

Wagyu South Africa

The Certified Wagyu Beef Program



1. Introduction

The Animal Improvement Act of 1998 recognised Wagyu Society of South Africa (WSA) to be the custodian of the Wagyu breed. This includes its efforts to establish and ensure the integrity of its product.

Accordingly, WSA has established the Certified Wagyu Beef Program (CWB) program which aims to ensure the integrity of the South African Wagyu beef supply chain and so assure the end customer of product reliability and quality.

2. Definition of Wagyu

The breed definition of Wagyu beef in South Africa is:

- Any animal sired by a WSA registered sire which is Fullblood or Purebred (see the table in the Article on Breeding Wagyu in this Newsletter for Wagyu Breed descriptions)
- Minimum breed level is Crossbred Wagyu F1 with at least 50% Wagyu breed content with a maximum variation of 5%.

3. Definition of CWB is:

The definition of CWB is:

- Wagyu breeding as per the South African Wagyu breed definition
- Minimum Marble Score 3
- Hormone free
- All males castrated prior to 5 months of age
- Ethically produced.

4. Program

Purpose

The certified Wagyu Beef Program will ensure that all sectors of the Wagyu supply chain:

- Ensure product integrity
- Provide a consistent message to consumers regarding Wagyu beef as a product
- Provide the Wagyu industry with the opportunity to market and brand the Wagyu product appropriately; and
- Protect the investment made by WSA members.

The Wagyu Supply Chain

The South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program will **ensure Wagyu breed content** in all live animal sectors of the Wagyu supply chain including:

- Seedstock producer
- Commercial/emerging producer
- Backgrounder
- Feedlot.

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The South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program will assure Wagyu in the Abattoir sector for minimum carcass attributes.

The South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program will assure Wagyu at wholesale and retail level to ensure final product integrity and customer confidence and loyalty in the Wagyu brand.

Licensing

Each sector of the supply chain will have its business entities licenced to comply with the South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program at a small charge. The licence principles include:

- CWB licence certificate prominently displayed
- Only Fullblood and Purebred registered bulls used to produce progeny
- Each sector must only purchase Wagyu animals and/or beef from a CWB licenced entity and sell to a CWB licenced entity
- Commercial producers to tag all Wagyu slaughter progeny with CWB trademarked tags and supply a DNA sample (TSU) and a list of registered Fullblood/Purebred bulls used to produce the progeny to CWB. The tag identifiers will only be activated on the CWB database when the matching TSU is received by CWB.
- The CWB animal database will be accessible only to licensees.
- Feedlots to supply feedlot entry and exit weights and dates
- Abattoirs to supply live animal tag/body number linkage and carcass attributes of:
 - Carcass Weight
 - Marble Score, or Marble Percentage if camera available
 - Eye Muscle Area, if camera available
 - Marbling Fineness, if camera available
- Wholesalers will only procure Wagyu product from CWB licenced abattoirs
- Retailers will only procure Wagyu product from CWB licenced abattoirs and/or wholesalers
- Licensees may use the CWB trademarked logo in their marketing with CWB specific approval e.g. CWB produced signage
- CWB will make the full list of licensees publically available
- Complimentary Commercial Membership with WSA if not already a member.

Fees and charges

The South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program will only apply charges to:

- Commercial Producer – for the purchase of the tag bundle (matching visual tag, RFID button tag, Tissue Sampling Unit or TSU) from CWB for every CWB animal
- Abattoir – for payment per CWB certified carcass. The Certification Fee will be in the order of 1% of carcass value (eg. 400 kg carcass @ R100/kg = R40,000. 1% is R400) and will be based on the need for CWB to fund the following functions:
 - Supply chain audit
 - Data collection
 - Loading data for inclusion in Wagyu genetic analysis
 - ABRI fees
 - Data feedback to all participants in the value chain

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- CWB brand marketing
- Administration.

The South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program will offer value-added services and marketing products at a fee e.g. metal gate signs carrying the logo and a statement such as “Proudly producing Certified Wagyu Beef”.

Supply Chain Audit

The South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program will audit the Wagyu supply chain as follows:

- Commercial Producer – random 100% physical inspection to ensure all CWB identified animals are CWB tagged and TSU’s have been submitted to CWB to activate the tags on the CWB database. Minimum 5% sire validation through genomic testing of the TSU supplied DNA
- Feedlot – random physical inspection to ensure all CWB fed animals are CWB tagged and a minimum 5% check on tags to ensure they are active in the CWB database. No use of hormones or disallowed feed products on CWB animals.
- Abattoir – random physical inspection to ensure all CWB lairage animals are CWB tagged and a minimum 5% check on tags to ensure they are active in the CWB database. Correct matching of CWB ear tag to body number. Minimum 5% check on CWB carcasses to ensure minimum Marble Score 3. CWB logo correctly displayed on all Wagyu vacuum packs and boxes and on all beef sold as carcasses or part carcasses.
- Wholesaler – random physical inspection of cool rooms to ensure all Wagyu beef is CWB. Random sample of meat served as CWB to be genomically tested for minimum Wagyu breed content. CWB logo is correctly displayed on marketing materials.
- Retailer (Butchers and Restaurants) – random physical inspection of cool rooms to ensure all Wagyu beef is CWB. Random sample of meat sold and/or served as CWB to be genomically tested for minimum Wagyu breed content. CWB logo is correctly displayed on menus and other marketing materials.

Data collection and storage

The South African Certified Wagyu Beef Program will collect and store data as follows:

- CWB tag bundles sent to Commercial Producers will be registered in the CWB Register on ILR2
- When the TSU is returned to CWB with the DNA sample enclosed it will be:
 - Considered for sire validation as part of the 5% audit check and if selected, sent to the DNA service provider for sire validation and the TSU returned to CWB
 - Stored in the CWB TSU storage unit for subsequent testing as required. CWB retains the right to SNP genotype and test the DNA sample at its sole discretion.

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- As the technology develops, the licenced Commercial Producer or Feedlot may purchase a SNP genotype and performance prediction of an animal
- CWB will collect feedlot and carcass performance data and store in ILR2 for input to Wagyu BREEDPLAN as follows:
 - Feedlots to supply feedlot entry and exit weights and dates
 - Abattoirs to supply live animal tag/body number linkage and carcass attributes of:
 - Carcass Weight
 - Marble Score, or Marble Percentage if camera available
 - Eye Muscle Area, if camera available
 - Marbling Fineness, if camera available

This is diagrammatically stated as follows:

