



JIM FROM MONTANA DISCOVERS WAGYU

Jim Hayden runs 400 red Angus plus 200 yearlings at Lolo Trail Ranch in Montana, USA, doesn't own a single Wagyu and before the World Wagyu Conference in Australia was not a member of the American Wagyu Association and did not know one Wagyu breeder.

He had observed what the Wagyu breed could do and stumbled across the World Wagyu Conference in Australia through the web. Three days later joined close to 400 Wagyu breeders from 15 countries at Yeppoon, Qld, for six days of Wagyu conferencing and touring that will help decide whether he will make the big move into Wagyu.

"I came to Australia cold, it is my first visit here and I just wanted to learn more about Wagyu," he said before he returned to Montana after less than a week in Australia.

Lolo Trail Ranch value adds through its own red Angus beef brand and markets beef direct to the public but also sells feeder steers. Last year his 600 pound (272 kgs) red Angus feeder steers sold for \$US2.68/pound (\$US5.91/kg) live or \$US1608/head.

Why consider a change to Wagyu when you are getting that sort of money for your steers?

"If they were F1 Wagyu they'd bring 40% more than the straight Angus," he replied.

"I've done some research into how many Wagyu are out there (in the USA) and looked at the prices F1s are bringing. There is certainly no surplus of F1 Wagyu and in fact a real shortage generating a regular premium that ranges for 30% up to 50% over Angus.

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"There is a definite demand for this (Wagyu) style of beef in the US and the supply is just not there. It can only be found in high level restaurants.

"And it's not all about money, the healthy aspects of Wagyu beef are very important...it's a healthy product that people can really enjoy", he added.

Where to from here?

After absorbing information at the World Wagyu Conference and observing thousands of Wagyu on the post conference tour, Jim said he was most impressed with how the breed is expanding world-wide and how Wagyu handled the central Queensland conditions.

"I just need to get home and collect my thoughts. We start joining in July and the first thing to do is to find some good Wagyu semen", he said. ■

By GEOFF PHILLIPS Marketing and Communications Manager, AWA

ABOVE

Jim Hayden from Montana USA made a late decision to attend the World Wagyu Conference and Tour to 'find out more about Wagyu'.

He runs 400 red Angus breeders and 200 yearlings at Lolo Trail Ranch, Montana.

