% of the fullblood carcasses grading 40% IMF or higher and 4% of those carcasses grading BMS 12. None of this would be possible without great genetics along with the hard work and dedication of our customers and staff. We are so very thankful to be part of the wonderful and extremely vibrant U.S. Wagyu community! 🌱



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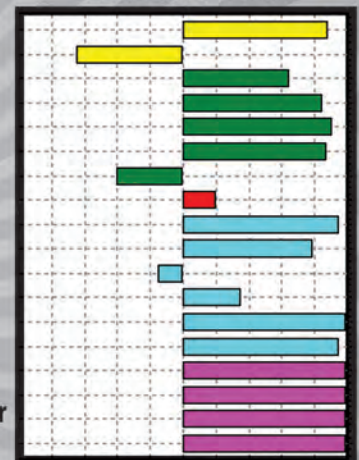
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DL TEXAS BOND 640K (AI) - DLTF22T640	-0.8	-3.2	-10	-16	-21	-24	-1	-2.0	-14	+9.8	-0.7	+1.0	+2.9	+0.41	+\$ 172	+\$ 219	+\$ 206	+\$ 222
mating prediction	-1.5	-0.2	+5	+12	+20	+20	-2	-1.0	+23	+8.1	-0.6	+0.8	+3.1	+0.43	+\$ 272	+\$ 298	+\$ 264	+\$ 255
SHOGUN	-2.1	+2.9	+19	+40	+60	+63	-2	0.0	+60	+6.3	-0.6	+0.6	+3.3	+0.45	+\$ 371	+\$ 377	+\$ 322	+\$ 288
MAE RANCH L10 OKUTANI 264K (ET) - MMRF22T264K	+0.1	+2.0	+13	+23	+34	+21	0	-0.1	+33	+10.4	-4.5	+2.4	+3.2	+0.39	+\$ 304	+\$ 311	+\$ 276	+\$ 255
mating prediction	-1.0	+2.5	+16	+32	+47	+42	-1	-0.1	+47	+8.4	-2.5	+1.5	+3.3	+0.42	+\$ 338	+\$ 344	+\$ 299	+\$ 272
SHOGUN	-2.1	+2.9	+19	+40	+60	+63	-2	0.0	+60	+6.3	-0.6	+0.6	+3.3	+0.45	+\$ 371	+\$ 377	+\$ 322	+\$ 288
LMR MS L10 1552J (ET) - LMRFS1552	-0.1	+1.5	+15	+22	+25	+11	+5	+0.2	+25	+5.8	+0.1	+0.3	+2.9	+0.39	+\$ 252	+\$ 266	+\$ 265	+\$ 253
mating prediction	-1.1	+2.2	+17	+31	+43	+37	+2	+0.1	+43	+6.1	-0.3	+0.4	+3.1	+0.42	+\$ 312	+\$ 322	+\$ 294	+\$ 271
SHOGUN	-2.1	+2.9	+19	+40	+60	+63	-2	0.0	+60	+6.3	-0.6	+0.6	+3.3	+0.45	+\$ 371	+\$ 377	+\$ 322	+\$ 288
LMR MS L10 1743J (ET) - LMRFS1743	-0.7	0.0	+8	+12	+17	0	+1	-0.6	+32	+6.2	-0.1	+0.3	+2.8	+0.36	+\$ 228	+\$ 253	+\$ 245	+\$ 238
mating prediction	-1.4	+1.5	+14	+26	+39	+32	-1	-0.3	+46	+6.3	-0.4	+0.4	+3.1	+0.41	+\$ 300	+\$ 315	+\$ 284	+\$ 263
SHOGUN	-2.1	+2.9	+19	+40	+60	+63	-2	0.0	+60	+6.3	-0.6	+0.6	+3.3	+0.45	+\$ 371	+\$ 377	+\$ 322	+\$ 288
LMR MS SANJIROU 9270G (ET) - LMRFQ9270	+1.2	-2.5	-14	-32	-39	-36	-7	-2.9	-40	+10.5	-0.4	+0.9	+2.3	+0.30	+\$ 116	+\$ 173	+\$ 140	+\$ 166
mating prediction	-0.5	+0.2	+3	+4	+11	+14	-5	-1.5	+10	+8.4	-0.5	+0.8	+2.8	+0.38	+\$ 244	+\$ 275	+\$ 231	+\$ 227

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OUT & ABOUT

Wagyu Sales, Social & Other Happenings

Community

2024 Operation Lonestar EAGLE PASS, TEXAS

We were first notified of Operation Lonestar by our brother, Sargent Mathew Hanke, who has spent the last 3 years serving in the Texas Army National Guard on the border in Eagle Pass & Del Rio, Texas. He gave us a call asking Kevin and I if we had any brisket or if we could get some brisket because he and some of the upper Sergeants and Captains wanted to do a Christmas "Moral Boosting" dinner for their troops, and were looking at ways that they could make that happen, and if we could assist them. Matt went on to explain how the troops have such a hard time when it comes to missing out on special moments with their families. They sacrifice births, deaths, birthday parties, anniversaries and of course holidays. Right now, things are tougher at the border than many people realize. At this time, early to mid-December, the numbers of people coming across the border illegally were estimated to be 300,000. That is about 8,400 immigrants per day. The young people serving in our Texas National Guard are dealing with heart breaking tasks each day and seeing human suffering and death that nobody should see. Unfortunately, some of our young, brave soldiers were taking their own lives because it was just too much for them to deal with.

Kevin and I quickly decided that we wanted to be a part of this special dinner but realized M6 Ranch didn't have enough beef for this project by ourselves. Kevin pulled out his phone and drafted a text asking many of folks in his contacts if they had any Wagyu brisket and/or short ribs they could spare. At first, he was actually hesitant. When I asked him why he said he didn't want to pressure anyone into feeling like they had to help. I told him to just put it out there. God doesn't have a phone and needs to "borrow" yours, plus we have been told by our former pastor, Frankie Rainey, that sometimes it is a blessing to accept the help from those around you and not just for you but for them as well. I tell you within a few minutes his phone started going off! Our Texas breeders and friends were stepping up to give us the tools we needed to help Operation Lonestar become a reality. We all appreciate our troops but how often do we get the opportunity to give back to the young people who are working hard to protect our nation's security and freedom. We were "all in"

Kevin, Gary Stevens and I knew we were all going to go down and serve them in Eagle Pass, TX. The work began. We pulled out the smoker and of course cleaned it up with a great new paint job and added flag holders for both our American and Texas flags. We choose a menu that we felt we could do well. We gathered up the meat from all the contributors. Gary was amazing with his shopping for potato salad from a special restaurant and cookies! Kevin worked cooking in the driveway for 3 days smoking all the meat, and friends provided homemade Christmas desserts. December 17, 2023 we hooked onto the smoker and hauled it 10 hours to the border. We served an amazing feast of Wagyu brisket, Wagyu short ribs, cowboy beans, potato salad, homemade cookies and candies and all

the fixings. It was fabulous and we fed two companies of soldiers. The Lima company and Golf company, about 250 soldiers! They loved it and there was no food left over after they came back for seconds and thirds. The weather was good and the soldiers relaxed with a DJ playing fun music, basketball, card, domino and corn hole games happening. We kept hearing over and over how much they loved the food and appreciated everyone that provided it.

Kevin & I never expected that so many people would want to help. In the end we served 23 briskets and 100 pounds of short ribs all Prime Wagyu!!!! That is the moment we knew the theme of this year's sale would be "Better Together" because we are. We give our heartfelt thanks to all those who made this a reality:

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PX Feeders
Landgraf Ranch
M6 Ranch



Article provided by Jessica Moore

Save the Date **Upcoming Events**

2024

MARCH

- 2** **A5 Wagyu Production Sale**
Purcellville, Virginia
- 6** **Lone Mountain Ranch Online Sale**
WagyuLive.com
- 16** **Triangle B Ranch Production Sale**
Stigler, Oklahoma

APRIL

- 1** **Passion For Prime Entries Close**
www.jdaonline.com
- 6** **M6 Ranch Bull & Female Production Sale**
Alvarado, Texas

MAY

- 11** **Feddersen USA Wagyu Production Sale**
Anita, Iowa
- 25** **Bar R Wagyu Production Sale**
Pullman, Washington

JUNE

- 8** **Passion For Prime**
Salina, Kansas

JULY

- 1** **Fall Harvest Sale Entries Open**
www.jdaonline.com

SEPTEMBER

- 7** **Elite Wagyu Top 5% Collection Vermont Wagyu & Friends**
Springfield, Vermont
- 12-14** **AWA Conference**
Williamsburg, Virginia
- 27-28** **Booth Creek Wagyu Summit and Sale**
Williamsburg, Virginia

OCTOBER

- 19** **JDA Event**
TBD

NOVEMBER

- 2** **Stay WILD 2024 - Wilders Wagyu Production Sale**
Turkey, North Carolina
- 9** **Fall Harvest**
Luling, Texas

2025

MARCH

- 8** **FushimiSake Southern 300**
Bowie, Texas
- 15** **Triangle B Ranch Production Sale**
Stigler, Oklahoma
- 29** **R-C Ranch Production Sale**
Houston, Texas

APRIL

- 5** **M6 Ranch Bull & Female Production Sale**
Alvarado, Texas

MAY

- 3** **Old Three Wagyu Production Sale**
Brenham, Texas
- 17** **Double W Wagyu Production Sale**
Meade, Kansas

JUNE

- 7** **Passion For Prime**
Salina, Kansas

SEPTEMBER

- 6** **The KMO Group**
Greenfield, Missouri

NOVEMBER

- 1** **Stay WILD 2025 - Wilders Wagyu Production Sale**
Turkey, North Carolina
- 8** **TWA Fall Harvest**
Luling, Texas



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A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jay Heller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

