

Akaushi vs the Term Wagyu

I would like to offer some ideas and opinions on the definitions of Akaushi and Wagyu. Hopefully this will provide some talking points and help clarify these two terms. By defining this subject properly, I'm hoping it will have a positive and lasting effect on all the Japanese breeds and their future successes.

Many people have tried and been successful in defining Wagyu as a breed. I see it differently, I believe the true definition of Wagyu refers to an origin, not a single breed.

Akaushi is a separate and distinct Breed from the other Japanese cattle. There are no similarities, genetically or phenotypically, between Akaushi and the other Japanese Breeds. Based on my research the Akaushi Breed started with the South Korean breed known as Hanwoo. In ~1870 Devon was infused into the Hanwoo cattle and in ~1910 Simmental was incorporated into the breed. Around 1910 the breed was closed to any other outside genetics and the Akaushi breed was formed, and to this day remains the same, a closed herd for well over 100 years.

First of all let's define the word - **Breed**: (noun) A stock of animals or plants within a species having distinctive genetics and appearance, typically having been developed by deliberate selection. (New Oxford American Dictionary)

Now let's define - **Wagyu**: any of several breeds of cattle, the most desired of which is genetically predisposed to intense marbling and to producing a high percentage of oleaginous unsaturated fat. (Wikipedia)

Here is a Japanese Beef Industry leader offering his definition of Wagyu : Mitsuru Minezawa:

"The word Wagyu is an *anglicisation* (making English in appearance) of the Japanese language "wa-gyu", which simply means (Japanese produced) beef cattle. It does not describe any single breed."

Prominent Japanese animal science researcher and academic, Mitsuru Minezawa, defines contemporary Japanese Wagyu as comprising four distinct breeds, in addition to two indigenous Japanese cattle breeds (**Mishima** and **Kuchinoshima**) both of which survive only in non-commercial, trace populations. The four distinct breeds are **Kryoshi** (Kuroushi, Kuroge Washu), **Akaushi** (Akage Washu), **Japanese Polled** (Mukaku Washu) and **Japanese Shorthorn** (Nihon Tankaku Washu). With this definition, there is even more clarity that the term "Wagyu" is an origin, **NOT A BREED**.

Here are more Quotes-Statements and Definitions from other Japanese Beef Industry leaders:

The American Wagyu Association: Wagyu – a Japanese beef cattle breed – derived from native Asian cattle. "Wagyu" refers to all Japanese beef cattle, where "Wa" means Japanese and "gyu" means cow.

Six Buck Ranch: "In Japan, cattle breeds are divided into two kinds. The first is dairy cattle, which are Holsteins and Jerseys and the second are referred to as Wagyu. There are four breeds of Wagyu cattle, Akaushi, Kryoshi and Japanese polled and Japanese Shorthorn. All of our Red Wagyu are 99.2% purebred and since they are a "different type" of Wagyu they will produce a certain amount of heterosis when bred back to black Wagyu."

Lone Mountain Cattle Company: "Wagyu is a breed of Japanese cattle."

Chisholm Cattle Company: "Wagyu - the breed that made Kobe famous - is the generic name for Japanese cattle. "

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V-V Wagyu: “We say Red Wagyu/Akaushi because they are the same cattle. The only difference is the name.”

Chisholm Cattle Company: Wagyu calves for sale – 100% Full blood. They were sired by JC Rueshaw 65, who is the first black, fullblood son of foundation bull and Japanese National Champion, Rueshaw (Akaushi). With this infusion of Kumamoto red genetics, these black calves have it all. Red bulls can be used to breed for red or black progeny.

JC Rueshaw 65 FB14154: Fullblood Black bull (Red influenced). #65’s pedigree combines the exceptional production and maternal traits of the Kumamoto Red strain with the Tamija strain. He will add welcome hybrid vigor to Red and Black Wagyu herds.

Chris Brant: “Wagyu means Japanese Cattle, believe it or not some breeders and former board members are unaware Wagyu is not a breed and believe Reds and Blacks are related. Red is a breed, Black is a breed. That’s a fact and it will not change. A Red crossed with a Black is an F1. The longer we try to appease people the worse this problem gets. No matter how much cross breeders want a red black cross to be a full blood it is not a full blood.”

CONFUSED YET? The term Wagyu has confused and is still confusing a lot of people. By lumping all Japanese cattle into one group doesn’t help matters. There are no genetic or phenotypic similarities whatsoever between the four (4) Japanese beef breeds. Hypothetically you can call them what you want but are you being honest and truthful with potential buyers. It’s like putting Hereford and Angus into one Breed/Association because they are both English breeds. To me that doesn’t make sense.

We must continue to differentiate the **Akaushi Breed** from other Japanese cattle breeds. Akaushi must be properly defined as to it’s origin and genetic makeup and how it sets itself apart from other Japanese cattle breeds.

By using language like Red Wagyu, Red Hided Wagyu, Kumomoto Reds, Japanese Brown, Red-Black Wagyu crosses, does not further our cause, it just confuses people more. If these words continue to be used to identify the Akaushi Breed, the Beef industry will never, totally accept or respect Akaushi as a breed.

Akaushi deserves its rightful place among the other recognized beef breeds in the industry. To accomplish this we need to continue telling our story correctly, **“WE ARE AKAUSHI”**, fullblood descendants originating from the Emperor’s herd in Japan.

We respect and wish all Breeds and Breed Associations well but the American Akaushi Association is here to protect the integrity of the Akaushi Genetics, the Akaushi Breed Registry and your investment as an Akaushi Breeder!

Food for Thought: *All Fullblood Akaushi cattle are red, but not all red cattle are Fullblood Akaushi!*

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