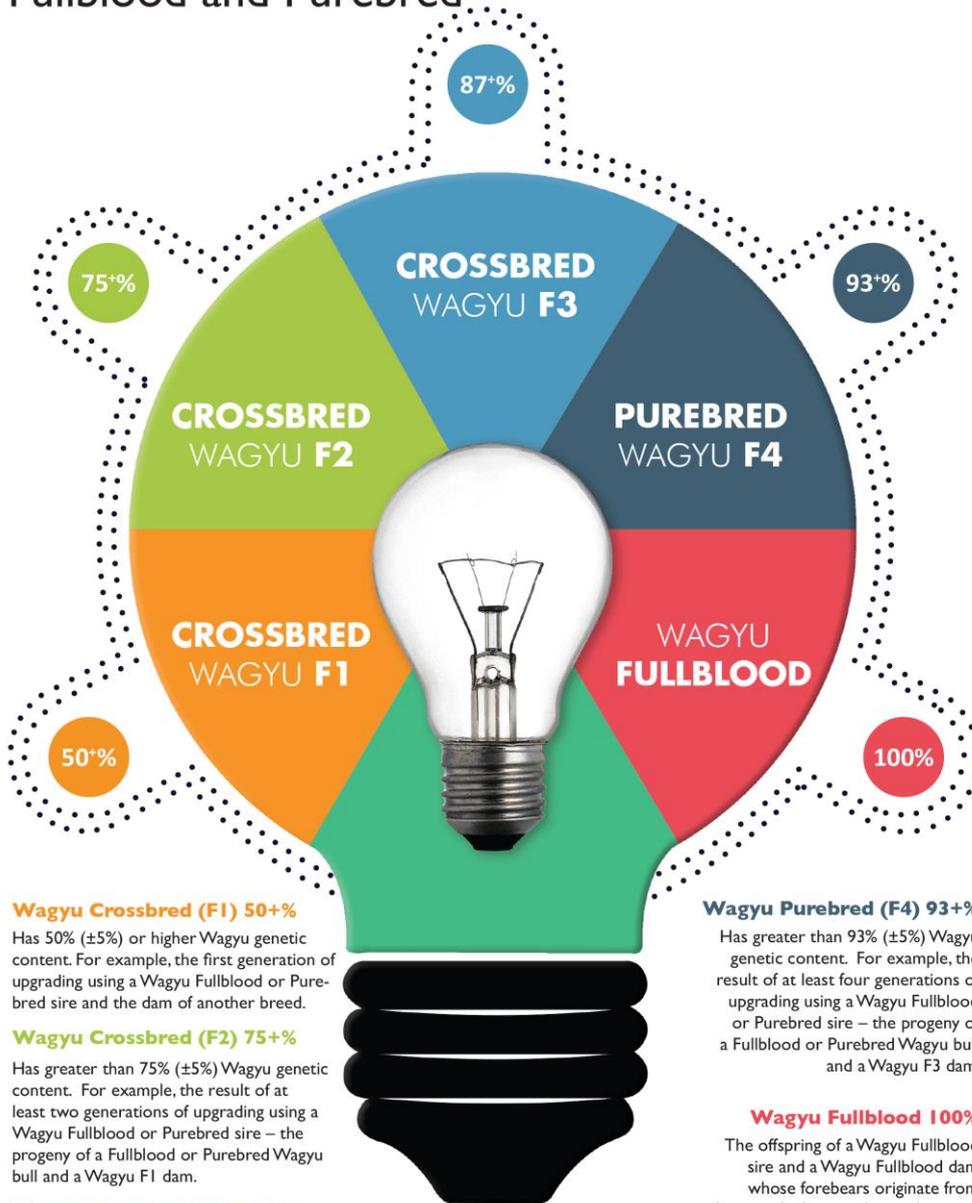


WAGYU GRADING-UP PROGRAM

Fullblood and Purebred



Wagyu Crossbred (F1) 50+%

Has 50% (±5%) or higher Wagyu genetic content. For example, the first generation of upgrading using a Wagyu Fullblood or Purebred sire and the dam of another breed.

Wagyu Crossbred (F2) 75+%

Has greater than 75% (±5%) Wagyu genetic content. For example, the result of at least two generations of upgrading using a Wagyu Fullblood or Purebred sire – the progeny of a Fullblood or Purebred Wagyu bull and a Wagyu F1 dam.

Wagyu Crossbred (F3) 87+%

Has greater than 87% (±5%) Wagyu genetic content. For example, the result of at least three generations of upgrading using a Wagyu Fullblood or Purebred sire – the progeny of a Fullblood or Purebred Wagyu bull and a Wagyu F2 dam.

Wagyu Purebred (F4) 93+%

Has greater than 93% (±5%) Wagyu genetic content. For example, the result of at least four generations of upgrading using a Wagyu Fullblood or Purebred sire – the progeny of a Fullblood or Purebred Wagyu bull and a Wagyu F3 dam.

Wagyu Fullblood 100%

The offspring of a Wagyu Fullblood sire and a Wagyu Fullblood dam whose forebears originate from Japan and whose pedigree shows no evidence of any crossbreeding.

When you start with F1 you parent verify the progeny to the Sire only. With F2, F3 and Purebred animals, members are required to parent verify both the sire and dam.

This article describes the process that producers can follow to either breed to a Fullblood, Purebred or commercial herd.

1) Difference between Fullblood and Purebred

Fullblood animals trace their lineage, uninterrupted, through their pedigrees directly back to an ancestor in Japan. They are thus 100% pure Wagyu genetics and are thus considered to be part of “the original stock”. In the Wagyu seedstock industry there is still a significant monetary value associated with being a breeder of Fullblood Wagyu cattle. This was also the case when all British and European breeds were exported out of Britain and Europe at the turn of the previous century. Aberdeen Angus, for example, was exported from Scotland to the USA and Simmental into Africa. Australia is the largest source of Fullblood Wagyu outside of Japan while the USA has the largest population of Purebred Wagyu. A total of 100 000 cattle are joined annually to Wagyu sires in Australia. Purebred cattle are obtained after four generations of breeding as per the breeding program described in the graphic illustration.

2) Starting a Fullblood herd

A Fullblood herd is bred by:

- a. Purchasing Fullblood Wagyu bulls or semen and using them on Fullblood cows. Fullblood cows can be purchased at many of the production sales being held across the country or at the Society’s annual National Sale.
- b. With an embryo transfer program using normal commercial cows as recipients and Fullblood cows inseminated with the semen of Fullblood bulls as donors.

There are three AI/Embryo stations in South Africa that are partners of the Society. These are:

Ramsem: <http://www.ramsem.com/>

Embryo Plus <http://www.embryoplus.com/>

In Vitro Africa <http://invitroafrica.com/>

Fullblood Embryos can either be sourced from an Embryo station or imported directly from countries such as the USA and Australia. The Embryo stations in South Africa are well equipped to assist with procuring embryo’s and to assist prospective producers with their embryo and AI programs.

3) Starting a Purebred seedstock (stud) herd

The Animal Improvement Act (Act Nr. 62 of 1998) determines that Seedstock(stud) animals can only be bred through registering / recording such animals through the official body designated for that purpose by the Act. In the case of Wagyu cattle that body is the Wagyu Society of South Africa. The task of the Society is to look after the interests of the breed, the breeders and to collectively promote the breed. The South African Wagyu Society received official recognition in 2014. The first option for starting a Purebred herd is to purchase

Purebred females from other breeders. These females are often in calf from a Purebred or Fullblood bull. The advantage of this option is that you start breeding Purebred Wagyu's from the first calf crop.

- A grading-up program is also a commonly accepted way to “breed up” to a Purebred herd. This process will take four generations of breeding if starting from scratch with commercial cattle. **Only registered Fullblood or Purebred bulls can be used for breeding**, either *via* natural mating or *via* the use of semen of approved bulls on cows **in the upgrading program**. The progeny of such bulls on commercial cows are eligible to become first generation (F1) animals; the progeny of qualifying bulls on first generation (F1) heifers and cows are eligible to become second generation (F2) animals; similarly, the progeny of qualifying bulls on second generation (F2) females are eligible to become third generation (F3) animals; and finally the progeny of third generation (F3) females can be used to breed what is known as Purebred animals (in theory F4's). As per the illustration below and by definition, a Purebred Wagyu can never be a 100% Fullblood, but will be breeding 93+% purebred Wagyu's by the fourth generation.

4) Breeding a commercial Wagyu herd

A significant proportion of producers simply want to breed commercial animals and reap the benefits of breeding with Wagyu's without the additional effort to register the animals in the herdbook section of the Society. To breed a commercial herd requires a Fullblood or Purebred bull (or semen of such bulls) to obtain the F1 progeny. Commercial producers can then decide themselves if they want to breed F2 and F3 animals for the feedlot market.

Note that it is suggested that all commercial producers be part of the Certified Wagyu Beef Program (CWB). The definition of a CWB animal is any animal sired by a WSA registered sire (Fullblood or Purebred and see Wagyu Classification Description above), thus an animal with at least 50% Wagyu breed content (maximum variation of 5%), a minimum Marbling Score of 3, hormone free, all males castrated prior to 5 months of age and ethically produced as per the CWB protocol.