

Lone Mountain transitions to full-blood Wagyu

By ROD SMITH

THE Lone Mountain Cattle Co. announced last month that it is ready to supply Wagyu genetics from its herd of full-blood Wagyu cattle, providing genetics producers can infuse into their herds to take their herds "Beyond Prime."

Although the Wagyu industry is growing in the U.S., there are few full-blood producers, according to the announcement, which also noted that Wagyu beef consistently grades Prime quality and is becoming increasingly popular at the high-ticket end of the white-tablecloth restaurant sector.

The announcement also said Lone Mountain's Bar R 12P Takazakura bull (insert) has received the highest possible GeneStar ranking — 14 stars — for marbling and tenderness. GeneStar is a Bovigen LLC DNA test that



Key Points

- Company announces genetic-supply campaign for producers to go "Beyond Prime."
- Demand from seedstock producers reported as quite strong.

identifies genetic markers for desired performance and quality traits in cattle.

The herd is owned by Mary Lloyd and Robert Estrin and runs on their Lone Mountain Ranch in the high desert region of western New Mexico.

The Estrins have owned the ranch since the mid-1990s and at one time had a herd of 325 Angus cows that they had to reduce to 100 due to drought in 2003.

However, on different dining occasions in 2004 and 2005, they were exposed to Wagyu beef in restaurants that was priced at \$16 per ounce — at the time, about equal to a pound of Choice rib-eye steak.

That convinced them it was time to get off commercial grids and produce higher-value Wagyu cattle, Robert Estrin said.

The ranch bought two full-blood Wagyu bulls in April 2005 to breed them to its commercial herd and nine full-blood Wagyu cows in August 2005 to begin a breeding program with a goal of having 150 full-blood Wagyu cows on the ranch by 2008.

Robert Estrin said demand from



LONE MOUNTAIN COWS: These cows grazing on the Lone Mountain Ranch are part of the ranch's full-blood Wagyu herd, one of the few such herds in the U.S. The ranch has started to market Wagyu genetics through the Lone Mountain Cattle Co.

seedstock producers is so strong that he is currently focused on supplying genetics, although he does plan to eventually begin feeding out Wagyu cattle.

Lone Mountain is partnering with Origen Genetic Services to provide Wagyu genetics products, according to the announcement.

Red and healthful

Wagyu cattle are synonymous with Kobe beef that comes from Wagyu raised in Japan's Kobe region. They are known for producing bright-red, highly marbled and tender beef that's extremely low in cholesterol and higher in monounsaturated fat than all other breeds, according to the announcement.

Due to Japanese regulations, only Wagyu beef produced in the Kobe region can be marketed as Kobe beef, which means Wagyu beef produced outside of the region must be marketed as Wagyu beef, the announcement

explained.

The cattle also are known for their docility and durability and are very adaptable to altitudes and climates across the U.S., the announcement said.

The Lone Mountain Ranch experiences extremes in dryness and heat in the summer and cold and snow in the winter.

Additional information is available online at www.LoneMountainCattle.com.

FYI

Robert Estrin also is a filmmaker — one of his more well-known editing projects was "A River Runs Through It" — and he also is a full professor in the school of cinema and television at the University of Southern California. Mary Lloyd Estrin is a published photographer, with one of her works being *To The Manor Born*.

Stock Summary

Feedstuffs-Nelson Stock Indexes	May 9	May 2	Year ago
Agribusiness	135.60	137.50	135.10
Baking	279.30	375.50	228.40
Fertilizer	247.90	236.20	136.30
Meat	191.60	191.60	170.70